An Analysis of Factors Shaping Students’ Decisions to Study or Not to Study Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in Queensland State Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the teaching of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in Australia has received widespread support from governments at both state and federal levels. Much funding has been directed to this curriculum area, and initiatives have been implemented to increase enrolment levels in LOTE subjects once the compulsory periods of language study are over. In spite of this, enrolments in elective LOTE programs remain largely unchanged over this time period.

This thesis reports on a study examining the subject choices made by Year 9-12 students in Queensland State secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to identify and explore the factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so. In Queensland, Year 9 represents the first opportunity that students have to make choices concerning their language study, and they are given further opportunities in Year 10 and in Year 11. The design of the study was informed by Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1980; 1988; 2005) ‘Theory of Planned Behaviour’, which maintains that behaviour is a result of the influence of three major components – attitude toward the behaviour (in this case, studying LOTE), subjective norms (the influence of the opinions of people who are important to the student) and perceived behavioural control (the extent to which the student feels that they are in control of their own actions). The use of this theory allowed for the analysis and exploration of the factors shaping students’ subject choices.

The research was conducted using a five-phase, mixed-methods approach incorporating two major phases, one of which was qualitative and the other quantitative. The two major phases were preceded by three preliminary phases, all of which were of a quantitative nature. The first preliminary phase involved the collection of historical enrolment figures in LOTE subjects in Queensland schools, in order to establish enrolment trends over the past forty years. The second preliminary phase examined enrolments in LOTE subjects in individual State schools in Queensland, in order to select research sites for the subsequent phases of the study, based on the proportion of students in each school electing to study a LOTE. Three large State schools in the Gold Coast region were then selected to participate in the third and fourth phases of the study. In the third preliminary phase, 2030 students in Years 9-12 at the three schools completed a survey, which served two purposes – to provide background information
concerning the students’ participation in LOTE programs at the school, and to ascertain the students’ willingness to participate in Phase Four of the study.

In Phase Four (the major qualitative phase of the study), 94 students at the three schools were interviewed about their experiences with LOTE study. The data collected were analysed and the results informed the construction of a survey instrument, which was used in Phase Five of the study. This instrument, which was designed according to the guidelines of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, was administered to 1259 students at three additional schools situated in different regions of the state, which were selected based on the data collected in Phase Two. The results of the qualitative data from Phase Four and the quantitative data from Phase Five were then integrated and analysed.

The results of the qualitative data indicated that when choosing their subjects, students appear to be influenced to varying degrees by advice received from parents, teachers and friends, their performance in prior LOTE studies, future career aspirations, like or dislike of the subject and like or dislike of the teacher. The LOTE teacher was found to have considerable influence over students’ decisions regarding LOTE study, with dislike of the teacher identified as an issue of central importance for students who had chosen not to study LOTE. This was especially true for male students. Teacher attrition was also found to be a factor that influenced the choices made by students at one particular school. The qualitative findings also indicated that the role of parents in students’ decision making processes was not clear, and that like or dislike of the subject, as well as the perceived relevance of LOTE to students’ future career aspirations, were factors that shaped students’ subject choices.

The results of the quantitative analysis supported most of the qualitative findings. It was revealed that students who choose not to study a LOTE generally do not have positive attitudes towards LOTE study, do not perceive it as being relevant to their future career aspirations and do not hold favourable attitudes towards the LOTE teachers at their school. Students who choose to study a LOTE in Years 9-12 generally hold favourable attitude towards LOTE study and hold the LOTE teachers at their school in high regard. While the benefits of studying LOTE were recognised by the students, most indicated that they did not consider LOTE to be of relevance to their future career aspirations. Additional analyses revealed that gender continues to be an issue of importance in LOTE study, with many boys indicating that LOTE is a “girls’ subject”.

