

Russian Studies in the Antipodes: Russian Language Teaching and Research in Australia and New Zealand*

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This article provides an overview and critical assessment of the development and current state of university Russian language teaching in Australia and New Zealand and examines the main directions of research in Russian Studies in these countries in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It also highlights various factors that influenced teaching and research in the field of the Russian language and literature. The relevance of the topic is due, on the one hand, to the urgency of examining the state of Russian studies in Australia and New Zealand in the light of ongoing political and socio-cultural changes, and, on the other hand, to the lack of research in this area. Both periods were chosen because it is impossible to explain the position of Russian studies in Australia and New Zealand in the twenty-first century without considering the trends in the development of the discipline in the previous century. The study is based on the analysis of press materials, official websites of Australian and New Zealand universities, statistical materials of higher education, and research publications. The article demonstrates that the dynamics of demand for teaching Russian at tertiary level in Australia and New Zealand, as well as the emergence or closure of Russian programs, certainly reflect changes in interest in the Russian language. However, university Russian language teaching in the two countries was also found to be strongly influenced by historical, economic, and political factors, as well as by government reforms in education and, in particular, language teaching. The article also demonstrates changes in the directions of research in the field of the Russian language and literature. It was observed that while in the twentieth century (especially in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s), more studies were published on the description of the grammatical and phonetic structure of the modern Russian literary language, as well as on comparative analyses of Slavonic languages, in the twenty-first century, a large number of works of an applied nature appeared, including publications on the methodology

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of teaching Russian and on applying the achievements of linguistics to teaching. In addition, while in the twentieth century literary studies dealt to a greater extent with the classics of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the twenty-first century, more research has been devoted to the analysis of the works of contemporary poets and writers.

Keywords: Australia, New Zealand, Russian Studies, Russian language, language teaching, Russian Literary Studies

Представлены обзор и критическая оценка развития и современного состояния преподавания русского языка в университетах Австралии и Новой Зеландии. Анализируются основные направления исследований в области русистики в этих странах в XX и XXI вв. и факторы, повлиявшие на преподавание и исследования в этой области. Актуальность темы обусловлена, с одной стороны, необходимостью изучения состояния русистики в Австралии и Новой Зеландии в свете политических и социокультурных изменений, а, с другой – недостатком исследований в этой сфере. Выбор временного промежутка объясняется тем, что невозможно объяснить положение русистики в Австралии и Новой Зеландии в XXI в. без учета тенденций развития этой дисциплины в предыдущем столетии. Исследование основано на анализе материалов прессы, официальных сайтов австралийских и новозеландских университетов, статистических материалов и научных публикаций. Показано, что динамика спроса на преподавание русского языка в высших учебных заведениях Австралии и Новой Зеландии, безусловно, отражает изменения в интересе к этому языку. Установлено, что на характер преподавания русского языка в этих двух странах оказывают сильное влияние исторические, экономические и политические факторы, в особенности государственные реформы в сфере образования и, в частности, преподавания иностранных языков. Демонстрируются изменения в направлениях исследований русского языка и литературы. Если в XX в. (особенно в 1950-е, 1960-е и 1970-е гг.) большее количество исследований было посвящено описанию грамматического и фонетического строя современного русского литературного языка, сопоставительному анализу славянских языков, то в XXI в. появились работы прикладного характера, публикации по методике преподавания русского языка и применению достижений академической лингвистики в преподавании. Если в XX в. литературоведение в большей степени занималось классикой XIX и начала XX в., то последние исследования по большей части посвящены творчеству современных поэтов и писателей.

Ключевые слова: Австралия, Новая Зеландия, русистика, русский язык, преподавание языка, изучение русской литературы

Russian Language Teaching¹

Russian studies in Australia and New Zealand have quite similar histories. Before the Second World War, there were no university courses in Russian in either country that would provide official qualifications upon completion. Interest in the language of the allied country increased significantly during World War II. Although Russian was not included in university undergraduate degree programs, various Russian language courses emerged and were rather popular [Донских, с. 288].

In Australia, the first Russian language courses appeared in the curriculum of the University of Melbourne in 1946. At the origin of their creation was Nina Christesen², who had a difficult task introducing “a totally new subject with totally inadequate resources” [Rigby, p. 267]. In 1955, Russian began to be taught at the Australian National University, which at that time was called Canberra University College. The first teacher was Associate Professor T. H. R. Rigby [Travers, p. 223].

