Mapping the Landscape of Language Learning in Victorian independent schools

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ABSTRACT

The researcher for this study was granted access to a hitherto unanalysed collection of data: the results of annual surveys on language learning of all independent schools in the state of Victoria, Australia. These surveys detailed the language learning programmes of 126,377 students in 203 primary and secondary schools in 2013.

Using the methodologies of Descriptive Research and Grounded Theory, the researcher undertook quantitative analyses of the data to produce an overview of language learning across the Independent sector in Victoria, and snapshots of several languages, calculating the total number of students learning the language and schools teaching it, the location of the schools (metropolitan or regional), the average Socio-Economic Status (SES) index of the schools, the gender balance of students and the number of teachers.

The next part of the study involved pursuing patterns and theories that emerged from the data. Four main issues were explored using the data from the surveys:

1. the concentration of students at primary school level in learning certain languages, and the time allocated to these languages in schools;

2. the issue of compulsory language studies, and retention rates;

3. boys and language learning; and

4. children of different socio-economic status and language learning.

It was found that some languages, such as Japanese and Italian, were almost exclusively taught in primary school, but in most schools they were given considerably less than the government recommend ninety minutes per week; there was a strong correlation between the mandating of language studies and student retention, and making languages compulsory for longer was associated with higher retention rates in the final year of schooling; languages in the final year of schooling showed in general a stronger proportion of girls, but this was largely due to the strong position of French, which showed a marked imbalance between the genders; and children of low socio-economic status were more likely to learn languages in their final year of schooling than other
students, but they tended to choose community languages, which had an impact on the score used to determine university entrance.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctorate in Education;
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and
- the thesis is fewer than 55,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

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John Tuckfield

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KEY TERMS

Below are some of the key terms used in this study:

Languages

For this study, languages have been grouped according to their function (for example, community language) or origin (for example, Asian language). It should be noted that a language’s placing often depends not on the language, but on the learner, and a language may fit into more than one grouping.

Community Language: a community language is one that is used in a specific community within Australia on a daily basis to communicate with family or community members (Department of Education and Training (Victoria), 2016).

Indigenous Language: a very specific subset of community languages: languages that are or were spoken by the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Asian Languages: Chinese\(^1\), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean are grouped as Asian languages. While there are other Asian languages, these four have been singled out for special attention in language policy (COAG, 1994) and are dealt with as a distinct group. Other Asian languages are treated as Community Languages.

Foreign Language: languages that are learnt as L2 languages (see below). For many Victorian students, these include popular European languages such as French and German.

Classical Language: a subset of Foreign Languages, these are languages that are no longer spoken by a community anywhere in the world as a means of everyday communication. Their study typically differs noticeably from other languages in having little or no spoken element. This group includes Latin and Ancient Greek.

Language Learners and Teachers

L1 Learner: a student who has been brought up from their early years in an environment, especially at home, where the target language - the language being learnt - is the main means of communication. They may also have had some formal education

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\(^1\) Note that the term 'Chinese' will be used for Modern Standard Chinese, also known as Mandarin or Putonghua; Cantonese is taught in very small numbers in Australia.
in a school where the target language in the main language of instruction. This group includes students referred to as Background Speakers or Home Speaker Learners (ACARA, 2016; Orton, 2016).

**L1 Teacher:** a L1 Teacher is a native speaker, a person who teaches the language and comes from a L1 background.

**L2 Learner:** a student for whom the language is a second (or subsequent) language. These students are not exposed to or interact in the language outside the language classroom and have typically learnt everything they know about the language through classroom teaching in an Australian school or similar environment, where English is the language of school instruction (WACE, 2016; ACARA, 2016).

**L2 Teacher:** a L2 Teacher is not a native speaker of the language they teach, but rather has come from a L2 learning background; they may, however, have spent considerable time in a country where the target language is spoken.

**Schooling**

**School:** for the purpose of this study, the term 'school' will be used to denote places of learning for students aged 5 to 18 approximately, where students are taught a curriculum recognised by state and federal authorities (Community language schools, which typically offer one only subject in out of hours classes, were not included in the ISV SLP Survey).

**Government School:** Government schools are those which are the direct responsibility of the Director-General of Education (or equivalent) in each state or territory and receive funding from the relevant state or territory government (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

**Independent School:** The non-government school sector is divided into two: Catholic schools, which come under the control of the Catholic Education Office, and Independent Schools. The latter are self-identified, but are under the direct control of neither the Catholic Education Office nor the Department of Education. They may be part of another system (such as Steiner schools), affiliated to a religion, or stand-alone.
They are still regulated to some extent by the state and receive a proportion of their funding from the state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

**Year 1**: Children in Victoria typically begin their schooling with a foundation year; they then progress up from Year 1 onwards each calendar year, starting in January, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The compulsory age for commencing formal schooling is six. In Victoria, Primary School is usually Years 1 to 6, and Secondary School is Years 7 to 12 (Department of Education and Training, 2016b).

**Senior Secondary**: the final two years of secondary schooling, Years 11 and 12. In Victorian schools, students typically study the Victorian Certificate of Education (see below) over these years.

**Matriculation**: Year 12, the final year of schooling in Australia.

**VCE**: Victorian Certificate of Education, the matriculation qualification in Victoria. Students typically study five or six subjects per year over two years, although there is flexibility. An English subject is compulsory; all other subjects are at the student’s choice. A subject is divided into four units, with Units 3 and 4 being scored by a mixture of coursework and external examinations. It is expected that each unit will constitute 50 hours of class time (VCAA, 2016b).

**Organisations**

**ACARA**: the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority: a statutory body established by the Federal Government in Australia with responsibility *inter alia* for the Australian Curriculum.

**DET (Aust)**: the Department of Education and Training: the Federal Government department responsible for national education policies and programmes across all of Australia.

**DET (Vic)**: the Department of Education and Training: the government department responsible in the state of Victoria for education, including school education. Manages government schools and regulates and provides some funding to independent schools. Formerly known as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
**ISV**: Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes, develops and advocates for independent education in Victoria. Schools opt to join as members.

**MLTAV**: The Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (MLTAV) is a professional association for language teachers, and the umbrella organisation for approximately twenty Single Language Associations (SLAs) in Victoria (MLTAV, 2016).

**VCAA**: the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority: a statutory body established by the state government in Victoria to provide curriculum, assessment and reporting for all schools in Victoria. Responsible for implementing the Australian Curriculum in Victoria, and designing and administering the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) (source: VCAA, 2016a).

**VTAC**: the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre. VTAC is the central office that administers the application processes for places in tertiary courses, scholarships and the Special Entry Access Scheme at universities, TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges in Victoria (source: VTAC, 2016b).
Chapter 1: Introduction

Languages have always held a fascination for me, so much so that I have made them the focus of my career. I learnt two languages at school - German and Latin - and continued Latin at university, picking up Swedish, Ancient Greek, Old Norse and Old English on the way, as well as beginners Italian and Chinese. My first ever job was as a language teacher, and I have continued with this for all of my working life. I am a convert to the wonder of learning about other cultures through their language and literature and interacting with them whenever possible, but I often found myself frustrated when trying to convince parents, students and colleagues of the importance of learning a language. Part of this frustration was my inability to bolster my arguments with a coherent understanding of the bigger picture of language learning in my home state of Victoria - it simply did not exist. I could not tell how widespread certain languages were, which ones were more popular with girls or boys, or how well languages were retaining their students. It is this gap in understanding the situation of languages in Victoria that I hope to go part way to addressing.

My initial aim was modest: I was interested in whether boys in a boys-only school had different participation rates in languages to boys in similar but co-educational schools. However, as I was preparing to gather data on this topic I recalled a survey that I had previously filled out in my role as school Curriculum Co-ordinator. This was a survey for the Federal Government, but administered by Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), the peak body for independent schools (i.e. schools falling outside the Government and Catholic Education sectors) in that state; in this survey schools had to complete a detailed annual census of language learning in their schools and submit the results to ISV. Recalling this survey, I realised that there was very considerable overlap between the questions it asked and the questions which I intended to pose. I wondered what had become of these data, and to what uses they had ever been put. On investigation, I found that the survey, which was discontinued in 2014, had been stored by ISV and the data retained, and while ISV had used these for the allocation of funds to schools, the data themselves had never been analysed. I approached ISV and they granted me permission to carry out an analysis of the data. I was given over a quarter of a million
points of data, covering the language learning programmes of 126,377 students in 203 schools. This caused a dramatic rethink of my study and I decided to alter my original project proposal in order to make use of the amount of data at my disposal. I modified my original intention considerably and instead set out first to make some meaning of the data by mapping the overall landscape of language learning in Victorian independent schools, including detailed analysis of several individual languages. Once I had done this, I let the data speak to me as a number of patterns started to emerge. In addition to being able to return to my original question of rates of participation in language learning for boys, I was struck by other issues as well: the large amount of language learning that is taking place in primary schools, the impact of compulsion on rates of language learning and language learning among children from a lower socio-economic background.

My initial need - to gain a coherent understanding of the bigger picture of language learning in my home state of Victoria - drove the methodology I selected, and the methods I used. I used two methodologies, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3: Descriptive Research, to organise the data into a coherent form that would help tell the picture of language learning, and Grounded Theory, to explore further some of the findings highlighted by my initial research. Descriptive Research is focused on describing and reporting on a particular situation, rather than manipulating variables (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker, 2014, p. 112). Its strength as a methodology lies in its ability to help the researcher to acquire a better understanding of data (Johnson, 1977, p. 43), and is particularly valuable ‘when first investigating an area’. (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997, p. 281). Once Descriptive Research had helped me to make meaning of the data, I used Grounded Theory to explore different characteristics. In Grounded Theory, the theory emerges from the data, and is partner to systematic data collection and analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 598). This was, I felt, a way to let my initial findings spark more in-depth investigations.

My methods were thus centred on quantitative analysis, making use of the spreadsheet format the data were in: I filtered and sorted the data to isolate elements for investigation, such as the average number of classes a week a Year 3 student of Chinese
received, or the total number of Year 10 students learning Arabic. These have been presented in tables, graphs and infographics. These methods are set out in Chapter 3.

My approach was not without limitations. Because I have focused on the interpretation of pre-existing data, rather than data I have gathered myself, there has been no flexibility in the questions asked in the survey - these had been determined by other people long before I obtained the data - and I have not been able to tailor survey items to probe a specific issue. Additionally, the data were restricted to just one of the three educational sectors in Victoria. However, these limitations were offset by the benefits of using the ISV Survey data. The ISV Surveys had a near universal reach of Victorian independent schools, far in excess of anything that a student researcher could hope to achieve. The questions the ISV posed were comprehensive (see Appendix 2) and gathered enough data for the analyses I had originally planned, and much more. While the data were from only one sector, it is a major sector in Victoria, and represents a sizeable proportion of the language learners in Victorian schools.

**Importance of the Study**

Language learning is an integral part of education in Australian schools, occurring as a key learning area in the *Hobart* (1989), *Adelaide* (1998) and *Melbourne* (2008) *Declarations* (language learning policies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2). Similarly, there has been no shortage of discussion of language related issues in academic journals and at events, such as the Modern Language Teachers’ Association of Victoria and Australian Association of Foreign Languages annual conferences. However, I had found it impossible to find detailed data on some of the fundamental questions about language learning, such as how many students learn each language, at what year levels, and how many teachers they have. More detailed information, such as breakdowns by gender or socio-economic status, have been very difficult to locate. The landmark work in this field in Australia is the report *An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian Schools* prepared by Liddicoat, Scarino, Curnow, Kohler, Scrimgeour and Morgan for the Federal Government in 2007 (*Liddicoat et al.*, 2007). This report provided an overview of language learning, but with a national focus, and contained statistical descriptions of language learning across the country, together with detailed discussion and proposals for language learning in Australia.
However, there are some limitations to this report. It is now several years old, and does not reflect the impact of changes in policy at state or federal levels since the report was made; there were no data supplied for individual languages, and little data for individual states; as the report authors acknowledge (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 7), there were some major gaps in the data they were able to obtain; and their observations and recommendations were largely confined to the national, following their brief. This is not to deny the significance of the report, but merely to note that it does not tell the full picture. Liddicoat et al. (2007) themselves acknowledged the difficulties they faced in the gauging how representative their data on language learning in independent schools in particular were: ‘it is usually unclear whether the available data is in any way representative of the system as a whole, or whether it over- or under-represents the real picture’ (p. 8). There has been nothing similar at a state level in Victoria.

I felt there was a need for someone to provide a map of the language learning scene in Victorian independent schools, with overviews of the general language learning landscape, detailed pictures of individual languages, as well as discussions of the patterns that emerged from this mapping activity. My aims are to provide researchers, teachers, schools, language associations and government with a clear picture of what is actually happening in schools; a base line that can be used to measure the impact of any changes or programmes on language study that may be implemented in the future; and to shed light on some of the issues that are facing language learning in Victorian independent schools.

**STRUCTURE OF THE INVESTIGATION**

For this study, the research questions grew organically from my initial overview of the data, to more finely grained analysis: the more I analysed and interpreted the data, the more leads I found that I wanted to pursue.

The initial research questions were framed around attaining an overview of language learning in Victorian independent schools:

1. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools at a sector-wide level?
2. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools in individual languages?

(These questions were broken down into a series of smaller questions, such as ‘how many students learn a particular language’, and so on.)

These were followed by questions to explore emergent issues in greater depth:

3. How much language learning was taking place in primary schools?
4. To what extent did rates of language learning follow compulsion in schools?
5. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between boys and girls, overall, and within individual languages?
6. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between children of lower, middle and higher socio-economic backgrounds?

The shape of the investigations can be expressed as a flow, stemming from the initial overview investigation:

![Flowchart](Image)

*Figure 1.1: Structure of the investigation*
THE SETTING

The Australian Educational System

As this study focuses on the schools in one state of Australia (Victoria) and one sector (Independent), the educational system in Australia warrants some explanation, with its characteristics of shared federal and state responsibilities, and three sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent).

Schooling in Australia

In Australia, children typically begin primary school at ages four or five, and although there is some variation between states, this is being harmonised. Primary school extends to the end of Year 6, with Secondary School from Year 7 to Year 12. School is compulsory to the end of Year 10. There is no national qualification, but rather each state or territory confers their own qualification, known as a Certificate of Education (for example, the Victorian Certificate of Education). This is usually completed by students at the end of Year 12. The school day is typically from 8.30 am. to 3.30 pm., and runs by the calendar year, with Term 1 commencing in late January.

Schools must teach a curriculum that is recognised by a state accreditation authority (VRQA, 2015). For the majority of schools, this is the Australian Curriculum, introduced in schools in 2012, and still being phased in at the time of writing.

Federal and State Responsibilities

Australia is a commonwealth, and a federation of six states and two territories. When the Australian states federated in 1901 to form the Commonwealth of Australia, education was left entirely as a state matter. In each state a statutory body is responsible for curriculum and assessment: the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (Victoria); the Board of Studies (New South Wales); the Tasmanian Department of Education (Tasmania); the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (Queensland); the South Australian Certificate of Education Board of South Australia (South Australia and Northern Territory); and the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia (Western Australia).
However, there has been increasing Federal interest in education. This was initially purely financial, with the Federal Government providing additional funding to schools to supplement their funding by their respective state or territory. The ministers of the states and territories have, at times, agreed on common principles for education across the country, such as the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008). In recent decades, the Federal Government has linked funding to various conditions, such as the provision of reports of a specific nature by all schools to parents (*School Performance Information (Schools Assistance Regulations* (Cth) 2005). In 2008, the Federal Government established the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as a federal body to 'develop and administer a national school curriculum' (*Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority Act* (Cth) 2008, Part 2 s.6). Under this arrangement, ACARA creates the curriculum, while the state bodies are responsible for implementing and, at senior secondary levels, assessing the curriculum. ACARA have designated some subjects as mandatory, while others are left to the individual states or even schools. Language study is one area that has been mandated by ACARA, but which languages an individual school offers is a choice largely left to individual schools.

Education funding and curriculum are thus now a shared responsibility between federal and state and territory governments.

**Sectors**

Different schooling sectors operate across Australia: government and non-government schools, the latter defined as schools that are not 'conducted by or on behalf of the government of a State or Territory' (*Education Act 2013*, Cth). Non-government schools are further divided into two groups: Catholic schools and Independent schools. Catholic schools are those under the control of the Catholic Education Office (CEO); Independent schools are autonomous, although some belong to a system, such as Steiner schools.

In Australia, the independent sector is a major part of school education, especially when compared to similar countries. Approximately 16% of all Australian school students

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2 There are some independent Catholic schools; for some purposes, these are considered as Catholic schools; for others, as independent schools. For this study, even though some were members of Independent Schools Victoria, they were not included in the ISV Surveys, but rather through a separate CEO survey, to which I do not have access. They have not been included in the study.
attend an independent school (Independent Schools Council of Australia, 2016). In the state of Victoria, a similarly large proportion of students attend an independent school: the non-government sector - Catholic and Independent - accounted for 38.2% of all students in 2013 (ISV, 2014). This compares with the United Kingdom, where 7.06% of students attended an independent school in 2012 (Gov.UK, 2013), and the United States, where 1.04% of students attended an independent school in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

The reasons for this are many and long standing. In Victoria, to prevent sectarian disputes, government schools were explicitly secular:

In every State school secular instruction only shall be given and no teacher shall give any other than secular instruction in any State school building and in every school used under this Act. (Education Act 1872, Vic, Section 12)

As a result, parents who wished their children to receive an education centred on a particular religion or denomination had to send their children to schools established by churches. In addition, private individuals were allowed to establish schools.

The funding by government of independent schools is relevant to this study, as the survey on which this study is based was developed to facilitate federal government funding. The history of funding for the non-government sector is explained in a background note by the Australian Parliamentary Library (Harrington, 2011): initially, non-government schools received no funding from the state; this came to an end under the Menzies government, when the embarrassment suffered over the closure of several Catholic schools drove the Federal Government to commence funding. In the States Grants (Science Laboratories and Training) Act 1964 (Cth), non-government schools (Catholic and independent) received funding for science laboratories and later school libraries (Wilkinson I., 2013). In 1970 the States Grants (Independent Schools) Act 1969 (Cth) introduced payments per student to non-government schools, fixed at a flat rate per student; the school and student’s financial state were not taken into account. In 1973 needs-based funding was introduced, and this remained in place until 2009, when the Schools Assistance Act 2008 (Cth) came into effect, and the SES model was introduced (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).
Key Characteristics of Language Learning in Australian Schools

Monolingualism and a low priority for language learning

For many years, learning languages was not been a high priority in Australian education: the national language, English, has been the *lingua franca* of international trade, and the country has no land borders with any country, let alone one that speaks a different language (Lo Bianco, 2003, p. 9). This monolingual dominance is not unique to Australia, but rather Liddicoat *et al.* (2007) found it common in English-speaking countries (p. 29; see also Chapter 4 of this study). This can be contrasted with the situation in Europe, where the concept that everyone should be able to speak a second language is widely accepted:

> There is a broad consensus among Europeans that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one foreign language, with more than four in five (84%) agreeing with this view (European Commission, 2012, p. 112).

Without the demands of bordering countries to deal with or trade negotiations in a foreign language, for many years language study in Australia has been valued for its intellectual value rather than its practical utility:

> The teaching of second languages favoured choices and methods of instruction dictated by attachment to the western canon of literary prestige, principally for reading and cultivation rather than active use. (Lo Bianco, 2009, p. 15)

Until recent decades the European languages of cultural, economic and strategic importance to 19th Century Britain - such as French and German - flourished in Australia, alongside Latin and Ancient Greek. To a significant extent this attitude still resonates in Australia, where European languages such as French and German remain very widely learnt (Crozet, 2008).

This linguistic isolation was challenged by Australia’s post war migration programme and the abandonment of the White Australia Policy in 1966. Community languages rose to prominence in the 1970s, as the children of Australia’s post war migration boom reached school age and multiculturalism became government policy. This movement saw Italian and Greek in particular rise in numbers, and languages were taught in primary schools in large numbers for the first time (Lo Bianco, 2003, p. 22). However, in 1968 universities dropped language study as an entry requirement. Language
enrolments in matriculation dropped from 44% to below 10%, where they have remained - more or less - ever since. Indeed, as recently as 1980 the Curriculum Development Centre - a federal agency - excluded languages from a core curriculum because 'it would be difficult to justify these as part of a practical core for all students' (Clyne, 1997, p. 65).

The push for more language learning
Pressure to increase Australia’s level of language learning has come from both government and business groups. Government pressure was evident in 1989, when languages were explicitly included in the National Goals of Schooling, and then the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations (MCEETYA, 1989 and 1999). These combined with a push for greater levels of Asian language learning in Australian schools in 1994. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), comprising representatives of all state and territory governments, as well as the federal government, identified four strategic languages for Australia’s future: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean - and targeted these with special funding and attention, sparking a surge in enrolments (the course of Asian languages will be covered in greater detail in Chapter 5). The emphasis in learning languages changed from an intellectual pursuit to an economic advantage; language ability was seen as 'critical to Australia securing its economic future in the region and the world' (COAG, 1994, p. ii).

The benefit of learning languages was further broadened in 2005. In the National statement for languages education in Australian schools: national plan for languages education in Australian schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005), it was claimed that learning languages would help enrich learners intellectually, educationally and culturally, contributing to social cohesiveness, strategic, economic and international development and enhancing employment and career prospects for the individual (p. 2). These same values prevail in most current government policy documents, such as the Victorian government’s Languages for Victoria’s Future (Department of Education and Training, 2002), Teaching and Learning Languages Other than English in Victorian Schools (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2008), and The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (ACARA, 2011). In 2016 the Federal Government announced
The Australian Government is working to revive the teaching of foreign languages in Australian schools with the goal to ensure that at least 40 per cent of Year 12 students are studying a language other than English within a decade. (Department of Education and Training (Cth), 2016)

The return to pre-1968 levels of matriculation language learning represents a belief in government that languages are important.

Pressure on increasing language learning in Australia has also come from business groups. The necessity in learning the languages for businesses was put succinctly by the German Minister for Economics:

If you wish to buy from us, there is no need to speak German, but if you want to sell to us … (Leal, quoted in COAG, 1994, p. 61)

This idea has been picked up by many business lobby groups. As one example, a report by Price, Waterhouse, Coopers (PWC, 2015) lamented Australian schools’ low output of students with the language skills needed by business:

Language is an important window into culture, but unfortunately Australians have relatively low Asian language capabilities. Of the approximately 70,000 students enrolled in the NSW Higher School Certificate in 2014, only 2.2 per cent studied Japanese, 1.3 per cent studied Chinese and 0.3 per cent studied Indonesian. This needs to be addressed in part by Government through our education system, and supported by business. (p. 16)

Of the eight 'Fundamentals for success in Asia' listed by PWC, the second (as determined by a survey of over 1,000 Australian directors, executives and business owners) was 'invest in learning the culture' - and this explicitly included proficiency in languages: one of the survey respondents was quoted as saying 'We have focussed on getting recruitment right and look for staff who have multiple Asian languages' (p. 23).

More recently, the Chief Executive of CPA (Certified Practising Accountants) Australia has gone even further, calling for the learning of Chinese to be made compulsory in Australian schools up to Year 12 (Malley, 2016), while former NSW Premier Mike Baird, citing a fear that Australia’s poor rates of language learning risked the country losing its international competitiveness, announced a major increase in support for children learning Chinese (Murdoch, 2015).
It is reasonable therefore to state that the climate is positive for increases in language
learning; there is consensus across both major political parties and interest in increased
goals of language learning at both state and federal levels (Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development, (2012); Department of Education and Training, 2016),
as well as support by prominent members of the business community. Nevertheless,
enrolments in language learning remain stubbornly low by international comparison
(Liddicoat et al., 2007).

For most of Australia’s post-settlement history, English has been the dominant global
language, through the economic and strategic power of either Britain or the United
States. While the Australian economy has gradually gravitated towards Asia, it has
usually been the case that our trading partners have been keen to learn our language
rather than vice versa. Australia’s geographic isolation and privileged position as a
predominately English-speaking society has meant that the country has lacked the
exposure to other languages and the societal motivation that McPake, Johnstone, Low
and Lyall (1999) identified as the two crucial factors in hindering language learning in
children in a predominantly English-speaking country. They noted that exposure was
more limited for a child in Scotland than in Holland, for example:

    By ‘exposure’ we imply ‘opportunity to use’, that is to hear the modern language,
to read, write and speak it in a range of different contexts, including school.
    (McPake, Johnstone, Low and Lyall, 1999, p. 18)

It is easy to imagine this description fitting in with the typical Australian child of the
1950s and 1960s, while the societal mindset they describe for Scotland could very
easily have applied to Australia:

    it is also fair to state that if the population of a country generally allows itself to
develop a mind-set which perceives monolingualism as the norm (especially in
English), this is less than conducive to learning other languages, whether
Indigenous or foreign. (McPake, Johnstone, Low and Lyall, 1999, p. 19)
OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 (this chapter) provides an introduction to the thesis, describing the development of the research idea, the outline of the thesis, describing the setting of relevant features of the Australian educational system and key characteristics of language learning in Australia, and defining key terms used in the thesis.

Chapter 2 explores the policy and research discussions of the issues relevant to the findings: which languages students were learning; language learning in primary school; mandating language learning; boys and language learning; and lower SES children and language learning.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology chosen and the methods used in this study.

The findings and discussion are divided into four chapters.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research findings, describing the main feature of language learning in Victorian independent schools.

Chapter 5 provides a deeper analysis of selected individual languages which represent a range of languages (community languages, traditional foreign languages, Asian languages and classical languages).

Chapter 6 analyses the patterns of language learning by year level. It focuses on the concentration of learning in primary school, and the implications of this, and the nature and role of compulsory language studies, and the implications of this for language learning.

Chapter 7 analyses language learning for boys and children of a lower socio-economic background. It focuses on the gender and socio-economic balance of students studying particular languages.

Chapter 8 summarises the research findings from the previous chapters, drawing overall conclusions and discusses the implications of these findings for language learning in Victorian independent schools and schools in general. The chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the study and offering suggestions for further research in this area.
Chapter 2: Literature Review: Issues in Language Learning in Australia

This chapter explores some of the context of students learning languages in Victorian independent schools. It will examine some of the recent discussions, in Australia and overseas, of both academic research and government policy that bear upon the context.

The context is envisioned as being in three layers. The first layer is the macro argument over which languages should be taught in Australian schools - which itself consists of a series of interconnected and sometimes conflicting arguments based on categories of languages: the traditional foreign languages; community languages; Australian Indigenous languages; and Asian languages. These have been the focus of shifting government policies, and the debate - and government policy - have been hotly contested. The next layer is that of other issues which are integrally related to language learning, but not linked with any particular language or set of languages, such as the right time for students to learn languages, and whether and to what extent students should be compelled to learn languages. The third layer is that of factors external to language learning but arguably with a major impact on student participation: gender and socio-economic status. These will be explored in this chapter to provide the context for the investigations I have carried out in this study on how these issues are manifested in the language learning of students in Victorian independent schools.

WHICH LANGUAGES WERE BEING TAUGHT IN VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS?

The question of which languages should be taught in Australian schools has been the subject of discussion and sometimes profound disagreement over recent decades. Australia’s geographic location, its demography and the history of language learning have all come into play. There has been strong advocacy for prioritising Asian languages (for example, COAG, 1994; Lo Bianco, 2005; Price, Waterhouse, Coopers, 2015), while there has been lobbying for community languages as well. In addition,
the traditional foreign languages taught in Australian schools (and reflecting the European outlook of Britain) such as French and German have remained strong.3

**Foreign and Classical Languages**

The traditional foreign languages, such as French and German, have had a special place in Australian education that would seem difficult to justify given the country’s demography and geographic location. Rather, the choice of these languages reflects the geographic location not of Australia but of England, with Australian schools following their British antecedents. Up until the late 1950s French enjoyed a near monopoly as the language taught in Australian schools (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009, p. 20). This position remained unchallenged until the dropping of a language study requirement from university entrance in 1968 and the surge of community languages, fostered by the Whitlam federal government and successive governments, and later by the rise in Asian languages in the 1990s. Nevertheless, these languages have remained popular, and continue to be taught in great numbers (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2007, p. 32); this is despite receiving none of the special advocacy and funding that Asian languages have received in recent decades (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2002). Much of the advocacy work has been left to organisations such as the *Alliance Francaises* or the *Goethe-Institut*, bodies supported by the governments of the home countries for the promulgation of their language and culture, or to teacher groups, such as the Association of French Teachers in Victoria (AFTV) or the Association of German Teachers in Victoria (AGTV). Where governments do get involved it is often to support such bodies: for example, the Victorian government worked with the AFTV to produce a small brochure *Why Learn French* (LOTE, ESL and Multicultural Education Branch Department of Education, Employment and Training, 2000) (still being issued in 2014). These organisations’ overt advocacy in schools is often limited to the provision of competitions and promotional packets for students. However, while these languages have benefited from many of the programmes targeted at increasing language learning overall, there have been no special programmes for these languages specifically.

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3 A language may fulfil more than one function - for example, for some students, Chinese will be a community language, while for others it will be a foreign language. This overlapping of boundaries should be borne in mind in the following discussions.
Arguably the most traditional foreign language, Classical Languages are also still considered worthy of being studied by many students. These languages have been regarded as markers of social status for some time and been therefore keenly adopted by those with aspirations for such status (Stray, 2003). In more recent times, classical languages in Australia and abroad have suffered sustained attacks on their relevance and position within the curriculum (Tristram, 2006). In Australia, strong advocacy by the Classical Associations of Victoria and New South Wales directly to government has seen Classical Languages added to phase 3 of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (Tuckfield, 2015). These associations have supported lobbying of ministers and close co-operation with curriculum authorities to produce curricula to successfully support the ongoing teaching of their languages.

**Community Languages**

Australia’s reliance on traditional foreign languages was initially an impediment to community languages; a student with a pre-existing ability in a language was viewed as having an unfair advantage:

> The presence of students or communities speaking a particular language was, in most cases, a deterrent rather than a stimulus for the teaching of that language at a school. In some states, discriminatory examination assessment was in place for languages such as German, Italian and Russian based on interrogation to ensure 'positive discrimination' in favour of students without a home background in the language. (Clyne, 1997)

The move for community languages to be taught in schools came to fruition in the 1970s, as the children who were descendants of Australia’s post-war migration boom came to be of school age. Not surprisingly, the languages learnt reflected the backgrounds of those migrants, with large numbers coming from Italy and Greece. The *National Policy on Languages* (1987) was the first comprehensive national language policy, and included, among other things, overt funding and support for community languages. It focused heavily on the importance of community languages:

> Australians speak a wide variety of other languages… usually labelled community languages and this term, for the sake of convenience, is retained in this policy. Community languages are used daily to fulfil a wide range of social, familial,
cultural, economic and educational purposes… Community languages are recognized and supported in the Australian languages policy. (Lo Bianco, 1987)

'Other' languages - such as French - were given much less prominence in the policy; the focus was firmly on community languages. Community language learning was given bipartisan support (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009) and this continued until the emergence of the prioritisation of Asian languages by COAG in 1994. The result has been that languages such as Italian and Greek are firmly entrenched in the Australian education system (Liddicoat et al., 2007) and are in the top 20 languages nationally.

One development is that these languages may be transitioning from community languages to foreign languages. The students learning them now may be the grandchildren of the original migrants, who do not speak the language at home, and will primality use the language for travel overseas; Lo Bianco (2009) suggests this may be a reason for Italian’s precipitous decline in student numbers in secondary school. Clyne and Kipp (2006) talk about 'language shift' to explain how some communities hold on to their background language, while others do not; for example, 'there is a 2.4% chance that a person born in Vietnam will speak only English at home and a 54% chance that a person born in Germany will do so' (Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 17). They list the 'cultural distance' between the migrant group and mainstream Australian society, the role of language in background culture, and the length of residence in Australia as playing a role; in addition, there is a large intergenerational factor, as could be expected (interestingly, they cite Chinese as having the largest intergenerational language shift, which they ascribe to the pragmatism of Chinese migrants).

Chinese is effectively the biggest community language in Australia (Orton, 2016, p. 44). Similarly, Arabic, Vietnamese and languages from the Indian subcontinent are emerging community languages.

**Australian Indigenous Languages**

Lo Bianco describes Australia’s education policy on Indigenous languages as 'a tormented affair' (2003, p. 13). The prime importance of Indigenous languages was recognised in the general principles of the *National Policy on Languages* (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 5), and Indigenous languages were discussed second only to English, and
before community and other languages. Lo Bianco proposed a raft of measures (pp. 15-16) to help Indigenous languages survive and flourish, including a dedicated National Aboriginal Languages Project, annual workshops, research, and the establishment of a key centre for Aboriginal language teaching and research.