In summary, the study found that students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so are shaped by the interplay among a
number of factors. The study’s findings contribute to a better theoretical understanding of students’ attitudes towards LOTE study and the reasons why a majority of students choose not to study LOTE in Queensland State secondary schools. The thesis also discusses implications for policy and practice that have arisen from the study, and provides recommendations for ways in which enrolments in LOTE subjects might be increased.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: 

Scott R. Ham.
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CHAPTER ONE

The Context of Language Learning in Australia

This study is concerned with the teaching of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in Australian schools. More specifically, its main focus is to examine reasons why students choose to study or not to study a Language Other Than English (LOTE) after the compulsory years of LOTE study. In the Australian state of Queensland, this covers the period from Years 9-12, as Year 8 represents the third and final year in which students are required to study a LOTE as part of the core curriculum.

1. Justification of the Study

Since the early 1990s, the teaching of LOTE in Australian schools has received widespread support from Departments of Education across the country. Much effort and revenue has been devoted to the design and implementation of LOTE programs at both the primary and secondary levels of schooling. In Queensland, the study of a LOTE has been compulsory since 1994 for all students attending State schools in Years 6, 7 and 8. Year 9 marks the first opportunity for students to choose whether to continue to study a LOTE. Students who continue to study a LOTE after Year 8 are also required to make further decisions about their LOTE study at the end of Year 9 and again at the end of Year 10, when they choose the subjects that they will study in Years 11 and 12.

Much has been written about the benefits of engaging students in LOTE study, with the majority of the literature pertaining to this field expounding the educational, economic and cultural benefits to be gained from the study of a LOTE (for example, Grosse, 2004; Lantolf & Sunderman, 2001; Parkinson, 1999; Ingram, 1993, and Carr, 1993). However, with the exception of Baldauf and Lawrence’s 1990 study, which will be discussed later in this chapter, there is little published research that explores the nature of students’ decisions to study a LOTE once it is no longer compulsory.

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1. School year levels in Queensland correspond to the following average ages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Age 11</td>
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<td>Year 7</td>
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<td>Year 8</td>
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<td>Year 9</td>
<td>Age 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Age 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>Age 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>Age 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 1: Context of Language Learning in Australia
significant body of research exists relating to the role played by motivation in the acquisition of a second language (for example, Gardner & MacIntyre 1991, but this does not address the issue of why students choose to study or not to study a LOTE. Rather, it examines the role played by motivation when a student is required to study another language. Research has also been conducted concerning students’ attitudes towards LOTE study (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Nicholas, Moore, Clyne & Pauwels, 1993; Djite, 1994 and Parkinson, 1995), but studies over the past decade have tended to focus on gender issues, rather than why students make the choices that they do (Carr, 2002; Hajdu, 2005). International research has also tended to focus on gender issues and LOTE study (Davis, 2004; Stables & Wikely, 1999; Barton, 2002; Harris, 2002), although a recent American study explored primary and lower secondary students’ attitudes towards language study in California (Cortes, 2002). Given the lack of recent Australian research conducted in this specific area, a study that sets out to examine the reasons why students choose to study a LOTE after the compulsory years of LOTE study is both timely and necessary, as the knowledge to be gained from such research is an integral component of the development of effective LOTE programs. Furthermore, such a study is also warranted by the significant financial investment that has been made by both federal and State governments in the teaching of LOTE in Australia over the past fifteen years.

In order to provide an understanding of the context in which these issues will be considered in this study, I first provide an overview of the background to the teaching of Languages Other Than English and outline the history of LOTE teaching in Australian State schools. The second part of this chapter looks more closely at national and State language policy contexts.