In New Zealand, as early as 1942, a reading course in Russian was introduced at the Victoria College of Wellington of the University of New Zealand. The availability of a Russian lecturer played a role in the opening of this course. As Dr. Danilow (who was offered the position of a temporary lecturer in German at this college) knew Russian, he proposed the initiation of Russian language courses. The number of students gradually increased, and in 1945, Russian was established as an official subject of the B. A. degree program [Danilow].

In both Australia and New Zealand, colleges were associated with universities in the 1940s and 1950s. Hence, Canberra University College offered the same Russian course as the University of Melbourne [Travers, p. 223], whilst Auckland College students could take their Russian language exams by correspondence at the Victoria College of Wellington [Course Outlines for Previous Years, p. 128].

In the 1960s, three more universities in Australia established Russian language courses. In 1963, the University of Queensland welcomed an addition to its curriculum with the introduction of the Russian language as a degree course. Mrs. V. Coe was appointed to the position of lecturer. [Travers]. In 1964, Russian courses were introduced at Monash University, and Reginald de Bray became the Foundation Professor of Russian [Records Archives]. Then, in 1967, the University of New South Wales followed suit, with Tatjana Cizova taking up duties as Professor of Russian [Records and Archives].

¹ The study is based on the analysis of press materials, official websites of Australian and New Zealand universities, higher education statistical materials and three academic journals: “Melbourne Slavonic Studies” (1967–1985), “Australian Slavonic and East European Studies” (1987–) and “New Zealand Slavonic Journal” (1968–). These journals are journals of the Australia and New Zealand Slavists’ Association and the primary research outlets for Slavists in the two countries. It is important to note that, due to limitations of space, the article makes no claim to be a comprehensive survey of research contributions by Australian and New Zealand scholars to the field of Russian Studies. Instead, it is intended to identify and describe some of the main characteristics of the field over the periods analysed.

² Only the first convenors of the Russian language streams are mentioned in this article.

In New Zealand, in addition to the department of Russian language at the University of Wellington, the department of Russian studies was opened at the University of Canterbury in 1960 and at the University of Otago in 1961. In 1963, introductory and science Russian courses appeared in the curriculum of the latter, and a junior lecturer in Russian, Mrs. Aleksandra Casselton, was appointed [Calendar Archive].

The inclusion of the Russian language in university curricula was influenced by many different factors. One of these was the significant expansion and development of higher education in Australia and New Zealand, which created fertile ground. During the long post-war boom from 1945 to the early 1970s, universities in Australia and New Zealand grew from small institutions to mainstream organisations, and their numbers increased dramatically. In the mid-1940s, there were only six universities in Australia and one in New Zealand (with five colleges in Otago, Canterbury, Auckland, Wellington, and Palmerston North). By comparison, currently, the Australian tertiary education system includes forty-one universities [List of Australia's Universities], while New Zealand is home to eight universities [About UNZ].

The Australian and New Zealand governments provided financial support for higher education [Laming; Roper]. For example, in Australia, between 1955 and 1965, funding for higher education was increased [Reid, p. 6], and, between 1972 and 1975, university tuition fees were even abolished [Abbott, Doucouliagos]. In New Zealand during those years, government funding was also “sufficient to keep tuition fees very low, provide universal living allowances, and ensure that students could complete their tertiary education without having to borrow large sums of money to do so” [Roper, p. 9–10].

Another factor that had an impact on the inclusion of the Russian language in university curricula was the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Australia on October 10, 1942, and between Russia and New Zealand on April 13, 1944, as well as the allied relations connecting these countries during the Second World War. A crucial aspect of increasing interest in the Russian language was the rising influence of the USSR on the international arena and the growth of its political, economic, and scientific power [Dessaix; Рудых].

The number of students studying foreign languages was influenced by the measures taken by universities to account for differences in proficiency between native speakers, students with a Higher School Certificate in Russian, and those with no previous knowledge of the language. For example, from 1963 to 1966, a preliminary year for beginners was offered at the University of Melbourne, but this “meant extending the pass major to four years and a full honours course to five” [Travers, p. 226].

One other factor contributing to the reduction in foreign language students in the 1970s was the increasing removal of foreign languages from the list of required subjects in many non-language faculties [Ibid., p. 226].

By the early 1980s, the magnetism of Russian culture and the Russian language had waned [Dessaix], but there was a significant surge of interest during and soon after Perestroika. In the 1990s, profession-related reasons

for studying Russian became more prominent. There was a significant increase in the number of Australian and New Zealand companies whose business was directed to the Russian markets and vice versa. The prospect of further opportunities to pursue academic studies in Russia and to travel to Russia was enhanced.

In 1988, Russian language courses appeared at Macquarie University. This was facilitated by the fact that by that time the university had an existing program of Slavic studies and various Slavic languages were already being taught [Koscharsky, Pavković, p. 149]. Initially, Russian was not included in this program since it was taught at another university in Sydney, the University of New South Wales.