McKay (2011) found that the promises held out by the *National Policy on Languages* rapidly dissipated:

> While Indigenous languages have never gone back to the previous era of complete neglect and repression, support of them has been variable and much relevant policy has moved to individual states, to education programs, and to specific funding programs that tend to support languages on a short-term project basis rather than a language needs or strategic basis, thus giving little certainty or continuity to language programs. (p. 301)

In 2009 the Federal Government announced a national Indigenous languages policy: *Indigenous Languages – A National Approach* (Office for the Arts, 2010). This was focused on helping endangered languages to survive, and building literacy skills in the Indigenous community, although the last of its five objectives did specifically address the needs of language learning in schools:

> Supporting Indigenous Language Programs in Schools: To support and maintain the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages in Australian schools. (Office for the Arts, 2010, p. 184)

Much of the support and programmes attached to this objective were for government schools only, but $56.4 million was provided over 2009 to 2012 through the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* to support the teaching of languages, including Australian Indigenous languages, in non-government schools. However, this money was for all languages - there was no specific sum earmarked for Indigenous languages. In a submission to a House of Representatives inquiry, the Australian Education Union noted that ‘there appears to be a significant disjuncture between policy statements and actual practice’ (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (HRSCATSIA), 2012, p. 54). In an echo of McKay’s complaints, the union claimed that the money was disbursed with little real change in results.
Liddicoat et al. (2007) found that 1,661 students nationally learnt Pitjantjatjara, the language of Western Desert peoples in central Australia, and the only Indigenous language to appear in the top 20 languages learnt nationally (as a point of comparison, the most popular language, Japanese, had 220,126 learners). In general, Indigenous languages were taught for 'linguistic maintenance' or 'cultural maintenance' (Liddicoat et al., 2005, p. 155) - that is, they were taught to the community who already speak the language, or who have it in their heritage. The teaching of the language to groups outside the community - as happens with traditional foreign languages, and some community languages such as Italian, which are spanning both categories - has generally not been seen as a priority. This is despite the 1987 National Policy on Languages listing as a goal 'that all Australians would at least learn about the unique Australian languages' (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009, p. 35).

Asian Languages

No group of languages has received as much attention in Australia in recent decades as Asian languages\(^4\). These languages have a special place in Australian education; Asian languages, and their importance to Australia, have been the subject of numerous government reports and reviews, starting in earnest in 1969 when Australia was engaged in Vietnam and the rise of China was becoming apparent. The current position on Asian languages traces back to the policy of the Hawke-Keating government of the 1980s. This section provides an overview of the various policies regarding the learning of Asian languages in Australia.

In 1991 the Federal Government delivered *Australia's language: the Australian language and literacy policy* (DEET, 1991). This was produced under then Education Minister Richard Dawkins, and while it did not focus exclusively on Asian languages, it did highlight their importance, and foreshadowed the targeting of particular languages:

> Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific region and our patterns of overseas trade should continue to be a factor in this selection of priorities. Although English is widely used in the international business environment, mature trading relations

\(^4\) For this study, I have followed COAG (1994) in defining Asian languages as Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean; languages such as Vietnamese are included in Community Languages.
require the depth of insight obtained through a grounding in the languages and cultures of other countries. (DEET, 1991, p. 15)

The offshoot of this policy was to establish the School Language Program (SLP), which funded language learning in schools, and the Languages, Asian Studies and Literacy Support Program, which included the Innovative Languages Other Than English In Schools Program (ILOTES), where approximately half of the funds went to supporting Asian languages; the Asian Studies Program, which supported curriculum and professional development for Asian languages and studies; the Asia Education Foundation, which promoted learning about Asia across the curriculum in Australian schools; the Asian Languages Teachers In-Country Scholarships (ALTICS); and the National Asian Languages Scholarship Scheme (NALSS) (COAG, 1994). Many of these programmes remained in place until the election of the conservative Abbott government in 2013.

Australia's language: the Australian language and literacy policy established many Asia-focused programmes, and this was followed by Asian languages and Australia's Economic Future (COAG, 1994), produced by the Labor Keating government as the first national strategy for Asian languages in Australia, to build greater co-ordination, especially between the different levels of government in Australia.

The strategy started from the principle that language learning was essentially an economic good. The working group - chaired by Kevin Rudd, later to become Prime Minister and a noted Chinese speaker - responsible for the report tasked the East Asia Analytical Unit (EAAU) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to make projections about the importance for Australia of export markets in Asia to 2012:

This was undertaken because the working group was of the view that a prioritisation of Australia's Asian language requirements based on our long term regional economic interests was necessary if we were to maximise outcomes and avoid fragmentation of effort…

Based on its analysis, which is detailed in the body of the report, EAAU of DFAT argues that the languages Australia should focus on for the future are:

- Japanese,
- Chinese (Mandarin),
Economic interests were the only consideration in the selection of these languages. This differed from previous approaches, where language learning was seen first as non-vocational 'liberal cultivation of the intellect' (Hunter, 1991, p 9), or later to support and maintain cultural connections, as seen in the growth of community languages (Firdaus, 2013, p. 28). By putting the weight of the argument on the economy, and not culture, perhaps it was felt that this would bolster the case for languages: that people would perceive that languages were not just helpful things to know, but vital to maintaining national and personal prosperity. Not all have agreed with this position: for example, Slaughter (2009) argued that the 'entrepreneurial policymaking' of such an approach had the effect of ‘devaluing’ other languages, including European languages.

The 1994 strategy set out targets for Asian languages for schools: by 2006, 15% of Year 12 students would be studying one of the four Asian languages; by 2006, 60% of Year 10 students would be studying one of the four Asian languages (COAG, 1994, p. 106).

National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) 1995-2002 was the development of Asian languages and Australia's Economic Future; it was established to develop, support and monitor the implementation of the strategy. Its objective was:

- to improve participation and proficiency levels in language learning in four targeted Asian languages – Japanese, Modern Standard Chinese, Indonesian and Korean, and to support the studies of Asia across the curriculum. (NALSAS, 2003)

All state and territory education authorities entered into bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth to work towards national targets and agreed to contribute significantly from their own resources.

NALSAS funded programmes designed to support and promote the learning of Asian languages, and in 2002 they were able to claim increases in the number of both schools teaching the priority Asian languages and students learning them, among other achievements. Part-way through the programme, the Federal Government engaged Erebus Consulting Partners to conduct an evaluation of the programme so far (Erebus
Consulting Partners, 2002). They found that the key targets of 60% of Year 10 students and 15% of Year 12 students showed stubborn resistance to improvement: in 2002, only 8.6% of Year 10s and 4.5% of Year 12s were studying one of the Asian languages. They described the Year 10 and 12 targets as 'too ambitious' and proposed instead targets of 50% of Year 8 students and 7% of Year 12 students. No mention was made of making languages compulsory to the end of Year 10. No justification was given for these changes beyond the failure to reach the original targets; there was no setting out of the educational or economic justifications, as had been done in Asian languages and Australia's economic future.

Although Erebus claimed that 'NALSAS was never about language or cultural maintenance for students from Asian backgrounds' (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2002, p. 82), the figures supplied for students learning Asian languages did not distinguish between L1 and L2 learners, thus there is the real possibility that large increases in L1 learners (especially of Chinese) might have distorted the improvements that were claimed. NALSAS was closed by the Howard government in 2002.

In the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005), Asian languages were no longer dealt with separately, and there were no priority languages: instead, it was stated that 'all languages are equally valid'. Lo Bianco (2005), in responding to this, put forward four options: to maintain the status quo (including funding for NALSAS); to revive and refresh NALSAS; to offer a combination of a suite of Asian and European languages; or to implement combined language and cultural awareness programmes.

The National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) 2008-2012 replaced NALSAS in 2008, and largely continued its work. The four languages remained, despite the recommendation of Erebus Consulting to drop Korean. There was funding for governments, universities, community and business groups and schools, as well as national projects. Many of these programmes were continuations of those started by Dawkins in 1991. The goal of Year 12 students was changed down to 12% by 2020; the goal for Year 10 students disappeared.
NALSSP identified teacher shortage, community perceptions of language learning, time allocation and competition from native speakers as some of the key challenges to be overcome (NALSSP, 2010). NALSSP was discontinued by the Federal Government in 2012.

Australian schools currently operate under the federal government’s Australian Curriculum, in which all languages are treated as equally valid, which would indicate a continuation of MCEETYA 2005. However, the selection of Chinese as one of the two pilot languages for initial course design in the Australian Curriculum, and the further selection of three Asian languages in the core of other languages (Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese), might indicate otherwise. Asian languages are acknowledged as priority languages (ACARA 2011, p. 34), but there is no guidance as to what this might mean in reality.

**In Summary**

Australia currently has a plethora of languages being taught in schools - traditional foreign languages, community languages established and emerging, Asian, Indigenous and classical languages. In 2005, it was found that 133 different languages were taught across the country (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2007). 45 of these were Indigenous languages; 22 languages were taught only in ethnic schools. Some felt that there were simply too many languages for a country of Australia’s size, and one solution was to rationalise languages - what Lo Bianco called a 'Hard Decision' (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009, p. 62).

The Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria (MLTAV), the peak body for language subject associations in Victoria, reacted strongly against this idea of a core of privileged languages:

> The recent recommendation by so-called ‘experts’, that Australia needs to concentrate its efforts on a small number of ‘priority’ Languages, is an example of a short-term planning strategy. The adoption of such strategies in the past has led us to our current most unsatisfactory situation. A Languages education strategy which puts only a few linguistic eggs into one basket is potentially very harmful to the future of our country.  

(MLTAV, 2008, p. 1)
In the face of grass-roots opposition such as this, Lo Bianco’s 'hard decision' morphed into the Australian Curriculum’s approach of funding curriculum writing for a small, pilot group of languages, to be followed by curricula for certain other languages. In Victoria, languages which do not appear in the Australian Curriculum can continue as state-based languages under the aegis of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). The concept of a favoured group of languages seems to have disappeared from the language policy. Indeed, it is explicitly stated in the Australian Curriculum that

This draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper provides direction for the curriculum development for all languages, including Australian Languages, world languages, as well as classical languages and Australian sign language. (ACARA, 2011, p. 5)

It seems that the federal government at least has decided that it is not their responsibility to determine what languages Australian students should be learning.

**LANGUAGE LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The next layer of context was that of factors that are not linked to any one language or group of languages, but have a profound impact on how students' experience of learning a language. This first - and one of the research questions for this study - was when students should learn languages, and how much language learning should take place in primary schools. This was already identified as one of the biggest changes seen in language learning since the 1980s:

Since the introduction of the National Policy on Languages in 1987, it is clear that primary school languages education has been the most significant feature of language learning in Australia, and it is in primary schools that the bulk of Australian children experience language learning. (Liddicoat *et al.* 2007, p. 96)

There has been a similar increase in England, and it is perhaps salutary to examine the English experience in some detail. While the Australian uptake of languages in primary schools has been inconsistent (Liddicoat *et al.*, 2007), in England it appears to have been much more planned. Language study was already compulsory at Key Stage 3, the equivalent of Years 7-9 in Australia. In 2012, after a period of consultation, the government announced that from the start of the 2014 school year languages would be
compulsory at Key Stage 2, the equivalent of Years 3-6 in Australia. The government justified its determination by outlining the then current state of language teaching at primary schools (which was marked by inconsistency), and detailing the arguments for (Department for Education, 2012). They listed neurological and cognitive advantages in teaching children languages at an early age; benefits for English literacy; social benefits of tolerance and cultural diversity; and economic benefits and enhanced job prospects. They also argued the case for making language learning compulsory rather than optional, including providing greater fairness and equality of opportunity, and helping students’ progression at secondary schools. By 2015, a survey of 648 state primary schools revealed that 99% of schools were complying with this requirement (Board and Tinsley, 2015) (since this survey, however, budget cuts in education may have altered this picture). In Years 3 and 4, most schools were providing between 30 and 45 minutes’ instruction per week, while the majority of schools offered more than 45 minutes for Year 5 and 6 students. This new policy was in general viewed positively (Department for Education, 2013) and was seen as a chance to move languages forward:

The important thing is that whatever learning occurs early on is sustained and developed. The new curriculum is saying that you've got to take languages seriously – not necessarily by teaching in a formal way, but by taking it as seriously as every other area of learning. There has to be time and expertise dedicated to it. 20 minutes a week won't achieve the levels the key stage two curriculum requires (Dr Shirley Lawes, subject leader in the PGCE in languages at the Institute of Education, University of London). (Ratcliffe, 2013)

What stands out in the English example, when compared to Australia, is the thoroughness of making the case and consulting with the community, and the diligence with which the policy has been adopted in schools.

In Australia, the debate over the optimum age to start learning a language was led by Clyne (1986) and Hill, Davies, Oldfield, and Watson (1997): each put forward competing arguments on the merits of an 'early start' (Clyne argued for an early start, especially in the context of bilingual education, while Hill et al. offered a more cautionary viewpoint). Brown et al. (2000) challenged the notion that learning a language from primary school necessarily resulted in better achievement in later years. They tested Australian Year 8 students learning French, Indonesian, Italian and
Japanese; some had been learning their language since primary school, while others commenced their study in Year 7. They found that students who had learnt their language at primary school as well as secondary did not necessarily achieve the best results. Hill et al. (1998) looked at students who had learnt a language from primary school, and found that in many cases progress had ground to a halt.

The most recent review of the issue of primary school languages was by Tinsley and Comfort (2012), in a report commissioned by the Council for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Trust, which reviewed the evidence base for language learning in primary curricula across the world as part of the British government’s examination of the ideas surrounding making languages compulsory at Key Stage 2. They reviewed international research on the issue and curriculum policies and practice in Europe, Asia, the USA and Australia. In reviewing the benefits of learning a language at primary level, Tinsley and Comfort discussed the question of whether learning a language detracts from the child’s abilities in their native language (an argument behind the need to return to a ‘core curriculum’ complaint so frequently heard in Australia). They found that learning another language did not have a negative impact on the level of literacy of the native language - rather, the opposite was the case:

Insights into the workings of the bilingual brain have shown the fallacy of what Baker calls the ‘naive theory of bilingualism’ – that learning a second language somehow results in a reduced capacity for language or a language deficit (Baker, 2006). According to Baker, ‘the evidence suggests the opposite – that language attributes are not separated in the cognitive system, but transfer readily and are interactive’. (p. 21)

These findings were reflected in the work of other researchers in Canada and the United States of America. French academics Narcy-Combes et al., 2007 noted that 'mother tongue helps to learn a foreign language, but learning a foreign language also helps the mother tongue'; this was supported by Liddicoat et al. (2007) and Fernandez (2007) writing in the Australian context about the ability of insights into the foreign language to be applied to the native language. Fernandez also highlighted the importance of language learning for developing a student’s inter-cultural skills.
The argument for the optimum age to start learning a language is less clear cut than the arguments for the benefits of language learning. There is confusion over the 'critical age hypothesis', where there is an optimum age for children to start learning a language, taking advantage of a child’s natural inquisitiveness to learn (Tinsley and Comfort, 2012, p. 24). Tinsley and Comfort claim that the 'most compelling' evidence is from Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006), who conducted very large scale longitudinal analyses of the language development of immigrants arriving at different ages in the US and Australia. This showed that the younger the immigrants started learning, the better their ultimate achievement was. However, a meta-study by Edelenbos et al. (2006) was unable to determine whether effects like these were because there was something intrinsically special about staring to learn a language at a specific developmental stage, or simply because of the extra time the child had to learn the language.

Tinsley and Comfort concluded that

Although researchers agree that younger children learn languages differently from older students, their findings do not tell us whether age three, six or eight is the best age to start… policymakers should beware of seeing an early start alone as a panacea. Evidence from across the world shows that the mere fact of starting early is not in itself a ‘magic bullet’ for increased levels of competence over the long term. (p. 27)

And ultimately,

An early start can only be effective when there is sufficient time, high-quality teaching and continuity through to higher levels of learning. (p. 27)

What emerges from this debate is that in some ways the age of starting to learn a language is a red herring: starting a language at a certain age does not in itself guarantee success; what is important is the time and quality of the teaching given. A review of research in the EU on primary school languages carried out in 1998 found that the actual level of achieved language acquisition by primary school students was low, and often limited to repetition (Blondin et al., 1998). Lo Bianco and Slaughter also found this in their 2009 study:

The failure of the conventional MLPS (modern language primary school) model is not surprising, given it is based on a ‘drip-feed’ approach of only a few minutes per day, amounting to a relatively limited number of hours overall across the
whole of primary school education – Lo Bianco’s data indicates a total of only 200 hours for the learning of an additional language is common in Australia. It is not clear what level of proficiency in the additional language could be expected of such provision. (p. iv)

Hunt et al. (2005) in the United Kingdom found a number of serious challenges that would need to be overcome for there to be a successful primary school languages programme: ‘curricular issues and variety of curriculum models; teacher supply issues and training; teachers’ knowledge and qualifications; pupil attainment and attitudes; transition; and inclusion, special needs and equal opportunities’ (p. 13). They were concerned about time, and where that time would come from; the method of instruction; what the aims of a course would be - would they be linguistic competence, or familiarity with the concept of a foreign language, or something in between; the lack of teachers with training in teaching languages at primary school, and their ongoing training; transition between primary and secondary school; and the need for all students, regardless of socio-economic status, to be able to access quality language programmes (pp. 14–23). All of these apply equally to Australia; the extent to which many of these have been addressed in the context of Victorian independent schools can be explored by analysing the ISV SLP Survey data.

**In Summary**

It is generally agreed that there are clear benefits to primary aged students learning languages, and that their language learning can assist rather than detract from their English skills. While it is also clear that the earlier a child starts learning a language, the better they will ultimately be at that language, there is no consensus on whether this is due to the intrinsic qualities of a particular age or is simply due to the cumulative hours the child has spent learning the language. What is clear, however, is that for language learning at primary school to be effective, it must be given sufficient quality time.

**COMPULSORY LANGUAGE STUDY**

Together with the issue of when students should learn languages is whether, and to what extent, students should be compelled to learn languages; this also forms one of the research questions. Making language study compulsory is a feature of the recently
adopted Australian Curriculum (implemented for languages after the ISV SLP Survey), but the issue of mandating language study in Australia is mainly one that has been discussed behind the scenes, and despite the advent of the Australian Curriculum there is disparity between the states and then between different sectors and schools within those states. Liddicoat et al. (2007) highlighted the arguments commonly used in Australian education debates for and against making language study compulsory:

The most common rationales for compulsory language study are:

- language study is important but languages will not be offered by schools or taken by students if they are not compulsory;
- mandating languages shows clearly that language education has value;
- mandating languages gives direction in a context of general apathy or ignorance about languages.

The most common rationales against language study are:

- language study should not be made compulsory for people who simply do not want to study them as this only means that students are disengaged;
- other important subject areas are not mandated so languages should not get special treatment;
- the community does not want compulsory language study; and
- languages should be offered only if the quality of the programme is assured. (p. 21)

They make the point that many of those arguments contain assumptions about the value and place of language learning. For example, the argument that languages must be made compulsory for students to take them implies that students cannot see for themselves the intrinsic value in languages; the argument against, stating that compelling unwilling students to take languages only makes them disengaged, implies that disengagement is an inevitable result of language teaching for some students, and that no student should be forced to study a subject they do not like.

Compulsion may be a necessary catalyst to get language study established with students. As has been noted, Australia - unlike Europe, for example - does not have a strong history of the necessity of language learning (Lo Bianco, 1987; Liddicoat et al., 2007). Up until now there have not been the economic imperatives to learn a foreign
language that have driven language learning in Europe and continue to drive language learning in many developing countries. Rather, Australia has been in the privileged position of speaking what has effectively been the world language for the entirety of its modern existence. Without extrinsic pressure to study languages, there is a need for other means to encourage students to study languages. Part of the problem lies in students not knowing enough about languages to decide whether they would like to study them; often they do not have first hand experience of language learning outside the school context.

It is here that compulsion comes into play, triggering the third argument for compulsion put by Liddicoat et al. By requiring that students study a language, they get exposure to the language and are thus in a position later on to decide from a position of knowledge whether or not they would like to continue with the language. In this model, language teachers have a window of time in which to ‘sell’ the language: to make the case that it is useful, intrinsically worthwhile, interesting and achievable. Bolstered by this compulsory foundation, the languages can then ‘stand on their own feet’ in the optional years.

These arguments were possibly behind the first attempts to make language learning compulsory nationally. In his 1987 policy, Lo Bianco stated:

this policy explicitly declares that the study of at least one language in addition to English ought to be an expected part of the educational experience of all Australian students, ideally continuously throughout the years of compulsory education (p. 120)

This call was strengthened in 1994, when in Asian languages and Australia's economic future, the committee recommended that

over the next decade progressively mandate the study of a second language during a student's compulsory school education (i.e. progressively from early/mid primary up until Year 10) (COAG, 1994, p. xii)

They justified this recommendation by citing the need for time for students to achieve the desired level of proficiency. This, however, was not acted upon nationally (and arguably, it was this failure that made the audacious goals of Asian languages and
Australia's economic future unreachable), although some state governments took on the recommendation.

In 2002 the requirement that 'all students in the compulsory years of schooling (Years P–10) learn a language other than English' was made part of the Victorian government’s Languages for Victoria’s Future (DET, 2002) and this goal was reinforced in The Victorian Government’s Vision for Languages Education 2013–2025 (DEECD, 2013), with the goal that by 2025,

25% of all students in government and non-government schools include a language in addition to English in their senior secondary program of study. (p. 5)

Language study remains compulsory in Victorian government schools (and arguably, under the sometimes opaque rules of the Australian Curriculum, in all Australian schools), with the goal of '100% of government schools providing a languages programme and awarding the new Certificate of Language Proficiency at Year 10' by 2025 (DEECD, 2013). Clearly there is a belief at government level that compulsory language studies are a valuable and worthwhile part of every student’s education, although the very slow timeline might indicate a more pragmatic approach to the difficulties than was evident in the optimism of COAG in 1994.

GENDER AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

This was the basis of my original research question, and one that was borne out by my initial investigations of the ISV SLP Survey data. This issue was raised explicitly in the paper Languages for Victoria’s Future (Department of Education and Training, 2002):

There is a need to identify the reasons for boys’ disengagement from learning languages and to develop strategies to promote languages to boys, particularly in the middle and later years of schooling.

Statistics on boys’ language enrolments at senior secondary levels reveal some of the extent of this issue. National statistics by subject and gender are not available but various state authorities publish their figures, and from these it is evident that there is an imbalance between the genders. In New South Wales, the most populous state, 7,235 students enrolled for a language at HSC in 2013; of these, 4,798 were girls and 2,437 - or 33.68% - were boys (Board of Studies, 2014). In Victoria, 10,187 students enrolled
for a language at VCE in 2013; of these, 4,046 were boys, and 6,141 were girls: thus 39.72% were boys (VCAA, 2014). This reflects the observation made by Liddicoat et al. (2007) who found that in the period 2000-2005 boys consistently made up only one-third of the Year 12 language students nationally, and thus this represents a long-standing situation in Australian education. Moreover, this seems a specifically Australian issue; for example, the ratios are not reflected in the United Kingdom, despite its similar language setting to Australia, where the numbers still favour girls but are much closer than in Australia: in the GCSE, where language study is optional, the gender break-up in 2014 was 56% girls to 44% boys (Tinsley and Board, 2015).

It is surprising, then, that there has been comparatively little research done on this issue in Australia. The leader in the field has been Jo Carr from the Queensland Institute of Technology. She noted

boys’ particular disinterest in languages appears to be accepted as ‘how it is’; rarely commented on, poorly documented, accorded little critical attention. (Carr and Pauwels, 2006, p. 21)

Carr (2002) asserted that 'boys into languages won’t go'. She interviewed 100 boys in secondary schools about their attitudes to languages and language learning, and repeatedly encountered negative self-perceptions about the boys’ ability to do well at languages, and feelings of alienation from what they perceived as a feminine domain: 'boys described the feeling of being ‘outsiders’ in a context where teachers tended to be women, appeared to favour girls and used materials and activities which are perceived as being more ‘girl friendly’.' (pp. 8-9)

Carr and Pauwels (2006) developed these ideas, focusing on the gendered perception of subjects that existed among many boys. A further 100 boys were interviewed, along with several teachers and girls. Their findings echoed Carr’s earlier work: that not only boys, but also girls and sometimes teachers viewed subjects through the lens of gender, pigeon-holing some subjects as an area of study for boys, and others as ones for girls: languages were deemed 'girls’ subjects' (pp. 21-24). One boy discussed the pressure he faced after choosing to continue with French:

There’s a real social pressure. I’ve had friends come up to me and say: ‘why are you bothering to do French? What’s the point? When will you use it? Why don’t
you just do maths?’ I find that girls are really good at it, but I think that’s because they’re expected to be – they’re allowed to be! It seems to be a natural instinct to make distinctions between maths and languages and boys and girls.  (p. 72)

Carr and Pauwels also commented on the peer pressure on boys to do - or not do - certain subjects (pp. 83-4). They noted the special status of French: ‘French, however, is relegated unforgivingly by most boys – and some teachers too – to the status of a ‘girls’ language’’ (p. 128), and the acceptance by boys of Latin as a notable subject for boys, but did not delve any deeper into perceptions of specific languages. Boys’ views of French were echoed across the other side of the world:

As a high proficiency year 9 boy put it, ‘French is the language of love and stuff’ while German is ‘the war, Hitler and all that’. (Williams et al., 2002, p. 520)

This contradicted the earlier findings of Barton (1997) in the United Kingdom, who found that

Most research has shown, however, that 'gender-image' is not the main reason for boys preferring German. According to Pritchard's findings in 1987, pupils have to be pushed to equate a language with one sex. (pp. 13-14)

It is possible that these differences are due to student attitudes hardening over time, or cultural differences between the United Kingdom and Australia; at any rate, Carr and Pauwels found the gendering of subjects a strong force in their sample respondents.

Carr and Pauwels found negative comments about the pedagogy used, although it would have been interesting to get the girls’ point of view about these; some of the teaching methods sounded unpalatable, no matter what the gender of the student. This approach - that it is the teaching methods which are to blame - is a strong thread, also appearing in Barton (1997, 2002, 2011) and Pavy (2006) in Australia. The complaint is that too much time is spent on dialogues, and the topics are often of little intrinsic value to many boys.

One of the schools Carr and Pauwels used in their study was boys-only, and this elicited some dramatically different responses from the boys in co-educational schools. There boys did not perceive subjects in the same gendered way, and were to some extent shielded from what Carr and Pauwels call 'the gaze of the other' shaping their views.
Unlike the boys in the co-educational schools, they did not need to justify their choice to do a 'girls’ subject':

what emerged quite distinctively in their responses to these questions was a qualitatively different sense of how they see themselves as language learners. There was no sense of apology or justification. (p. 106)

This insight suggested an area that could be tested by the data provided by the ISV SLP Survey: whether there was a quantitative difference in language learning rates between boys in single-sex schools and co-educational schools.

Pavy (2006) examined this issue in the context of Victorian schools, but could only use macro data of Year 12 enrolments, or total figures for Catholic secondary schools. These showed a gender imbalance, but did not cover every language or setting; instead, they gave the impression of a crisis in boys’ learning of languages in toto, something which I wished to test. She identified some pedagogical approaches as being frustrating for students, although like Carr many of the methods she mentioned would seem equally off-putting to girls, a fact she acknowledged (p. 38); what was different between the genders was their motivation: girls were able to see the delayed pay-off, while boys needed more immediate returns (pp. 38-9). If this is correct, it might be anticipated that participation rates by gender in all languages would be roughly the same; this was something the data in the ISV SLP Survey could reveal.

**How do students choose to study languages?**

In understanding why boys choose not to study languages, it is useful to start by exploring some of the research on the reasons students in general have for choosing languages over other subjects, and then to examine whether some of these factors may impact more heavily on boys than girls. In many western education systems, students start off with a highly prescriptive set of compulsory subjects, but by their final years of schooling subjects are for the most part chosen by the students. Once languages are made optional in a school, they become players in a market of enticing options for students. Currently in Victoria, English is the only subject protected under this system by being made compulsory throughout the years of schooling. Languages must compete for students against other subjects, such as Mathematics, sciences, business
subjects, the arts. Subject choice is a zero-sum game: one subject wins at the expense of another subject.

Choosing to study languages is a more complex matter than it might seem. Curnow and Kohler (2007) surveyed 57 South Australian students about their attitude to languages, and their reasons for studying them or not. The majority were able to identify the value of learning languages for jobs and getting along in a multicultural society. They then promptly ignored these:

Interestingly, however, despite students being able to regurgitate these messages, the messages appear to have little or no impact on why they say they continue or discontinue their language study…. Instead, the reasons they gave as motivating them to continue with languages were to do with personal learning, achievement, and personal experiences. (pp. 23, 24)

Students are motivated by a range of factors, and these differ as the child grows older. Some research also shows that there is also a difference according to gender.

Modern investigation of motivation for students to learn languages began with Gardner (1985), who developed the ‘social-educational model’, which incorporated the cultural beliefs of the learners, their attitude towards the learning situation and their desire to learn. Gardner distinguished between integrative and instrumental orientations in motivation:

The **integrative orientation** motivates learners to learn another language in order to identify closely with the other language’s speakers and cultures.

The **instrumental orientation** on the other hand motivates them to learn another language for more utilitarian purposes such as gaining a good exam grade or gaining entry to the next level of education or adding to one’s CV or selling more goods abroad. (McPake J. *et al.*, 1999).

However, classroom factors have emerged as being even stronger factors:

the most motivating factors for children between 6 and 14 years of age included positive attitudes towards the learning context and the teacher, intrinsically motivating activities, tasks and materials. They were more motivated by classroom practice than by integrative or instrumental reasons ..... Instrumental motives here emerged around the age of 11-12 but they remained vague and general. (Nikolov, M. (1998). ‘Hungarian children’s motivation to learn EFL’.

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These 'classroom factors' are perhaps manifestations of the intrinsic motivation aspect of the self-determination theories of Deci and Ryan (1985), where students are motivated to perform an action for the pleasure it gives. Aplin (1991) surveyed 200 secondary students in England who had dropped a language. He found a range of factors cited by the students for why they dropped their language: they preferred other subjects; they disliked the activities in class, which they found boring or irrelevant; they felt the language would not be helpful to their future career; they felt they were not making progress; they disliked their teachers; and they had little authentic contact with speakers of the country (pp. 7-9). Interestingly, a fifth expressed regret at their decision (p. 10); although Aplin does not draw this conclusion, it seems that even a few years can make a significant difference in the outlook of students in their decisions making, that the relative importance of classroom factors and instrumental motivation shifts. Aplin’s findings match Nikolov’s observations exactly - classroom practice was at least as important, if not more so, than integrative or instrumental reasons; the latter seemed to become more dominant only as the children got older.

To these factors of integrative orientation, instrumental orientation and classroom practices/intrinsic motivation, societal factors could be added: how much a society values a specific skill, such as the ability to speak a language. As was discussed earlier, Australia’s position as an anglophone country has removed much of the pressure to learn a language that exists in most non-English-speaking countries. This has led to the learning of languages being given a much lower priority than in much of the rest of the world:

Although it is beyond dispute that to be a well-educated, literate speaker of international English is an immense boost in the modern world, it is also fair to state that if the population of a country generally allows itself to develop a mindset which perceives monolingualism as the norm (especially in English), this is less than conducive to learning other languages, whether Indigenous or foreign. In fact, most of the world’s population perceives some form of bi- or multilingualism as the norm, a capacity which is not only functionally useful to them but which
also allows them to perceive reality in more than one way. (McPake J. et al., 1999, p. 33)

This motivation is possibly an element of what Dörnyei (2003) calls 'group-specific motivational components', which he defines as characteristics of the learner group, such as cohesiveness, goal-orientedness, and group norms. The 'group norms' is closest, although Dörnyei tends to be talking about the norms of a smaller group, such as a classroom, than societal expectations in general.

The Hungarian academic Marianne Nikolov, one of the leading international voices on research into the motivation of children to study languages, conducted a meta-study (Nikolov, 1999), and grouped responses by age group of children (though not by gender) - a crucial distinction, as she discovered:

Perhaps the most important finding with classroom implications relates to the way causes of motivation were found to vary at different ages. For very young children, classes must be fun and the teacher is in focus. The development of self-confidence also seems to play a major role and external rewards slowly lose some of their attractiveness. Instrumental motives emerge, but they are balanced by classroom-related motives even at the age of 14. (p. 53)

This difference according to age was also found by Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002). The pattern found is that younger children prioritise intrinsic motivation, and instrumental motivation comes later; for some students, integrative motivation might not come at all. When examining responses by gender, there is very limited evidence, but it does seem to indicate a higher level of intrinsic motivation among some boys. Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002) researched 228 English secondary students by questionnaire and interview about their attitudes to language learning, and discovered among other things a distinctive gender difference in attitude:

The gender differences were further explored in interviews. Both boys and girls explained that girls were more inclined to put effort into work that appeared tedious, while boys needed to find enjoyment in it. As one year 9 boy put it, ‘Girls just do the boring bits which boys just can’t be bothered with’. (pp. 515-6)

Thus, in the complex world of motivation to learn languages, there are four - and possibly more - factors interacting: integrative orientation; instrumental orientation; classroom practices/intrinsic motivation and societal expectations. More recently,
Dörnyei (2013) has been investigating the role of visualisations in student motivation; in the same way that an athlete might visualise their performance as part of their training and preparation, so too students can visualise themselves as successful language learners. This would seem to demand a high level of integrative and instrumental orientation, which have been shown to develop later in children, although some of the studies Dörnyei cited involved primary aged students. None, however, were in an Anglophone situation, where arguably visualisation of an instrumental future in the language is more difficult, as there are fewer precedents than in non-English-speaking countries (in the study of Korean primary school children cited by Dörnyei, it might be easier for the Korean students to imagine themselves in a future speaking English, rather than Australian students imagining themselves speaking Korean).

**LANGUAGE LEARNING AND CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS**

Like the question of gender and language learning, the socio-economic status of students may also have some bearing on their language learning, although this issue has been studied far less than the previous one. Given the arguments of the economic value to the nation and individuals of learning languages (for example, COAG, 1994, p. 49ff.), learning languages might, therefore, be a means of lifting children from a lower socio-economic environment. It is thus important that all children have the opportunity to learn languages, not just children from middle and high socio-economic backgrounds. However, there seems to be an almost total lack of knowledge about levels of language learning and choice of language among different socio-economic groups. This topic has not been mentioned in any of the major policy documents or major reviews such as that by Liddicoat et al. (2007).