2. **Background to the Teaching of LOTE in Australian Schools**

The following section of this chapter deals with the place of Languages other Than English in the Australian education system over the past century. This timeframe has been chosen as it represents a period of time in which the place of LOTE has changed dramatically, from a prerequisite to university entry, to a subject taught almost exclusively in the secondary system and finally as a core component of the curriculum in both the primary and secondary sectors of education. In the following section, I provide an explanation of the term, ‘Languages Other Than English’.
2.1 Languages Other Than English: A Definition

In the Australian context, the term Languages Other Than English (LOTE) is widely used to refer to all languages other than English that are used by people living in Australia (Lo Bianco, 1987). The term LOTE also refers to languages which, while not widely spoken in Australia, are important to Australia for other reasons, such as the economic benefits that being able to speak the language bring to the country (for example, Mandarin and Japanese). In the past, a number of other terms have been used to refer to languages other than English. Traditionally, they have been known as ‘foreign languages’, since such languages are spoken more widely by people living in ‘foreign’ countries than they are in Australia. However, the use of this term was described by Clyne (1991, p. 3) as being “discriminatory and inadequate”, since so-called “foreign languages” are “very much part of Australian life”. Consequently, the term is no longer considered an appropriate way to describe linguistic diversity in Australia. This is evidenced by the fact that the term has been replaced in all official educational documents and policies by the acronym ‘LOTE’ or, in some States and in the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools (2003), the term ‘languages’. This is in contrast to practices in other English-speaking countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, where ‘foreign languages’ remains the accepted term used to refer to languages other than English (Grosse, Tuman and Critz, 1998; Lantolf & Sunderman, 2001; Stewart-Strobel & Chen, 2003; McPake, Johnstone, Low & Lyall, 1999).

The term ‘migrant languages’ has also been used to describe languages other than English. Its use is not encouraged, however, since it does not take into account the fact that such languages are often spoken widely by Australian-born descendants of migrants, which renders the term ‘migrant languages’ inaccurate (Clyne, 1991, p. 3). Another term used in the past to describe languages other than English was ‘modern languages’. The term was used frequently after World War One to make a distinction between languages such as French and German, which were widely used in the countries of the ‘modern’ world, and Latin and Ancient Greek, the ‘classical languages’ which were no longer used for general communication (Smolicz, 1986, p. 46).

In 1975, the term ‘community languages’ was first used to describe all languages other than English used in Australia (Clyne, 1991, p. 3). In all, there are 18 community languages that are each used at home by more than 20 000 people living in Australia (Clyne, 1991). By definition, the term ‘community languages’ also describes
Aboriginal languages, which is important to note since none of the terms discussed above could be used to describe Aboriginal languages. According to Clyne (1991, p. 3), the term ‘community languages’ has “attained fairly universal currency in Australia and has also been adopted in some other English-speaking countries”. For at least the last 15 years, however, the term ‘Languages Other Than English’ or ‘LOTE’ has been used in preference to ‘community languages’. Although the two terms appear to be highly similar, they are not synonymous. While both terms refer to all languages that are spoken by people living in Australia, only the term ‘Languages Other Than English’ refers specifically to languages that are important to Australia for other reasons. In addition, LOTE is used to refer to Australian Sign Language (Auslan), since the Australian Education Council (1994, p. 9) “acknowledges the right of deaf people in Australia to maintain and develop their linguistic and cultural heritage”. For the purpose of this thesis, the term ‘Languages Other Than English’ and its acronym LOTE will be adopted, as it is the only term that fully encompasses all non-English languages used by, or of relevance to, people living in Australia. A similar term, LBOTE, is also now widely used to describe students who have a language background other than English.

2.2 A History of LOTE Teaching in Australia

2.2.1 Aboriginal Languages.

Over the past fifteen years, the teaching of LOTE in Australian State primary and secondary schools has been an area of great interest to educators (Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council [ACSSO & APC 2007]; Liddicoat, 2002; Kleinsasser, 2000; Nicholas et al., 1993; Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990). This period has seen the production of a National Policy on languages, and in turn, the Departments of Education in each State and Territory have produced their own policy documents regarding the teaching of LOTE in State primary and secondary schools. However, the teaching of LOTE in Australia is by no means a new phenomenon. Prior to the colonisation of Australia by the British in 1788, it is estimated that between 200 and 260 Aboriginal languages were spoken by an Aboriginal population of over 300,000 (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984). By the mid 1980s, as a result of the complete dominance of the English language in this country, the number of Aboriginal languages spoken in Australia had decreased to 150, with only 50 of these considered to be viable (Ingram, 1988).
2004, this number had been further reduced to 18, the majority of which were considered to be endangered.