In the 1990s, when government funding for universities in Australia and New Zealand decreased, the search for different ways of preserving language programs began. In 1996, in Australia, a Language Consortium was established at various universities in the state of Victoria with the main aim of “joining forces” in language teaching to facilitate and encourage student enrolment. One such initiative was the teaching of Russian at the University of Melbourne by Monash University staff, while the University of Melbourne staff taught Latin at Monash [Handbook Archive]. This arrangement was maintained from 1999 to 2001. Similar arrangements were made in the State of New South Wales. Russian was introduced at the University of Sydney in 1999 under a collaborative agreement with Macquarie University, and staff from the University of Sydney taught Indonesian at Macquarie [Archival Records]. In 1999, the Russian language program at the Australian National University was closed, and in 1998 [Programs and Courses], the Russian language program at the University of Otago in New Zealand was also discontinued.

In the 2000s, universities continued to look for more cost-effective ways to teach foreign languages. The Language Consortium program, which was introduced at the end of the twentieth century, continued but had many shortcomings. Among the unresolved problems of the Languages Consortium were travel expenses and timetable clashes. A serious concern was also the difference in the number of students enrolled in courses and, therefore, the difference in costs to universities. For example, for these reasons, the collaborative agreement to teach Russian and Indonesian between Macquarie University and the University of Sydney lasted only until 2002. In 2003, a similar collaborative agreement for teaching Russian and Indonesian was made between the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales, but it also existed only until 2004.

One of the important initiatives to increase student numbers taken by Australian universities between 2002 and 2011 was the introduction of an extra percentage added to the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank for students who studied a language at the secondary school level.

Another initiative to increase enrolment was the introduction of the Certificate and Diploma in Language. These are short undergraduate courses (certificate – 2 half-year units, diploma – 4 half-year units) that can be taken in addition to the main undergraduate degree.

In the 2000s, universities in Australia and New Zealand were increasingly challenged by ever-changing government education policies and cuts in government funding. There was a gradual reduction in staff participation in university governance and the dismantling of collegiality structures. For example, decisions on staff reductions were “typically made by management bodies where academic values and issues of quality come second to the commercial imperative” [Russell, p. 113]. Moreover, the bulk of higher education funding was not directed towards the humanities [Barnett, p. 44; Brown, Caruso, p. 457; Holmes, p. 17]. The concept of a “crisis of the humanities” became well-known among language instructors as the number of languages taught at the university level began to decline. In 2003, the Russian language program ceased to exist at the Australian National University and Monash University. In 2013, the Russian program at the University of New South Wales faced a similar fate.

In 2001, the Russian language courses at Victoria University of Wellington were closed [Calendar 2001], and in 2007, the major and minor in Russian were suspended at the University of Auckland. The number of New Zealand universities offering Russian returned to the 1950s levels.

Nevertheless, the circumstances in Australia were not as unfavorable. For example, the Russian department of the University of Melbourne was re-opened in 2001 “with funding from a private bequest” [Holmes, p. 17]. Moreover, in 2004, the Reading Russian for Academic Purposes course appeared at the Australian National University, and, in 2014, a Russian minor program was opened (introductory courses were offered at the Australian National University and intermediate courses at Macquarie University via distance learning). Figure 1 summarises changes in the number of Australian and New Zealand universities offering Russian language courses from the moment of their creation to the present day (Fig. 1).

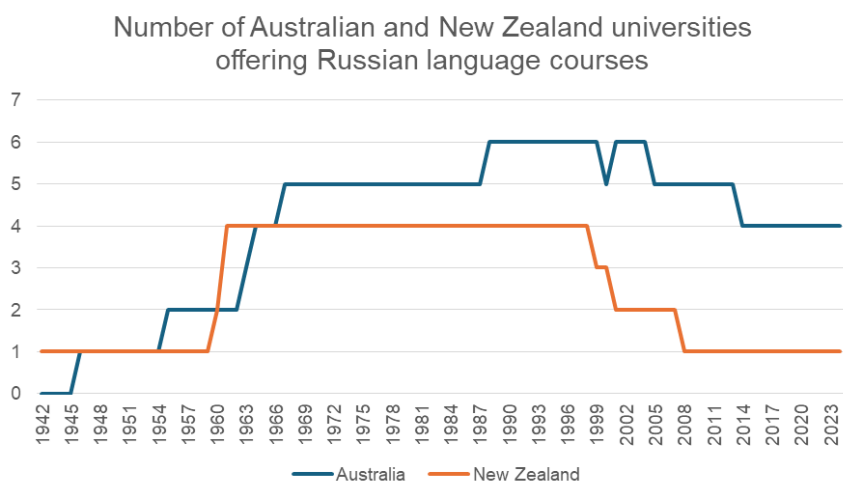


Fig. 1. Russian language courses in Australian and New Zealand universities (1942–2024)

In 2018–2019, some universities initiated reforms to reduce the number of courses offered in order to increase students' enrolment in the remaining courses. For example, as part of such restructuring, Russian cultural units at Macquarie University were subjected to budget cuts. These units were previously taught in English and attracted a considerable number of students from diverse majors.