That a student’s socio-economic status impacts upon their education has been well researched. The Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) is widely regarded as setting the standard in this area, and although its main focus was on the issue of segregation in American schools, it brought attention to links between the socio-economic status of the school and educational attainment. Sirin (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on Socio-Economic Status (SES) scores and educational achievement, and found:
This review's overall finding, therefore, suggests that parents' location in the socioeconomic structure has a strong impact on students' academic achievement. (p. 438)

More recently in Australia, Perry and McConney (2010) used PISA scores to investigate correlations between SES scores - both for the school, and for the individual - and PISA scores. They found a strong association:

In sum, the findings … confirm that for the Australian PISA case, both student- and school-level SES consistently and substantially matter in the academic performance of students across the three core subjects of reading, math, and science. The systematic disaggregation of the PISA 2003 data set for Australia shows unequivocally that both student and school group SES are strongly associated with academic outcomes across five quintiles representing a range of individual and group SES profiles. (pp. 1153-1154)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) similarly found a relationship:

There is a strong relationship between the socio-economic status of the area in which the child lives, as measured by the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, and NAPLAN performance. Students in the most disadvantaged areas were substantially more likely to score below the national minimum standard for each of the three domains than those in more advantaged areas. For example, 15% of students in the most disadvantaged quintile did not meet the national minimum standard for reading, compared with 4% in the most advantaged quintile.

However, links between language learning and socio-economic status have received much less attention. In California, Sung, Padilla and Silva (2006) found a negative correlation between such indicators of low socio-economic status as free lunches, and enrolment in foreign language programmes and the school’s academic achievements; in Australia, Cruickshank and Wright (2016) found a connection between SES and language uptake, especially at senior secondary years; they attributed this to lower-SES schools not offering language programmes at Year 12 due to funding difficulties and falling enrolments in the languages (pp. 81, 92).

In Summary

That there is a disparity in language learning, at least at senior secondary levels, between girl and boys is evident from the enrolment statistics: it is significant and has
been a consistent feature of Australian education for at least a decade, if not longer. However, there has been little academic examination of this issue. The disparity may come down to student motivation, and the complex interplay of motivating factors that may affect some boys more than girls. The issue of socio-economic status and language learning is even less well understood, and the analysis done in this study is, to the author’s knowledge, the first of its kind; it is hoped that this will start some useful areas of investigation for future researchers.

**CONCLUSION**

Students in Victorian independent schools learn languages in a context that is shaped by many layers, ranging from government policy to their own socio-economic status. Government policy has flowed between a strong bias in favour of Asian languages, to treating all languages as equally worthy, while Australian Indigenous languages have languished outside their own communities (and sometimes even within). Calls were made for students to learn languages in primary schools, using arguments of greater time for students to learn, and - by some - the idea of there being a time when a child is especially open to language learning. and these have been heeded; however, whether schools have been able to provide the other side of the call- for sufficient time to make the learning valuable and effective, remains to be seen. The issue of compulsion to learn languages is one that has been accepted almost without debate, at least in recent decades; the result perhaps is that there has not been scrutiny of the effectiveness of school language programmes in terms of their retention of students beyond the years when the subject is compulsory. The issue of what motivates students to choose to learn languages has been much studied, with students exhibiting different motivations at different stages of their development; however, it is unclear if this knowledge informs schools’ decisions on how to shape their language programmes, and especially when to cease making languages compulsory. Boys and languages have received attention, with some strong qualitative research. This has revealed that students often perceive subjects through the lens of gender, and may pigeonhole some subjects as being more appropriate to boys or girls. The interplay of education and socio-economic status has been widely studied, but not in the specific context of language.
Thus, while much has been achieved to further knowledge of these contexts, there are still many things unknown. For example, the past decades have seen government attention and funding directed towards Asian languages. Do the languages students are actually learning reflect these priorities? A shift has been observed from learning languages in secondary schools to primary schools. Has this been accompanied by the time allocation recommended for languages in primary schools? Does this flow into large numbers of students continuing with those languages into secondary school? Languages have been made compulsory in many schools and in government policy, but do students continue with their language learning beyond the compulsory years? Is there any difference in when schools make languages no longer compulsory? The claim has been made that boys often do not choose languages. Is this true for every language? And so little has been done on the nexus of socio-economic status and language learning. Is there any connection? Are languages for the better-off students? Do different socio-economic groups learn different languages? The search for an answer to these questions has driven the analysis that follows.
Chapter 3: Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study used pre-existing data rather than data collected specifically for the purpose of the study. Thus the data preceded the research intentions; rather than research intentions determining the nature of the data to be sought, the data already existed, and the research intentions flowed from consideration of what the data could potentially offer. For this reason, in the discussion that follows, I begin with a discussion of the data, which then leads to discussion of the methodology and methods of research, mirroring the process that took place.

THE DATA

Using Pre-existing Data

My original intention had been to conduct research into levels of language learning in boys, and obtain data for myself; my research question was to be whether boys are more likely to learn languages when they are in a single-sex school than a co-educational school. To investigate this, I intended to send a survey to schools in Victoria, requesting information on the proportion of boys in their Year 12 cohort, and the proportion of those who studied languages; I would then compare rates between boys in boys-only schools, and boys in co-educational schools. However, before I could do this I was offered the opportunity to use the data already gathered by ISV, but not yet analysed. I then had to decide whether to continue with my own survey, or abandon it and use the ISV SLP Survey. The advantage of using my own survey was that I could tailor the questions to suit my research interest. The advantages of using the ISV SLP Survey were that the questions allowed me to continue with my original research questions if I wished; that there was a wealth of other data which could potentially reveal broader discoveries; that the data were already collected and entered into spreadsheets; and that there had been near universal responses from the survey audience. Crucial tasks such as designing and administering the survey (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2006, p.159) had already been carried out. The main disadvantage was that the survey data were restricted to independent schools only. I felt that the advantages were sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages, and decided to use the ISV SLP Survey data rather than my
own, and commenced negotiations with ISV to use their data. They agreed, as they were keen for someone to start analysing their data, and provided me with a de-identified version of the data.

THE DATA SOURCE: BACKGROUND

The purpose of the ISV SLP Survey was to provide ISV with sufficient data to allow them to allocate federal grant money to schools according to the number of students learning languages at each school. The grants were a Federal Government initiative, the School Languages Program (SLP) which arose from the Schools Assistance Act 2008 (Cth), designed 'to improve the learning outcomes of students who are learning languages other than English' (Section 89). The SLP was carried out from 2009 to 2013; Part 6, 'Grants for targeted expenditure, Division 4: Languages education', authorised the payment on a state-by-state basis of funds to non-government schools (there were similar arrangements for government schools). ISV was chosen by the Federal Government to administer this scheme for Victorian independent schools, and any independent school which attracted recurrent funding - effectively all independent schools - was eligible.

An initial national grant amount of $14,762,000 was provided. According to the Schools Assistance Act 2008 Administrative Guidelines: Commonwealth 2009 to 2013/2014 (Cth), SLP funding could 'be used to support languages education at any level from Kindergarten (or equivalent) to Year 12' (p. 56). Non-government education authorities - such as ISV - were required to submit a report by 31 January each year on the language activities. The Department of Education and Training provided a template for the report, which became the basis for the survey conducted by ISV.

For each year for the life of the SLP, ISV sent out this survey to curriculum co-ordinators in all independent schools in Victoria, whether the schools were members of ISV or not (government and Catholic schools were dealt with by the Department of Education and Training and Catholic Education Office respectively). The survey was delivered digitally via ISV’s website, and accessed by schools using a password. Schools could also print a hard copy of the survey to keep for their own records, although all data were submitted electronically to ISV. Results were stored at ISV.
electronically on a series of spreadsheets. ISV followed up with schools which were late in making returns (source: personal communication with ISV Research Officer, 14 Aug 2015).

These data were stored at ISV and used to calculate grants, according to the portion of federal grant money ISV received to distribute to schools. Following the allocation of grants, schools also had to provide details of proposed projects, and account for the money granted. Under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth), the SLP was discontinued at the end of 2013.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Key questions I asked of the ISV SLP Survey data were:

1. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools at a sector-wide level?
2. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools in individual languages?
3. How much language learning was taking place in primary schools?
4. To what extent did rates of language learning follow compulsion in schools?
5. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between boys and girls, overall, and within individual languages?
6. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between children of lower, middle and higher socio-economic backgrounds?

**METHODOLOGY**

Given that the data had been collected before I had commenced my planning for the study, and by an outside agency, some important methodological considerations arose. Often, methodologies assume that the researcher is able to dictate, within limitations, the data they will be collecting, and use this to shape their study. For example, in Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker (2014, p. 11), the identification of a problem is the first step, while the gathering of data is listed as the fifth - and last - in the research process.

This is not to say that I could not have proceeded with a conventional approach, simply using the ISV SLP Survey data to test my hypothesis; this was my original intention with boys and language learning, whereby I would formulate a hypothesis - boys are more likely to learn languages when they are in a single-sex school than a co-
educational school - and test it using the data from the survey. However, as I began to examine the wealth of data provided to me, I soon realised that this was an inadequate way of approaching such a data source, and restrictive of the value that could be obtained from such data.

The first consideration was that the data were entirely in a quantitative form. There were counts of numbers of students, schools and teachers, but no measures of attitudinal or affective dispositions. This made the decision to conduct a quantitative investigation sensible, and was further bolstered by the absence of similar quantitative studies: my study would fill a gap in the existing research.

My initial explorations of the data indicated to me that I had a rich source of data, but even the simplest forms of analysis, such as totals and averages, had not been done; this made it difficult to see exactly what I had to work with. I therefore decided on a dual approach. First, to help mould the data into a more useable form, I applied the methodological approach of Descriptive Research to them: I examined the data and sought to describe what I found. Next, I used Grounded Theory to explore elements I had found that demanded further investigation.

**Descriptive Research**

Descriptive Research - which uses descriptive statistics such as totals, averages and means - enables researchers to 'organise, summarise and describe observations (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker, 2014, p. 112):

> [It] is concerned with the current or past status of something. This type of research simply describes achievement, attitudes, behaviours, or other characteristics of a group of subjects. A descriptive study asks *what is or what was*; it reports things the way that *are* or *were*. Descriptive research does not involve the manipulation of independent variables. Descriptive research provides very valuable data, particularly when first investigating an area. (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997, p. 281)

Descriptive Research also has as one of its strengths the ability to make data more understandable:

> Because methods of descriptive statistics are relatively simple, they may sometimes be overlooked or used sparingly. This is unfortunate. Descriptive
statistics, used intelligently and computed accurately, can enable the researcher to acquire a better understanding of data. (Johnson, 1977, p. 43)

This form of research is especially powerful when the researcher has a large amount of data and wishes to make it accessible to an audience: “the descriptive aspect of statistics allows researchers to summarise large quantities of data using measures that are easily understood by the observer” (Burns, 2000, p. 43).

Descriptive Research reports on what is (or was), rather than observing the impact of a particular intervention, whether natural or engineered. There is no manipulation of one or more variable, by, for example, introducing a new method of learning vocabulary to a group of language learners; instead, the nature of those language learners as they are is described. In many cases, this kind of research would be of limited use, especially in a group whose characteristics are already well known; but in a group whose characteristics have yet to be enumerated, such a description may well prove to be a useful starting point for future comparison. Importantly, Descriptive Research is non-experimental: that is, relationships are observed 'between two or more variables as they exist, without trying to manipulate them' (Slavin, 1984, p. 14).

Given the nature of my study - using data that were extensive and pre-existing the study - Descriptive Research seemed the ideal methodology for the first part of my project. I was not able to introduce variables that could be manipulated as the data had already been obtained, and Descriptive Research was a methodology that suited this particular limitation. Also, Descriptive Research has the advantage that it 'allows researchers to summarise large quantities of data using measures that are easily understood by an observer' (Burns, 2000). In my case, I had an extremely large amount of data - 222,498 individual points of data, representing over 200 schools and 126,377 students - that I wished to understand better and convey to others, and Descriptive Research allowed me to do this. Lastly, McMillan and Schumacher (1997) highlighted the usefulness of Descriptive Research 'when first investigating an area' (p. 281), and this matched my situation; to date, nobody has produced a detailed picture of language learning in a

5 In this regard, Descriptive Research has much in common with ethnographic research, although this typically is qualitative and involves detailed observation and interviews; Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker, 2014, p. 676.
sector in a state of Australia. Given these, I felt that Descriptive Research matched my intentions for the initial phase of my study, and helped launch the next phases.

In choosing Descriptive Research I was also influenced by the work of Liddicoat et al. (2007), *An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian Schools*. Liddicoat et al. collected data from all states and territories and from all sectors to try to present as comprehensive picture of language learning in Australia as possible. Despite now being a decade old, this work has not been repeated and remains the most complete description to date of language learning across the country. I was impressed by the authority that the presentation of such data gave the findings of Liddicoat et al; they were able to demonstrate features and trends in language learning that are difficult to detect without such a large-scale view. However, they experienced difficulties in obtaining their data: they found 'significant gaps in the data available from the jurisdictions' (p. 7) and especially had difficulties with obtaining data from the non-government sector (p. 8). That this situation has not been addressed since Liddicoat et al. (2007) further influenced me on the need to create my own, albeit much smaller focused, research.

This approach enabled me to meet gaps in current understanding of language learning. A description of language learning in Victorian independent schools - meaning a highly detailed, empirically sourced account of such matters as what languages are being learnt, by how many students and in what kinds of schools, by language, gender, SES background, regionality and year level - could form the basis for future decision making on language policy at a school and system level. A description such as this would provide a bedrock on which further studies into language learn can be carried out, and which could also provide a benchmark for the measuring of future interventions.

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006) list five steps for conducting descriptive research: design and developing the survey; selecting the sample; piloting the survey; administering the final survey and collecting data; and analysing the data (p. 159). Of these five steps, four had already been done by ISV in their own development of the survey, leaving me with the last stage: analysing the data.
Having conducted my initial exploration and organisation of the data using Descriptive Research, I then proceeded to the next phase of my study. In this, I pursued elements that arose from the initial Descriptive Research that struck me as worth pursuing, including my original interest in boys and language learning. For this I was influenced by the approach of Grounded Theory, first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded Theory 'is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 598). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that the defining features of Grounded Theory are that:

- theory is emergent rather than predefined and tested;
- theory emerges from the data rather than vice versa;
- theory generation is a consequence of, and partner to, systematic data collection and analysis;
- patterns and theories are implicit in data, waiting to be discovered;
- grounded theory is both inductive and deductive, it is iterative and close to the data that give rise to it. (p. 598)

Since the initial work of Glaser and Strauss there has been much debate over the exact nature of Grounded Theory, and a number of competing interpretations have emerged. The systematic procedure, expanded by Strauss and Corbin, stresses the detailed, rigorous coding of the data (Creswell, 2008, pp. 432-438). The emerging design was the critique by Glaser of Strauss and Corbin’s direction; he claimed that they had overly emphasised procedures; instead, there should be greater flexibility, and coding should change as the process develops (p. 438); other academics have proposed other variants.

There are several features of Grounded Theory, especially Glaser’s less rule-bound approach, that made it suitable for this part of my study. First, it positions the data before the theory; the data pre-exist the creation of a theory, and lead to it, rather than the theory pre-existing the data and the data being collected to test the theory. Second, Grounded Theory assumes that there are patterns and theories to be found - they are 'waiting to be discovered'. For me this was a particularly stimulating insight; I did not need to be bound by the existence of theories and patterns external to the data I was
studying, but rather was free to explore and uncover for myself. Given the wealth of data I had at my disposal, I felt this was an appropriate way to approach the study.

There are some elements of Grounded Theory that did not apply in this study. Usually, Grounded Theory is qualitative, with the researcher as the primary data-gathering instrument (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker, 2014, p. 493), asking questions until a saturation point is reached - where the researcher has sufficient data, and further questioning will not change the results. In my case, however, I was unable to be the primary data gatherer, but rather ISV was, and this also meant that I was unable to determine a saturation point; I simply had to use the data that I had. Moreover, the data I had was quantitative not qualitative. In Grounded Theory, the data are then coded; again, this was already done for me. In some instances, the coding was unproblematic, such as labelling responses by language 'French' or 'German', but in other cases the coding was a result of a decision made by the ISV, such as recording teaching times in interval blocks rather than by minutes per week. However, I felt that this was a minor limitation at most. For these reasons, I cannot claim to have followed Grounded Theory in anywhere approaching a purist fashion; rather, it would be more accurate to describe my approach as one influenced by the possibilities opened up by Grounded Theory.

Inspired by the possibilities of Grounded Theory, I began to look for patterns and theories that would emerge from the data. In this I found the language snapshots I had created particularly useful. For example, I included the average Socio-Economic Status (SES) of all schools that taught a particular language; it soon became apparent that some languages were generally being taught in schools with a high SES, while other, different languages were taught in lower SES schools. This sparked questions of whether languages could be grouped according to the SES of the schools where they were taught, which in turn led to the question of whether children from lower SES schools were more or less likely to learn languages. My initial question of boys in single-sex versus co-educational schools was quickly supplanted as I discovered that a much greater disparity in the genders was occurring between languages rather than school types. When I graphed student numbers by year level, it emerged that some languages had a concentration of students in primary schools, and some in secondary schools; the ISV SLP Survey had included questions on at what year levels language
study was compulsory, and when I graphed these against retention rates patterns emerged. I was able to find that there were patterns implicit in the data, and the data inspired me to consider the theory, rather than the other way around; the fact that some of these patterns, such as those of lower SES background children and languages, and the correlation between the extension of compulsion and Year 12 retention rates had not yet appeared in academic literature confirmed the notion that 'patterns and theories are implicit in data, waiting to be discovered' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 598).

THE METHODS OF ANALYSIS

This study needed considerable manipulation of the spreadsheet provided to me by ISV, and although most functions were simple, the size of the data and the number of different information I wished to obtain from them required a large number of calculations. I frequently created sub-spreadsheets to allow for simpler manipulation of the data (my computer tended to crash when dealing with the entire spreadsheet) but I maintained the original spreadsheet in a pristine state, and was able to check with that if I had any suspicions that I might have corrupted the data. The methods used were mostly innate to the spreadsheet programmes. I used both MS Excel and Mac’s equivalent, Numbers; Excel was slow, but better at investigations involving very large samples; Numbers was simpler to use, but tended to crash when required to cope with the spreadsheet in its entirety. On both forms of software I made frequent use of filtering, sorting and addition functions, as well as built-in averaging, standard deviation, ‘countif’ (used for counting the number of items with the same value, such as SES scores) and correlation functions. On some occasions it was easier to do simple counts manually; these are noted below.

The table below (Table 3.1) outlines the detailed research questions that I sought to answer with each table or figure and the steps taken for each one. In many cases I was able to put the same basic work to a number of different uses, and this made my task easier. Note that unless stated otherwise, ‘spreadsheet’ in the table below refers to the data provided by ISV.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **School SES Histograms**      | 1. What is the SES spread of independent schools?                                    | 1. Obtain national SES data from the federal government website  
2. Obtain Vic Independent School SES data from the ISV spreadsheet  
3. Upload national data onto a spreadsheet  
4. Calculate frequency of each value, manually and using the `countif` function  
5. Use this to create a frequency histogram |
| Tables 4.1, 4.2                | 1. How many languages does each state offer at Year 12 (or equivalent)?              | 1. Source list of subject offerings from all state and territory websites  
2. Manually calculate the number of languages each offers  
3. Source total Year 12 enrolments for each state and territory from education authority websites  
4. Source subject enrolments for each state and territory from education authority websites |
| **National language statistics** | 1. How many students learn a language in Year 12, by state?                          | 1. Source list of subject offerings from all state and territory websites  
2. Manually calculate the number of languages each offers  
3. Source total Year 12 enrolments for each state and territory from education authority websites  
4. Source subject enrolments for each state and territory from education authority websites |
| Tables 4.6, 4.7, 4.8           | 1. How many schools offer 1, 2, 3, 4 5 or 6 languages to their students?             | 1. Sort the spreadsheet by the number of languages offered  
2. Calculate totals for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 languages |
| **Number of languages offered** | 1. How many students learn each language?                                            | 1. Sort the spreadsheet by language  
2. Calculate totals of students by gender and year level, per language  
3. Add to create overall totals per language  
4. Count number of schools by language  
5. Count total number of schools  
6. Cross reference school ID with school SES on demographic tab |
| **Languages most frequently taught:** Languages by gender and SES | 1. How many students learn each language?                                            | 1. Sort the spreadsheet by language  
2. Calculate totals of students by gender and year level, per language  
3. Add to create overall totals per language  
4. Count number of schools by language  
5. Count total number of schools  
6. Cross reference school ID with school SES on demographic tab |
<p>| Tables 4.10, 4.11              | 1. How many students learn traditional foreign languages/community languages/Asian languages/Chinese/Indigenous languages/Classical languages? | 1. Group results for Table 4.10 into language groupings |
| <strong>Languages by groupings</strong>     | 1. How many students learn traditional foreign languages/community languages/Asian languages/Chinese/Indigenous languages/Classical languages? | 1. Group results for Table 4.10 into language groupings |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Snapshots</td>
<td>1. How many students learn this particular language?</td>
<td>1. Use results for Tables 4.10, 4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How many schools teach this particular language?</td>
<td>2. Filter the spreadsheet by language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. What is the average SES of schools teaching this language?</td>
<td>3. Sort the schools by location; calculate the number of metro, regional schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Where are the schools located?</td>
<td>4. Check teachers are FTE (full time equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. How many teachers teach this language?</td>
<td>5. Calculate the number of female teachers per language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. How many Year 12 girls learn this language?</td>
<td>6. Calculate the number of male teachers per language; add to calculate total number of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. How many Year 12 boys learn this language?</td>
<td>7. Repeat for each language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student distribution by gender and year level</td>
<td>1. How many girls learn the particular language, by year level?</td>
<td>1. Use the results for Table 4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How many boys learn the particular language, by year level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How many females teach the particular language, by year level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. How many males teach the particular language, by year level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsion and student numbers</td>
<td>1. How many schools teach Japanese/Chinese, by year level?</td>
<td>1. Use the results for Table 4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. In how many schools that teach Japanese/Chinese is the subject compulsory, by year level?</td>
<td>2. Filter the spreadsheet by language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How many students learn Japanese/Chinese at each year level?</td>
<td>3. Sort by year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. What is the correlation between compulsion and student numbers?</td>
<td>4. Calculate the number of schools where the language is compulsory, by year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher qualifications</td>
<td>1. What are the qualifications of female teachers of a particular language?</td>
<td>1. Filter the spreadsheet by language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What are the qualifications of male teachers of a particular language?</td>
<td>2. Sort by teacher gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Sort by different levels of qualifications</td>
<td>3. Sort by different levels of qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Calculate the total of teachers by qualification level</td>
<td>4. Calculate the total of teachers by qualification level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Repeat for each language</td>
<td>5. Repeat for each language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Table No.</td>
<td>Research Question(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Time allocation, Year 3 Chinese          | Table 5.7  | 1. How much time each week do Year 3 students of Chinese receive for Chinese lessons? | 1. Filter the spreadsheet by Chinese  
2. Sort by year level  
3. Calculate different levels of time allocations |
| Primary school Chinese teachers          | Table 5.10 | 1. How many Chinese teachers are there in each primary school offering Chinese?     | 1. Filter the spreadsheet by Chinese  
2. Check by year level  
3. Calculate number of FTE teachers |
| Language learning by year level          | Tables 6.1, 6.5, 6.6 | 1. How many students learn any language, by year level? | 1. Use the results for Table 4.10  
2. Calculate totals |
| Frequency of language lessons            | Table 6.2  | 1. How often do students receive a lesson in a language, by year level?             | 1. Filter the spreadsheet by language  
2. Sort by year level  
3. Sort by lesson frequency  
4. Calculate totals for lesson frequency |
| Length of language lessons               | Table 6.3  | 1. How much time do students spend in lessons in a language, by year level?         | 1. Filter the spreadsheet by language  
2. Sort by year level  
3. Sort by lesson length  
4. Calculate totals for lesson length |
| Compulsory languages                     | Table 6.7, 6.8, 6.9 | 1. How many cohorts are here of a particular language?  
2. In how many of these is the language study compulsory?  
3. How many students learn a language, by year level?  
4. What is the correlation between compulsion and student numbers? | 1. Use the results for Table 4.10  
2. Filter the spreadsheet by language  
3. Calculate the number of cohorts per language  
4. Sort by compulsory/non compulsory  
5. Calculate totals  
6. Calculate correlation  
7. Repeat for each language |
| Gender of teachers, by subject area      | Table 7.3  | 1. How many teachers teach in primary school, by gender?  
2. How many teachers teach in secondary school, by gender?  
3. How many teachers teach languages in primary school, by gender?  
4. How many teachers teach languages in secondary school, by gender? | 1. Use SiAS results for number of teachers by primary, secondary school, by gender  
2. Use SiAS results for number of language teachers by primary, secondary school, by gender |
Notes

**SES groupings:** For the SES calculations in Tables 4.4, 4.5, 7.5 and 7.6, I sorted schools into grouped frequencies. I searched in vain for established definitions of groupings of SES ratings, approaching the Department of Education, searching the Australian Bureau of Statistics and enlisting the help of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER); none were able to help. For Tables 4.4 and 4.5 I used a simple method of grouping the SES scores in ascending brackets of five score points, starting at 81 and ending at 131 (the lowest and highest scores nationally). This produced 10 brackets, which provided finer grained analysis than a simpler tripartite grouping.

**Language Snapshots:** for this study I created language snapshots for a number of languages (Figures 5.1 etc.). These aim to provide a picture at a glance of an individual language: how many students learn it, what type of schools teach it, how many teachers, among other things. Initially, these language snapshot data were presented in a series of graphs; however, I found it difficult not to be overwhelmed by the sheer number of figures. I searched for a means of making these data more accessible to a reader, and
came upon the infographic. An infographic is a 'graphic visual representation of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly' (Newsom and Haynes, 2004, p. 236), and serves as an alternative to conventional graphs and tables. I saw this was a way of making data about individual languages readily accessible, and facilitating comparison between languages. There are several advantages of graphical representations of data:

Excellence in statistical graphics consists of complex ideas communicated with clarity, precision and efficacy. Graphical displays should

- show the data
- induce the viewer to think about the substance rather than about methodology, graphic design, the technology of graphic production, or something else
- avoid distorting what the data have to say
- present many numbers in a small space
- make large data sets coherent
- encourage the eye to compare different pieces of data
- reveal the data at several levels of detail, from a broad overview to the fine structure
- serve a reasonably clear purpose: description, exploration, tabulation, or decoration
- be closely integrated with the statistical and verbal descriptions of a data set.

Graphics reveal data. Indeed graphics can be more precise and revealing than conventional statistical computations. (Tufte, 1983, p. 13)

These points met many of my concerns. I had large data sets, and many figures to present in a short space if I was to get across the picture of an individual language in a small space - and given the number of languages I wished to include, this was a necessity. At the same time, I wanted readers to be able to look at the figures and understand whether those figures were low or high, whether they represented a balance or an imbalance, and whether there were clear anomalies when compared with other languages. For these reasons, I decided to use infographics for the language snapshots.

For these infographics, the following conventions were used:

- for total student numbers, one figure represents 2,000 students;
• for total school numbers and location, one figure represents 10 schools; green represents regional schools, and blue metropolitan schools;
• for total teacher numbers, one figure represents 50 teachers;
• for Year 12 student numbers, one figure represents 100 students; and
• for average school SES, one figure represents SES 81-89; two figures represents SES 90-99; three figures represents SES 100-109; four figures represents SES 110-119; five figures represents SES 120+.

Correlations: for Tables 5.4 and 6.8, I examined the correlation between the degree to which language study was compulsory, and the number of students studying a language. This was done using the correlation function on the spreadsheet computer program. The two variables being examined were the degree to which language study was compulsory, and the number of students learning a language at a given year level. The degree to which language study was compulsory was obtained by determining the total number of language cohorts offered by all the schools offering any language at a particular year level, and determining - through the data provided by the ISV SLP Survey - what proportion of these were compulsory by the school; the number of students learning a language at a given year level was determined by totalling the number of students across all schools learning any language at that year level. These produced interval/ratio variables, and so the Pearson product-moment correlation was used to describe the correlation found (Burns, 2000, pp. 232-235).

CONSIDERATIONS

The Survey Items

The original for the survey, the Department of Education and Training template, only required administering bodies to survey schools for:

1. the number of school students by year level, where possible, studying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish (state bodies were allowed to include other languages taught in their state/territory); and
2. the number of qualified school teachers available to teach the same group of languages.

There was some additional reporting for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islands languages and programmes.
However, these limited questions were changed significantly by ISV (due to staff changes at ISV I have not been able to find out who at ISV did this, or why). ISV questions now covered:

1. school demographics (size, location, type of school);
2. the number of languages taught at each level of the school;
3. the number of boys and girls learning each language at each level;
4. the method of instruction (face to face, immersion, etc.);
5. the number of teachers for each language, their gender and qualifications;
6. whether the language was compulsory or not;
7. the amount of time given to each language; and
8. the frequency of lessons.

A full list of the questions is provided in Appendices 2 and 3. Some items required schools to choose from a selection given in a pull-down menu, some required simple checking of a box, while other items required text entry, typically of figures. The survey now contained between 123 and, potentially, 500 items, depending on the number of languages a school offered. There were demographic and identifying questions at the start, and then approximately 100 questions to be completed for each language taught at the school; there were also a small number of questions which related specifically to Chinese. The survey took a number of hours for school to compile the highly detailed data required. Typically, the data had to be obtained manually - schools could not simply download data from their school administration systems. The labour-intensive nature of the survey might be expected to lead to a lower return rate, but this was not the case, possibly because completing the survey was a condition of receiving grant money.

The extent of these changes is shown in Table 3.2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolment per language</th>
<th>Federal Government Template Questions</th>
<th>ISV SLP Survey Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Boys, Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Girls, Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>Boys, Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls, Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Comparison between original government survey questions and actual questions delivered by ISV SLP Survey
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Government Template Questions</th>
<th>ISV SLP Survey Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep Year 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching time</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep Year 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of lessons per week</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep Year 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of delivery (Not offered/Combined/Face to Face/Computer-based learning)</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate L1 and L2 classes</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep Year 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>Number of teachers per language: Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of teachers per language: Year 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many teachers teach this language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many FTE teachers teach this language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of teachers from Prep to Year 6 who teach this language? (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of teachers from Prep to Year 6 who teach this language? (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many of these teachers hold a primary years teaching qualification? (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many of these teachers hold a primary years teaching qualification? (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of teachers from Year 7 to Year 12 who teach this language? (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of teachers from Year 7 to Year 12 who teach this language? (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many of these teachers hold a secondary years teaching qualification? (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many of these teachers hold a secondary years teaching qualification? (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualifications of the female teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualifications of the male teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen, ISV either greatly expanded the federal government template questions, or added completely new items. As a result, the ISV Survey can be considered a different survey to that originally suggested by the federal government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Government Template Questions</th>
<th>ISV SLP Survey Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>No special questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students studying Chinese First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students studying Chinese Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students studying Chinese Second Language (Advanced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the school provided separate classes for Chinese First Language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the school provided separate classes for Chinese Second Language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School demographic information</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SES Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrolment Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Type (co-educational/ boys-only/girls-only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metro/Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Full Fee Paying Overseas Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Full Fee Paying Overseas Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Full Fee Paying Overseas Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Full Fee Paying Overseas Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Full Fee Paying Overseas Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Primary Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Primary Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Secondary Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Secondary Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Full Time Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Part Time Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Prep Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Year 1 Students etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Boys Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Girls Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Boys Gr 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Girls Gr 1 etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Comparison between original government survey questions and actual questions delivered by ISV SLP Survey
The Format of the Data

ISV provided me with a spreadsheet of data, on two tabs. The first tab was titled 'Longitudinal LOTE data from 2010 to 2013'; this contained 1,578 rows and 141 columns of data, providing 222,498 points of data. These are in the form of numbers, yes/no, or an option from a pull-down menu, depending on the question being answered. The questions were those devised by the ISV, and have been included as Appendix 2 to this study. The second tab was titled '2013 info on schools', and contained demographic information on each school: its identifying number (randomly generated by ISV), SES score, size, general location (metropolitan or regional), gender make up, total number of students by gender, total number of teachers by gender, and a break down of student numbers by year level. These data were gathered from both the ISV SLP Survey and ISV’s own records. There were 203 rows and 64 columns, making a further 12,928 points of data, also in the form of numbers or an option selected from a pull-down menu. These questions have been included as Appendix 3.

Although the data collected by ISV were tied to individual schools, school names were replaced by ISV with a random identification number before the data were supplied to me; this de-identification was a condition of ISV in allowing me access to the data. This ensured anonymity of the data, but as the number was kept constant, I was able to cross reference data from tab 1 with the demographic data from tab 2. For each language, detailed figures were then provided for how many boys and girls learnt that language at each year level, for how long, how often per week, and the gender and qualifications of their teachers. This was repeated for 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. However, the demographic information applied only to 2013.