2.2.2 Discrimination against LOTE

At the time of the federation of Australia in 1901, Australia’s linguistic profile had diversified, with its inhabitants speaking English, hundreds of Aboriginal languages and a significantly large number of European and Asian languages, including German and Chinese (Ingram, 1988). Languages other than English have often been discriminated against, both by individuals (native English speakers) and State governments, in that their use has been discouraged and, in some instances, banned (Ingram, 1988). In the early decades of the twentieth century, as a result of increasing tension between Britain and Germany, Australia strengthened its identification with Britain, displaying “great animosity … towards German-speaking Australians [in spite of the fact that the majority of them] expressed strong loyalty to Australia and the British Empire” (Clyne, 1991, pp. 12-13). Monolingualism came to be seen as “a symbol of Australian nationalism” (Clyne, 1991b, p. 94), while speaking any language other than English was deemed “un-Australian” (Leal, Bettoni & Malcolm, 1991, p. 15) and “a social problem to be identified, eradicated, alleviated, or in some other way resolved” (Ruiz, 1988, p. 17).

Views such as those described above became more widespread as a result of the two World Wars, after which 90% of Australians claimed to have exclusively British backgrounds (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984). During the first World War, Australia adopted an ‘English Only’ language policy, which resulted in legislation outlawing the establishment of ethnic schools and the “use of languages other than English as a medium of instruction” (Clyne, 1991, p. 12) being passed in both Victoria and South Australia (Lo Bianco, 1990), although such languages were still studied as subjects within the curriculum. This represented a considerable shift in both attitude and policy, considering that at the turn of the century, there were almost 100 bilingual schools (schools in which two languages were used equally for instruction) operating in Australia, most of which were in Victoria or South Australia (Clyne, 1991). The adoption of such policies resulted in a widespread display of “xenophobia and intolerance to languages other than English” (Clyne, 1991, p. 12), with the assimilation of immigrants into the English speaking community being encouraged and hence monolingualism being reinforced. Rather than simply acknowledging that assimilation
was encouraged, Ozolins goes further, arguing that “growing ethnocentrism meant that explicit assimilation was demanded of non-British migrant groups.” (1993, p. 4). Indeed, by the end of World War One, “Australia’s national identity was clearly established in terms of English monolingualism” (Clyne, 1991, p. 13). The notion of Australia as a monolingual society is supported by Baldauf (1993, pp. 122-123), who asserts that “by the end of the Second World War, the Australian self-image was of a monolingual monocultural society.” Thus, according to Lo Bianco (1990, p. 52), “historically … Australia has ‘planned’ for English monolingualism”. However, it has been noted that official policy did not reflect this conception; rather, it was implied through actions such as the widespread repression of Aboriginal languages (Lo Bianco, 1990).

Until the early 1960s, Australia’s official policy on immigrants was one of assimilation (Bullivant, 1995). All immigrants were expected to stop using their native language and were strongly discouraged from teaching it to their children (Clyne, 1991). In the late 1960s, however, official government ideology shifted from assimilation to integration (Bullivant, 1995). While assimilation involved migrants conforming to pre-established Australian community patterns, integration required “a willingness on the part of the community to move towards the migrant, just as it [required] the migrant to move towards the community” (Sneddon, 1969, cited in Ozolins, 1993, p. 105).