Cuts in funding to universities by the Australian and New Zealand governments were partially offset by significant increases in international student enrolments. However, in 2020, the dramatic collapse of the international higher education market caused by Covid-19 restrictions and international border closures plunged universities in Australia and New Zealand into a crisis. Curriculum cuts, budget cuts, and staff reductions through forced retirement or enhanced redundancy packages became the norm in universities in this period. Nevertheless, enrolment in language subjects was to a degree stimulated by subsidised student fees. From 2021 onwards, a language major costs an Australian student about a quarter of the cost of most of the other arts, humanities, and social sciences majors. The new funding system aims to use price incentives to encourage students to enrol in disciplines that have historically struggled to attract significant numbers of students. While these measures did not reverse the long-term decline in language enrolment, the fall in enrolment from 2020 to 2021 was minor [Norton], see Fig. 2.

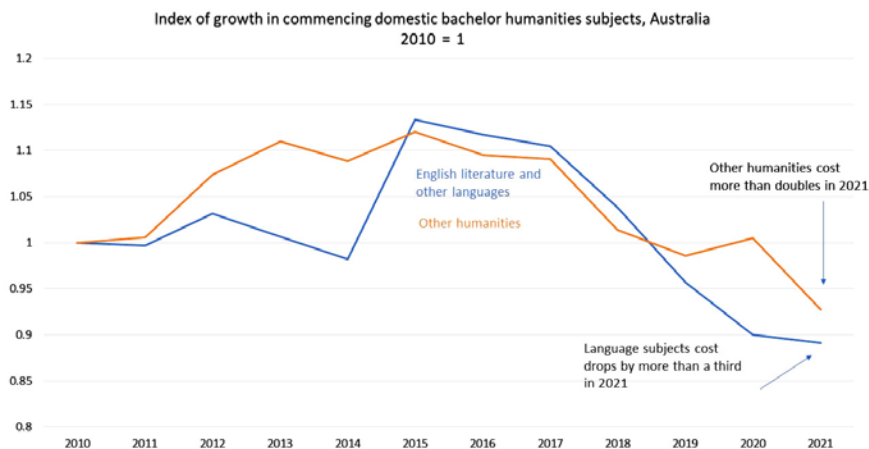


Fig. 2. Index of growth in commencing domestic bachelor humanities subjects, Australia.
Source: Department of Education, Selected students statistics

Prior to 2020, in its efforts to support and preserve various languages, the Australian government utilised Commonwealth funding agreements with universities as a key strategy. One stipulation of these agreements was that universities needed approval from the Commonwealth before discontinuing specific courses, particularly those related to nationally strategic languages. Up until 2020, funding agreements consistently

included safeguards for nationally strategic languages. However, in 2020, this protection was removed from the agreements, which created a loophole that makes it simpler for universities to discontinue language programs.

Currently, the tendency to cut the teaching of foreign languages in universities continues. Amid the financial strain caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous universities have put forth proposals to discontinue language programs. Among these are La Trobe University (Hindi and Indonesian) and Swinburne University (all foreign languages). The same fate befell Russian programs.

For example, in 2022, the University of Queensland changed the Russian major program to a shorter, Russian minor program. In 2023, Macquarie University administration proposed to discontinue teaching five languages: Croatian, Modern Greek, German, Italian, and Russian, even though the Russian Studies program at Macquarie is the largest in Australia and New Zealand.

In New Zealand, Russian is taught at only one university, but a trend towards a reduction of language departments can also be seen in this country. For example, recently, the University of Otago has decided to cut German from its offerings, while Victoria University of Wellington has proposed discontinuing German, Italian, Greek, and Latin.