Other sources of data used in this study include statistics published by the various state curriculum authorities, especially the Victorian Curriculum and assessment Authority (VCAA). The VCAA publishes detailed data annually on all subjects, as well as overall statistics on the cohorts; this information is published on the VCAA website and is publicly available. Other states do similar to greater or lesser degrees. These data were used for some of the tables where interstate comparisons were made.
Participants and Response Rate

The participants were independent schools in Victoria; these did not necessarily have to be members of ISV. Schools which were independent Catholic schools were not included; these were dealt with by the Catholic Education Office. The completion rate was very high. In 2013, for example, 203 schools completed the Survey; according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 206 independent schools in Victoria in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014), thus there was a completion rate of 98.54%. Muijs (2004) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) listed a number of methods that can be used to increase response rates, including 'keep the questionnaire sufficiently short', 'provide a reward for completion', 'follow up visits and phone calls' and 'credibility/institutional affiliation, survey sponsorship or support from a high status agent'. The ISV SLP Survey could not achieve the first of these, but this was compensated for by the remainder: the reward was in the considerable form of government funding (grant allocations were dependent on the completion of the survey); there was persistent follow up by the staff at ISV; and both sources of the survey - initially ISV, and ultimately the Federal Government - had great credibility. A detailed analysis of the survey participants is provided in the next chapter.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is 'the extent to which an instrument or test actually measures what it is intended to measure' (Sampson, 2012, p. 39). Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker (2014), in discussing validity of surveys, draw the distinction between issues with the validity of the survey items, and the responses. For the items, they usefully sub-categorise face validity into two streams: 'construct under-representation', where the survey is 'too narrow and fails to include important dimensions of the construct', and 'construct-irrelevant variance', where test scores 'are affected by variables that are extraneous to the construct' (p. 243).

In reviewing the validity of the items, it should be remembered that the ISV SLP Survey was designed for one purpose - to determine levels of funding - but is being used in this study for another - to gain information about the status of language learning. Arguably, it has stronger validity for its use in this study than in the purpose it was originally intended for - Table 3.2 shows that far more information was gathered (for example, on
the gender of teachers of a particular language) than was needed for the task of allocating funding. For the uses I have put the survey to, however, these items give the survey powerful face validity, as every question relates directly to the teaching of languages in schools in a detailed and precise way. Fortunately, the perceived construct irrelevance was not of a nature to cause variance in the responses given by participants; it might have caused disgruntlement with the time taken to complete the survey, but as there were no attitudinal items in the survey, merely reporting of school statistics, these would not have been negatively affected. For neither purpose could it be claimed that the survey suffered from construct under-representation; the questions are exhaustive and all focused on the issue of language learning.

Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker (2014, pp. 435-6) list five potential problems which may impact upon the validity of the responses:

1. respondents often report what they think is the right answer, rather than what they really think;
2. respondents may give answers that are more socially acceptable than their real beliefs;
3. respondents may get the answer they think the researcher wants to hear;
4. respondents may give little thought to a question; or
5. respondents may give 'safe' answers, especially when their anonymity is in question. However, these problems have greatest potential impact on attitudinal questions, not on the reporting of statistics, and can be disregarded as having any significant impact on this study.

Reliability for this measure depends on the diligence of the individual schools in completing the ISV SLP Survey. There are not the usual issues of reliability where judgements are made or opinions sought, and one person’s interpretation may differ from another person, or from their own at another point in the survey. Schools were asked to input factual information (whether the school is co-educational or single-sex) or numbers (how many boys learn French in Year 8). These questions are open to very little interpretation, if any, and ISV was on hand to answer any questions that were asked. Where possible, when figures have been able to be cross-checked with other sources (such as the VCAA), they are constant with these other sources. There is always
the possibility of error in entering responses. On two occasions I discovered that there was an inconsistency in a school’s figures, where the total number of students in a year level was inconsistent with the total number of students studying a language at that year level. In both of these cases the figures were disregarded for that particular variable, and the remaining figures for the school double-checked for consistency. In addition, these figures were checked with the previous year’s responses for the school for consistency.

**Scope of the Study**

This study, while based on comprehensive data, did not seek to analyse every aspect of that data; such a task is beyond the scope of the present study. It did not examine the teaching qualifications by language and gender (except in a limited aspect with Chinese), even though this data is present in the survey. Similarly, the impact of language assistants, cultural activities and tours was not studied, important though they might be. Nor did the study look at individual teachers. It did not, for example, determine the impact a particular teacher has on student retention, on engaging and inspiring students, nor on their performance level in the Victorian Certificate of Education. These things are very worthwhile, but beyond the scope of this study. As discussed, this study is a quantitative one, not a qualitative one. As such the study did not seek out attitudes of students, parents or teachers to the learning of languages, important as they are in forming the full picture of languages in Victorian independent schools.

Nor did it examine trends. The data cover a relatively short period, 2009-2013, arguably too short to see genuine shifts in languages. It should be noted that although ISV provided me with data from 2009 to 2013, I have focused only on the most recent year, 2013. There were a number of reasons for this. 2013 was the only year for which ISV provided demographic data, thus I was able to link data on language programmes with features of the schools which taught these languages, such as school size, location and gender composition; this made some of the analysis possible. The 2013 data were the closest to the present day, and thus could give the nearest approximation to the current state of language learning in Victorian independent schools; if schools are to use the findings of this study, the closer they are to the present time, the more useful they
will be in explaining current situations. Last, because the overall time scale was quite small - only five years separated the first and last years of data collection - and the policy and curriculum situations were largely constant during this period, there might be less longitudinal data that could be drawn from comparing across years. However, that period saw the continued implementation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP), with increased funding for Asian languages, as well as the final years of the SLP. It would be useful to compare language data from that period, to a few years’ time, once the impacts of the cessation of the SLP and NALSSP, and the introduction of the Australian Curriculum for Languages, have taken effect in schools. That task remains for the future, and at least the comparative data from the NALSSP and pre-Australian Curriculum for Languages period exist.

IN SUMMARY

Early on in this study I had to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of using data already collected by an outside agency. The advantage of using my own survey was that I could tailor the questions to suit my research interest; the advantages of using the ISV SLP Survey data were that I could still investigate my original question, plus many more; the data were already collected and entered into spreadsheets; and there had been near universal responses from the survey audience, which was far wider than I could expect to reach. The main disadvantage was that the survey data were restricted to independent schools only. I felt that the advantages were sufficient to outweigh the disadvantage. The data themselves came from a survey developed by ISV to administer the federal grants for language programmes in schools, which was completed by almost every independent school in Victoria for the life of the programme.

I decided to carry out a quantitative analysis of the data with two aims. The first was to render the data into a format that I could understand and would enable me to gain an understanding of the overview of both language learning in general in the sector and within individual languages. The methodology best suited for this was Descriptive Research, which ‘asks what is or what was; it reports things the way that are or were. Descriptive research does not involve the manipulation of independent variables. Descriptive research provides very valuable data, particularly when first investigating
an area’ (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997, p. 281). This meant also that I was following in the footsteps of Liddicoat et al. whose 2007 report *An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian Schools* set the standard for such research in languages in Australia. I was then inspired by Grounded Theory for the second part of my study; Grounded Theory has the strengths of positioning the data before the theory; the data pre-exist the creation of a theory, and lead to it, rather than the theory pre-existing the data and the data being collected to test the theory; these strengths suited both my use of a large amount of data that had already been collected, which could reveal patterns and findings that were ‘waiting to be discovered’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 598). Grounded Theory is most often associated with qualitative research, with the researcher collecting the data, but I felt that while I could not claim to be following its dictates to the letter - especially the more onerous conditions set by one of its founders, Glaser - I could usefully utilise it for my study.

My choice of methods was driven by these methodologies and the nature of the data. There was need of considerable manipulation of the spreadsheet provided to me by ISV, mostly in the form of using the filtering, sorting, addition, averaging, standard deviation, ‘countif’ and correlation functions. On some occasions it was easier to do simple counts manually. Each of the main research questions developed into a series of smaller questions to elect the information I needed; each required me to carry out different operations on the data to isolate the elements I required.

In terms of validity, the survey was not threatened by construct under-representation (where the survey is 'too narrow and fails to include important dimensions of the construct’), as the survey items were exhaustive and generally covered more than enough for the purposes of the study; nor by construct-irrelevant variance (where test scores 'are affected by variables that are extraneous to the construct’) (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson and Walker, 2014, p. 243): any items in the survey not used by this study did not detract from the reliability of the data in other items. There were limitations to this study; it was quantitative, not qualitative; and because the accompanying demographic data were confined to one year only, I could not describe trends, only the situation in 2013. Moreover, the data were only from one sector, in one state. These limitations, however, do not invalidate the potential significance of the findings of this study.

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Chapter 4: Findings: Overview

In this chapter I present an overview of the analysis of the data on the participants and languages, providing a context for the later discussion on each of the key issues explored in this study.

PARTICIPANTS

School Location, Gender Type and Size: Findings

The ISV SLP Survey data were interrogated about characteristics of the schools - their location, gender type and size. This information was included on the demographic tab in the Excel spreadsheet. For location, the choice was between regional and metropolitan; no other identifying details were included. This is presented in Table 4.1 below:

*Table 4.1: Location of Schools (N = 203)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melbourne Metropolitan Schools</th>
<th>Regional and Rural Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicated that 142 of the schools were from the Melbourne metropolitan area, with 61 from regional Victoria. In the survey no distinction was made between regional and rural schools.

Schools were categorised in the survey as being boys-only, girls-only or co-educational:

*Table 4.2: Gender Type of Schools (N = 203)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-educational Schools</th>
<th>Girls Only Schools</th>
<th>Boys Only Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86.21%</td>
<td>8.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of schools (86.21%) were co-educational, with only 13.79% of schools being single-sex.

Schools were asked to identify their size for the survey. Four options were given (the classifications are those devised by ISV): Very small school (<100 students); Small
school (100-499 students); Medium school (500-999 students); and Large school (1000+ students). The results are shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Size of Schools (N = 203)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Very small school (&lt;100 students)</th>
<th>Small school (100-499 students)</th>
<th>Medium school (500-999 students)</th>
<th>Large school (1000+ students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.17%</td>
<td>34.48%</td>
<td>19.21%</td>
<td>23.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schools were spread across a range of sizes. Approximately a quarter (22.17%) were very small schools, with a student population of under 100; many of these were primary only, or schools that served a specific constituency, such as a particular ethnic group or students with a specific disability. The largest group of schools (34.48%) had between 100 and 499 students. 19.21% were classed as medium sized schools, with between 500 and 999 students. Nearly a quarter (23.65%) were large schools with a population of over 1000 students.

School Location, Gender Type and Size: Discussion

School location reflects the overall population of Victoria: in June 2013, the same year that the survey data were collected, the ABS listed Victoria’s population as 5.74 million (ABS, 2013), with Melbourne accounting for 4.35 million. This gave a Melbourne: rest of Victoria general population ratio of 75.78%. The Victorian independent schools ratio of Melbourne schools: rest of Victoria schools was 69.95%, thus generally reflecting the overall demographics of the state as a whole.

While the perception of independent schools is often dominated by the high profile single-sex schools, the reality is far different. Such schools accounted for only 13.79% of the total number of schools; the vast majority of Victorian independent schools are co-educational. However, the fact that there were 18 girls-only schools, and 9 boys-only schools, did allow for comparisons between what occurs in co-educational schools, and boys-only or girls-only schools to be made. This comparison can only be meaningfully made in the independent sector. Currently, there are only four single-sex government schools in Victoria (Melbourne High School, MacRobertsons Girls’ High School, Melbourne Girls’ School and Canterbury Girls’ Secondary College), only one of which - Melbourne High School - is boys-only. The larger number of single-sex schools in the
independent sector means that these schools can be a specific focus of research, especially in questions of boys’ levels of participation in language learning, and whether the setting of a boys-only school or a co-educational school, is a factor.

School size is important because a small school might find it difficult to staff languages. Generally, the bigger schools offered more languages (see discussion on table 4.6 below). This may be due to the economics of employing a specialist teacher, as the larger the school, the greater the leeway to employ specialists with a small teaching load. The range of sizes allowed for language learning to be investigated in a range of size settings, from very small to large.

**School Socio-Economic Status (SES): Findings**

Socio-Economic Status (SES) scores are used to determine most independent schools’ level of federal funding, and can serve as an indicator of the relative wealth of the school population. A small proportion of independent schools have no SES: these receive federal funding on different bases, usually because of high enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, or children with a disability. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collects data on four dimensions for the SES using its censuses and other means: the level of education attained by the parents; the family and household income; and the parents’ occupation. These are averaged by the ABS for each Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) - that is, a geographical area of approximately 400 people (ABS, 2011): this gives the SES for each SA1. These are cross-checked with the addresses of the parents of children attending the school, and from that an average SES for the school is obtained (*Australian Education Regulations 2013*, Cth). This is used to determine the relative wealth, educational level and occupation status of the background of students attending a school. While this method has received some criticism, its robustness has been defended by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Radisch and Wise, 2012, p. 35).

Schools’ SES scores were included in the demographic tab of the ISV SLP Survey data. There is no universally accepted definition of ‘low’ and ‘high’ SES; accordingly, I divided the range of SES scores into ten sets, of 5 points each, covering the national
range of SES scores. For the ISV Survey schools, there were no schools in the bottom or top sets, and 16 schools had no SES score, for the reasons stated above.

*Table 4.4: SES of ISV Schools (N = 203)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>SES not stated</th>
<th>SES 85-89</th>
<th>SES 90-94</th>
<th>SES 95-99</th>
<th>SES 100-104</th>
<th>SES 105-109</th>
<th>SES 110-114</th>
<th>SES 115-119</th>
<th>SES 120-126</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Federal Government has made publicly available the SES figures for all Australian schools for 2013 (Department of Education and Training, 2014a). Using this data I was able to plot SES scores for all Australian schools using the same scale as for Table 4.4. Because of the number of schools, I recorded these as percentages of the total number of schools, rather than the number of schools in each set. Table 4.5 shows these scores, while the bottom row shows the corresponding percentages of Victorian independent schools.

*Table 4.5: SES of all Australian Schools - percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Australian Schools</th>
<th>SES 81-84</th>
<th>SES 85-89</th>
<th>SES 90-94</th>
<th>SES 95-99</th>
<th>SES 100-104</th>
<th>SES 105-109</th>
<th>SES 110-114</th>
<th>SES 115-119</th>
<th>SES 120-126</th>
<th>SES 127-131</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>2.52%</td>
<td>5.38%</td>
<td>12.23%</td>
<td>67.49%</td>
<td>3.56%</td>
<td>2.28%</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victorian independent schools</th>
<th>SES 81-84</th>
<th>SES 85-89</th>
<th>SES 90-94</th>
<th>SES 95-99</th>
<th>SES 100-104</th>
<th>SES 105-109</th>
<th>SES 110-114</th>
<th>SES 115-119</th>
<th>SES 120-126</th>
<th>SES 127-131</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.41%</td>
<td>15.84%</td>
<td>16.83%</td>
<td>14.36%</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
<td>6.44%</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Socio-Economic Status (SES): Discussion**

The ISV Survey schools had a spread of SES scores that differed to this nationally for all schools. Across all Australian schools, SES scores are not normally distributed across schools; instead, they are very highly concentrated in the middle, with two-thirds having an SES score of 101. The lowest score was 81, and the highest 131, but there were relatively few high or low scores: 73.45% of schools had an SES score of 98-103. This indicates that, on the whole, there was little socio-economic difference between the majority of Australian schools. There were certainly several high and low SES schools, but the great majority were very closely clustered around the middle.
This differs from the pattern for Victorian independent schools, which shows a much more even spread. I used this to construct a histogram of all Australian schools, which could be used as a means of comparison with the participant ISV schools. The difference is best illustrated by comparing the histograms for all schools, and Victorian independent schools, Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

Figure 4.1: SES Score Distribution: All Schools

The histograms show the dense cluster of SES scores around 101 for all schools in Australia, compared to the more even spread for Victorian independent schools. Victorian independent schools thus do not have the same heavy clustering around the middle, but rather show greater representation of the ends of the continuum. The lower end of the SES scores for the ISV SLP Survey schools are slightly better represented than the upper ends, contrary perhaps to the public perception of independent schools as being only for the well-healed. This means that in the survey, schools at the top and

Figure 4.2: SES Score Distribution: Victorian independent schools
bottom ends of the SES index were more strongly represented than is the case for the national and state averages, providing insights into language learning at both ends of the continuum. The overview carried out for this study revealed that some languages do seem to be situated in a particular economic bracket; languages learnt in the lower SES schools tended to be community languages and the languages of what might be presumed to be more recent migrant groups from the Middle East (Arabic, Coptic, Syriac, Turkish), while in the higher SES schools students were learning the traditional foreign languages such as French, or classical languages. Chinese was taught in schools with a relatively high SES. Language participation rates and SES will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

LANGUAGES

Language Enrolments - Nationally: Findings

In Australia’s federal system, education is a state responsibility, and each state conducts its own matriculation certificate\(^6\). Each state can choose which languages will be offered, and the level of compulsory language study. All states provide information about the subjects offered at senior secondary levels for their students. These were tabulated in Table 4.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA/NT</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of languages offered at Senior Secondary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: VCAA (2015a), SACE Board of SA (2015), Board of Studies (2015), Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2015), School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia (2015), Tasmania Department of Education (2015))

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\(^6\) Recently, with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, there has been a homogenisation of curricula across the states. At the time of writing the languages component of the Australian Curriculum had only just been introduced.
Some smaller states, such as Tasmania, offer only six languages, while larger states such as Victoria and New South Wales offer 48 and 32 respectively.

Using public data for final year courses on the websites of state curriculum authorities, I calculated individual subject enrolments for 2013. Adding those for all languages together, and comparing them to the total enrolment for the secondary qualification, it was possible to determine the proportion of students by state learning languages (it should be noted that some students may study more than one language, but this should not necessarily favour any one state). Data for Tasmania, the ACT and Western Australia were unavailable.

Table 4.7: Year 12 Students studying Languages, by State, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total number of students studying at least one language at Year 12</th>
<th>Total number of students undertaking Year 12</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>7,235</td>
<td>85,449</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>50,069</td>
<td>8.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia/ Northern Territory</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>21,857</td>
<td>4.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>10,187</td>
<td>51,266</td>
<td>19.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22,680</td>
<td>208,641</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: VCAA (2014), Board of Studies (2013), Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2013) SACE Board of SA (2013))

**Language Enrolments - Nationally: Discussion**

Victoria stands out with the highest proportion of matriculation students learning languages. The low rate for South Australia is possibly due to recent changes in the South Australian Certificate of Education, that state’s matriculation qualification, where the requirement for study was reduced from 5 or 6 subjects in Year 12, down to 4; to a large extent, languages seem disproportionately to have been the subject dropped by students. The reasons for this, and the extent, are themselves areas for further research.

Despite having a much larger cohort studying HSC (the NSW matriculation certificate), there are fewer language students overall in New South Wales than in Victoria. The reasons for this are themselves a topic for research, although two possible factors
present themselves. First, there are considerably more languages on offer to Victorian students than in any other state, as shown by Table 1.1: this large number of languages arguably makes it easier for students to choose a language to study, although many have very small enrolments. Second, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) gives a bonus for tertiary admission for students studying a language at Units 3 and 4 (VTAC, 2016a). Both of these factors may have had a part to play in the comparatively strong figures for language learning in Victoria.

International comparisons with Australia’s rates of language learning are illuminating. In the non-English-speaking OECD countries, the situation is significantly different. Bense (2011) outlined the situation in Germany, with language study being demonstrably highly valued. For many students, their language learning began in preschool, and students continued with ‘mandatory study of one or more foreign languages at secondary level until the end of high school’ (p. 487). By contrast, the situation in English-speaking countries is more similar to the Australian experience. Direct comparisons are difficult to make, as data are not always available, and some comparable countries, such as England, have significantly different senior secondary structures. For example, in the English A levels students typically study three or four subjects over two years, while in Victoria students typically study six subjects at Year 11 and five at Year 12; this means there is not a useful basis for comparison. Nevertheless trends seem comparable. In the English A Level, Board and Tinsley (2015) reported that ‘over the 18 years from 1996 to 2014, entries for French and German have declined by 60 per cent’, while ‘recent falls in French and German have been particularly severe: nine and ten per cent respectively between 2012 and 2013, followed by an eight per cent decline for French and a further two per cent decline for German between 2013 and 2014’ (p. 30). In Scotland, which has a system more similar to the Australian model, approximately 10% of students studying 'Highers' are learning languages (Reynolds and Kemp, 2013). In New Zealand, of the 10,965 students sitting the 'scholarship' testing in senior secondary, 928 were for languages, or 8.46% (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2014). The picture that emerges is that in English-speaking countries languages learning is often in decline rather than growth. By contrast, 'for several
decades it has been mandatory for most European children to learn at least one foreign language during their compulsory education' (European Commission, 2015).

The low rate of language learning at Senior Secondary levels in Australia is disappointing, and flies in the face of government support (see Chapter 1). Languages seem to have met a perfect storm of obstacles: the large number of languages, making it difficult to resource all adequately; the problem in supplying teachers; and the lack of continuity between primary and secondary schools (in Australia many primary schools are completely separate from secondary schools, meaning that a student may invest several years at primary school learning a language that they will be unable to continue at secondary level) (Liddicoat et al., 2007, pp. 151-158).

One further reason may be that parents and children in Australia have not yet been convinced of the necessity of learning a language. Curnow, Liddicoat, and Scarino (2007) noted that parents are well aware of the benefits of knowing a language, and generally supportive of these. What they are not convinced about is that knowing a language is a necessity:

However, a strong distinction is made between a language being ‘useful’ and a language being ‘necessary’, and only ‘necessary’ subjects are studied at school; in a large-scale Scottish survey it was shown that students did consider that a language would have a long-term benefit in their lives (whether for travel, leisure, or their career), but that this was something they would think about studying in the future, after they had received their degree, or already got their job, and the same appears to be true in Australia. (p. 11)

The difficulty is that for the current generation of parents, languages were perhaps not perceived as a necessity when they were at school, and they are passing this belief on to their children - for whom a far different future awaits. The British Council have identified the change in the necessity of learning a language for English speakers:

There is no denying the importance of English as a common means of communication across the world, or its strength as the first foreign language of choice for most non-Anglophone countries. But David Graddol’s 2006 analysis of global language trends was a timely warning against complacency regarding the predominance of English worldwide. He predicted that the competitive advantage of English will ebb and that monolingual English speakers, unable to tap into the
multilingual environments enjoyed by others, would face a bleak economic future. (British Council, 2013, p. 4)

Arguably, this argument has not been made satisfactorily to parents and children - the dissemination of the benefits of learning a language to the public consciousness has not been apparent in the same way that the importance of mathematics and science have become mainstream (compare, for example, the success of the STEM strategy, as outlined in Office of the Chief Scientist, 2013). Nor is this new; in a 2007 report from the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council as a response to the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA, 2005), this was identified by parents and teachers as one of the most pressing issues for language education in Australia:

> When asked for suggestions about how languages could be strengthened in schools, many people commented that one of the first things to do was to convince parents and the general community of the benefits of languages education. (ACOSS, 2007, p. 83)

This was echoed in Britain, which shares Australia’s low levels of language learning, in a recent report on language trends for the British Council:

> There is one further issue which is contributing to the difficult climate for languages in schools which plays a significant role in deterring students who are capable of becoming good linguists from studying a language. That is the widely held belief that languages are not important in comparison with mathematics and science subjects. The view that other subjects are more useful in careers, that everyone speaks English and that it is easier to achieve examination success in other school subjects is commonplace. (Tinsley and Board, 2015, p. 138)

The views of Curnow, Liddicoat and Scarino, ACOSS and the British Council are borne out by the figures on language learning in Australia. It is hoped that the solutions they have also presented, in helping persuade the public of the necessity of learning a language, will also be borne out in years to come.
Within Victoria, language learning is spread unevenly across sectors. Students in Victorian independent schools learn languages at twice the rate of students in Victorian government schools (Fullarton and Ainsley, 2000, p. 25).

A total of 24 different languages were taught in Victorian independent schools in 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Greek (Ancient)</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auslan (Australian Sign Language)</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic spoken across parts of Syria and the Middle East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptic (a version of Egyptian used in the Coptic church)</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Makaton (a language programme devised for people with Down syndrome, autism, and other conditions)</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Indigenous languages</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Sanskrit (the sacred language of Hinduism)</td>
<td>Yiddish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the demographic data, each school indicated how many languages they offered to their students, by typing in the number. These results are collated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of languages offered</th>
<th>Offering 1 language</th>
<th>Offering 2 languages</th>
<th>Offering 3 languages</th>
<th>Offering 4 languages</th>
<th>Offering 5 languages</th>
<th>Offering 6 languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>85 (41.87%)</td>
<td>52 (25.62%)</td>
<td>19 (9.36%)</td>
<td>14 (6.90%)</td>
<td>8 (3.94%)</td>
<td>5 (2.46%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the respondent schools, 41.87% offered only one language, 34.98% offered two or three, and 13.30% offered four or more. Of the schools that offered only one language, 34 were primary only schools, with small or very small school populations. 25 schools taught a specific community language, or a language linked to a characteristic of the students, such as Auslan (Australian Sign Language, used by people with impaired hearing) or Makaton (a language programme devised for people with Down syndrome, autism, and other conditions). This reflects the fact that many independent schools are formed to serve the needs of a specific constituency, such as a religious or ethnic group.
Of the schools which offered four or more languages, 18 out of 27 were large schools, with a population of over 1000.

The ISV SLP Survey data were filtered for each language, and then the total number of students calculated by adding the columns for boys and girls in each year level. The number of schools teaching each language was calculated manually. These were compared to the the total number of students from Foundation to Year 12 (126,377) and schools (203) covered by the survey.

By student numbers, the ten most frequently learnt languages were:

Table 4.9: Ten Languages most frequently taught in Victorian independent schools, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total Number of Students, Years P-12</th>
<th>% of total number of Students</th>
<th>Total Number of Schools where Taught</th>
<th>% of total number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>29,080</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>43.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>16,318</td>
<td>12.91%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>15,994</td>
<td>12.66%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>11,747</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>9,075</td>
<td>7.18%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>4,189</td>
<td>3.31%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>4,176</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td>2.29%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 explore these statistics in greater detail. As well as showing the total number of students and schools for each language, student numbers are also broken down by gender, showing any possible imbalances. The schools which taught each language were denoted on the spreadsheet by a random identification number; these were cross-matched for each language with the school’s SES index score, which were then averaged to give the average SES score of the schools that taught the language.
Table 4.10: Languages by Number of Students, Number of Schools, Gender and SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total Number of Students, Years P-12</th>
<th>Total Number of Schools where Taught</th>
<th>Total Number of Girls, Years P-12</th>
<th>Total Number of Boys, Years P-12</th>
<th>Average SES of Schools teaching this Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>5,741</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,964</td>
<td>2,777</td>
<td>93.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>95.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptic</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>29,080</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>17,222</td>
<td>11,858</td>
<td>109.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>11,747</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5,638</td>
<td>6,109</td>
<td>108.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>102.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek (Ancient)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>108.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>4,486</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2,308</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>104.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous languages</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>9,075</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4,466</td>
<td>4,609</td>
<td>102.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>104.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>16,318</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8,416</td>
<td>7,902</td>
<td>107.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>111.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makaton</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>15,994</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7,806</td>
<td>8,188</td>
<td>110.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>116.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>112.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syriac</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>1,403</td>
<td>91.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>98.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language Enrolments - Victorian independent schools: Discussion

It is difficult to make judgements about the number of languages offered by individual schools, as there are no benchmarks to allow comparison to determine whether the number of languages offered is higher or lower than expected. It would be very useful to determine how many languages are offered according to school size, and this study may be a first step in helping to establish benchmarks for comparison (although the number of languages offered does not necessarily equate to the number of students learning languages in a school; European schools may only teach one language - English - but still have very high levels of language learning).

These top ten rankings differ from the national picture, which showed at 2005 that Japanese was number one, followed by Italian, Indonesian, French, German, Chinese, Spanish, Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese (Liddicoat et al., 2007). In Victoria, in 2001, the ranking was Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, French, German, Chinese, Greek and Vietnamese (Department of Education and Training, 2002). (More recent statistics tend to cover senior secondary levels only. These can differ significantly from enrolments in all year levels, as the enrolments for some languages peak in primary school; see Chapter 6.) In Victorian independent schools in 2013, the traditional foreign languages French and German dominated, while Indonesian had dropped in popularity relative to national and state rankings. Japanese was strong; Italian - second nationally - was surprisingly low, while Latin had healthy numbers. These positions might reflect the different priorities of the client group of independent schools, as will be discussed in the following chapters. It is worthwhile noting that overall language numbers are no indication of the number of students studying a language at senior secondary level, nor are they indicative of the amount of time a student receives in instruction in the language; it is possible that a language’s numbers may be bolstered by large numbers of students learning the language for a small amount of time, as will be examined in the following chapters.

Languages which have importance for a particular segment of the community, but not the community in general, tend to be over-represented in independent schools, possibly because many independent schools cater to a specific community group. For example, Hebrew was number 12 in the national, cross-sectoral analysis of Liddicoat et al., but
number 7 in Victorian independent schools. This is because there are a number of independent schools which cater for the Jewish community, and in many of these Hebrew is compulsory for a number of years, as was indicated in responses to the ISV SLP Survey. Highly specialised languages such as Coptic, Sanskrit and Syriac also fall into the same category, albeit with smaller numbers, as they are taught in schools which serve the Coptic, Hindu and Syriac Christian communities. This notion of specialisation as important for languages in Victorian independent schools - often as the *raison d’être* for many independent schools - is backed up by the large number of languages that are taught in only one school: Ancient Greek, Hindi, Makaton, Romanian, Sanskrit, Syriac, Thai and Vietnamese. By concentrating in an independent school, a community might be able to reach the critical mass whereby it would be economically feasible to provide a teacher in a particular language. This situation would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach in a generalist school, such as most government schools, where the concentration of students with a background in, say, Syriac Christianity might never reach a level where a teacher is justified (although such students may be able instead to learn through the Victorian School of Languages or a community language school).

At the other end of the scale, French dominated, being taught in 89 schools, or 43.07%. This wide coverage of French put it significantly apart from all of the other languages, and clearly ahead of the second most popular language, Chinese, which was taught in 57 or 28.22% of the schools. The next group of languages, German, Indonesian and Japanese, were taught in approximately 20% of schools. Japanese and Indonesian were taught in the same number of schools - 44 - but there was a significant difference in the number of students: 16,318 Japanese students compared to 9,075 Indonesian students. These two languages are examined in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4.10 showed clear difference in student numbers by gender for some languages. Overall, 54,534 girls learnt languages, compared to 49,653 boys; this disparity could not be due solely to a corresponding imbalance in the enrolments in the schools surveyed, where there were in total 64,115 girls and 62,261 boys. Discounting those

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7 Many students learn more than one language, particularly at Years 7 and 8. This leads to an inflated number of students learning languages, but this affects boys and girls equally. The ISV SLP Survey did not distinguish between students who learnt one or more than one language, and none of the figures collected by other agencies reflect this either, including senior secondary statistics.
languages which have a total candidature of fewer than 50 students, of the 24 languages taught, just over half (13) were evenly spread between the genders, with a difference between the genders of less than 5%. For the rest, 5 languages had significantly more girls than boys, with Indigenous languages showing the greatest imbalance - albeit within a small cohort and a very small number of schools - and French - the biggest language in both number of students, and number of schools where it is taught - showing the next highest imbalance (a difference of 18.45%). Two languages had significantly more boys than girls, both of them highly specialised languages: Syriac (86.15% boys) and Latin (57.80% boys). Some of this difference may be due to the presence of single-sex schools, but it must be remembered that the vast majority of schools were co-educational; boys-only schools made up only 4.46% of the schools. This might skew the results for a language with a small number of schools, where those schools are single-sex only. This is the case for Ancient Greek, and to some extent for Latin, but is certainly not the case for French. This issue will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

The SES shows some interesting characteristics of the learners of particular languages. Latin, which tends to be taught in established, high fee-paying independent schools, was taught in schools with on average a high SES: 111.79. By contrast, for Arabic, which is taught as a community language largely for members of the Arabic speaking migrant community, the average SES is 93.62. In general, traditional foreign languages and classical languages were taught at schools with a higher SES than community languages.

**CONCLUSION**

This overview highlights some of the areas that have merited more in depth examination, as well as providing a context for the understanding of the position of Victorian independent schools in relation to these issues. The survey had a near perfect response rate, reflecting the incentives to complete the survey and the status of the body seeking the information. The participant group reflected the overall Victorian population well in terms of the divide between city and country, with Melbourne metropolitan schools mirroring the overall population. Schools represented a range of
sizes, with all categories - very small, small, medium and large - being almost equally well represented. The SES was more spread than that for schools in the state and nationally, thus providing an opportunity to investigate what happens at the ends of this continuum. Large numbers of schools taught only one language, with many of these being primary only schools, or schools with a particular ethnic or religious affiliation. In all, 24 languages were taught, with most students learning French, Japanese or Chinese, but there was a large number of small enrolment languages and languages which catered for a very particular segment of the community. Differences in participation between boys and girls were more marked in some languages than others, as were differences of socio-economic status.
Chapter 5: Individual Languages

In this chapter a number of languages are examined more closely for details of their enrolments. The languages were selected as representatives of the various categories of languages, as discussed below. Using the ISV Survey data, all schools teaching a particular language were grouped together. Calculations were then made of:

- the total number of students learning the language at any level in Victorian independent schools;
- the number of schools and teachers teaching the language;
- the gender breakdown of Year 12 students; and
- the socio-economic status and locality (regional or metropolitan) of the schools teaching the language.

This created a snapshot of the individual languages, which can be used in a number of ways: it can provide a convenient overview of the language; it can be used as a basis for comparison with other languages; and it can serve as a benchmark for measuring future change (for example, to measure any impact of the Australian Curriculum languages). Further, these investigations reveal some of the issues facing languages in general in Victorian independent schools - such as the concentration of numbers in primary school but low levels in secondary school, sharp drops in retention, or marked gender imbalances.