According to Ozolins (1993), the shift in ideology was prompted by the need to attract a migrant labour force to Australia, as there was evidence at the time that migrants had been deterred by Australia’s policy of assimilation. By the early 1970s, a multicultural policy had emerged (Collins, 1988). Language professionals and community activists argued for “equal educational [opportunities] for children of minority language background in schooling and of adults in the workforce and in society in general” (Djite, 1994, p. 7). The Federal Government responded by officially recognising the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia’s society with the passing of the Immigration (Education) Act of 1971, “in which the Commonwealth assumed the responsibility for English instruction as a consequence of its constitutional responsibility for recruiting immigrants” (Lo Bianco, 1990, p. 55). By 1976, all restrictions placed on the use of LOTE in Australia had been lifted (Kee, 1988).

The 1978 Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants (known as the Galbally Report) contributed greatly to the improved status of LOTE in Australia. The report highlighted Australia’s linguistic diversity and accepted
that cultural pluralism - an understanding that all cultures are considered equal, as opposed to focusing on the differences inherent in various cultures (Kalantzis & Cope, 1983) - existed in Australia. Malcolm Fraser, the Australian Prime Minister at the time, declared that “Australia is at a critical stage in developing a cohesive, united, multicultural nation. [The government] will foster the retention of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups and promote intercultural understanding” (1978, cited in Ozolins, 1993, p. 1). The report also stressed the importance of maintaining community languages by teaching such languages in schools, a recommendation which was acted upon by the Australian government with the development of a variety of programs. The implementation of such programs, including the current LOTE initiative, became possible as a result of the government’s acceptance of Australia’s ethnic and linguistic diversity. The impact of the Galbally Report cannot be underestimated, as it gave legitimacy and impetus for the development of LOTE policies and programs in Australian schools.

2.2.3 LOTE Study in Australian Schools.

LOTE was considered to be essential for all students to study at secondary school in the first half of the twentieth century, despite the widespread prejudice held against LOTE and legislation outlawing ethnic schools (Ingram, 1988). The importance of language study was highlighted by the fact that most universities required “some foreign language study for undergraduate entry” (Ingram, 1988, p. 16), which resulted in 50% of all Year 12 students studying a LOTE in 1961. The most common languages studied in that era were French, Latin, German and Ancient Greek (Wykes & King, 1968), as these were languages held in esteem by academics and were linked closely with traditional English society in the sense that they were taught widely in British tertiary institutions (Smolicz, 1994). It is important to note that at the time, it was rare for primary school students to study a LOTE (Ingram, 1988). For students whose first language was English, their first experience with a LOTE usually occurred after the transition from primary to secondary school.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Australian universities began to abolish foreign language requirements, which resulted in a dramatic decline in language enrolments at the Year 12 level. Enrolments dropped from 40% of students engaged in LOTE study in 1968 to 14% in 1978 (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984). At the secondary level, enrolments continued to fall throughout the late
1980s, with only 9% of Year 12 students studying a LOTE in 1988, although 29.5% of all secondary students were engaged in the study of a LOTE in that year (Nicholas, Moore, Clyne & Pauwels, 1993). More encouraging were the figures for enrolments at the primary level, which indicated that 13% of all primary students were studying a LOTE in 1988 (Nicholas et al., 1993). By 1994, there had been a slight increase in the number of Year 12 students studying a LOTE (9.9%), but after rising to 10.6% in 1998 (Fullarton & Ainley, 2000), this figure had dropped to 9.7% by 2001 (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley & Hillman, 2003), which is surprisingly low given the concerted efforts made by all State governments to increase the profile of LOTE programs in schools. Recent newspaper articles have stated that approximately 13% is the national enrolment figure in LOTE subjects, but comprehensive data have not been provided (Slattery, 2007). While recent data on national enrolments in primary LOTE programs are not available, data from Victoria indicate that primary programs in the State are widespread and well-established in schools, as 79.5% of all primary students were studying a LOTE at school in 2006, ranging from 68.9% of Prep students to 88% of Year 6 students (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2007). Nevertheless, enrolments in primary LOTE programs in Victoria have fallen over the past seven years, after having peaked at 88% overall in 2000 (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2006). It is highly likely, however, that participation of primary school students in LOTE programs in other States has increased substantially since the early 1990s, as a result of the implementation of national and State language policies.