Research in Russian Studies

Both in Australia and New Zealand research centres in Russian Studies grew from the very start around universities where the Russian language was offered. Under the leadership of the founder of Russian Studies in Australia, Nina Christesen³, the department of Russian language and literature at the University of Melbourne evolved as a strong school of literary studies with a particular focus on nineteenth-century literature [Rigby, p. 269; Travers, p. 6]. While Christesen's own works in this area were mostly dedicated to Tolstoy, many articles and several monographs on Dostoevsky were authored by Dmitri Grishin. The founding father of the tradition of Dostoevsky studies in Australia, Grishin was one of the founders of the "International Association of Research into the Life and Works of Dostoevsky" established in 1971. Research on nineteenth-century Russian literature was also conducted by Judith Armstrong, the author of *The Novel of Adultery*, among other scholars. Another strand of research which evolved at the department concerned modern Russian poets such as Evtushenko, Rozhdestvensky and Okudzhava and was reflected in the work of Igor Mezhaikov-Korjakin, among others. In addition to literary studies, the department specialised in Russian linguistics with the first MA and PhD degrees in this discipline conferred in 1957 and 1963 respectively [Марван, Кларк, с. 153]. Subsequently, following the appointment of Roland D. Sussex in 1976, linguistics moved into the centre of the stage [Rigby, p. 269]. Sussex's research interests included Russian

³ Nina Christesen was also the founder and editor of the first academic journal on Russian / Slavonic Studies in Australia and New Zealand, "Melbourne Slavonic Studies".

syntax, lexicology, Slavonic phonetics and Slavonic languages in émigré communities. These interests were to some extent shared by Paul Cubberley whose work was mainly devoted to historical Slavonic phonetics [Rigby, p. 269], while John Clarke published on the history of Russian linguistics. Another strand of language research that developed at the University of Melbourne was the study of Russian-English linguistic contacts and, more specifically, the speech of Russian immigrants in Australia. A substantial investigation in this area was Liudmila Kouzmin's PhD thesis entitled "The Russian Language in an Australian Environment: A Descriptive Analysis of English Interference in the Speech of Bilingual Russian Migrants".

The department of Slavonic Studies at the Australian National University developed as a strong research centre in linguistics [Марван, Кларк, с. 152], especially after the appointment of a comparative philologist, Reginald de Bray, as its chair in 1971. The specialisations of the department included Slavonic linguistics, the development of the Russian language, Russian grammar and Russian-English bilingualism in the Australian context. In addition to language topics, several scholars such as Kevin Windle, Rosh Ireland, and I. I. Gapanovich worked on late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature. Some research into the Russian language was also carried out by Anna Wierzbicka, who is internationally known for her work in semantics, pragmatics and cross-cultural linguistics.

The focus of the department of Russian at the University of Queensland from the very beginning was on modern Russian literature. The first chair of the department, Boris Christa, had a strong interest in the poetry of Russia's Silver Age and subsequently in semiotics and Dostoevsky. His doctoral thesis became the basis of a monograph, *The Poetic World of Andrey Bely* (1977), which was one of the first substantial studies in English of the Russian poet [McNair, p. IX]. Research into nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature was also conducted by John McNair and Lyndall Morgan, while Robert Woodhouse specialised in comparative and historical linguistics. The majority of MA and PhD theses completed in the department from its foundation to early 1990s dealt with literary topics or with problems of contemporary Russian usage, and some work was also done on the language of the Russian immigrant community in Australia [Rigby, p. 271].

Similarly to the Australian National University, the Russian department at Monash University evolved as a strong linguistics centre. At the origins of this tradition was once again Reginald de Bray, who headed the newly created department from 1966 to 1969. De Bray's successor, Zdenek F. Oliverius, specialised in Russian phonetics and Russian morphology, while Oliverius's successor, Jiří Marvan, worked on the diachronic and synchronic links between the Slavonic languages, Slavonic morphology, and comparative Slavonic and Balto-Slavonic philology. Research into Russian phonetics, as well as Russian-English bilingualism in Australia, was also conducted by Victor Pobie. Despite this focus on language studies, some research on literary topics was also underway at the department. For example, Slobodanka Millicent Vladiv-Glover, who graduated from the department

of Russian language and literature at the University of Melbourne with a PhD thesis on the narrative structure in Dostoevsky's *Demons*, published studies on Dostoevsky.

From its emergence, the School of Russian, later the Department of Russian Studies, at the University of New South Wales maintained an emphasis on Soviet literature. Extensive research and translation within this field was conducted by, among others, Robert Dessaix, Michael Ulman⁴, and Barry Lewis. Ulman additionally researched nineteenth-century Russian literature and civilisation, while Lewis was also a specialist in Slavic comparative linguistics and published on Russian-English linguistic contacts in Australia and Oceania. Soviet and, more particularly, Gulag literature was the focus of Elena Mikhailik's PhD thesis, *Poetics of the 'New Prose' Kolyma Stories by Varlam Shalamov*.