Language Groupings

In total, 24 different languages were taught in the participant schools. I have subdivided these into a series of groupings: traditional foreign languages; community languages excluding Chinese; Chinese; Asian languages; Indigenous languages; and classical languages. The groupings are not mutually exclusive, and some languages are included in several categories. While there will be some overlap between these groupings, depending on the background of the individual learner, they remain useful distinctions. Traditional foreign languages included the languages that are generally learnt as L2 languages in Victoria, although there might be a small percentage of L1 speakers.
These languages include French, German, Indonesian and Spanish. Community languages were Arabic, Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Romanian, Sanskrit, Syriac, Turkish, Vietnamese and Yiddish; Chinese was excluded not because it is not a community language, but because its special place in Australian language policy warrants it being a focus in its own right. Asian languages included Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese, Vietnamese and Thai, while Ancient Greek and Latin were classed as classical languages. Chinese, whether for L1 or L2 learners, was counted as one language, as was Indonesian and Japanese.

The number of students, at any year level, learning the languages according to the language grouping was calculated from the ISV SLP Survey data. These figures were compared with the total number of students included in the survey:

Table 5.1: Types of Languages Offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of language</th>
<th>Traditional Foreign Languages</th>
<th>Community Languages (excluding Chinese)</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Asian Languages (excluding Chinese)</th>
<th>Indigenous Languages</th>
<th>Classical Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students, any year level</td>
<td>50,997</td>
<td>18,417</td>
<td>15,994</td>
<td>25,653</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of all students</td>
<td>40.35%</td>
<td>14.57%</td>
<td>12.66%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traditional foreign languages, despite decades of the drive for Asian languages, remain strongest. Similarly, community languages excluding Chinese had a very large overall number of students. Chinese on its own accounted for a significant number of students, and was taught as both a foreign language and a community language; the other Asian languages also had strong numbers. Indigenous languages remained a very small group, and have not captured the student, parent and school interest in the same way that other languages have.

**TRADITIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

The most popular traditional foreign languages in Victorian independent schools were French, German and Indonesian (for discussions of Indonesian, see below on Asian Languages).
French: Findings

The data showed that French was the single most studied language among the respondents, reflecting its strong position in all schools in the state. For this, and the other language snapshots in this chapter, I determined the total number of students learning a language, from Foundation to Year 12, the number of schools, the average SES of those schools and their location; the data were filtered by language and counted the number of teachers, converted to Full Time Equivalent, for the language; finally, the number of boys and girls in Year 12 for that language were calculated. The results are below, with the data in table form available in Appendix 1:

**Figure 5.1: French Infographic**

French was taught in 89, or 44.06% of Victorian independent schools, more schools than any other language, and over 30 more than its nearest rival, Chinese (57 schools). This widespread teaching has translated into strong numbers, with more students...
learning French than any other language. The socio-economic profile for French is relatively affluent, and although students in a very wide range of SES scores learnt French, it was especially studied in higher SES schools. The split between metropolitan and regional schools mirrors the general split of schools, indicating that French was equally popular in both areas. In a significant number of schools (16), French had been chosen as the sole language taught in that school, a sign perhaps of its popularity and acceptance by parent groups. Of the 18 girls-only schools, 15 taught French; by contrast, only 5 of the 9 boys-only schools taught French. The teaching body was overwhelming female, with a ratio of female teachers to male teachers of 4.49:1.

Using the figures already calculated for the number of students learning French by year level and gender, the following the Student Distribution Profile was created (this same method was used for other languages in this chapter).

The Student Distribution profile (Figure 5.2) shows that French was strongest in secondary schools. While there were many students learning French in primary schools, these were far outnumbered by the influx of students at Years 7 and 8; this is when students are entering secondary school and beginning their secondary study of languages. The gender imbalance, noticeable in Figure 5.2, is more stark when just the secondary years are focused on:
By gender (Table 5.2), girls outnumbered boys in Year 7, and as the years progress, the proportion of boys learning French steadily diminished (this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7).

**German: Findings**

The second most popular traditional foreign language in Victorian independent schools was German.
German was taught in 48 schools or 23.76% of Victorian independent schools, giving large numbers of students. The socio-economic profile for German was relatively affluent, although not quite as high as French. German was taught proportionally in equal numbers in metropolitan and regional schools. In many schools (13), German was the sole language taught in that school, proportionally higher than French. German was less popular than French in the girls-only schools, and only 5 of the 18 taught it; however, only 3 of the 9 boys-only schools taught German. The teaching body was, like French, overwhelming female, with a ratio of female teachers to male teachers of 4.40:1.

The number of students, divided by gender, learning German at each year level is plotted below.

The Student Distribution profile (Figure 5.4) shows that like French, German was strongest in secondary schools, although the difference was not quite so marked as in French. Again, there was a strong spike in Years 7 and 8, and then a steady decline after that. In Years 7, 8 and 9, boys outnumbered girls, but from Year 10 onwards girls began to outnumber boys. The sharpest difference was in Year 12, where girls outnumbered boys at a ratio of 3:2 - an unusual outcome, given the parity between the genders in previous years.
French and German: Discussion

In Victorian independent schools, it is clear that the traditional foreign languages were still the most popular. This is to be expected given the aforementioned history of language learning in Australia, and still arguably reflects a Euro-centric past. Of these languages, French and German account for the majority of students. This might reflect the hangover of Australia’s British colonial origins, where these languages were privileged and were of greater practical use, given Britain’s proximity and trade connections with continental Europe. This in turn impacts on the availability of teaching materials, and the ready availability of high quality teaching material for popular languages from the United Kingdom should not be discounted in influencing schools’ decisions on which languages to teach. It might also reflect the closed cycle nature of language teaching in Australia. Realistically, a student can only choose from the languages offered by their school; this gives them a predisposition to study these at university; some then return to schools to teach these same languages. Perhaps this tradition also operates on parents and school administrators: if they are familiar with the languages that were taught when they were at school, it might be easier for them to continue with those languages rather than to make confronting decisions to change. These reasons might account for the continuing strength of languages such as French and German, which arguably represent an economic and cultural past rather than future.

The popularity of French and German is at odds with the theories of language learning motivation discussed in Chapter 2. The instrumental orientation - that is, the practical usefulness of these languages (Clément et al., 1994, pp. 419-420) - is less for Australians than Britons. Even travel as a motivator is undermined by the very large number of English speakers in France and Germany (foreign language study - usually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of boys</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of boys</td>
<td>55.28%</td>
<td>51.11%</td>
<td>54.16%</td>
<td>44.85%</td>
<td>47.88%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English - is compulsory in France and Germany at secondary school at least: Liddicoat et al. 2007, pp. 27-29). The integrative orientation, where students view themselves as speakers of the languages and participants in the culture (Dornyei, 2003, pp. 4-7), suffers from the comparatively small French and German communities in Victoria, especially when compared to the highly visible Asian cultures, and the mainstreaming of Asian culture through videos, music and comics. This leaves the two motivating factors that receive the least attention from researchers such as Dörnyei: classroom practices/intrinsic motivation and societal expectations. Possibly the real reasons for the popularity of French and German are a combination of these: good, engaging classroom practice, and the general acceptance of these languages as suitable for study. If this is the case, then classroom practice is of even greater importance than the overseas research might indicate (although Nikolov, 1999, did make similar findings).

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES
As noted in Chapter 2, the growth in community languages was a result of the post war migration schemes, especially in Victoria from Italy and Greece. In later decades, migrants from South East Asia and the Middle East have changed the language profile. Most recently, the large numbers of migrants from China have impacted on language patterns in the state, and Chinese will be examined with the Asian languages.

Three community languages have been chosen for close examination: Italian, Greek and Arabic. These have substantial numbers of students and were taught in a number of schools, unlike many community languages which were only studied in one or two schools, and had small enrolments. Italian and Greek represent the more established community languages, and are major languages in Victoria’s education system overall. Arabic is a relatively newer member of the community languages.

Italian: Findings
The data were examined to determine how many students, in how many schools, learnt Italian out of the Independent Schools. 6.93% of Victorian independent schools, a total of 14 schools, taught Italian, with 2,370 students learning Italian across all year levels. Both metropolitan and regional schools were well represented (n = 9 and 5 respectively), a slightly higher proportion for regional schools than languages such as
French and German; this might be because of pockets of established Italian migration in regional areas, such as northern Victoria. Five of the 14 schools were primary schools only, and in half of the schools Italian was the only language offered. The gender gap in teachers was very pronounced, with a female to male teacher ratio of 10.75:1.

**Figure 5.5: Italian Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)**

The Student Distribution profile (Figure 5.6) shows that Italian was strongest in primary schools. While there was an influx of students in Year 8, this very rapidly dwindled to small levels, with boys dropping the language to a high degree.
Greek: Findings

Figure 5.7: Greek Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)

Three schools taught Greek, with 722 students learning Greek across all year levels. All three schools were in the Melbourne metropolitan area, and in two of the three schools Greek was the only language offered. In one school Greek was compulsory.
from Prep to Year 9; in one it was compulsory from Prep to Year 10, while in the other it was compulsory in Year 4 only.

**Arabic: Findings**

Arabic was taught in 8 schools, but there were still quite high numbers of students. The socio-economic profile for Arabic was lower than for Italian and Greek, which may reflect the position of Arabic speakers as relative newcomers to Australia when compared to the Italians and Greeks. Arabic was taught only in metropolitan schools. In many schools (5), Arabic was the sole language taught in that school. Arabic was taught in none of the single-sex schools. The teaching body was more balanced, although still with more female than male; the ratio of female teachers to male teachers was 1.63:1.

![Arabic Infographic](see Appendix 1 for data)
Community languages: Discussion

This picture of community languages in Victorian independent schools that the data produces is at odds with the rest of the state. Statewide, Italian and Greek dominate languages across all Victorian schools in general: in 2013, 841 Unit 3 and 4 VCE students learnt Italian, making it the 5th most popular language; Greek had 274 students, making it the 11th most popular language (VCAA, 2015b). However, the situation in Victorian independent schools was different: Italian was the 9th and Greek the 13th most popular. The situation of these particular community languages in Victorian independent schools seem to represent a different phenomenon to that observed in other sectors.

One possibility is the prevalence of Community Language Schools. These are places for students to learn a particular language outside normal school hours: while they are frequently referred to as 'Saturday Schools', they can take place any time outside the normal school day. Typically such schools offer only one subject, and often they are associated with a particular church or community group. Precise numbers are difficult to find, but the peak body Community Languages Australia claims that 'approximately 700 school authorities ... conduct classes in over 1400 venues... Over 100,000 students participate in the program nationally' (Community Languages Australia, 2015). Such popularity raises the question of why students learn their community languages in a Community Language School rather than in their everyday school.

The circular argument is that schools do not offer the community languages, because students study them at a Community Language School, and that Community Language Schools exist because schools do not offer the languages. However, that argument is challenged by the case of Chinese, which is offered in a large number (57) of Victorian independent schools, as well as being taught in Community Language Schools.

At the time of writing, no research has been done into the difference between Italian and Greek in the government sector, and in independent schools; prior to this study, the figures had not been available. Any reasons are therefore speculative, and might include the differing demographics of independent and government schools (although it should be noted that the schools in the iSV SLP Survey came from a wide range of SES
backgrounds: see Chapter 7). The language choices might reflect options presented by schools, or might indicate a generational shift as Italian and Greek transition from being community languages to traditional foreign languages. It is possible that these languages are widely taught in the state sector not so much as a reflection of their position as a community language, but because they have now been established long enough in Victorian schools to enter into the closed cycle of school-university-school described earlier that is apparent in French and German. However, why this should impact upon government schools more than independent schools, is unknown. Research into this area would shed light on a phenomenon in language learning that has, to the author’s knowledge, not been identified before.

While many of the migrants who came to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s came from southern Europe, more recent migrants have often come from Asia, the Middle East and Africa. These might be grouped as the next wave of community languages, but these communities are not, however, equally represented in Victorian independent schools. In the case of Arabic, there are good numbers of students learning the language, but they are concentrated in a relatively small number of schools. These are possibly schools that have been established to cater for the specific needs of a migrant group, or are schools designed to give students an Islamic education.

Newer community languages such as Vietnamese, Hindi, Tamil and Sinhalese were poorly represented in the ISV SLP Survey. Only one school taught Vietnamese, and this was in unusual circumstances: the whole cohort at Year 5 learnt Vietnamese, but only for that year. There was no opportunity to pursue the language at later years. No secondary school reported teaching Vietnamese. Only one school taught Hindi, and a total of only 12 students there took up the subject, with just two to three students per year level, from Years 7 to 12. No schools offered Tamil or Sinhalese, at even the most introductory level. This would seem perplexing, given the demographics described above.

The attitudes of these groups to language learning is an area for future research. There are Community Language Schools for Vietnamese and Tamil, and the Victorian School of Languages, where students can enrol in a language (including at VCE) provided their
home school does not offer that languages, also offers these languages for study. Possibly these option might reduce the pressure on schools to offer these languages.

**ASIAN LANGUAGES**

In this section, the three main Asian languages studies in Victorian independent schools - Indonesian, Japanese and Chinese - will be discussed. Because the situation of each language is markedly different to the others, they will be discussed separately.

COAG (1994) identified four Asian languages of economic and strategic importance for Australia: Indonesian, Japanese, Korean and Chinese. Of these four, Korean has been unsuccessful in becoming a language of importance. No Victorian independent schools teach it, and under 100 students undertook Korean (either first language or second language) at VCE level in 2013 (VCAA, 2014). This is despite Korean being identified as one of the target languages under NALSSP and a history of over twenty five years of government-backed focus on Korean, with the aim of increasing student numbers.

Any Victorian independent schools embarking on a Korean language programme faces two hurdles. First, there is a distinct lack of teachers available. This might deter schools from starting the language, as there may be difficulties in sustaining the language over the long term. Second, the national cohort, small as it is, is made up almost exclusively of L1 speakers (AEF, 2010, p. 21); this must be daunting to a L2 learner (although the VCAA does offer a separate L1 and L2 strand, it is likely that given the small enrolments in the subject, students would be grouped together in the one class; this may have an intimidating effect on the L2 learner). Projections of 3,000 students nationally studying Korean by 2020 (AEF, 2010, p. 3) would seem impossible to reach, given the total absence of Korean from a major sector - Victorian independent schools. This would seem to be a failure of both the general populace to embrace the importance of Korean as a major economic partner of Australia, and the consequent need to learn the language, as well as a failure of the efforts of various government bodies to promote Korean. For the other Asian languages, however, the situation has been better.
Japanese: Findings

21.78% of Victorian independent schools taught Japanese (44 schools), and Japanese was the second most popular languages studied, with 16,318 students across all year levels learning the language in 2013. Schools had an average SES of 107.95, and were distributed across both metropolitan and regional areas, with 29 schools in the Melbourne metropolitan area and 15 in regional Victoria. Most schools were P-12 schools; in nine of them, Japanese was the only language taught. Two boys-only schools and eight girls-only schools taught Japanese. 204 teachers taught Japanese, three-quarters of them women.

Figure 5.9: Japanese Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)

The Student Distribution profile (Figure 5.10) shows that of the 16,318 students learning Japanese, 9,297 - well over half - were in primary school. The majority of students did not continue their Japanese study into senior secondary years, with very small numbers of students in Year 12, especially boys:
Japanese: Discussion

Japanese in Australia is often hailed as the 'success story' of Asian languages (de Kretser and Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 70). It has grown from almost nothing to become the most widely taught language nationally, with very large numbers in Queensland in particular. Japanese had a rapid expansion in the 1980s and 1990s, and although numbers have dropped nationally in the last decade, it remains a popular language. There are many possible reasons for the popularity of Japanese: it has attractions that the other Asian languages do not. It shares with Chinese the career attractions of learning the language of a major trading partner, but it also has a culture that many students find attractive - both the historical Japan of the Samurai, and the present Japan of technological marvels and manga (de Kretser and Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 13). It does not suffer the same problem that Chinese has, where the majority of students have a Chinese background; by contrast, comparatively few Japanese students have a Japanese background (de Kretser and Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 23) (in the Victorian independent schools, only three of the 44 schools had sufficient background students to offer separate L1 and L2 classes at VCE).

However, the data revealed that the high overall numbers for students learning Japanese marked a pronounced concentration of students in primary school, and very small number of students in senior secondary years. The limitations of primary school programmes in general will be discussed in Chapter 6, but the situation of Japanese, revealed starkly in Figure 5.10, warranted closer examination; Japanese is limited if it is
concentrated in primary school alone, as noted by de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010, pp. 38-41, 73).

In order to investigate the drop off of students further, I analysed the survey data to find to what extent the subject was compulsory in those schools that taught it. I compared the number of schools by year level that had compulsory Japanese, with the total number of schools teaching Japanese; these were then compared with the overall number of students learning Japanese. The results are shown in Table 5.4:

Table 5.4: Proportion of students studying Japanese, secondary school, by year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of schools where Japanese is compulsory</th>
<th>Proportion of schools where Japanese is compulsory</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73.68%</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65.79%</td>
<td>2,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28.95%</td>
<td>1,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those students who do study Japanese at secondary school, there is again a dramatic drop off once the language is no longer compulsory. In Year 7, 2,200 students were learning Japanese; by Year 12, this had dropped to just 360. I calculated a correlation co-efficient of proportion of schools where the subject is compulsory, to the number of students studying Japanese, of .96, indicating a near perfect correlation (although points of contact were limited to school years). To explore this idea further, I calculated the compulsion rate (proportion of classes at each year level that are compulsory) and the retention rates of students (the proportion of students in each year, compared to Year 7); when plotted together, the two are seen to largely mirror each other:

Figure 5.11: Compulsion rates and retentions rates, Japanese, secondary school
De Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010, pp. 34-6) offer reasons for students leaving Japanese: school structural factors, where languages are put up against more popular, 'softer' options on the timetable; small class size at Year 12, making the subject unviable for a school to offer; a narrow number of subjects allowed in a Year 12 course (this is less of a problem in Victoria, where six Unit 3 and 4 subjects - one done at Year 11 - is very popular in many independent schools); perceptions of the difficulty of the subject; and the perceived advantage of Japanese background students, or even students with an Asian background (Chinese or Korean students might find the characters easier to learn, for example).

Analysis of the data revealed that the average class size in Year 12 was just 8.47 students, showing that senior classes are nevertheless precarious, as de Kretser and Spence-Brown noted (2010, p. 34), but it is heartening to note that these schools have continued to run the classes with small numbers. Perhaps this is one of the distinctive features of the independent sector, where those schools with sufficient resources have put them into supporting smaller classes that might otherwise be cancelled.

I extracted data from the ISV SLP Survey about the qualifications of teachers of Japanese, and collated the totals in Table 5.5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Female teachers</th>
<th>Male teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speaker, no formal language qualification</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Accreditation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/Doctorate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite claims about the shortage of suitably qualified teachers, this does not seem to be the case in Victorian independent schools. The majority of teachers had appropriate tertiary qualifications. The proportion of native speakers with no formal language qualifications is low, while the largest group by a considerable margin is teachers who completed three years post VCE (as opposed to \textit{ab initio}) Japanese study at university.

\textbf{Indonesian: Findings}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Indonesian Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)}
\end{figure}

The data revealed that Indonesian was the fifth most popular languages studied in Victorian independent schools, with 9,075 students across all year levels learning the language in 2013. 44 schools taught Indonesian, with an average SES of 102.93. They were distributed across both metropolitan and regional areas, with 30 schools in the Melbourne metropolitan area and 14 in regional Victoria. Most schools were P-12 schools; in 12, Indonesian was the only language taught. Two boys-only schools and
two girls-only schools taught Indonesian. 127 teachers taught Indonesian, two-thirds of them women.

The survey data revealed that Indonesian has the largest peaks for its numbers in Years 7 and 8, the start of secondary school, when languages are usually compulsory (see Table 6.7). Once Indonesian becomes optional, the drop off is dramatic. From a peak of 1,918 students in Year 7, there was a drop to 198 students in Year 12: 90% of students dropped Indonesian by Year 12. Boys dropped the subject at a greater rate than girls: in Year 7, there were 1,021 boys (outnumbering the girls); by Year 12, only 82 boys remained.

![Figure 5.13: Student Distribution by Year Level: Indonesian](image)

**Indonesian: Discussion**

Australia is unique in its teaching of Indonesian; it is the only western nation to teach Indonesian at school level. The importance of Indonesian, given its geographic proximity to Australia, very large population and growing economic strength makes Indonesian a logical language for Australian students to be learning. Moreover, Indonesian uses the familiar Roman alphabet, has a simple grammatical structure and lacks the tonal system which makes languages such as Chinese difficult for many non-Chinese to pronounce. There are few L1 learners to compete with, and in any case the VCAA has separated the subject into Indonesian as a First Language and Indonesian as a Second Language.
Despite this, claims have been made for several years now that Indonesian is in a precarious situation (Kohler and Mahnken, 2010, p. 4). From data available from the Curriculum Authorities of Australian states, Kohler and Mahnken were able to create a picture of Indonesian across the country (2010, p. 13); their table is reproduced below as Table 5.6. In most states the language has very low Year 12 enrolments, with Victoria alone standing out as having strong Indonesian numbers in the final year of schooling: it has more than triple the number of NSW, despite that state having more students, and ten times and almost twenty times states in much greater proximity to Indonesia: Queensland and Northern Territory.

Table 5.6: Number of students studying Indonesian at matriculation by state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Yr 12 Indonesian students (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students studying Indonesian nationally has been decreasing since the closure of NALSAS in 2002: there was a loss of 15% of school students studying Indonesian between 2001 and 2005 (Slaughter, 2007, pp. 304-5), and there was a decrease in overall enrolments in Indonesian of almost one-third in the five years preceding 2009 (Kohler and Mahnken, 2010, p. 13). Indeed, Kohler and Mahnken claim that

Without urgent and sustained action, it is likely that Indonesian will make minimal contribution towards the NALSSP target and its future viability as a language in Australian schools will be at serious risk. (p. 4)
Given these trends, there is a distinct possibility that Indonesian will disappear as a national language, surviving only in Victoria and New South Wales; Kohler and Mahnken raised the possibility (in 2010) that

It may be possible that Indonesian will cease to exist at the Year 12 level within eight years. (p. 12)

In Victorian independent schools, the situation is more positive. Overall numbers of students was high, with Indonesian being the 5th most popular language. While the same number of schools taught Indonesian as Japanese (21.78%, or 44 schools), there was a dramatic difference in student numbers: 16,318 for Japanese compared to 9,075 for Indonesian. When Figure 5.13 is compared to Figure 5.10, it quickly becomes apparent that Japanese has a much larger presence in primary schools than Indonesian. Indonesian received a very substantial influx of students at Year 7 - 1,918 students - setting the subject up well for secondary school. However, by Year 12 this had dropped to 198 students. The average Year 12 class had only 8.40 students, and numbers such as these can be difficult for schools to justify. Many schools are reluctant to not offer a class at Year 12 when students have been learning that language since Year 7; the result of unsustainable numbers at Year 12 is frequently not to close down Year 12 programmes, but to close down the entire language.

The reasons for this drop off are complex. Travel advisories from the federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have restricted schools’ abilities to run trips to Indonesia (Slaughter, 2007, p. 314; Hill, 2012, p. 26). Kohler and Mahnken (2010) note that there is a popular perception of Indonesia as a 'threat' to Australia (p. 38), and not sufficiently economically developed to make learning the language worthwhile; these are factors that impact on student numbers. Indonesian is not perceived as being economically valuable in the same way that Chinese is:

Some parents have now been calling for Chinese (Mandarin) to be introduced instead of Indonesian as China has greater economic potential. Both the lack of economic imperative within the school to study Indonesian and the travel restrictions placed on trips by students to Indonesia militate against the continuation of Indonesian within the school. (Teacher, quoted in Slaughter, 2007, p. 316)
The loss of government support has been critical. Under NALSAS, all Asian languages saw a dramatic increase, but the programme was cut short by the Howard Government in 2002. As Firdaus (2013) noted,

The timing could hardly have been worse, since only a few months later a terrorist attack in Bali killed scores of Australians, thus creating fear and a negative association in public and official minds between Indonesia and terrorism (Hill, 2012). Together, these factors had a profound impact on Indonesian language programs in Australia. (p. 30)

While the funding was important in the losses noted by Slaughter, and Kohler and Mahnken, so too was the message that the Australian government at the highest levels valued the learning of Asian languages, including Indonesian. By withdrawing the funding, the government seemed to be sending a message to the community that Asian languages were no longer of special importance.

Teacher supply is also an issue, although a complex one. University Indonesian departments 'face decline and abolition, and one by one they are closing down' (Firdaus, 2013, p. 33), and this in turn threatens the supply of Indonesian teachers for the future. Kohler and Mahnken (2010) noted that

Among those interviewed, there were reports of both an undersupply and oversupply of qualified teachers of Indonesian. It is clear that neither education systems nor the profession fully understands the current teacher supply status for Indonesian. There is an urgent need to undertake further in-depth workforce planning research. (p. 29)

However, they did acknowledge that the ageing workforce in many secondary schools, as baby-boomer Indonesian teachers reach retirement, is not being replaced by a new generation of teachers, and no plan seems to be underway to address this:

A further impact of declining numbers of Indonesian teachers is the capacity of the profession to sustain itself and generate the necessary expertise, particularly at the senior secondary level. Increasingly, there is a limited pool of expertise to draw upon and those who are sufficiently expert are in high demand. Of particular concern is that the cohort with the expertise required to teach at senior secondary level is diminishing with no succession strategy in place. (p. 29)
This sustainability is, ironically, being threatened by the importance of Indonesia. Anecdotal reports indicate that Federal Government agencies aggressively recruit the top Indonesian studies graduates, closely followed by business interests. Teaching comes a distant third, thus threatening the long-term supply of teachers.

The Indonesian government has been slow to support the teaching of Indonesian in Australia. While the Indonesian government has set up *Balai Bahasa* centres in Perth and Canberra to promote the teaching of Indonesian, these centres do not have the reach or influence of the Chinese Confucius Institute and Hanban programmes, where the Chinese government has invested very considerable resources to promote the learning of Chinese in Australia (and one must question why there is no centre in Victoria, the centre of Indonesian learning in Australia). Firdaus (2013, p. 36) notes that 'no major language-teaching venture in Australia has been successful without the assistance of the home country', and such input is needed from the Indonesian government.

One of the reasons for the drop off seen in Figure 5.13 is the negative attitude towards Indonesia held by some in the Australian community. This was uncovered by Slaughter (2007), who interviewed 137 Year 11 and 12 Indonesian students in Victoria and New South Wales across a range of schools: 49.6% mentioned violence, especially terrorism and travel related, while teachers reported anxiety and negativity from parents about Indonesia. Given the surveys were conducted in 2003 and 2004 (Australian soldiers were deployed to East Timor in 1999; the Bali bombings were in 2002), these results are not surprising. However, Slaughter’s work only questioned those students who had already made the commitment to study senior secondary Indonesian, and these are not the students who need to be reached. We do not know, for example, what factors influence a Year 8 student to choose to discontinue with Indonesian, and yet this is the battleground where Indonesian will either be lost or won. Much effort and funding through NALSAS and NALSSP, not to mention by VILTA, the Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers’ Association and individual teachers and schools, has been expended in the last 25 years to boost Indonesian, but the subject remains at a crossroads. This targeted research - of what persuades or dissuades a Year 8 student to continue with Indonesian - should be a clear priority; it will be difficult to remedy the situation until the causes can be diagnosed.
Chinese: Findings

In the VCE, there were three strains of Chinese at the time of the ISV SLP Survey: Chinese as a First Language (CFL), Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) and Chinese as a Second Language Advanced (CSLA). Entry into these subjects is dependent on the years resident in a Chinese speaking country, and education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction; language spoken at home is not a consideration.

In the survey, Chinese was the third most popular languages studied, with 15,994 students learning the language. 57 schools (28.22%) taught Chinese, with an average SES of 110.64. They were mostly in the Melbourne metropolitan area, with 48 metropolitan schools and 9 in regional Victoria. In 13 schools Chinese was the only language taught. Four boys-only schools and 11 girls-only schools taught Chinese. 195 teachers taught Chinese, three-quarters of them women.

Figure 5.14: Chinese Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)
The survey data also showed that Chinese was strong in primary years, with 7,991 or 49.96% of students in Years Prep to 6. There was an influx of students at Year 7, and then student numbers remained steady for Years 10 to 12 (774, 770, 677 respectively).

**Chinese: Discussion**

The survey data also showed a profile for Chinese students that is different to other Asian languages. Like Japanese, Chinese had a strong presence in primary school; unlike Japanese, it also had a strong presence in secondary school. Like Indonesian, it received an influx of students in Year 7; unlike Indonesian, it had steady numbers in Years 10 to 12. A different set of variables seems to be operating for these three Asian languages.

One characteristic of Chinese is the proportion of background speakers. Orton (2008) makes some startling observations on the composition of the Victorian VCE Chinese cohort. Of the CFL cohort, the majority are international students, including some who are resident in China, studying through schools affiliated to Australian schools. This group in particular has necessitated an increase in the difficulty of the examination to meet the abilities of students who live in a totally Chinese-speaking environment: their language skills are superior to those who, although Chinese is their first language, live and operate in the English-speaking Australian milieu. The CSLA cohort similarly contains only native speakers. However, the CSL cohort is also dominated by 'Background students': those with a Chinese background, who possibly speak Chinese at
home and attend Chinese school on the weekend. Orton estimates that in CSL, background students outnumber non-background students at a ratio of 7:1. A scan of 40+ scores, published annually in the Age, reveals that even in CSL the high achievers invariably have a Chinese background (O’Meara, 2014): 'The trend has been particularly pronounced in the past three years when all but one of the students obtaining a study score of 40 or over in CSL had a Chinese family name' (p. 21).

Indeed, Orton (2008) says that,

by senior secondary school, the learning of Chinese in Australia is overwhelmingly a matter of Chinese teaching Chinese to Chinese. (p. 5)

The preponderance of background students in Chinese classes is cited as a major deterrent to non-background students following through with the language:

The presence of strong numbers of first language speakers, locally born or otherwise, who share their classes and overwhelm them in assessment. (p. 5)

The logic is that if students perceive that everyone else in the class has a background in the language (whether this is true or not), they are likely to assume that they will find it very hard to compete, and that their efforts may be better rewarded elsewhere - either in another language, or another subject altogether. In a study of boys’ decisions to continue or discontinue their study of Chinese after Year 8 in a Victorian independent schools, Ren (2009, p. 25) found that 95% of students discontinuing their Chinese study were non-background students, while 71% of students continuing their Chinese study were background students - this despite background students only making up 26% of the participants. Ren did not include the inability to compete as a choice for students to nominate as a reason for discontinuing CSL, although perhaps the choice of the language being too hard - which was the top reason chosen - might be a proxy for this.

Holding separate classes at Years 7-10 may be part of the solution, but it is still unsatisfactory, as when they reach VCE, the non-background students will be in the same class and sitting the same assessment as many background students who qualify for CSL but may be fluent Chinese speakers 8. Students are aware of this, and may well

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8 The criteria for acceptance into CSL and CSLA are years spent in formal schooling and living overseas; the language spoken at home is not considered. Thus a student who was born in Australia, but speaks Chinese at home with their family and attends Saturday Community Language School, will still qualify for CSL.
decide to leave early rather than delay the inevitable; this may be behind Ren’s findings on the drop off of non-background students at the end of Year 8 in a Victorian Independent school (Ren, 2009).

The ISV SLP Survey did not explore the background of Chinese students at any level, although it did ask if schools offered separate CSL and CFL classes (most did). No data is held on the background of Chinese students, so other measures must be used.

A second characteristic of Chinese is its difficulty for native English-speaking students. English as a language is heir to both Latin and Germanic languages. While it is Germanic in structure and the majority of common words, it also has a vocabulary that is especially rich in Latin origins (Baugh, 1951). Accordingly, when learning a European language, either Germanic or Romance, there is a large amount of vocabulary that is recognisable through common Latin or Germanic roots, and most of the grammatical structures, while different, are still relatable. By contrast, Chinese shares none of these common roots; it is not an Indo-European language, and the only vocabulary words that are similar come from the small pool of loan words; its structure has a totally different grammar, with many features such as particles and measure words that are absent from English; its tonal pronunciation is alien to English; and its writing system of characters can be very difficult to grasp. Added to this, there are several cultural differences which are effected in the language, such as the hierarchical system of naming members of the extended family. Other languages, such as Vietnamese and Japanese, share some of these features, but arguably none of the major languages have them all. For a native English speaker, Chinese is demonstrably more difficult than learning a Germanic or Romance language.

This gives L1 learners a considerable advantage:

BS [Background Speakers] have proficiency in exactly those areas of most difficulty to classroom L2 learners - grammatical accuracy, vocabulary size, and phonological authenticity – and thus they start from owning a standard in Chinese few of the L2 group will ever be able to match. (Orton, 2008, p. 27)

The result is disheartening for the non-background student:

An even more significant difference in this matter is that 500 hours of secondary school study of a European language can bring a diligent, reasonably bright
beginner in Year 7 inside the proficiency range of a BS/L1 student by Year 12: they can compete. All the more so in Romance languages, where they can expand their vocabulary by converting a great deal of their formal English using patterns of change they are familiar with by then. By Year 12 the same diligent, reasonably bright L2 student has the Chinese characters of a Grade 1 student in China: they can’t compete. (Orton, 2008, p. 27)

The convergence of these two factors - the difficulty of Chinese for a native English speaker, and the preponderance of background students in classes - might explain one aspect of the profile of student distribution: the drop after Year 8 and the generally steady numbers in Years 9 to 12 (and especially 10 to 12). Given, as Orton has found, that the majority of students in VCE are of Chinese background, it is likely that the non-background students have made an attempt at Chinese in Years 7 and 8, and then almost all of them drop the subject; some continue in Year 9, perhaps because in their schools it is still compulsory. Of the 32 schools in the survey that offered a Year 7 programme, Chinese was compulsory in 26; by contrast, by Year 9, only 10 of the surveyed schools had compulsory Chinese:

Table 5.7: Proportion of students studying Chinese, secondary school, by year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools where Chinese is compulsory</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of schools where Chinese is compulsory</td>
<td>81.25%</td>
<td>59.38%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>2,085</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When this is compared to the number of students, it becomes clear that many students are studying Chinese only when they have to do so. Assuming that the influx of students in Year 7 is a mix background and non-background students, and given Orton and others’ findings that the majority of Year 11 and 12 students are of Chinese background, and the steadiness of student numbers in Years 9 to 12, it is apparent that non-background students are largely leaving the subject as soon as it becomes non-compulsory.