As the above discussion suggests, the place of LOTE in the Australian curriculum has changed significantly over the past 40 years. The major changes can be summarised as follows:

- University language requirements abolished
- Decline in numbers of students choosing to study LOTE subjects in Years 11 and 12
- LOTE programs expanded to provide instruction to both primary and secondary students

In addition to the above, the profile of languages taught in Australian schools has changed significantly over the past four decades. In the 60s and 70s, European languages such as French, German and Italian were studied by almost all students studying a LOTE in Australian schools (Nicholas et al, 1993). While a small number of Asian languages were offered in schools (for example, Japanese and Indonesian), their
study was not widespread. It was not until the 1980s that more students became involved in the study of Asian languages, and by the early 1990s, the majority of LOTE students were involved in Asian language study, with Japanese being the most popular. This trend continued into the next decade, with Japanese and Indonesian being joined by Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean in the school curriculum. The profile of European languages studied has changed very little since the 1960s, with German, French and Italian still being studied by almost all students who choose to study a European language, although the past 40 years has seen the expansion of programs offering Spanish and Modern Greek in schools.

2.3 **LOTE in the Context of the School Curriculum**

In order to provide a complete picture of the position of LOTE in the Australian school curriculum, it is necessary to briefly examine the status of other elective subjects at the secondary level. The most recent comprehensive study conducted in the area of student subject selection was published in 2003 and describes Year 12 enrolments in various subjects in 2001 across Australia, as well as comparing them to similar statistics available for 1993 and 1998 (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley & Hillman, 2003). Subjects that are studied by the majority of students (i.e., English and Mathematics) are not included in this discussion, since its purpose is to examine enrolments in subjects that are chosen by students as electives, rather than compulsory subjects (although Mathematics is not considered to be a compulsory subject in all schools, approximately 85% of all Year 12 students elect to study it ([Fullarton et al., 2003]).

Many of the elective subjects examined by Fullarton et al. (2003) experienced declining enrolments over the period 1993 to 2001, with only LOTE maintaining steady enrolments. However, as indicated above, this is not necessarily a positive reflection on LOTE, since the period examined in the study was one in which a great deal of funding was dedicated to increasing enrolments in LOTE subjects, something which clearly did not eventuate (Fullarton et al., 2003). Enrolments in History dropped from 21.1% in 1993 to 18.2% in 2001, while Geography experienced an even greater decline in enrolments, from 18.3% in 1993 to 12% in 2001 (Fullarton et al., 2003). Interestingly, specialised business and finance subjects experienced declines in enrolments (e.g., Economics from 17.8% to 7% and Accounting from 12% to 6.4%), while the more generic Business Studies experienced large increases in enrolments, from 9.2% in 1993 to 22.7% in 2001 (Fullarton et al., 2003). With the exception of Psychology, all Science
subjects exhibited downward enrolment trends (e.g., Chemistry – 22.6% to 17.8%; Physics - 20.4% to 16.6% and Biology – 31.7% to 25.4%) (Fullarton et al., 2003). Enrolments in Physical Education also dropped, from 17.6% in 1993 to 15% in 2001, although enrolments in Health rose from 1.9% to 9%, possibly due to more schools offering such subjects as electives (Fullarton et al., 2003).

Enrolments in all electives in the area of The Arts increased between 1993 and 2001 (Creative and Visual Arts – 17.4% to 20.9%; Performing Arts – 7.3% to 10%, and Music – 3.6% to 6.2%), while Computer Studies also increased from 20.7% in 1993 to 27% in 2001 (Fullarton et al., 2003). According to Fullarton et al. (2003), the electives that attracted more than 20% of students in 1993 were History, Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Computer Studies, but in 2001, History, Chemistry and Physics had dropped below the 20% mark, to be replaced by Business Studies and Creative and Visual Arts. It would appear, then, that students are choosing to move away from the traditional Science and Humanities based electives, in favour of Business and The Arts. Given that enrolments in LOTE subjects remained stable over the period examined above, the change in enrolments in Humanities, Science, Business and The Arts does not seem to have affected students’ decision to study LOTE subjects. It is unclear, however, whether this would have been the case had extra funding not been devoted to trying to improve enrolments in LOTE subjects.