Established only in 1988, Russian Studies at Macquarie University developed into a fully-fledged research centre towards the early 2000s. In the 1990s, research into Russian-English child bilingualism was conducted by Marika Kalyuga.

Similarly to Australia, in New Zealand, research centres in Russian Studies formed primarily around the departments of Russian. From its early days and especially after the appointment of an established literary scholar, Patrick Waddington, the department of Russian at Victoria University of Wellington evolved as a strong school in literary studies. Waddington himself specialised in Turgenev and his association with French and English writers. Other members of the department worked on Ostrovsky (Irene Esam), Russian poetry of the Silver Age (Anton Kovac) and Dostoevsky and Ostrovsky (Irene Zohrab), among other topics. Zohrab's contributions to the field in the past century also included studies on Tolstoy and Soviet literature.

Similarly to Victoria University of Wellington, the department of Russian at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch has a long-standing research tradition in literary studies. In the past century, substantial work was done here on various periods and themes of Russian literature. For example, J. D. Goodliffe researched eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prose and drama, including Tolstoy and Chekhov. A. K. Lojkin, a graduate of the Russian Language and Literature Department at the University of Melbourne, was an expert in prosody and Russian language didactics. Russian Modernism, post-Modernism, and women's writing was researched by Alexandra Smith, who had a special interest in Tsvetaeva and is the author of the monograph *The Song of the Mockingbird: Pushkin in the Work of Marina Tsvetaeva* (1994). Another specialist in Russian Modernism and post-Modernism, as well as literary theory, Evgeny Pavlov published works on Mandelstam, Benjamin and Pelevin, among others. Finally, Henrietta Mondry worked on Russian cultural history, nineteenth- and twentieth-

⁴ For example, Dessaix and Ulman translated Boris Vakhtin's *Dublenka* (*The Sheepskin Coat*) and *Odná absolyutno schastlivaya derevnya* (*An Absolutely Happy Village*). The scholars also collaborated in translating scholarly works: see, for instance, *A History of Post-war Soviet Writing: The Literature of Moral Opposition* by Grigori Svirski (1981).

century Russian literature, including Nabokov and Bulgakov, and Soviet literary criticism.

The Russian department at the University of Otago also specialised in literary studies and brought together experts on eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian literature. One of the founding members of the department, Peter Soskice, worked on Yesenin and made a number of English translations of this poet. He was also interested in N. A. Nekrasov, as well as Russian futurist poetry. Research into the field of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and especially into nineteenth-century Russian poetry, was conducted by J. A. Harvie, who specialised in Baratynsky. In contrast, Andrew Barratt worked primarily on Gorky and his period. He authored books on Olesha, Bulgakov, Gorky, and Lermontov and compiled an edition of Gorky's letters in English. The Russian literature of the first decades of the past century was also researched by Peter Stupples. Finally, Sandra Shaw Bennett had a special interest in Russian women's studies and published a translation and commentary of the 1920s poetry of Mariya Shkapskaya.

Over its four-decade history, the Russian Department at the University of Auckland had an emphasis on both literary studies and linguistics. For example, Hans-Peter Stoffel wrote on Slavonic/non-Slavonic language contact, Russian/Slavonic lexicology and contrastive linguistics. Additionally, Robert Lagerberg conducted research in the fields of Russian and Slavonic linguistics, his further interests revolving around nineteenth-century literature and especially Turgenev. In contrast, Ian K. Lilly published on Russian versification and researched the history and cultural and literary symbolism of Moscow and St Petersburg.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, research in Russian Studies in Australia and New Zealand continued to develop along the lines established in the past century with some losses and additions. One of the losses was the decline of the tradition of Russian literary studies at the University of Melbourne. However, the department maintained and fortified its emphasis on Russian linguistics. The principal research interests of the current Russian discipline coordinator Robert Lagerberg lie in the accentology and phonetics of modern Russian. He is the author of the monograph *Variation and Frequency in Russian Word Stress* (2011). In addition, Lagerberg has published works on Russian foreign language didactics and Russian cinema, more particularly, on the films of Andrei Zvyagintsev. Many MA and PhD theses completed in the department in the last two and a half decades have dealt with linguistic topics. For example, Natalia Batova's PhD thesis focused on the Russian word order and provided an account of unconventional verb-initial patterns across a range of genres and time periods, while Beatrice Venturin's work examined the emotional speech of Russian-Australian sequential bilinguals. Venturin subsequently authored several publications on the topics of bilingualism and emotions, language attrition and identity among Russian Australians. Another recent PhD thesis, by Natallia Kabiak, explored the usage of high-frequency Soviet

film quotations – the so-called “winged phrases” – in modern Russian. Kabiak has recently published a textbook on this topic entitled *Lyubimye sovetskie fil'my na uroke RKI* [Favourite Soviet Films in the Russian-As-A-Foreign Language Classroom].