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9 For Table 5.8, only schools with Chinese programmes that extended into Years 9 and 10 were included; schools with a non-continuing ‘taster’ programme at Years 7 and 8 were not counted. Schools with more than one campus were counted as one school only.
Another aspect of Chinese is its strength in numbers in primary school. However, raw numbers do not in themselves indicate that the subject is in a healthy state: equally important is how much time students are receiving instruction in Chinese in primary school. I extracted the results for every school in the ISV SLP Survey that taught Chinese at Year 3 (responses for other year levels were very similar) to map the amount of time for Chinese was given in Table 5.8:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time per week, Year 3</th>
<th>Under 30 mins</th>
<th>30-60 mins</th>
<th>61-90 mins</th>
<th>91-180 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n of schools</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that in the 30 schools offering Chinese at Year 3, most students were receiving between 30-60 minutes per week of Chinese instruction. The AEF had already raised concerns over the efficacy of such programmes, given their low frequency and time allocation (AEF, 2010, p. 12). As was seen in Chapter 1, time spent learning a language is of crucial importance to the efficacy of any programme. This will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Another issue is that of continuity. While Figure 5.15 may imply a clear flow of students from primary to secondary school, the reality is that very many students change schools from primary to secondary, and there is no guarantee that a language programme started in primary school will continue in secondary school. Even where students are learning the same language, they might have to change courses and textbooks, or they might reach their secondary school to find that there is no continuing Chinese programme, and instead they must start again from the beginning. These issues have been well canvassed (see, for example, Liddicoat et al. 2007; Lo Bianco 2009; Orton, 2008). It would be very informative to track students, both background and non-background, from primary school to secondary school, to see how many persevered with their language study, and whether learning the language at primary school had an impact on student retention or achievement.

A further issue raised by Orton and others is the qualifications of the teachers of Chinese (for example, Orton, 2008, pp. 21-22; Orton, 2016, pp. 58-9). I extracted data
from the ISV SLP Survey about the qualifications of teachers of Chinese, and collated the totals in Table 5.9:

Table 5.9: Qualifications of Chinese Teachers in Victorian independent schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Female teachers</th>
<th>Male teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speaker, no formal language qualification</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Accreditation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years beginners (tertiary)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years post-VCE (tertiary)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/Doctorate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the data on teachers indicated a point of major difference to other languages: the stand-out feature of the cohort of Chinese teachers (Table 5.9) is the large number of those whose sole qualification is that they are native speakers (n = 36). These teachers have not been trained as Chinese teachers either overseas or in Australia; they may have a teaching qualification (possibly in a method other than language teaching), although this is not always the case. Almost always they have tertiary training in China, but this may be in a completely unrelated field, such as commerce or engineering. As a result they might be expected to draw upon their own experiences as a student to shape the way in which they teach (Chen, 2016, p. 937; Moloney and Wu, 2015, pp. 7-8). Frequently, they grew up in China in the 1970s or 80s, when pedagogy was extremely different to that expected in modern Australian schools: classes were very large (often with excess of 50 students); teachers were themselves sometimes poorly trained in the post-Cultural Revolution environment; textbooks were sometimes scarce, and the emphasis was placed on memorisation and repetition. Little allowance was made for the fact that many leaners had no Chinese language background (Singh and Han, 2014). This might explain the phenomenon that Orton (2008) found:
A commonly remarked on point of tension in primary second language Chinese is the predilection of native Chinese speaking teachers for spending a considerable proportion of what little time is available teaching characters using flashcards, even with five year olds in Prep, while native English speaking teachers aim to engage young learners only through oral activities such as singing, stories and games, and the language of classroom organisation, an emphasis they prefer to maintain even when reading and writing have been introduced in the later years. (p.13)

This is compounded by differing societal perceptions of teachers and authority between China in the past and modern Australia:

what the L1 teachers found most challenging was to engage with L2 students. They also revealed a divergence along L1-L2 lines over culturally shaped beliefs and values in matters such as teacher authority, fairness, the teacher-student relationship, and the role each party should play in the education process. (CTTC, 2015, p. 23)

Or, as one teacher put it

How could they be so rude! I was really shocked and disappointed. Why they not listened to me, just as my authority was totally ruined. Don’t the teachers enjoy their authority naturally and students must respect teacher and follow the teachers’ instruction? (L1 Teacher, quoted in Chen Z., 2015)

The result of this is that many L1 teachers teach in a manner that is unfamiliar to many Australian students. For some Australian L2 students, entering the Chinese classroom involves learning in a manner that is different to every other class, and that they find less enjoyable.

This is compounded by the frequent lack of interaction in primary school between the language teacher and the classroom teacher. Almost invariably language lessons are used as Release Teaching for the classroom teacher - that is, to provide a break for them during the day. Classroom teachers are not expected to be with their students every hour of every day; they are given time off for marking, administration and similar tasks. During this time the students still need to be taught, so release teaching involves another teacher - usually a specialist - taking the class. As a consequence, classroom teachers are not present when the language teacher is teaching, and thus there is no in-class interaction between the two (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 83). Closer interaction might
permit language teachers to observe and model themselves on the classroom teacher, and similarly the classroom teachers could gain greater insight into the way in which the language teachers operates. Instead, both tend to teach in isolation from each other.

This situation might be mitigated to some degree if there are colleagues with whom the teacher can discuss teaching. I interrogated the ISV SLP Survey data to find out the number of teachers per school teaching primary school Chinese:

Table 5.10: Primary Chinese Teachers per School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Primary school Chinese teachers</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools where there is only 1 primary Chinese teacher</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools where there are 2 primary Chinese teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools where there are 3 or more primary Chinese teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ISV SLP Survey data revealed that a large majority of Chinese language teachers in primary schools worked in isolation as the sole language teacher in their school; three-quarters of primary Chinese teachers had no colleagues in their schools they could discuss or work collaboratively with in their fields. A bilingual class, where all subjects are taught in both English and Chinese, and the language teacher is fully integrated into the teaching team would avoid this problem, but no schools in the survey taught this way.

This is exacerbated by the teaching materials used; often they have been produced overseas, without regard for the Australian context:

A great many imported Chinese language materials are published in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and North America… Those intended for the classroom second language learner of any age have been less positively accepted in Australia. (Orton, 2008, p.15)

Chen (2015, p. 936) found that teachers of Chinese background were disconcerted by the absence of a centrally mandated textbook, which he found indicative of a wider pedagogical gulf:
In contrast to Chinese educational culture which attaches greater importance to memorizing information from textbooks and quantity of knowledge, Australian educational culture values the interest of learning. (p. 936)

Thus the pedagogies employed by language teachers, especially L1 language teachers, are often at odds with the pedagogies employed elsewhere in the school. This might make the subject feel alien to the L2 learner especially. It might also have greater appeal to L1 parents, who can recognise many of the elements of their own schooling. These factors contribute to L2 learners discontinuing the subject, and L1 learners continuing.

Despite its undeniable strength in numbers, Chinese is in a difficult position. It is strong in Victorian independent schools, but much of this is in teaching to background students. Its primary programmes are bedevilled by low frequency and time allocation, and the drop off of non-background students from Year 9 onwards is pronounced. This is exacerbated by a discordance between some teaching pedagogies and course material and those experienced in other areas of their schools. Orton proposed many solutions (including language spoken at home as an entry criterion for VCE courses, increasing lesson time, and many others), but these have not been followed up, and in 2015 the Federal Government ceased funding for the Chinese Teacher Training Centre, and it closed. Few would dispute the importance of Chinese language skills and cultural understanding for the next generation of Australians; currently, however, there does not seem to be the political will to achieve this.

**Asian Languages: Conclusion**

In Victorian independent schools, two of the four targeted Asian languages - Japanese and Chinese - were in the top three languages studied. However, these numbers were boosted by large numbers of students in primary school, where they tended to receive under an hour’s language instruction per week. Of the four Asian languages, only Chinese showed any possibility on current trends of nearing the various government targets of Year 12 language learning, and this could only be achieved by retaining all of those students who now drop out of the subject. Despite a very large number of students receiving exposure to Chinese, only a very small fraction persevered with the language, most of whom had a background in the subject. Japanese was strong in
primary school but weak in secondary school, and failed to hold on to students once they were no longer bound to study the subject. Indonesian had no large body of primary students to build on, and suffered a precipitous drop in student numbers after Year 8. For all of these languages, the issue of retaining students beyond the compulsory years was a challenge that had not yet been met. Significantly, not a single school in the survey taught Korean.

**INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

Indigenous Languages is the term used for languages spoken by Indigenous/Koori communities in Victoria. These languages pre-exist European settlement and were exclusively oral; the Roman alphabet is used for their modern written versions. Indigenous Languages are supported in the Victorian education system, and students can study these at VCE level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous Languages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many students learn Indigenous Languages?</td>
<td>139 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many schools teach Indigenous Languages?</td>
<td>2 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the schools</td>
<td>100% metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many teachers teach Indigenous Languages?</td>
<td>6 teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many Year 12 students learn Indigenous Languages?</td>
<td>0 girls, 0 boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.16: Indigenous Languages Infographic (see Appendix 1 for data)
Analysis of the data showed that Indigenous Languages were taught at only two Victorian independent schools, under 1% of the participant schools. These schools were both in the Melbourne metropolitan area, with a total of 139 students. The profile - while limited to being derived from only two schools - is unusual. Because one of the schools was girls-only, girls dominated Years 7, 8 and 10. No students continued beyond Year 10 into the VCE, and no boy continued beyond his one year of study. Whether this was the choice of the students, because the school did not offer the subject at VCE, or because the students did not continue to VCE is unknown. It is not known whether these schools catered specifically for members of the Indigenous community, or whether they were giving non-Indigenous students instruction in Indigenous languages.

The number of students, divided by gender, learning Indigenous Languages at each year level is plotted below.

### Indigenous Languages: Discussion

The absence of Indigenous languages is not because Victorian independent schools have no Indigenous students. Many support an Indigenous population, often through targeted scholarships. However, there are some impediments to Indigenous students in this situation learning their own languages. Typically, the students are small in number, making the provision of a teacher economically unfeasible. There are also issues of teacher availability (HRSCATSIA, 2012, pp. 129-135). Moreover, there is no one Indigenous language; instead, in Australia, there are a large number of Indigenous languages, and Liddicoat et al. (2007, p. 176) listed 36 different Indigenous languages taught in Australian schools, acknowledging that even that list was limited by a lack of
data from some key sectors, such as Queensland Government schools, and the tendency of some states simply to label all of the languages under one heading. It is quite possible, therefore, that if the Indigenous students at a school have been brought in, perhaps on a scholarship, from different parts of Australia, each might speak a different language (this problem does not occur when students are drawn from a single local Indigenous community). These students could study their Indigenous language through the Victorian School of Languages, but this would not show as a language taught by their school.

There is an assumption that Indigenous languages should be taught as a community language for language maintenance, but these languages could also be taught as foreign languages for the general student population. Given the arguments discussed in Chapter 2 about the ability of languages to breed empathy and open eyes to new communities, having non-Indigenous students learn Indigenous languages might be a practical means of achieving greater reconciliation. However, this does not seem to be considered by most schools; perhaps this is due to a lack of teachers, a perception that the languages will not be useful for the students, or simply because schools have not considered the possibility. Indigenous language policy is riven by what McKay calls a false dichotomy of choosing between English competency and competency in a child’s Indigenous language (McKay, 2011); the notion of broadening Indigenous language learning to the wider community seems to have been overlooked - a lost opportunity for the nation.

This is very much the pattern in similar English-speaking countries with sizeable Indigenous populations, such as the USA and Canada. In the USA, the current legislation is the *The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006* (USA); as in Australia, the emphasis is on preserving Indigenous languages within the native speakers’ communities. In Canada, language policy is dominated by the French/English divide, but Indigenous language policy is similarly aimed at preservation within the community (Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity, 2016): the spread of Indigenous languages to the wider community is not mentioned. This situation can be compared with that of New Zealand, where schools must take reasonable steps to provide *tikanga Māori* (Māori culture) and *te reo Māori* (Māori language) if parents request it. The result is that 2.3% of the school population are
taught in Māori medium. An even greater number of students learnt the Māori language, the majority of these students identifying as Māori, but a considerable number of non-Māori children also received education in *te reo Māori*:

As at 1 July 2014, 19.2% of the total school population were involved in Māori language in English … of the total 147,523 students enrolled, 37% identified as Māori and 58% attended a school where all students were enrolled in Māori language in English medium. (Ministry of Education, 2016)

New Zealand might provide Australia with a future direction for Indigenous languages.

**CLASSICAL LANGUAGES**

Classical languages are often ignored in studies of languages, but the number of students who have chosen to study them, especially at senior secondary level, justifies their inclusion. They differ from modern languages mainly in that they are no longer spoken; instead, the study of classical languages involves reading, translating and appreciating literature. For this study, Latin and Ancient Greek were classed as classical languages. An argument could be made that Syriac and Sanskrit could be considered classical languages, but given their very close connection with their communities, they were classed as community languages. Hebrew can be a classical language, where learnt for biblical studies, for example, or a modern spoken language, as the language of Israel. The VCAA categorises Hebrew as a modern spoken language, and the study design includes oral elements. For this reason, Hebrew was included in the community languages.

Latin was selected for closer study as the most successful of the classical languages. Ancient Greek was only taught at one school, to a small pool of students.

**Latin: Findings**

Analysis of the ISV SLP Survey data revealed that Latin was taught in 14 schools, mostly in the Melbourne metropolitan area and with a very high socio-economic profile. There were no schools where Latin was the sole language taught in that school. Latin was popular in boys-only schools, where 4 of the 9 boys-only schools offered Latin (by contrast, only two of the 18 girls-only schools offered Latin). The teaching body was predominantly male, with a ratio of male teachers to female teachers of 1.86:1.
The Student Distribution profile (Figure 5.19) shows that Latin was little taught at primary schools, and mostly was a secondary school language. There was a sharp intake at Year 7, which may be due to schools offering 'taster' language programmes at
this level. The decline after that was steady and mirrored most languages, although the drop-off rate for girls was less than that for boys.

**Latin: Discussion**

Latin stands out as a language that is more popular with boys than with girls. In VCE Latin across the state, the ratio of boys to girls was 5:3 in 2013 (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2015), and this is typical of the last decade at least. Some of Carr and Pauwels’ subjects also noticed the unusual situation of Latin – boys actually enjoyed it:

They told me they enjoy studying Latin for various reasons. The first is the default case: Latin involves no oral communication, unlike other (modern) languages…Latin involves close encounters with texts which detail great masculine exploits – military campaigns, heroic deeds, great leaders…most of all, according to these boys, Latin is regarded as cognitively challenging. (p. 99)

Unfortunately, Carr and Pauwels only interviewed Latin students from one school, with one teacher; it is impossible to generalise from these interviews alone.

It is worth noting Latin’s unique position in the languages curriculum. Latin has been taught at western schools for over 2,000 years, and for most of the Middle Ages and Renaissance was the main subject on offer. In English schools in the modern era it remained a mainstay until comparatively recently, when Oxford and Cambridge removed Latin as a prerequisite for undergraduate entrance in 1960 (Lister, 2007); Australia soon followed suit. This was almost contemporaneous with the diminished role of Latin in the Catholic Church, inspired by *Vatican II* in the first half of the 1960s. Instantly the demand for Latin at school level diminished, reaching a nadir in Victoria in the 1970’s: in 1979 Year 12 student numbers reached a low of 69 (source: Classical Association of Victoria). Since then, however, numbers have been recovering. In Victoria in 2015 approximately 200 students studied Units 3 and 4 Latin, and 18 schools offered the subject at this level (VCAA, 2015b). Latin is now predominantly a language for the independent sector (Table 5.22), and many of the schools that teach Latin are long-established schools with a history of teaching that subject that frequently goes back over a hundred years.
Latin also differs from modern languages in the manner in which it is taught. Latin was traditionally taught by the Grammar-Translation method: this put the emphasis on the grammar, especially through prose composition, where students would translate an English passage into Latin, demonstrating their mastery of increasingly fiendish elements of grammar; the composition had no authentic function. Lister, in his book *Changing Classics in Schools* (2007), includes the following example:

Translate the following into Latin Elegiacs:

May-you-leave my window, (whether being) a-slow-woman or with-faster foot.

What (is it) to-me, so-long-as you-leave? You-seek help badly from-hence. (p. 6)
Elegiacs are a particular form of poetic metre, which requires the syllables to be arranged in specific patterns.) This particular test was from a school entrance examination given to thirteen year-olds; few university Latin staff would be able to complete this now without considerable head-scratching.

This method was overtaken by the reading method in the 1960s, with emphasis on reading for enjoyment and understanding (Lister, 2007, pp. 2-9). Integral to this was a replacement of grammar with the comprehension and interpretation of literature, as can be seen from the current VCE Latin course, for example. However, many elements of the Grammar-Translation method are still present in the reading method, and students still have to learn tables and grammatical rules in a formal manner. By contrast, modern languages underwent a radical change in the manner in which they were taught. Initially they were taught by the same method as Latin - the Grammar-Translation Method – but in the mid Twentieth Century different approaches were adopted. Lo Bianco (2009) outlined these changes: the Audio Lingual method came after World War II, but was replaced in Victorian schools to a large extent by the Communicative Method. While this was used in some schools in the 1970s, it reached a greater level of coverage with the reforms to modern language assessment in the 1980s. These privileged authentic texts and authentic uses of the language, which
displaces the focus of language teaching away from language itself and onto meaningful and significant communication around concepts and information drawn from regular school subjects. (p. 30)

More recent reforms have stressed the importance of cultural understanding.

Lo Bianco is generous about some of the strengths of the Grammar-Translation method, which he refers to as GT:

while today the default position in discussions of method is to treat GT like ‘the bad old days of yore’, it had the virtues of being systematic, analytical, and many people learned languages quite effectively. GT is, however, oriented mostly towards accuracy rather than fluency, and to knowledge about language rather than competent use of it, and these are serious limitations when the goal is bilingual speaking skill. (p. 29)
For Latin, the goal cannot be bilingual speaking skills, as no native speakers remain. Moreover, the attributes he mentions - the method is systematic and analytical - appeal to some students, and are perhaps one reason for the attraction of Latin, especially among some boys.

CONCLUSION

Students were learning languages in large numbers in Victorian independent schools, but the data have revealed a mixed picture. The mainstays of language learning, French and German, continued to do well, and were supported in a large number of schools. Just as importantly, they were seen as serious secondary school subjects, retaining substantial numbers of students to senior secondary years. By contrast, the more established community languages such as Italian and Greek, which are flourishing in the rest of the state, were languishing in Victorian independent schools for reasons that will require further research. Newer community languages such as Arabic might possibly take their place, while other community languages, such as Hindi, Vietnamese, Sinhalese and Tamil remain perplexing low.

The Asian boom in languages likewise presents a mixed picture. Chinese had very strong numbers, but at the upper levels was largely confined to language maintenance for native speakers; it had failed to penetrate the non-Chinese background population in a meaningful way. Japanese also had large numbers of students, but half of these were in primary schools, and there was low retention to senior secondary years; instead, retention of students correlated strongly with compulsion to learn the language.

Indonesian had high exposure to a large number of students in Years 7 and 8, but there were likewise difficulties in retaining the students to senior secondary. While Chinese faced problems of the difficulty of the language and large numbers of background learners acting as deterrents to non-background learners, Indonesian faced problems of teacher supply and attitudes towards Indonesia in the wake of incidents of terrorism and executions of Australian prisoners.

The promising future for Asian languages that governments from 1991 have hoped for has not been achieved. Indeed, in the last few years these languages have been going backwards, with numbers dropping nationally in Indonesian and Japanese and Chinese
growing but becoming entrenched as a Chinese-dominated subject. This is not because the economic or strategic imperatives, outlined in 1994, have gone away; if anything, they have become more pressing.

Indigenous languages have had very little uptake and no retention to senior secondary, nor any demonstrable carry over into the non-Indigenous community; this contrasted with the situation in New Zealand, where Māori languages had greater reach. Latin had high numbers for a niche language, and excellent retention of girls; it was also a language where boys significantly outnumbered girls in Year 12. This may be due to the language being offered in a number of boys-only schools, or due to the way in which it is taught, which differs from the methods used for modern languages.
Chapter 6: Patterns in Language Learning: When are Children Learning Languages?

The languages examined in Chapter 5 revealed that some were taught predominantly in primary schools, and had low retention to secondary schools and at the senior secondary level. This issue will be explored in more detail in this chapter, together with the issue of compulsion in language learning.

LEARNING LANGUAGES AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Findings

Using the data, I calculated the number of students for every language by year level, to provide the total enrolment by year level (Table 6.1). Of the total of 104,196 students learning any language in Victorian independent schools in 2013, 49,405 were in primary school (Prep-Year 6), and 54,791 were in secondary school (Years 7-12). 23,127 were in the years where language learning, for most schools, is post-compulsory (Years 9-12). 7,225 were in the senior secondary years, Years 11 and 12.

Table 6.1: Number of students learning any language, by year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students</td>
<td>5,322</td>
<td>5,792</td>
<td>5,932</td>
<td>6,587</td>
<td>7,198</td>
<td>9,243</td>
<td>9,331</td>
<td>16,768</td>
<td>14,896</td>
<td>9,871</td>
<td>6,031</td>
<td>3,955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphing the data from Table 6.1, it is possible to see the shape of language learning by student numbers:

Figure 6.1: Number of students learning any language, by year level
Table 6.1 shows the significant numbers of students in Victorian independent schools learning languages at primary school; just under half - 47.15% - of language learners were primary school students. By contrast, only 6.93% of language learners were senior secondary students. The peak for language learning was at Years 7 and 8, where 30.38% of language learners were concentrated in just two year levels. This is boosted by the number of schools that offer 'taster' programmes at these levels - Year 7 in particular - and the vast majority of schools making language study in these year levels compulsory (see Table 6.7 below).

I also examined was frequency of lessons. Schools were asked in the ISV SLP Survey to select how many lessons students received for each language, per week, and at each year level. Using these data, I calculated the average for all schools that offered languages at that particular level (lesson length was not specified, but see Table 6.3 below):

Table 6.2: Frequency of language lessons, by year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the frequency of language lessons, it is apparent that there was a notable difference between year levels. Most primary school students learning a language received one and a half language lessons per week. This increased in Year 7, when students received on average over two lessons per week. The next jump occurred at Year 10, as students got ready for VCE (and for most students, languages became an elective), with classes being held over three times per week on average. In VCE, Years 11 and 12, students on average had four language lessons per week.

The next measure examined was the total time spent in language lessons. Schools were also asked in the survey to select how much time was spent on each language, per week, at each year level, choosing from seven options of period of time, ranging from under
half an hour to over seven and a half hours per week. The number of schools in each band for each year level is shown in Table 6.3:

Table 6.3: Time per week for language lessons, by year level - number of schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total time per week</th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30 mins</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60 mins</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-90 mins</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-180 mins</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-220 mins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221-450 mins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451 mins +</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Prep to Year 6, the majority of schools (57.59% at Year 3, for example) spent between half and one hour per week on language classes. In Year 7 this shifted: only 8.60% of schools spent between half and one hour, whereas 55.20% received between one and a half and three hours per language each week. The final shift occurred in senior secondary, Years 11 and 12, where the majority of students received in excess of 3 hours per week (80.00% in Year 11, 85.83% in Year 12). A primary school student will receive, on average, one-sixth to one-third of the time a VCE student will. Slaughter has discovered that the situation is similar in government schools, with students in primary school receiving, on average, under an hour a week (Cook, 2016).

I interrogated the ISV SLP Survey data to identify what proportion of primary school languages teachers held a primary school teaching qualification. First filtering the data by year level, I was able to isolate the teachers who taught in primary schools, and tabulate the data on their qualifications:

---

A very small number of schools in the survey gave very considerable amounts of time and frequency to language classes in primary school. However, these tended to be Auslan classes, where the students learnt sign language intensively.
Of the 582 teachers of languages in primary schools, almost half were not primary trained: 46.91% of teachers did not hold a primary teaching qualification.

Two languages examined in Chapter 5, Japanese and Italian, had a large majority of their students in primary school: Japanese had 83.03% of its students in primary or early secondary (Figure 5.10); Italian had 83.88% of its students in primary or early secondary (Figure 5.6). I felt it would be useful to examine the time allocation for these languages in primary school:

**Table 6.4: Qualifications of Primary School Language Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of primary school language teachers</th>
<th>Have Primary Teaching Qualifications</th>
<th>Do not have Primary Teaching Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>309</td>
<td>273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 582 teachers of languages in primary schools, almost half were not primary trained: 46.91% of teachers did not hold a primary teaching qualification.

Two languages examined in Chapter 5, Japanese and Italian, had a large majority of their students in primary school: Japanese had 83.03% of its students in primary or early secondary (Figure 5.10); Italian had 83.88% of its students in primary or early secondary (Figure 5.6). I felt it would be useful to examine the time allocation for these languages in primary school:

**Table 6.5: Time per week for primary school Japanese, by year level - number of schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total time per week</th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30 mins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60 mins</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-90 mins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-180 mins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-220 mins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221-450 mins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451 mins +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.6: Time per week for primary school Italian, by year level - number of schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total time per week</th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30 mins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60 mins</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-90 mins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-180 mins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-220 mins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221-450 mins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451 mins +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of primary school students received under one hour of instruction per week in Japanese (in Year 3, 76.92% of students; Table 6.5) and Italian (in Year 3, 100.00% of students; Table 6.6).

**Discussion**

For most students, primary and early secondary were the locus of their language education; for almost all students their language learning was over before they reached the highest level of schooling, and, most likely, language proficiency. This raises questions of whether this is a deliberate policy intention, or whether it has occurred independently, and education authorities have become resigned to this state of affairs; it also raises questions about how qualified language teachers are to teach this age group. This also has profound implications for the levels of achievement they can be expected to attain, which will be discussed later.

Governments and various agencies have championed primary language learning as part of a complete language programme. COAG (1994, p. 137) recommended schools starting language learning in Year 3 with 'approximately 2.5 hours instruction per week per class for each year of study for Years 3 to 10 and 3 hours in Years 11 to 12'. The federal body responsible for curriculum, ACARA, has been less opaque, in part because many decisions are still the responsibility of the states, but languages are in theory at least compulsory throughout primary school (ACARA, 2012, p. 9). In Victoria, a primary language programme is clearly mandated:

> Schools must therefore provide a languages program for students from Prep to Year 10. (Department of Education and Training, 2016c)

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are very sound reasons for students learning languages at primary school: language learning helps literacy in the mother tongue; very young leaners acquire authentic pronunciation better; and the earlier the child starts, the more sustained their language experience will be, and thus the more proficient they will be at the end of their schooling. This has been the attitude taken in Europe, where language learning typically starts in primary school and continues to the end of the compulsory school age (Liddicoat et al., 2007, pp. 28-9; Tinsley and Comfort, 2012, p. 28). However, Australia, and Victorian independent schools, differ by treating primary
school languages as a stand-alone unit. This is partly due to the nature of Australia’s schools, where it is the norm for students to change schools at the end of their primary years: as a result there is usually no continuity between language learning from primary to secondary. The number of languages noted in Chapter 5 also contributes to this situation, with there being no guarantee that a particular language learnt in primary school will be offered in secondary school. The result is that the primary school language programme, far from being a primer for secondary study, often stands on its own.

Given, then, that so many students are involved in primary school language programmes, it is worth investigating these in more detail, by examining the time devoted to primary language classes, and the qualifications of the teachers teaching those classes.

The schools in the survey were heeding only part of the state and federal governments’ demands for primary language learning: they are offering the classes, but ignoring the time and frequency recommendations - and thus arguably sabotaging their own efforts: these factors compromise the quality of language teaching and learning in primary schools and the outcomes that can be expected of primary school programmes. (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. ix)

Curtain and Pesola (2000, pp. 2-3) made the argument for languages in primary schools, but based this on the positive effect on proficiency of increased time spent learning a language. Met and Rhodes (1990, p. 438-9) identified time and frequency as two key elements in a primary language programme; this was reinforced by Rosenbusch (1991, p. 302). Lo Bianco made a strong claim for 'an early start' (2009, p. 60), but his argument was centred on immersion programmes, where students spend a very considerable amount of time learning and speaking the language - a far cry from the current situation in many Victorian independent schools. The Victorian Government adopted a version of these ideas in setting out their current recommendations for language programmes, which include:

- frequent, regular lessons including those conducted entirely in the target language; and
delivered for a minimum of 150 minutes per week, spread as evenly as possible across the week (Department of Education and Training, 2016b)

In most schools, as can be seen from Tables 6.2 and 6.3, neither of these conditions was being met.

It is difficult for students to make meaningful progress in a language with low frequencies and short time allocations: students forget what they learnt from one week to the next, and thus a considerable part of each lesson must be devoted to revising previous material rather than breaking new ground. In many cases, the linguistic learning is given token attention:

in quite a number of cases in all sectors, a ‘Chinese program’ in primary schools amounts to little more than familiarisation activities such as cooking, counting to 10, and drawing a few characters. (Orton, 2008, p. 13)

Liddicoat et al. (2007) go on to state that

The impact of this on Australian languages education is that, while many students may have an experience of language learning, this experience is unlikely to contribute to the development of useful levels of language proficiency. (p. 41)

They are highly critical in their assessment of many primary school language programmes:

Widespread languages education in the primary school sector has not meant that most children are exposed to positive language programmes. Many programmes do not meet the educational needs of learners … because programmes have not been established in ways that give languages adequate time allocations or the ensured continuity needed to achieve high-quality learning. The proliferation of programmes allocating a single block of 30 or 45 minutes per week for languages has been particularly detrimental for the effectiveness and the perception of languages education in primary schools. Where such programmes exist alongside policies recommending much greater time allocations they represent a particularly severe failure of policy. (p. 161).

Time also sends a signal to the students and school community. Time can be taken as a proxy for importance; the more important a subject is, the more time it receives. When there are cries for a 'back to basics' curriculum, often this means more time for literacy and numeracy, and consequently less time is available for such things as languages. For example, in 2014 then federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne stated:
we need to declutter primary school, focus more on history, literacy, numeracy, science in the primary school years to give our students a very good grounding that perhaps we are trying to do too much breadth and not enough depth in primary school. (Pyne, 2014)

Statements such as this send messages that languages are not as important as literacy and numeracy, and instead - to paraphrase the minister - 'clutter' up the curriculum. This message is reinforced if schools give languages a small amount of time in primary school.

An additional factor is the level of qualifications of the primary school language teacher. As most secondary teachers can attest, primary teaching is a very different proposition to secondary teaching, and the same holds true for languages: teaching a language to a Year 1 student is vastly different to teaching that same language to Year 11 students. Given that primary teaching is a specific skill in itself - and the existence of degree courses devoted solely to this would indicate that this is the case - the implications of almost half of the language teachers in primary schools not having that qualification, and the attendant training, are serious for the suitability of the pedagogy adopted by many primary school language teachers (Lo Bianco, 2009, pp. 43-4). This may not necessarily be the fault of the teachers; universities do not always make it easy for prospective teachers to gain qualifications in the teaching of languages at primary level. Not all university courses have languages as an option in their Primary Teaching qualifications. A scan of university handbooks for popular primary teaching courses in Victoria revealed that all had specialist units on science, numeracy and literacy, and many had core units on arts and health, but none included core units on languages. Some higher education institutions in Victoria, such as Deakin and Monash Universities, have an option to study language teaching as an optional part of a Bachelor of Primary Education, while others, such as the University of Melbourne, note that 'eligible teacher candidates may also undertake subject specialisations in either mathematics or science' - but no mention is made of languages (although changes to this situation are planned). This is consistent with the findings of the Asia Education Foundation (2015), which noted
Languages teacher education offerings for primary level teachers have decreased since 2007. Very few universities offer specific pre-service units on teaching languages (in addition to English) to students of primary teaching. For early childhood teachers, such offerings appear to be non-existent, in spite of the typically strong focus on language and literacy acquisition at that level. (p. 3)

It is thus likely that many schools were not able to find a language teacher trained to teach primary languages; instead, they have hired a teacher with secondary qualifications who has been willing to teach in the primary school. Given the inherent challenges of teaching students at this age, this can hardly be a desirable situation.

The situation of Japanese and Italian shows these issues at work. These languages now effectively operate for the most part in primary and early secondary school only, where the students receive an average amount of time that is, by the standards of the Victorian government, inadequate. There is the possibility that these languages will become stuck in the destructive spiral that Liddicoat et al. (2007) predicted (p. 161), where students receive insufficient time to make inroads into the language, thus making their time learning the language frustrating, and making parents cynical about the value of the language - leading to pressure from parents for less, rather than more time, to be spent on the language.

**MANDATED LANGUAGE STUDY**

As was seen above, in 2013 the majority of language learning in Victorian independent schools occurred in primary school and early secondary. This is partly due to language study being made compulsory at these levels in the majority of schools. Despite state government policy at the time being that language education was compulsory, at no year level did 100% of Victorian independent schools have compulsory language programmes. This may be because independent schools were not governed by the same rules as state government schools, and the Federal Government’s language requirements under the Australian Curriculum had yet to come into force; this situation may have since changed.
Findings

In the ISV SLP Survey schools identified whether the language programme was compulsory or optional at a particular year level. The total number of cohorts studying a language at each year level was then calculated, and the number of these that were designated as mandatory by the schools. This allowed the calculation of the percentage of cohorts that had compulsory language studies by year level (Table 6.7).