2.4 LOTE Study in the International Context

The issue of low or falling enrolments in LOTE subjects is not unique to Australia. Over the past decade, reference has been made to low or declining enrolments in countries such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Draper & Hicks, 2002; Hawkins, 2002; Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007). In the following paragraphs, the current situation regarding LOTE study in each of these countries will be examined briefly.

2.4.1 The United States of America

Detailed enrolment figures for LOTE subjects in US schools are quite difficult to obtain. The most recent figures available for the USA were published in 2002 and indicated that approximately 44% of public school students in Years 9-12 studied a LOTE (Draper & Hicks, 2002). When Years 7 and 8 are included in the calculations, the figure drops to approximately 34% (Draper & Hicks, 2002). While a figure of 44% may seem encouraging, a deeper analysis of the data collected in 2000 reveals that less
than 25% of those students were studying at Level 3 or greater (Level 3 courses are
designed for those students who have already completed two years of study in the same
language), with fewer than one in ten students continuing their language study beyond
Level 3 (Draper & Hicks, 2002). This trend continues into the US tertiary sector, with
only 8.6% of undergraduate students studying a LOTE in 2002 (the most recent data
available) (Welles, 2004). Perhaps not surprisingly (given the proximity to South
America and the large Hispanic population in the US), the majority of LOTE students in
US schools study Spanish, which accounts for almost 70% of total enrolments in LOTE
subjects in US public secondary schools (Draper & Hicks, 2002).

The US Department of Education recognises the need to increase the number of
students studying LOTE subjects, and the recent announcement of multi-million dollar
grants to “increase the number of Americans learning foreign languages critical to
national security and commerce” (Spellings, 2007) indicates that steps are being taken
to promote the status of LOTE teaching within the US school curriculum. In addition,
work is currently being undertaken on the development and implementation of a
national language education policy (Blake & Kramsch, 2007). Interestingly, in their
search to identify successful components of language education policies in other
countries, US educators have recognised Australia’s LOTE programs and policies as
being worthy of consideration (Brecht, 2007). This is in spite of both countries having
similar proportions of students choosing to study LOTE subjects as electives in upper
secondary school. US researchers acknowledge that at present, it is difficult to
accurately track enrolment figures in LOTE subjects nationally and that if programs are
to be expanded and improved, detailed and comprehensive studies of such figures must
be conducted (Draper & Hicks, 2002).

2.4.2 The United Kingdom

Significant changes in the status of LOTE in the UK curriculum have achieved a
great deal of attention in recent years. Prior to September 2004, it was compulsory for
all pupils in England, Northern Ireland and Wales to study a LOTE up to the end of
Year 11 (16 years of age) (The Department for Education and Skills, 2007). At that
stage, 80% of Year 11 students chose to sit for exams in LOTE subjects (students are
not required to sit for exams in all of the subjects that they study), although this figure
had been declining gradually since the start of the decade (The Department of Education
and Skills, 2007). At present, LOTE study is now compulsory only until the end of
Year 9, a situation which has seen enrolments in LOTE subjects in Years 10 and 11 drop sharply since 2004 to a figure of only 51% in 2006, with further declines expected this year (The Department of Education and Skills, 2007). In January 2006, the then Minister for Education stated that all schools should set themselves a target of ensuring that a minimum of 50% of their students in Years 10 and 11 studied a LOTE, although relatively few schools have been able to achieve this (The National Centre For Languages, 2006). The issue attracted the attention of the mass media, with *The Evening Standard* reporting in September 2006 that the government was re-evaluating its decision to make LOTE study optional in Years 10 and 11. To date, however, no change has been made to the current official policy.