Despite the discontinuation of the Russian language program at the Australian National University in 2003, work on Russian language and literature has continued through the efforts of several scholars. For instance, Kevin Windle, a specialist in Modern Russian literature, has published studies on Bulgakov, Bryusov, Australian motifs in Soviet literature, among other topics, while Rosh Ireland, who had a special interest in Russian drama of the Soviet period, authored several publications on the works of Vasily Shkvarkin. Over the last three decades, Windle has also been working in the fields of Translation Studies and Slavonic lexicography. In addition to the work described above, Anna Wierzbicka's extensive research in semantics, pragmatics, and cross-cultural linguistics has included several studies on Russian.

At the University of Queensland, where in 1997 five full-time academic positions were reduced to one and a half [Morgan, p. 178], John McNair specialised in the area of Russian-Australian cultural relations, while Lyndall Morgan researched post-Soviet popular fiction, as well as Russian cinema. After the retirement of McNair in 2017, his position was filled by the current Russian discipline coordinator, Anna Mikhaylova. Mikhaylova's research interests lie at the intersection of bilingualism, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics and language teaching. She has published works on various aspects of heritage and second-language learning and teaching.

Despite the closure of the Russian language program at Monash University and the University of New South Wales, some research continues to be carried out at these institutions. For instance, Slobodanka Millicent Vladiv-Glover has been working on the poetics of Realism, Modernism and Postmodernism in Russian and European literature. She is the author of the monograph *Dostoevsky and the Realists: Dickens, Flaubert, Tolstoy* (2019) and numerous articles on the poetics of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian writers, especially Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Vladiv-Glover is the chief editor of “The Dostoevsky Journal: A Comparative Literature Review”. At the University of New South Wales, Larissa Koroleva's PhD thesis examined the mythical aspects in Daniil Andreev's *Roza Mira* (*The Rose of the World*), while another graduate of the department, Elena Mikhailik, continued her research into Gulag literature started in the 1990s and has extensively published on Shalamov.

At Macquarie University, research in Russian Studies grew in several directions. Nonna Ryan mainly worked on the Russian language, including the speech of Russian immigrants in Australia. Her studies focused on different issues of language maintenance and assimilation, especially among Russian émigrés who fled the former Russian Empire in the wake of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, first landing in China and subsequently in Australia. The topics of language maintenance were also researched

in the early 2000s by Ryan's successor and the current Russian discipline coordinator Marika Kalyuga. A linguist by training, Kalyuga is specialised in cognitive and Russian historical linguistics and is the author of the monograph *Russian Prepositional Phrases: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach* (2020). Her further research interests include foreign language pedagogy in relation to teaching Russian as a foreign language. The MA and PhD theses completed in the department over the last two decades concerned political, historical and linguistic topics. A recent PhD thesis, by Sofya Yunusova, focused on the use of contemporary literary narrative in Intermediate Russian language classrooms. Yunusova has subsequently published several articles on literature in (Russian) foreign-language teaching.

In addition to the research described above, work on Russian literature and, in particular, on the poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been carried out by David N. Wells, a Perth-based scholar and librarian at the Curtin University of Technology. He is the author of two monographs on the poetry of Anna Akhmatova and numerous articles on Akhmatova, Balmont, Bely, Merezhkovsky, Aleksandr Kushner, Semyon Lipkin, among others.

Similarly to what happened in Australian universities, the discontinuation of the Russian language program at Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Auckland in New Zealand impacted the research in Russian Studies at these institutions. Nevertheless, some scholarly work continued. For example, Irene Zohrab continued to publish on nineteenth-century Russian literature, especially on Dostoevsky. At the University of Auckland, Dr Mark Stanley Swift published a series of studies on the works of Chekhov, including minor writings such as *Sakhalin Island* and *Ariadna*. He also researched twentieth-century Russian literature and published articles on Pyetsukh and Lukyanenko.