In almost every school that had a primary school language programme, it was a core part of the curriculum, with nearly 90% of language programmes being compulsory. This continued to Year 7, where over 80% of language programmes were compulsory. The rate dropped steadily from then onwards, although almost three-quarters of language programmes were still compulsory in Year 8. The major change occurred in Year 9: compulsion rates halved to 36.04%, and then halved again in Year 10. By senior secondary, very few language programmes were compulsory; when I examined these in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of cohorts</th>
<th>Number of cohorts where compulsory</th>
<th>Percent compulsory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>88.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>88.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>91.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>91.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>88.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>88.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>81.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>72.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>36.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this section, I have used the term 'cohort' for a year level group of students at a particular school studying the same language. A school may divide a cohort into one or more classes, depending on the number of students in the cohort.
more detail, I found that those that were tended to have a religious or cultural
association.

I carried out a correlation on the relationship between the number of cohorts where
language study is mandatory, and the total number of students (Table 6.8). For this the
cohorts as described above were compared to total number of students learning any
language at that year level.

Table 6.8: Language Study vs Student Numbers, by Year Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of cohorts where language study is mandatory</th>
<th>Student Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>16,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>14,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The $r$ value of this comparison is .996, and the coefficient of determination is 99.20,
making the relationship statistically significant (although a limitation was that the
number of points of comparison was necessarily low, as the comparison was limited to
using year levels), positing a very strong positive correlation between the degree to
which language study is compulsory and the number of students studying a language
(Burns, 2000, pp. 232-235).

Discussion

If one of the arguments for mandating language study is to provide time to win the
students over and persuade them of the value of learning languages, as discussed in
Chapter 2, then many students should continue with their language learning even after
they are no longer compelled to do so. However, the results from Victorian independent
schools tell a different story. This can be seen by comparing the data on student
numbers (Table 6.1) with rates of compulsion (Table 6.7); the similarities become
apparent when the data from these tables are represented as graphs, Figures 6.1 and 6.2:
Numbers for both graphs peak at Years 7 and 8, when there are compulsory language programmes in almost every school, and then fall steadily as fewer language programmes are made compulsory in the following years. Numbers are relatively stable for Years 11 and 12, by which time most students have committed to the two-year VCE.

It is possible that the post-compulsory drop-off is to some extent masked in Victorian independent schools. In many schools, the decision is made to withdraw a subject when enrolments fall too low for the class to be economically sustainable. It is possible that some independent schools have sufficient resources to continue to offer language classes even when student numbers are low. In the survey, there were eighty Year 12 classes where the total student enrolment was below 10, and yet the school was still offering the subject. Indeed, there were 32 classes where the student enrolment was below 5 - but still the school offered the subject.

One problem is that when languages are made optional at the end of Year 8, students are making the decision about their language future at a very early age. As was noted in Chapter 2, Nikolov (1999) found that as students grew older, their reasons for learning languages changed. In the youngest age group (6-8 years old), classroom and teacher related reasons accounted for 70% of a child’s motivation to continue with language learning, with utilitarian reasons accounting for only 2.5%; for the 8-11 year olds, classroom reasons accounted for 70.9%, with utilitarian reasons now 17.6%; and for the
final group, 11-14 year olds, classroom reasons were 56.4%, with utilitarian reasons 41.2% (Nikolov, 1999, p. 44). This indicates that as students get older, their motivation changes, and utilitarian factors such as the future use of a language for travel, employment or success in Year 12 become considerably more prominent. Younger students are more likely to make a decision based on short-term, localised factors, such as how much fun a particular teacher is, the kinds of activities done in class, or the relative workload when compared to other options (Nikolov, 1999, p. 42).

Consequently, asking students to make language choices at a young age may lead them to make shortsighted decisions, where an immediate need outweighs the longer-term benefits of studying a language. The more mature students are when they make this decision, the more likely they are to base it on longer-term payoffs. When this is added to the additional investment of time and effort they have made in their language learning, it becomes a powerful driver in increasing language retention.

**Differing lengths of mandated languages study: Findings**

Schools were filtered according to the years at which language study was compulsory. (I excluded one school from my results because it claimed languages were compulsory at Years 7, 8, 11, and 12, but not 9 and 10; this may have been an oversight by the school in filling out the Survey.) Schools were sorted into three groups: those in which language study was compulsory at Years 7 and 8, but optional at Years 9-12; those in which language study was compulsory at Years 7, 8 and 9, but optional at Years 10, 11 and 12; and those in which language study was compulsory at Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, but optional at Years 11 and 12. Each group contained a significant number of schools, and a range of languages was represented. For each, the numbers of students learning languages at Year 7 was compared with the number learning languages at Year 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels where languages are compulsory</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Number of Year 7 students</th>
<th>Number of Year 12 students</th>
<th>Proportion retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Years 7 &amp; 8 only</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5,790</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>11.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Years 7, 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3,441</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>17.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Years 7, 8, 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2,088</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>32.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For schools where language learning ceased being compulsory at the end of Year 8 - by far the biggest group, with 98 schools - the Year 12 language learners were just 11.43% of the Year 7 language learners. For schools where language learning ceased being compulsory at the end of Year 9 (51 schools) the Year 12 language learners were 17.67% of the Year 7 language learners. For schools where language learning ceased being compulsory at the end of Year 10 - the smallest group, although still with 39 schools - the Year 12 language learners were 35.52% of the Year 7 language learners.

The schools which continued mandating language learning the longest had three times the retention rate of schools where language learning ceased to be compulsory at the end of Year 8.

**Differing lengths of mandated languages study: Discussion**

This dramatic increase could be due to a number of factors, not just the longer time spent studying the language, although it does match Nikolov’s findings about changes in motivation as students get older (1999, pp. 52–4), and more instrumental reasoning taking place. It could be that in schools where language study is mandatory longer, languages have a more prominent place in the school; perhaps in these schools there are fewer alternative choices that students could be making; perhaps schools with longer language programme are able to attract better teachers; without additional research it is impossible to make a causal claim, and to my knowledge nobody has previously made even the limited comparison shown above. If a causal link can be proven then this would be an extremely powerful argument for any school or government wishing to promote language learning.

It could be argued, then, that in order to increase Australia’s level of language learning, the solution is simply to increase the years in which languages are compulsory. However, the impediments to increasing mandatory language learning are considerable. First, it is clear from Figures 6.1 and 6.2 that as soon as languages become optional, the majority of students drop them. It is possible that increasing the compulsory years would increase the resentment among students of being forced to study a subject they do not want to do, as Liddicoat et al. (2007) noted (p. 22), with this resentment having to be dealt with by parents and schools. Unless there is wider community acceptance that languages are as important as, say, Mathematics, this will remain a considerable
impediment (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 168). There are practical issues: for every subject that is added to the curriculum, something has to be removed; schools cannot keep adding to the students’ day. If a language is made compulsory at Years 9 and 10, and it is given a workable amount of time and frequency - as recommended by the Victorian government - then it will be at the expense of another subject, most likely an elective. This has implications for timetabling and staffing. There are also attitudinal problems, and these may prove harder to overcome (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 168).

Perceived difficulty is one often cited reason for students not choosing particular languages. Orton (2008) noted that all languages present difficulties for learners, but argued that Chinese is especially difficult:

> However, Chinese has tones, homophones, characters, and the system of particles and verb complements. They are very particular challenges, the first three peculiar to Chinese among languages taught in Australian schools, and the result is that the average competent learner will take 3.5 times longer to master Chinese than s/he would take to master a European language. (p. 30)

This, Orton claims, is one of the reasons why students without a background in Chinese drop out. However, it cannot be the sole reason behind the drop off. Languages have varying levels of difficulty, some with significantly different structure, vocabulary and alphabet to English, while others share many similarities to English, or even have a simpler structure and vocabulary, while using the same alphabet. However, almost all show the same drop off, regardless of their perceived difficulty. Difficulty may be part of the reason, but it cannot be the only explanation.

Another possible impediment is the tendency for students and adults to divide students into ‘language people’ and ‘not a language person’. This idea has been challenged by researchers such as Professor Carol Dweck, who in her book Mindset: the New Psychology of Success (2006) has shown that such attitudes are rather a reflection of self-perception rather than actual ability. Such attitudes are in many cases deeply held and may well prove difficult to stamp out, but a start has at least been made.

Moreover, there is simply not the supply of teachers to support a major expansion. Reviews at the federal level have highlighted the problem over a number of years:
language teacher supply has been identified as one of the key problems facing languages in the primary school… to date the problem of teacher education has not been addressed in any systematic way. (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 167)

This has had a practical impact on the provision of language classes in schools:

Between 2003 and 2006, over 100 Australian schools discontinued their language programs due to lack of a suitable teacher (Department of Education and Training, 2010, p. 13)

Despite being identified as a crucial impediment, and various governments coming up with strategies, there is no evidence that the issue has been resolved. Other options, such as computer based language learning, have no evidence for their long-term efficacy; from personal experience there is often a rush of enthusiasm at the start, but students do not persist with such programmes as they would with a traditional face-to-face learning environment. In the schools surveyed, only one used computer based learning for their language classes.

The policy of making language learning mandatory perhaps betrays the real weakness: that successive governments, business groups and educational authorities have not been able to convince the parents and students of Australia that languages are worth the time and effort of studying without being forced into them. Compulsion is in one sense an admission of defeat - the educational equivalent of the frustrated parent resorting to the lame 'because I said so'. The Victorian independent schools show clearly that this issue has not been addressed, and until it is, Australia may struggle to become a more language literate nation.

CONCLUSION

In Victorian independent schools just under half of all language students were in primary school, with only 6.93% of students in Years 11 and 12. There was a big spike of numbers in Years 7 and 8, possibly due to schools offering introductory 'taster' programmes in these levels. The result is that it is in primary and early secondary school that most students did their language learning. Schools have thus followed part of the recommendations of governments and educational authorities in teaching languages in primary schools, but they have in general ignored the recommendations on
length and frequency of lessons. Most primary school students received just one and a half lessons per week, for a total of under one hour, compared to more than four lessons and in excess of 3 hours in Year 12. This has led to primary language programmes being accused of tokenism or even being detrimental to a student’s language learning. Further, almost half of primary school language teachers were not trained as primary school teachers, and there were limited opportunities to gain such qualifications. Already some languages such as Japanese and Italian were effectively primary and early secondary school languages, with over 80% of their students in Year 8 or earlier, but with severely compromised programmes, as most students received under one hour of instruction per week.

Languages, when offered, were almost universally compulsory in primary school and Years 7 and 8, with half of that in Year 9, half again in Year 10, and very few in Years 11 and 12. The reasons for making languages compulsory are many, including as a signal that languages are valued, and to force students to study this important area, or provide students who might have no understanding or history of languages with their own first-hand experiences. Arguments against are that forcing students to study subjects against their will leads to resentment and disengagement, that compulsory languages is against what the community wants, or that the necessity to provide a programme might mean in some instances that a compromised programme was offered. Mandated language study has been mooted in Australia since at least 1994 (COAG, 1994, pp. 113-4), and it is current Victorian and federal policy (under the Australian Curriculum: ACARA, 2012, p. 9). However, despite this, languages are still not winning the battle for hearts and minds; students leave languages in patterns that mirror the dropping of the mandating of the subjects, as most students choose to leave languages as soon as they are allowed to do so. There are serious implications of students being allowed to decide on their language future as early as the end of Year 8, which is the case for most students; at this age, they are motivated more by classroom factors, and less by instrumental factors, which come later. In schools where the level at which languages become optional were later, there was a greater proportion of students learning a language in Year 12. The causal relationship cannot be proved, but this is potentially an important lever for schools and educational authorities.
There are many barriers to the simple expedient of increasing compulsory language studies over more years, including teacher supply, angst caused by removing other subjects to make way for languages and student dissatisfaction with languages, so evident in the current drop-out rates. However, excuses for students not learning languages should not be made: the argument that languages are difficult, for example, fails to take into account the very differing levels of difficulty of different languages, and the self-classification of students as ‘not language people’ is challengeable.

Ultimately, however, compulsory language study can be seen as a flawed solution, masking problems of motivation and community attitudes to language learning rather than dealing with them.
Chapter 7: Participation: Gender and SES

The languages analysed in Chapter 5 revealed that, among other things, there was a mixed picture of the gender balance of students studying particular languages: some languages had an even number of girls and boys, while other languages showed a marked imbalance; as was discussed in Chapter 2, claims have already been made by academics and government that boys do not favour languages. In addition, the analyses also showed that the average SES of schools teaching languages differed by the language. Both of these issues will be explored in more detail in this chapter.

GENDER AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Findings

The ISV SLP Survey data recorded the number of students, by gender, learning languages at each year level. Totalling the for every language, it was possible to determine the number of boys and girls learning at least one language at Year 7\textsuperscript{12}, the start of secondary school, when most language programmes are compulsory (see preceding chapter), and the number of boys and girls learning at least one language at Year 12, the final year of secondary school, when languages are in almost every case an optional study.

Table 7.1: Proportion of Boys, Years 7 and 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of boys learning languages</td>
<td>8,543</td>
<td>1,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls learning languages</td>
<td>8,225</td>
<td>1,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of boys</td>
<td>50.95%</td>
<td>37.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Year 7, there were 8,543 boys (51\% of the total), and 8,225 girls (49\% of the total); in Year 12, there were 1,154 (38\% of the total) boys and 1,897 girls (62\% of the total).

\textsuperscript{12} At Year 7, many students learn more than one language, as they study 'taster' courses, giving a total greater than the actual number of students, but this affects girls equally as much as boys, thus neutralising any impact on uptake by gender. Similarly, at Year 12 some students may be studying more than one language. There was no way to distinguish students learning more than one language in the survey.
These proportions are shown in the graphs below:

Table 7.1 and Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show that there is a gender imbalance in language learning by the time students reach Year 12. This cannot be attributed to a general gender imbalance in Year 12 students; rather, the genders are almost equally represented at Year 12: 48.51% boys and 51.49% girls (5,619 boys; 5,965 girls). A possibility might be that fewer boys than girls get the opportunity to start their secondary school language learning, hence there are fewer boys by the time they get to Year 12. However, checking of the data provided in the Survey Demographic tab showed that the proportion of boys to girls in overall Year 7 enrolments is almost exactly even, differing by only 9 students, (6,520 boys; 6,529 girls). Therefore, boys are dropping languages at a higher rate than girls.

Closer examination of the data for students in Years 9 to 12 was carried out. These specific years were chosen because it is at these years that in the majority of schools language learning becomes optional rather than compulsory, and thus they show the impact of student choice, as was seen in Chapter 6. For each language, I calculated the number of boys and girls learning the language, totalling the amount for Years 9 to 12, and using this to calculate the proportion of boys in these year levels. As well, I calculated the total number of male and female teachers in secondary school (the survey did not distinguish between teachers of Years 7 to 8, and other year levels of secondary school), and used this to calculate the proportion of male teachers. Languages with no students in Years 9-12 were omitted. The results are in Table 7.2:
Table 7.2: Language Statistics: Gender of students and teachers - Years 9-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total Number of Boys, Years 9-12</th>
<th>Total Number of Girls, Years 9-12</th>
<th>% of boys</th>
<th>Total number of Male teachers (secondary schools)</th>
<th>Total number of Female teachers (secondary school)</th>
<th>% of male teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>48.06%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41.38%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>1,706</td>
<td>48.80%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>24.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptic</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69.33%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2,706</td>
<td>5,050</td>
<td>34.89%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>1,401</td>
<td>48.79%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>17.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>51.72%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek (Ancient)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>50.06%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous languages</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24.10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>49.95%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>31.15%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>68.48%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makaton</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>32.81%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syriac</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>48.07%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.06%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excepting those languages with a small statewide enrolment of under 50 students over Years 9-12, only two languages - Coptic (69.33%) and Latin (68.48%) - had a predominantly male enrolment. Several more - Greek (51.72%), Hebrew (50.06%), Indonesian (49.95%), Chinese (48.80%), German (48.79%), Turkish (48.07%) and Arabic (48.06%) had effectively an even number of male and female students. Japanese
Yiddish (39.06%), French (34.89%), Spanish (32.81%), Italian (31.15%) and Indigenous languages (24.10%) had more girls than boys.

**Discussion**

These figures challenge sweeping statements about boys not studying languages, (Carr and Pauwels, 2006; Carr, 2002). There were two languages where boys dominated, and seven more (including some with very high enrolments) where the numbers of boys and girls were roughly the same. It was only in six that there was a strong shift to girls; of those six, only two - French and Japanese - had an enrolment in Years 9-12 of more than a thousand students, and while the Japanese imbalance was considerable (43.30%), it paled besides French (34.89%).

This phenomenon of more girls than boys choosing French is not limited to Victorian independent schools. In England, Board and Tinsley (2015) found that:

> female candidates for A level languages outnumber males by nearly two to one (64 per cent of entries are from girls and 36 per cent from boys). This pattern is most marked in French, where 68 per cent of entries come from female candidates. (p. 30)

This mirrors the Victorian independent schools, which had 65.11% of entries come from female candidates. The reasons for this are still being debated. In one of the most recent studies, Kissau (2006) surveyed 500 Canadian Year 9 students about their motivation in learning French. Even though the position of French in the Canadian curriculum is different to its position in the Australian curriculum, Kissau found much that could illuminate the situation seen in Victorian independent schools. Kissau noted that this phenomenon seemed to be seen across Europe and North America:

> In some respects, the problem of adolescent boys who are not interested in learning French is not particular to Canada. Numerous studies in the United States, England, Ireland, and Hungary have reported that male students are losing interest in studying French in favour of languages such as German or English (Dörnyei & Clément, 2001; Rosenthal, 1999; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002). (p. 402)

Kissau found that a key factor was that French simply wasn’t considered a boys’ subject:
Another reason frequently mentioned by both teachers and students is that of traditional views of what is appropriate for a boy as compared to what is appropriate for a girl. The words of an experienced male French teacher summarize this point: ‘[there is] still a lot of sexist thinking that a man doesn’t learn languages. A man does math or engineering, or whatever. Sexist behaviour still plays a great role. Learning French, it’s not perceived as a man’s job.’ The idea expressed by this teacher cannot be emphasized enough, because its repercussions were felt throughout the study. (p. 415)

This strong societal perception outweighed other motivational factors, such as intrinsic enjoyment and instrumental motivations. As Kissau claimed,

> Negative societal perceptions were actually found to override positive attitudes. Male students who want to learn French, like French, and are good at it are bowing to societal pressures and abandoning their pursuit of learning the language. (p. 416)

Kissau proposed a number of solutions. He argued that the curriculum content needs to be made more boy-friendly: too many topics are perceived as catering more to girls’ interests; he suggested including sports, as an example. He also argued for an increase in the number of male French speakers the boys could come into contact with (p. 417). This could improve a boy’s integrative motivation by allowing him to actually visualise himself as a French speaker, based on the role models he has seen. In the Canadian context, Kissau suggested numerous ways of bringing French speaking males into the students’ learning experience, but many of these are more difficult in a country like Australia, with far fewer French speakers. Overseas trips are beneficial but might be out of the financial reach of many students. In Australia, the main French speakers students are likely to come into contact with are their teachers, and it is here that the gender of the teachers becomes important in providing a role model for the students (Clark and Trafford, 1995, pp. 4-5).

In the United Kingdom, Barton raised the possibility that the gender of the teacher had an impact on boys’ decision to keep learning languages:

> Consciously or subconsciously, the prevalence of females in language teaching must influence pupils' attitudes to foreign languages (Barton, 1997, p. 14)

She found that
A boy who is susceptible to peer pressure … will not be highly motivated to set himself apart from his fellows and affiliate himself with a subject dominated by feminine connotations, be they explicit or not. (p. 14)

This is not to suggest that there is an issue of competence or even teaching style between the genders; rather it is a question of the visibility of language-learning role models to whom boys can relate. When the only role models boys see of language users are female, it might be difficult for them to visualise themselves in that role. To further complicate matters, on the rare occasions when prominent males do show themselves to be competent language users, they can be greeted with sneers and derision as ‘show-offs’, and their masculinity and loyalty can be questioned: one only needs to look at some of the venomous blogs and comments that were inspired by former Prime Minister Rudd’s use of Chinese (Australian Centre on China in the World, 2015).

Teaching is itself a predominantly female profession in Australia; the Federal Department of Education commissioned the Staff in Australian Schools (SiAS) Survey (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2015), which examined detailed demographic information about teachers. In primary schools, only about 20% of teachers are males; in secondary schools, 42% are. However, the situation is considerably different where language teachers are concerned:

(Adapted from Weldon et al., 2014, p. 72).

As can be seen, language teaching is even more heavily female than teaching in general, thus the chances are very high that boys will be taught languages mainly by women: language teaching in Victorian independent schools is mainly carried out by women.

The data on the gender of the teacher is shown in Table 7.2: discounting those languages only taught by one or two teachers, the pattern emerges of some languages having more
male teachers, and some more female; only Arabic is evenly balanced. The predominantly male languages for teaching staff are Turkish, Yiddish and Latin. The predominantly female-taught languages are Greek, Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, Hebrew, French, German, Indigenous languages, Italian and Spanish.

In the case of French, only 18.75% of all secondary school French teachers were female; a boy would have only a one in five chance of having a male French teacher. If this visibility of masculine role models in the target language is, as Kissau argued (Kissau, 2006, pp. 417-8), a key factor, then the gender of the French teaching community is at issue. However, of the seven languages in the Survey with an even split of male and female students (Arabic, Turkish, German, Chinese, Indonesian, Hebrew and Greek), only two - Arabic and Turkish - had more male teachers and females, while all of the others had similar proportions of teachers to French. It seems from this that the gender of the teacher cannot be a decisive factor in itself.

As a point of comparison, in one of the languages with the highest proportion of boys, Latin, there is a similar high proportion of male teachers: 68.48% of Latin students are male, and 64.71% of Latin teachers are male. There are a number of reasons behind Latin’s appeal to boys, just as there are behind the failure of French to engage more with boys, but the analysis of the Victorian independent schools data confirms what many of the commentators have suspected.

**School Type and Language Uptake by Boys: Findings**

Given the possibility that student perception of the gender suitability of languages was a factor, I decided to examine if there was a difference in boys’ language learning rates when different types of school - single-sex or co-educational - were compared. The Demographics table tithe ISV SLP Survey data included what type the school was. I identified a number of schools that were evenly matched in most aspects: size, location, socio-economic status and the years at which language study was compulsory, but crucially differs in school type: of the five that fit the criteria, two were boys-only, and three were co-educational. I chose to focus on French, as that seems to be the language where the gender gap was most significant. Four of the schools offered French from Year 7 to Year 12, and one (School 55) from Years 8 to 12; languages were mostly
compulsory a number of years into secondary school. In all but School 50 the majority of Year 7 boys learnt French. I obtained the total number of boys enrolled in Year 12 for each school from the Demographic data, and compared this to the total number of boys learning French at Year 12; this enabled me to calculate the proportion of the boys in each school learning French:

Table 7.4: Proportion of Boys Learning French, Like Schools, Years 7 and 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School 110</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 41</th>
<th>School 55</th>
<th>School 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size (total number of students)</td>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>500-999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Melbourne metropolitan</td>
<td>Melbourne metropolitan</td>
<td>Melbourne metropolitan</td>
<td>Melbourne metropolitan</td>
<td>Melbourne metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>Years 7, 8, 9</td>
<td>Years 7, 8, 9</td>
<td>Years 7, 8</td>
<td>Years 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>Years 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Boys Only</td>
<td>Boys Only</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of boys in Year 12</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Year 12 boys learning French</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of boys learning French</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
<td>14.57%</td>
<td>5.38%</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the proportion of Year 12 boys learning French was strikingly different. In the co-educational schools, only 2-5% of boys learnt French at Year 12; in the boys-only schools, 10-14% of boys learnt French.

**School Type and Language Uptake by Boys: Discussion**

This was only a small sample, but the findings possibly confirm what Kissau and Barton (2002) have found. If students perceive French as a 'girls' subject', then that dynamic would be expected to be seen in full force in a co-educational environment, where the students who wish to view subjects in this way can perceive their school like this every day. However, in a boys' only school, all subjects on offer at the school are boys’ subjects: there can be no demarcation between boys’ and girls’ subjects, at least within
the setting of their own school. These figures also confirm what Carr and Pauwels (2006) found in their qualitative study of boys and languages. One of their schools was a boys-only school in Queensland. She found talking to the boys there about languages was different to the other schools:

As indicated earlier in the book, when discussing the ‘gendering’ of the curriculum and the gendered economy of classroom interaction and performance, the impact of the ‘gaze of the other’ is clearly significant. We have noted variations in the performance of both masculinities and language learners in different contexts; but we have also noted the almost universal imperative for boys in school – across contexts – to differentiate themselves from girls. This group of boys, therefore, provided the opportunity to think about whether the absence of girls in the classroom actually makes a difference. And it seems that it does. (pp. 105-106)

Carr and Pauwels found that the boys in the boys’ only school perceived languages differently, even though some were aware of the gendered expectations in operation elsewhere:

But what emerged quite distinctively in their responses to these questions was a qualitatively different sense of how they see themselves as language learners. There was no sense of apology or justification. One boy mentioned fairly dismissively the fact that 'people' think languages are for girls and boys 'shouldn’t' do them. (p. 106)

They found that while the 'girl’s subject' narrative had been a constant in other schools, with boys often having to almost apologise for wanting to learn French, that aspect was missing in the boys-only school:

While I had been aware of the centrality and the impact of the ‘inappropriate for boys’ gloss on languages, meeting it constantly in conversations with boys and teachers, it possibly made its greatest impact by default, when talking with these boys. It wasn’t operating, and there was a distinctly ‘something’s missing here’ feeling. In all our conversations about the pros and cons of language learning, any sense of loss of face or ridicule was strangely absent. The skill of their teacher in establishing a learner-friendly environment is obviously part of this; but so, it would seem, is the all-boys’ context. (p. 106)

The data revealed in the ISV SLP Survey confirm what Carr and Pauwels found qualitatively - that a different dynamic operates in single-sex schools, one that is more
Conducive to boys learning languages such as French. This small sample of only five schools - but 572 boys - is not conclusive in itself, but might indicate a site for further investigation.

**In Summary**

There has been a long held view in some quarters that boys do not like languages, and that boys are under-represented. However, when the figures from the Victorian independent schools were examined, they revealed a more complicated picture. Some languages were clearly attractive to boys, and many languages seemed to be attractive to boys and girls equally. However, some languages had a noticeably higher number of girls than boys, especially in the final year of schooling. This was not due to there being significantly more girls in Year 12, or boys not being given the opportunity to learn languages in Year 7. Instead, boys had the same exposure to languages, but dropped out of some languages at a greater rate than girls.

One of the main sites for this was in French. As this was also the largest language in Victorian independent schools, the gender discrepancy in French tended to skew the results for languages overall. Indeed, it is more accurate to say that boys have a problem with French, rather than boys have a problem with languages. This phenomenon is not confined to Australia, but can be seen internationally as well. One factor in French may be that the subject is considered by some students to be more suitable for girls than boys. This can outweigh other considerations, such as enjoyment or the value of the language, for many boys. Their perception of French as a girls’ subject may also be influenced by the dearth of male role models of speakers of the language, although this is not the case in languages like German, which have a similar proportion of female teachers to French. In single-sex schools, where there is arguably less of a gendered dichotomy of subjects, a small sample of like schools showed evidence of a considerably greater retention of boys learning French compared to co-educational schools.
CHILDREN AT LOW SES SCHOOLS

Findings

The ISV SLP Survey demographic data included the SES score for each school, and this was the basis for the following analyses. In Table 7.5, schools were grouped according to their SES, and various language features noted for each group. The Federal Government’s definitions of bands of the SES have not been used in this study, as there are 46 separate sets; this was decided to be too unwieldy for useful interpretation. Instead, I have grouped Victorian independent schools SES scores into four brackets, which I have termed high, medium-high, medium-low, and low by dividing the schools into four groups of approximately equal numbers (as was seen in Table 4.5, Victorian independent schools were relatively evenly spread across the SES index scores).

Total numbers of students learning languages in Year 9 were compared with the number of students learning languages in Year 12 (some students might have been learning more than one language). These levels were chosen because Year 9 is the level in most schools when language learning becomes optional, and is a result of student choice, while Year 12 is the final year of schooling. Schools that had no students in either Year 9 or Year 12 were excluded from the table below.

Table 7.5: Language Statistics by SES band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES Bracket</th>
<th>Total number of schools</th>
<th>Average number of language offered per school</th>
<th>Total number of Year 9 students</th>
<th>Number of Year 9 students studying a language</th>
<th>Proportion of Year 9 students learning a language</th>
<th>Total number of Year 12 students</th>
<th>Number of Year 12 students studying a language</th>
<th>Percentage of Year 12 students learning a language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low SES (85-94)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>1,229</td>
<td>77.98%</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>37.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Low SES (95-101)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>21.93%</td>
<td>1,809</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>7.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-High SES (102-112)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>28.48%</td>
<td>3,739</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High SES (113-126)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>4,606</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>29.72%</td>
<td>4,828</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>14.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.5 thus illustrates language learning by SES bands. In the lowest SES band, with schools with an SES score of 85-94, the average number of languages offered per school was 1.67. 77.89% of the Year 9 students were still learning a language; in Year 12, 37.03% of students were learning a language. In the Medium-Low band, with an
SES score of 95-101, the average number of languages offered per school was 1.90; 21.93% of the Year 9 students were learning a language, while 7.24% of Year 12 students were learning a language. In the Medium-High band, with an SES score of 102-112, the average number of languages offered per school was 2.50; 28.48% of the Year 9 students were learning a language, while 9.23% of Year 12 students were learning a language. In the highest band, with an SES score of 113-126, the average number of languages offered per school was 3.29. 29.72% of the Year 9 students were learning a language, while 14.02% of Year 12 students were learning a language.

The SES scores for the de-identified schools from the ISV SLP Survey were cross-referenced with the languages the schools reported teaching (for the following table, languages which were only taught by one school have not been included to avoid identifying that school). The SES for all schools teaching each language were then averaged, with the standard deviation included to give an indication of the spread (a higher standard deviation indicates that SES scores for a particular language varied widely; a low standard deviation indicates that the SES scores are clustered around the average). (To give an idea of the relative position of each language, the average SES for all of the schools was 103.15, with a standard deviation of 11.14.) 14 schools had no SES, because they catered for aboriginal or disabled students, and received their funding under a different formula; they had to be excluded from this aspect of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of schools where taught</th>
<th>Average SES of schools where taught</th>
<th>Standard Deviation of SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>93.62</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>95.75</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>109.20</td>
<td>10.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>108.04</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>102.00</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>104.70</td>
<td>17.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>102.93</td>
<td>9.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>104.88</td>
<td>14.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>107.95</td>
<td>10.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Turkish and Arabic were taught to students of a low SES background, with an average SES score of 91.25 and 93.62 respectively. The low standard deviations (5.38 and 7.34) indicated that most schools were clustered around this average. By contrast, Japanese, German, French, Chinese, Latin and Spanish were all taught in schools with an average SES score in excess of 107, and while their standard deviations were slightly higher, they still indicated clustering around this average.

**Discussion**

The lower SES schools offered noticeably fewer languages per school. This may have been because these schools lacked the resources to fund large language departments, or because their language teaching was centred around a particular religious or ethnic identity; it must also be remembered that several of these schools were small, and smaller schools tended to offer fewer languages, as seen in Chapter 4. The higher the SES, the more languages schools offered; this may be because the higher SES schools tended to be larger.

Intriguingly, however, the rate of language learning was highest in the lowest SES band. Many low SES schools still had compulsory language classes in Year 9, with the result that the majority of students learnt a language; this contrasted with schools in all of the other bands. Possibly, the higher the socio-economic background of the school, the more variety parents and students demanded of elective programmes which usually begin in Year 9 and offer competition to languages in most schools. A very large proportion of Year 12 students (37.03%) in the lowest SES band were still learning languages in Year 12. It should be noted that these schools had the greatest loss in student numbers from Years 9 to 12, with students leaving school or transferring to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of schools where taught</th>
<th>Average SES of schools where taught</th>
<th>Standard Deviation of SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>111.79</td>
<td>10.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>110.64</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>112.08</td>
<td>11.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>91.25</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>98.33</td>
<td>16.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6: SES of Languages, by schools where taught
other schools. Nevertheless, these figures show that language learning in the final year of schooling is highest in the lowest SES band. This might reflect the finding made in Chapter 6, that the longer language learning is compulsory, the more students remain studying a language into Year 12. In the middle bands, there were similar proportions of Year 12 students learning languages. Rates at both Year 9 and Year 12 for language learning improved for the highest SES band, although still not to the levels seen in the lowest SES band. This confutes what might have been anticipated, that language learning increased with socio-economic status. These figures show that language learning is strongest in the lowest SES band, followed by the highest; it dips in the middle bands. The reason for this dip might be the focus of future research, as an understanding of why middle class students are learning languages at a lower rate than lower and higher SES students would be beneficial to increasing the overall number of students learning languages.

However, when SES scores were considered, there were clear differences in which languages were being learnt. The languages taught in lower SES schools tended to be community languages: Arabic, Turkish and Yiddish. This is not surprising; independent schools created to cater for a particular ethnic or religious group may well be expected to teach the languages associated with that group, and that was possibly the case here. Those languages may not have attraction to the general student population, and so remain restricted to a narrow band of schools. Similarly, the languages taught predominantly in high SES schools were the traditional foreign and classical languages; given the perhaps more traditional student and parent body of these schools, this was not a surprising result. The interesting thing, however, is the lack of cross-over between the two. The relatively low standard deviations would indicate that both sets of languages are taught mainly in their own SES groups - that the lower SES schools, for example, are not offering Spanish or Latin, and the higher SES schools were not offering Arabic or Turkish. Whatever the reasons for this - whether they are issues of resourcing, tradition in the school or links to community - there are some serious implications for this divide.

Language learning has great importance in Victoria for university entrance. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) offers a
bonus for students who learn a language: any student learning a language will receive an
advantage in the score used to determine access to many university courses. In
addition, however, every subject is scaled individually, according to the degree of
competition within that subject; the intent is to make all subjects compete on a level
playing field, and not disadvantage a student for choosing a difficult subject. The raw
score, out of a possible 50, is the score the student receives for their final result, a
combination of coursework and examinations (the highest possible raw score is 50, and
the median score for all subjects is 30; scores are then normally distributed around this
median). This score is altered by VTAC according to their scaling formula, and it is this
scaled score which is used to calculate a student’s overall score, which is used for entry
into many university courses. The average SES, tougher with the scaled scores for a
raw mark of 30 for a selection languages are shown below (VTAC, 2014):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of schools where taught</th>
<th>Average SES of schools where taught</th>
<th>VTAC Scaling - raw score 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>91.25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>93.62</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>102.93</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>104.88</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>107.95</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>108.04</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>109.20</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>110.64</td>
<td>35-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>111.79</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The languages taught in low SES schools, such as Arabic and Turkish, received either
no boost from the scaling, or went down slightly. By contrast, the languages taught in
high SES schools, such as French, German and Latin, received a very considerable
boost from scaling: in French, a median student received 41, and for Latin, 46. By not
offering higher scaling languages to their students, the lower SES schools were perhaps
unwittingly hindering their chances of a higher ATAR score, the score used for
university entrance in many courses in Australia. It could be argued that the students in
lower SES schools should have at least the same opportunity as those in higher SES schools, and the choice of language is a factor in this. Similar findings were made in New South Wales, where despite having a different system of scaling to Victoria, languages taught in low-SES schools had the lowest scaling (Cruickshank and Wright, 2016): this cross-state occurrence might indicate a systemic problem for Australia.

In addition, much of the drive for languages has been centred on their value for gaining future employment. The employment value for some languages, such as Latin, lies not in their direct applicability, but in their usefulness in helping students gain entrance to certain university courses, as well as the mental training they provide. However, for some languages, skill in the language can be seen as a directly valuable asset. COAG (1994) identified the economic value for Australians in being able to speak Asian languages (p. 49ff). In the United Kingdom, the British Council (2003) identified key European languages of economic importance, but also included Chinese and Arabic (p. 17). For Australia, the situation is different: our major trading partners, in rank order, are China, Japan, the United States, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Thailand and Germany (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016). It would seem logical that those with proficiency in any of the languages of these countries would have an advantage in the job market. Chinese (SES 110.64), Japanese (SES 107.95) and German (SES 108.04) are all key languages for these trading partners, and all languages that are taught in predominantly high SES schools.

**In Summary**

The ISV SLP Survey reveals that languages were not evenly distributed among all SES groups. In low SES schools, fewer languages were offered per school, but proportionally more students learnt languages at Year 9, and also at Year 12. There was a pronounced dip in middle SES schools, and although the proportions of students in the highest SES schools picked up, they still did not reach the levels seen in the lowest SES schools. This pattern could be because lower SES schools were centred around a particular religious or ethnic group, and the study of the associated language was viewed very highly by that group, or it might be the result of fewer options for other subjects, especially at the crucial Year 9 juncture. By contrast, the middle band schools may have suffered through too many options being offered at Year 9, enticing students
away from languages, or it may be because among this demographic, language learning is not valued. This study has identified a very intriguing phenomenon, and one that, it is hoped, will be the subject of future research.

While students at each SES band learnt languages, the languages they learnt were different. In the lower SES schools, students tended to learn community languages such as Arabic and Turkish. In the higher SES schools, students often learnt traditional foreign or classical languages, or Chinese. The languages taught in the higher SES schools tended to be those which were more beneficial for university entrance, as they were often very highly scaled; by contrast, the languages in the lower SES schools were scaled neutrally, or down. This would give the students from the higher SES schools an advantage in university entrance to many courses. Further, the languages taught in the higher SES schools were often the languages of Australia’s major trading partners, thus potentially opening the door to new job opportunities for speakers of those languages.

**CONCLUSION**

The question of who is being left behind in language learning turned out to be more complicated than expected. The accepted narrative, that 'boys do not do languages', turned out to be disproven by the data; rather, boys did learn languages, in some cases outnumbering girls. The issue was clouded by the domination of French as the main language learnt in Victorian independent schools, with numbers outstripping all other languages, and an especially strong presence in the highly visible senior secondary years, unlike many other languages. Because French has a high imbalance between girls and boys, it has been wrongly assumed that this applies to the subject area as a whole. This should be the spark for educational authorities to examine French in more detail, and try to determine boys’ attitudes to French in greater detail, and address these, perhaps through changes to pedagogy, course content or assessment; it should not be the cause of hand-wringing and despair over boys and their languages learning. Boys have shown that they are very willing and able to learn languages.

Similarly, the links between SES and language learning proved more nuanced than might have been assumed. Students at schools all along the SES continuum learn languages, but especially in the lowest SES band; language learning cannot be
dismissed as a middle class preoccupation. There was acceptance for the value of language learning, whether the students came from low or high SES background; the dip in language learning in the middle bands is a cause for concern. However, what was evident was that the choice of which languages were offered to students varied according to the the SES of the school. Lower SES students tended to be offered the languages of their communities, and while that is admirable for maintaining their language skills and cultural identity, it did not always serve that group well for university entrance and making them attractive to employers. Languages of economic importance tended to be taught more in the higher SES schools, and it is possible that the language choices made by schools might have had the effect of limiting the possibilities for students.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This study began with 222,498 points of data yielding information about 203 schools and 126,377 students, data that had been collected by an outside agency for another purpose and was yet to be analysed. In order to understand these data, the first phase of the project was an activity of Descriptive Research: mapping the landscape of language learning in Victorian independent schools, and presenting that information in a form that could be comprehended. The second phase grew organically out of the first, inspired by Grounded Theory to allow patterns and theories to emerge from the data. These were the issues of languages in primary school; compulsory language learning; boys and languages; and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and languages, but the data are so rich and comprehensive that other issues are sure to emerge with further examination.

Key questions I asked of the ISV SLP Survey data were:

1. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools at a sector-wide level?
2. What was the picture of language learning in Victorian independent schools in individual languages?
3. How much language learning was taking place in primary schools?
4. To what extent did rates of language learning follow compulsion in schools?
5. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between boys and girls, overall, and within individual languages?
6. Was there a difference between rates of language learning between children of lower, middle and higher socio-economic backgrounds?

These questions have led to a number of findings.

The landscape of language learning in Victorian independent schools: Main Findings

1. French dominates language learning, but Asian languages are also very strong.

24 languages were taught in the Survey schools, with every school offering at least one, and 58.13% offering more than one. French outstripped all others in numbers of students (29,080) and number of schools (89), while two Asian languages - Japanese and Chinese - came second and third, with each having approximately half the student
numbers of French. This represented a shift from the national findings of Liddicoat et al. (2007), which showed Japanese as the most popular, followed by Indonesian and Italian. Due to the nature of independent schools, which were frequently established to cater for a particular ethnic or religious group in the community, some smaller languages such as Coptic and Syriac were represented, as well as classical languages such as Latin, perhaps indicating the priorities of the independent schools.

A large proportion of students (40.35%) learnt one of the traditional foreign languages, such as French or German; a much smaller proportion (14.57%) learnt a community language such as Greek or Arabic; 12.66% learnt Chinese, with 20.30% learning another Asian language. Most dispiriting was the very low proportion of students who learnt an Australian Indigenous language, only 0.11%.

2. **Languages are numerically strong in Primary Schools, but they receive low frequency and time of lessons.**

Of the total of 104,196 students learning any language in Victorian independent schools in 2013, 49,405 (47.15%) were in primary school (Prep-Year 6), and 54,791 were in secondary school (Years 7-12). 23,127 were in the years where language learning, for most schools, is post-compulsory (Years 9-12). 7,225, or just 6.93%, were in the senior secondary years, Years 11 and 12. Language learning was thus concentrated in primary school, and in the early years of secondary school when language learning tends to be mandated by the school.

The benefits of learning a language in primary school were listed in Chapter 2, and while there is disagreement over the exact best age to start learning a language, there seems to be widespread agreement that a primary language programme is only beneficial if adequate time is given to it. This has been set by the government at 150 minutes per week, but the majority of the respondent schools gave between 30 and 60 minutes per week. Primary schools students tended to receive approximately a quarter of the time in language classes that their brothers and sisters in senior secondary years did. Just under half (46.91%) of those teaching primary school languages did not hold a teaching qualification in primary school teaching. In the two outstanding examples, Japanese had 83.03% of its students in primary or early secondary, and Italian had 83.88%. Moreover, the majority of primary school students received under one hour of
instruction per week in Japanese (in Year 3, 76.92% of students) and Italian (in Year 3, 100.00% of students). These languages now are effectively primary school languages, with a small residue learning them in secondary school; compounding this, the students receive considerably less than the recommended amount of time. It is possible to see this becoming a self-defeating spiral, where students receive insufficient time to make inroads into the language, thus making their time learning the language frustrating, and making parents cynical about the value of the language - leading to pressure from parents for less time, rather than more time, to be spent on the language.

3. **Most students learn languages only when they are compelled to do so.**

In almost every school, language study was compulsory at one or more year levels. In over 80% of schools, language study was compulsory in Years Prep to 7, gradually becoming an elective subject after that. Student numbers mirrored compulsion very closely: as soon as compulsion to learn a language ended, student numbers dropped, and often dramatically. The biggest drop off in numbers was from Year 8 to Year 9, and Year 9 to Year 10, and these are the year levels where levels of compulsion drop off most sharply as well (Year 8: 72.65% compulsory; Year 9: 36.04% compulsory; Year 10: 17.06% compulsory). Clearly, the majority of students were dropping their language study as soon as they could.

This links with arguments about student motivation raised in Chapter 2: when students are younger, they value the enjoyment they get out of the classroom, while it is not until they are older - and in many cases have already stopped their language learning - that the instrumental orientation of how useful language study might be to them plays a major role. By letting students opt out of language study at the end of Year 8, as the majority of schools did, students are making decisions on their future at a time when for the most part future utility is not a consideration.

4. **The longer languages are compulsory in a school, the more students learnt a language to Year 12.**

When results from schools which made languages compulsory in later years were compared with those that let students drop languages at the end of Year 8, there was a significant difference in retention to Year 12. Schools that had compulsory language programmes to the end of Year 8 had 11.43% of their Year 12 cohort studying a
language; by contrast, schools that mandated language study to the end of Year 9 had 17.67% of their Year 12 students in language study. The results were even greater for those schools - 39 - which mandated language study to the end of Year 10: 32.52% of their Year 12 cohort studied a language. Causality cannot necessarily be inferred, as other factors may have operated in these schools, but if governments want to have a greater proportion of senior secondary students studying languages then the year at which mandating language study ceases must be an important consideration.

5. *The gender mix for languages was nuanced, with some languages having more boys than girls learning them and many appealing equally to both boys and girls, but there was a major imbalance in French.*

The raw figures indicated an imbalance between boys and girls learning languages. In Year 7, where language study was compulsory in over 80% of schools, there were relatively even numbers of boys and girls: 49.05% girls, 50.95% boys. However, by Year 12, when language study was an elective, the balance had swung considerably in favour of girls: 62.18% girls and 37.82% boys. This might lead to the impression that there is a crisis in boys’ language learning, but a closer examination of individual languages revealed that the situation was more nuanced. Excepting those languages with a small statewide enrolment of under 50 students over Years 9-12, two languages - Coptic and Latin - had a predominantly male enrolment in Years 9-12. Several more - Greek, Hebrew, Indonesian, Chinese, German, Turkish and Arabic had a roughly even number of male and female students. Japanese, Yiddish, French, Spanish, Italian and Indigenous languages were predominantly female languages. The distortion of the figures occurs because of the exceptional position of French. Because French is offered in more schools than any other language, a gender imbalance in French will appear to be an imbalance in a whole learning area - whereas in reality, it is just an issue in one subject. The reasons for the reluctance by many boys to learn French may have to do with the perception of French as a 'girls’ subject', as Kissau (2006) found in Canada and Carr and Pauwels (2006) found in Australia. This is perhaps supported by the findings of a comparison between boys in single-sex schools and co-educational schools that were similar in size, SES and location: 2-5% of the boys in the co-educational schools leant French, compared with 10-14% in the single-sex schools. The sample size, while
high in the number of students (572), was small in the number of schools (4), but this might be a fruitful area for further research.

6. **Students from the lowest SES group learnt languages at a higher proportion than other groups, but learnt languages that were less advantageous for university entrance.**

When students were grouped according to the government-determined socio-economic status of their school (itself determined by demographic features of the students’ parents), several features became apparent. First, the lower SES schools tended to offer fewer languages (1.9 on average), while the highest SES schools offered more (3.29 on average). This may reflect a particular religious or cultural association of the lower SES schools, the size of the school or the resources that these schools were able to allocate to language learning. However, in low SES schools 37.03% of students were learning a language in Year 12, compared with 14.02% in the schools with the highest SES. Clearly, language learning was not just a preserve of the students from more wealthy backgrounds. When the actual languages were investigated, however, a more complex situation emerged. Students at the lower SES schools tended to be learning community languages such as Arabic, Turkish and Yiddish, while students at the highest SES schools learnt Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, French and Latin. There are important implications for this divide. It is arguable that the languages taught at the higher SES schools might be an advantage for students for future careers, with a predicted increase in demand for Asian language skills by business groups. Second, in the Victorian university entrance system, every subject is scaled in its value for points towards university entrance - and the languages taught at the high SES schools attract high scaling, whereas those at the lower SES schools attract little or even negative scaling. This then puts the students from the high SES schools at an advantage in university entrance purely because of the languages their schools offer.

**Recommendations**

1. **A public campaign needs to be mounted making the case for Australian children to learn languages.**

As discussed in Chapter 1, research for this study highlighted the need for key stakeholders - parents, students and employers - to be informed about the importance of learning languages. It is not enough for language associations and language teachers to
take on this task (and they can be too easily dismissed for being biased and partisan). Isolated voices from business have been calling for incased language and cultural awareness, but all of the calls need to be brought together under a campaign backed by government, clearly and persuasively explaining the benefits of learning languages. This would be in accordance with existing government policy at both the state and federal levels, and must be a precursor to any efforts to increase the number of Australian children learning languages.

2. **Time and frequency of language lessons in primary schools need to be re-examined.**
Finding 2 demonstrated the low average exposure children received to language lessons in primary school. Ideally, primary school students would have sufficient time to learn a language and make meaningful progress. The amount has already been put forward by government: 2½ hours per week, spread over a number of sessions. The best solution would be for schools to provide this to every student.

However, school time is a zero-sum game, and for more time to be given to languages, time must be taken away from something else. The answer may be in a rearrangement of the time. The ‘early start’ argument has not been able to produce conclusive evidence for its effectiveness beyond the sheer amount of time. Perhaps schools might reallocate time over year levels: instead of giving languages 1 hour per week, as many schools do, from Year 1 onwards, they might be better not starting the language study at all until Year 4, but giving it then the full 150 minutes.

3. **Remove the obstacles to schools making languages compulsory to the end of Year 10.**
It is already the policy of various governments in Australia to make language study compulsory to the end of Year 10; however, that clearly is not happening in the majority of schools. Lack of policy and direction is not the problem - there are other factors at work in schools which have been discussed in this project, such as teacher supply and making courses attractive to the full range of potential students (such as making French more attractive to boys, for example).

4. **Control for SES in the calculation of scaling for subjects by VTAC.**
Students from low SES backgrounds are studying languages at high rates, but are not receiving the full benefit of their language proficiency; instead they are in some cases
being disadvantaged. The scaling formula used by VTAC takes into account how well the student does in their other subjects:

Scaling adjusts the study scores in each study to take account of the strength of competition among students taking the study. The strength of competition in each study is measured by how well the students in that study performed in their other studies. The study scores are scaled so that the overall level of scores in that study matches the scores obtained by the same group of students in all of their other studies combined. (VTAC, 2017)

Thus because students from a low SES background might do poorly in their other subjects, their language score is downgraded, or not upgraded as high as other languages.

Given all that is known about the impact of SES on student academic achievement, it is reasonable that SES should also be another factor taken into account by VTAC in determining scores. Failure to do so has resulted in a vicious cycle which advantages students from a higher SES background, and locks students from a lower SES background out of many university courses. This is a major step, but the inequity of the situation cries out for serious action.

Methodology: a Reflection

The decision to use pre-existing data has been vindicated by the level of detail and the wide coverage of a range of languages, school types, SES and year levels I was able to examine. Had I gone with my first intention, of obtaining data myself, I would have been able to uncover only a fraction of the detail I was able to using the USV data. Moreover, I was able to explore areas that not only were beyond the data I had originally intended to collect, but also in many cases had not even registered with me as areas suitable for exploration before starting this project. A limitation was that I could only describe the situation of a particular point of time - I could tell, for example, what was happening with student numbers in Indonesian in 2013, but I could not assess the impact of the Bali bombings on student numbers. However, both are important - and in order to accurately complete the second task, the first task needs to have been carried out - and that is what this study has been able to achieve.
I have found the use of Descriptive Research very useful in my and others’ understanding of the area. While working on the thesis I have addressed several groups of language teachers, and the descriptive research I have been able to provide has in most cases been a first: teachers have not had access to data like these, which help them see the ‘big picture’ of their language. Descriptive research is useful for informing and providing a foundational understanding; it can provide a launchpad for future exploration. I have listed some of these in my recommendations for further study, and these would use the methods and methodology most suited to their purpose, but the decision to use descriptive research for this initial study has, I feel, been justified. Grounded Theory allowed my research the freedom to follow up on areas that needed further examination - and in some cases, these were completely new areas of examination, and have led to some exciting findings. I enjoyed the excitement of chasing a new thread, not knowing where it would lead; this was certainly the case with low SES students and language learning.

This is not to say that other forms of research would not have been useful or enlightening. I would be very interested in conducting what could become an ethnography of language learners in Australian schools - who are they? what motivates them? what problems do they encounter, and how do they overcome them? Such a study would be valuable to understanding language learning in Australia, and could assist in understanding language learning in other settings across the world. Teachers have reacted to some of my findings, which I have shared through two talks at the MLTAV conferences (2016, 2017) and an article for the MLTAV journal *Languages Victoria* (2016), by asking ‘why’; in some cases I have been able to put forward reasonable theories, but in others I have had to declare that I don’t know, and that there is a need for further research (especially qualitative). However, such questioning has been enabled by the descriptive research that I have done, and that I feel has formed a vital first step.

**Limitations**

As noted in Chapter 3, there were several limitations to this study, and these might indicate areas for further research. One limitation is that I have considered only one year. While I received survey data for three years, there were obstacles to conducting a longitudinal analysis. I had no demographic data for the years besides 2013; while most
schools were constant across the period, it is inevitable that there would have been some differences, especially in enrolments. Further, the period was too short for real changes beyond the normal fluctuations of school and subject enrolments to be seen; there were no major changes in the funding or curriculum arrangements related to languages in this period, for example. However, it would be useful to conduct the same survey again in a few years time to allow for comparisons to be made. Indeed, in preliminary discussions with the ISV about my findings, they have expressed interest in conducting a follow-up survey so that changes between that and the 2013 Survey can be examined\textsuperscript{13}. It might be useful to wait until the Australian Curriculum: Languages has been fully implemented in schools before carrying this survey out; this would allow for the impact at school level of these major changes in curriculum to be gauged. I would suggest 2020, or even 2023 - a decade on - would be sufficient time for the impact, if any, of these changes to be observed at a school and subject level.

A further limitation of this study is that it is confined to students in one state, and one sector within that state. The ISV SLP Survey was only sent to independent schools in Victoria, not Catholic or government schools; these schools also participated in the funding of the SLP, but their funding was administered by the Catholic Education Office and state Department of Education respectively. These bodies may have collected similar data to that asked for by ISV, although it is more likely they would have collected only the data specifically required by the Federal Government; nevertheless, if they can be obtained, it may be possible to add them to the present study, but there have been no indications that this will be forthcoming in the near future. Similar organisations to ISV in other states collected similar data from the independent schools in their state, but I have been unable to obtain the data from any other state to use as a comparison to the situation in Victoria. It is possible that the data were not stored, or that the exhaustive survey created by ISV was not replicated in other states, which may have obtained only the data required by the Federal Government.

However, it can be argued that the situation of language study in Victoria is sufficiently different to the other states to warrant it being the sole focus of this study. As discussed in Chapter 4, Victoria has significantly more students studying languages at Senior

\textsuperscript{13} At the time of writing ISV have just issued a new survey.
Secondary level than other states or territories, and offers the widest range of languages. Independent schools have a higher level of participation in language learning than government or Catholic schools in Year 12 (Fullarton and Ainsley, 2000, p. 25) and thus the focus of the study, Victorian independent schools, is fertile ground for the study of languages. Consequently, many findings may have applicability to the rest of Australia, and similar predominantly English-speaking societies such as Britain and New Zealand.

**Future Directions**

This study raises a large number of questions which require further investigation. This study has been quantitative, and could be supported by complementary qualitative research; to a large extent, the study was aimed at establishing what had happened in Victorian independent schools; the question of why could not be answered by the data available, but instead will require further research.

Ten possible research questions derived from the findings of this study are:

1. Why are Italian and Greek so much lower in independent schools than in government and Catholic sector schools in Victoria?
2. Why are newer community languages such as Tamil, Hindi and Sinhalese not offered in more schools?
3. What are the impediments to Japanese capitalising on its strong numbers in primary schools?
4. Why are students leaving Indonesian at such a high rate after Year 8?
5. What are the impediments to more schools teaching Australian Indigenous languages?
6. Are the strong numbers of boys in Latin due to access, something intrinsic in the language, or teaching methods used?
7. How do primary school principals/curriculum co-ordinators make decisions on how much time to allocate to languages?
8. Can the findings on the level at which compulsion ceases and retention rates to Year 12 be replicated in other settings?
9. Can the findings on the proportion of boys learning languages in boys-only schools compared to boys in co-educational schools be replicated in a wider setting?
10. How do principals/curriculum co-ordinators of low SES schools make decisions on which languages to offer? How can these schools capitalise on their students’ desire to learn languages?
Some of these questions could be answered by action research from teacher-researchers; others might require research that compares the situation in Victorian independent schools with that of other sectors, other states, or other countries.

Governments in Australia at both federal and state levels and business groups have recognised the need for more Australians to learn languages, as seen in Chapter 1. It is hoped that some of these findings on language learning in Victorian independent schools may help to achieve these goals.

**Personal Impact: a Reflection**

As a practising language teacher, I had found that the process of researching, exploring and writing this thesis has had a profound impact on my approach to language learning within my school, and in my engagement with other schools.

Some of my views have been challenged, and some bolstered. I had been ambivalent about the effect of increasing the length of mandated language study; I was not sure whether the students who continued with a language to the end of Year 12 would have done so regardless of when mandating ceased. My research has convinced more of the effectiveness of extending the time of mandated language learning - provided the courses are of a suitable standard and the material is appealing to a wide range of students. For another area where I have had my views challenged is on who is studying languages. I was heartened by so many languages that appealed equally to boys and girls, and the findings on low SES children was a surprise to me, upending notions of language learning at school being a middle class preoccupation.

The project has reinvigorated my feelings about the importance of languages. As I researched practice in other countries the need for Australia to improve was highlighted; this has resulted in an article for the MLTAV and a paper arguing the case for the increasing importance of languages in today’s curriculum. I feel now that more needs to be done to support low SES children in learning languages, and this is something I was unaware of prior to carrying out my research; it will from now on figure prominently in my thinking, and my attitude to the fairness of the scaling system used in the VCE had changed. I find myself changing from my role as a teacher within my school to becoming more of an advocate for these issues in language learning and the education
community, and I have become involved in the MLTAV and the University of Melbourne’s Master of Teaching course.

The project has also reinforced to me the power of research. When researching an area that is a passion, and where I already have considerable experience, it was thrilling to be making new discoveries that both supported what I have always felt to be true, and also opened my eyes to situations within my own profession to which I had been blind. Research provides authority to a position while at the same time questioning and probing that position. The result is that ideas get changed but ultimately strengthened by the process, and this can lead to more mature understanding of an often complex set of issues. The power of research has also been evident in discussions with other teachers and sharing my research with them. This empowers teachers within their schools: they can argue for their language programmes with the backing of hard data, and can marshall figures and research to back up their cases.
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Table A1.1

French Snapshot

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of French</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of French</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1.2

German Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching German</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>108.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying German</td>
<td>11,747</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A1.2
**German Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of German</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of German</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.3
**Italian Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Italian</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>104.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Italian</td>
<td>2,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Italian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Italian</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.4
**Greek (Modern) Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Greek</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>102.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A1.4
Greek (Modern) Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Greek</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Greek</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Greek</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1.5
Arabic Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Arabic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>93.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Arabic</td>
<td>4,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Arabic</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Arabic</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1.6
Japanese Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Japanese</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>107.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A1.6
**Japanese Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Japanese</td>
<td>16,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Japanese</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Japanese</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.7
**Indonesian Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Indonesian</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>102.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Indonesian</td>
<td>9,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Indonesian</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Indonesian</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.8
**Chinese Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Chinese</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>110.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A1.8
**Chinese Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Chinese</td>
<td>15,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Chinese</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Chinese</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.9
**Indigenous Languages Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Indigenous Languages</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Indigenous Languages</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Indigenous Languages</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Indigenous Languages</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A1.10
**Latin Snapshot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>n of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondent schools teaching Latin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SES of the schools</td>
<td>111.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspect</td>
<td>n of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro schools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools only</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole language taught in the school</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls only schools</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys only schools</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students studying Latin - all levels</td>
<td>2,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers of Latin</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers of Latin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: ISV SLP Survey Questions

a. What is your school name?

b. Do your figures relate to: the whole school/a particular campus?

c. Is your school (or campus you have selected): co-educational/boys-only/girls-only?

d. How many languages are taught at your school?

e. Do you offer languages at: Primary only/Secondary only/combined Primary and Secondary?

(The following questions were then repeated for each language taught at the school)

1. Enrolment:

2. Boys (Prep)

3. Boys (Year 1)

4. Boys (Year 2)

5. Boys (Year 3)

6. Boys (Year 4)

7. Boys (Year 5)

8. Boys (Year 6)

9. Boys (Year 7)

10. Boys (Year 8)

11. Boys (Year 9)

12. Boys (Year 10)

13. Boys (Year 11)

14. Boys (Year 12)

15. Girls (Prep)

16. Girls (Year 1)
17. Girls (Year 2)
18. Girls (Year 3)
19. Girls (Year 4)
20. Girls (Year 5)
21. Girls (Year 6)
22. Girls (Year 7)
23. Girls (Year 8)
24. Girls (Year 9)
25. Girls (Year 10)
26. Girls (Year 11)
27. Girls (Year 12)

28. Indicate if the language is compulsory at these levels:

29. Compulsory (Prep)
30. Compulsory (Year 1)
31. Compulsory (Year 2)
32. Compulsory (Year 3)
33. Compulsory (Year 4)
34. Compulsory (Year 5)
35. Compulsory (Year 6)
36. Compulsory (Year 7)
37. Compulsory (Year 8)
38. Compulsory (Year 9)
39. Compulsory (Year 10)
40. Compulsory (Year 11)
41. Compulsory (Year 12)
42. Compulsory (None of the above)

43. Estimated teaching time per week for (Prep)[Scale 1\textsuperscript{14}]

44. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Prep)
   [Scale 2\textsuperscript{15}]

45. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 1)[Scale 1]

46. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 1)
   [Scale 2]

47. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 2)[Scale 1]

48. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 2)
   [Scale 2]

49. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 3)[Scale 1]

50. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 3)
    [Scale 2]

51. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 4)[Scale 1]

52. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 4)
    [Scale 2]

53. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 5)[Scale 1]

54. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 5)
    [Scale 2]

55. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 6)[Scale 1]

56. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 6)
    [Scale 2]

57. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 7)[Scale 1]

\textsuperscript{14} Scale 1: (Not applicable/30 minutes or less/31 to 60 minutes/61 to 90 minutes/91 to 180 minutes (3 hours)/181-220 minutes (3 to 4.5 hours)/221 to 450 minutes (4.5 to 7.5 hours)/More than 7.5 hours

\textsuperscript{15} Scale 2: Not applicable/1/2/3/4/5/More than 5
58. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 7) [Scale 2]
59. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 8) [Scale 1]
60. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 8) [Scale 2]
61. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 9) [Scale 1]
62. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 9) [Scale 2]
63. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 10) [Scale 1]
64. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 10) [Scale 2]
65. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 11) [Scale 1]
66. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 11) [Scale 2]
67. Estimated teaching time per week for (Year 12) [Scale 1]
68. Average number of lessons or contact points for each year level per week (Year 12) [Scale 2]
69. Mode of delivery for (Prep)
70. Mode of delivery for (Year 1)
71. Mode of delivery for (Year 2)
72. Mode of delivery for (Year 3)
73. Mode of delivery for (Year 4)
74. Mode of delivery for (Year 5)
75. Mode of delivery for (Year 6)
76. Mode of delivery for (Year 7)

Options for Mode of Delivery: Not offered/Combined/Face to Face/Computer-based learning
77. Mode of delivery for (Year 8)
78. Mode of delivery for (Year 9)
79. Mode of delivery for (Year 10)
80. Mode of delivery for (Year 11)
81. Mode of delivery for (Year 12)
82. Do you provide separate classes for L1 and L2 Learners of this language at the following year levels? (Year 11)
83. Do you provide separate classes for L1 and L2 Learners of this language at the following year levels? (Year 12)
84. How many teachers currently teach this language at this school?
85. How many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers currently teach this language at this school?
86. Total number of teachers from Prep to Year 6 who teach this language? (Male)
87. Total number of teachers from Prep to Year 6 who teach this language? (Female)
88. How many of these teachers hold a primary years teaching qualification? (Male)
89. How many of these teachers hold a primary years teaching qualification? (Female)
90. Total number of teachers in Years 7 to 12 teaching this language? (Male)
91. Total number of teachers in Years 7 to 12 teaching this language? (Female)
92. How many of these teachers hold a secondary years teaching qualification? (Male)
93. How many of these teachers hold a secondary years teaching qualification? (Female)
94. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Three year (post VCE) tertiary language study (or equivalent))
95. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Language accreditation)
96. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Four year (beginners) tertiary language study)

97. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Two year (post VCE tertiary language study))

98. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Three year (beginners) tertiary language study)

99. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (One year (post VCE) tertiary language study)

100. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Two year (beginners) tertiary language study)

101. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (One year (beginners) tertiary language study)

102. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Native speaker; no formal Language qualifications)

103. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Other (e.g., one year living in Japan or unknown qualification))

104. Please consider the qualification(s) of the FEMALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Further tertiary studies, e.g., Masters in Applied Linguistics)

105. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Three year (post VCE) tertiary language study (or equivalent))

106. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Language accreditation)

107. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Four year (beginners) tertiary language study)

108. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Two year (post VCE tertiary language study))

109. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Three year (beginners) tertiary language study)
110. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (One year (post VCE) tertiary language study)

111. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Two year (beginners) tertiary language study)

112. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (One year (beginners) tertiary language study)

113. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Native speaker; no formal Language qualifications)

114. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Other (e.g., one year living in Japan or unknown qualification))

115. Please consider the qualification(s) of the MALE teacher(s) who teach this language. (Further tertiary studies, e.g., Masters in Applied Linguistics)

116. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 11: Chinese First Language)

117. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 11: Chinese Second Language Advanced)

118. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 11: Chinese Second Language)

119. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 12: Chinese First Language)

120. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 12: Chinese Second Language Advanced)

121. Of the students studying Mandarin, how many students are: (Year 12: Chinese Second Language)

122. Do you provide separate classes for: (Chinese First Language?)

123. Do you provide separate classes for: (Chinese Second Language?)
Appendix 3: ISV School Data Questions

1. School number
2. SES Score
3. Enrolment Range
4. School Type
5. Metro/Regional
6. Gender
7. OS Students
8. Sum Children
9. Sum Primary
10. Sum Secondary
11. Sum Boys
12. Sum Girls
13. Sum FFPOS
14. Sum Primary Boys
15. Sum Primary Girls
16. Sum Secondary Boys
17. Sum Secondary Girls
18. Total FT Teachers
19. Total PT Teachers
20. Total Teachers
21. General Staff
22. Number of Prep Students
23. Number of Year 1 Students
24. Number of Year 2 Students
25. Number of Year 3 Students
26. Number of Year 4 Students
27. Number of Year 5 Students
28. Number of Year 6 Students
29. Number of Year 7 Students
30. Number of Year 8 Students
31. Number of Year 9 Students
32. Number of Year 10 Students
33. Number of Year 11 Students
34. Number of Year 12 Students
35. Sum FFPOS\textsuperscript{17} Boys
36. Sum FFPOS Girls
37. Sum FFPOS Primary
38. Sum FFPOS Secondary
39. Number of Boys Prep
40. Number of Girls Prep
41. Number of Boys Gr 1
42. Number of Girls Gr 1
43. Number of Boys Gr 2
44. Number of Girls Gr 2
45. Number of Boys Gr 3
46. Number of Girls Gr 3
47. Number of Boys Gr 4

\textsuperscript{17} Full Fee Paying Overseas Students
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Author/s:
Tuckfield, John

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