At the University of Canterbury, the last two and a half decades have seen substantial research in Russian Studies, especially on literary topics. Alexandra Smith, who had worked at the department until the mid-2000s, continued her research into nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature. She published on Russian women's writing, especially on Tsvetaeva and Petrushevskaya. Smith also wrote entries on various Russian poets and writers for several literary encyclopedias and dictionaries. Further research into Russian literature and, more specifically, into Russian Modernism and Postmodernism has been carried out by Evgeny Pavlov. He is the author of the monograph *Shok pamyati: avtobiograficheskaya poetika Val'tera Ben'yamina i Osipa Mandel'shtama* (*The Shock of Memory: The Autobiographical Poetics of Walter Benjamin and Osip Mandelstam*) (2005) and a specialist in Russian Symbolism. He has also studied Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian poets and writers, including Platonov, Aleksandr Vvedenskii, Andrei Sen-Senkov, Konstantin Vaginov, and Pelevin, and has a special interest in the works of Arkady Dragomoshchenko. Literary topics have also been researched by Henrietta Mondry. Mondry's research interests include nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature and Russian cultural history, especially in relation to the history of the Jewish

people in Russia and to their representation in Russian literature. She is the author of several monographs on these topics and has also published works on Gippius, Gorky, Goncharov, Khlebnikov, Bitov, and Prokhanov, among many other writers and poets.

* * *

Russian studies in Australia and New Zealand have a long history, beginning around the same time with the introduction of Russian language courses in 1946 at the University of Melbourne and in 1945 at Victoria College of Wellington. The subsequent history of language teaching in these countries is also similar. In both countries, the peak of the opening of university Russian language programs occurred in the 1960s. At that time, Russian language courses opened in three universities in Australia and in three universities in New Zealand. By the end of the 1960s, there were already five universities teaching Russian in Australia and four in New Zealand. However, over the twenty-year period after that, the number of universities offering Russian increased to only six in Australia and remained the same in New Zealand. The 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s saw a mixed picture of the closure and re-establishment of some Russian language programs in Australian universities, as well as the search for different ways to increase the number of students studying foreign languages. In New Zealand in the same period most Russian programs were gradually closing. Currently, only two universities in Australia have a major in Russian, with one of them under threat of closure.

The dynamics of demand for Russian language teaching at universities in Australia and New Zealand and the emergence or closure of Russian programs certainly reflect the changes in interest in the Russian language. However, interest in Russian is far from the only factor influencing the scale of teaching of this language at universities. As shown in the article, historical, economic, and political changes, as well as the reforms undertaken by the government in the field of education and, in particular, in the field of language teaching, have a great influence. These are primarily changes in university funding. The decline in government investment in university education from the late 1980s and early 1990s in both Australia and New Zealand led to a wave of language program closures, including Russian language programs. The next wave of language program closures came in response to the financial strain caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2027, the number of universities offering a major in Russian in Australia will be reduced to one, while in New Zealand, for almost two decades, there has only been one university offering a major in Russian.

The review of academic sources conducted in this article has allowed us to identify the main directions of research in Russian Studies in Australia and New Zealand in the past and present century and determine the main factors that have impacted upon the development of the discipline. First, it has emerged that Australian and New Zealand scholars have made a significant

contribution to Russian language and literature studies. It has also come into view that this work led to the development of fully-fledged research traditions and centres, most commonly around university departments where the Russian language was taught. Although all departments encouraged research in a wide choice of areas, each one developed greater strength in certain directions, based on the chief interests of the academic staff. Our analysis has also determined that the flourishing of research in Russian language and literature in Australia and New Zealand in the twentieth century coincided with the period of significant public interest in the language and the opening and expansion of Russian language departments. Consequently, the discontinuation of Russian language programs at multiple universities in the late 1990s – early 2000s with the resulting dismissal of academic staff inevitably led to a general reduction of research within the discipline in both countries. At the same time, it has emerged that, despite these adverse circumstances, the field has so far shown high resilience. The analysis of the scholarship within the broad field of Russian language and literature studies has also revealed important changes in the directions of research. Indeed, while in the twentieth century (especially in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s), more studies were published on the description of the grammatical and phonetic structure of the modern Russian literary language, as well as on the comparative analysis of Slavonic languages, the twenty-first century saw the appearance of a large number of works of an applied nature, including publications on the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language and on applying the achievements of linguistics to teaching. In addition, while in the twentieth century literary studies dealt to a greater extent with the classics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the twenty-first century, more research has been concerned with the analysis of the works of contemporary poets and writers.

The results of the study suggest that the future of Russian Studies in Australia and New Zealand in the next few decades will primarily depend on the welfare of Russian language programs and the number of full-time academic positions. It will also depend on the availability of research funding opportunities, which have so far remained notoriously limited, due both to a strong bias towards STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines and to the general marginality of Slavic Studies, including Russian Studies, in Australian and New Zealand academia. Finally, the prospects of the discipline will probably depend on the public interest in the Russian language and Russian-speaking cultures, which, in its turn, will most likely remain susceptible to geopolitical and economic factors.

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