Given the high attrition rate from LOTE courses once the aforementioned changes were made to its compulsory nature, it is, perhaps, not surprising that in Years 12 and 13 (or Sixth Form, as these grades are often known in England), enrolments in LOTE subjects average only 10% (Hawkins, 2002). Although this figure is similar to enrolments at the same levels of schooling in both Australia and the US, it needs to be highlighted that when the English figures were compiled, all pupils in Years 12 and 13 had studied a language until the end of Year 10, which represents a 90% dropout rate from LOTE study. At the tertiary level, such low enrolments in Years 12 and 13 have “led to such a collapse of entries for university degree courses that some universities are closing their language departments” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 23). However, recent figures for Scotland are more positive in Year 11 (16 years of age), with approximately 80% of students choosing to study a LOTE in 2005/2006 (The Department of Education and Skills, 2007). Figures are not available for students in the final two years of secondary school in Scotland, although a report examining the issue of declining enrolments in LOTE subjects at that level was published in 1999, so it is clear that Scottish educationalists were concerned about the situation at the time (McPake, Johnstone, Low & Lyall, 1999).

2.4.3 New Zealand

In New Zealand, LOTE is designated as an essential learning area. As such, it should be offered in all schools, and although at present it is not compulsory, there are plans to mandate its study at some stage in the foreseeable future (Hardiman & Koefoed, 2007). Enrolments in Years 9-13 in 2006 ranged from 77% in Year 9 to 11% in Year 13 (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007). The 2006 Year 9 enrolment
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figure is significantly higher than the average enrolment for the period 2001-2005 (71%), while the Year 13 figure represents the average enrolment over the same period (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007). Enrolments in Year 10 dropped sharply (average 33%) and further decreases were recorded in Year 11 (19%) and Year 12 (13%) (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007). Of note, however, is the relative stability of enrolments in LOTE subjects over the past six years, as at all levels other than Year 9, the enrolments for 2006 were within 1% of the average enrolment for the period (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007). Interestingly, the enrolment figure in LOTE subjects of 11% for the final year of schooling is similar to that of all other countries examined, suggesting that in spite of the different efforts made by various departments of education to raise students’ interest in learning LOTE, enrolments in LOTE subjects in English-speaking countries remain low worldwide.

2.5 LOTE at the Tertiary Level

Although not the focus of this study, a discussion of enrolments in LOTE subjects at the tertiary level is useful in that it provides the reader with a comprehensive profile of LOTE study in Australian educational institutions. In the mid 1990s, Baldauf (1995) conducted research into the viability of low candidature courses in Australian universities. Baldauf’s research was a follow-up to a study conducted by Leal, Bettoni and Malcolm in 1991, which examined the teaching of modern languages in Australian tertiary institutions. After surveying tertiary institutions across the country, Baldauf (1995) was able to categorise languages into four groups, according to their enrolments at the tertiary level. “High Candidature Languages” are, as their name suggests, languages which attract high numbers of students and are taught in institutions across the country (Baldauf, 1995). In Baldauf’s study, Japanese, French, Italian, German, Chinese, Spanish, Indonesian/Malaysian and Greek were identified in this category. Baldauf noted that while enrolments in European languages had remained relatively stable in the period between 1990 and 1994, enrolments in Asian languages had increased greatly. This corresponds with a similar trend in the study of LOTE in secondary schools over the same period.

“Moderate Candidature Languages”, according to Baldauf, are those languages which attract smaller numbers of students and have a “community language and trade orientation” (1995, p. 3). Baldauf identified six language groups as belonging to this category – Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic, Hebrew, Korean and Classical Languages.
(including Classical Greek and Latin). All other languages offered by Australian tertiary institutions fell into the categories of “Small” or “Low Candidature Languages”, as they were either offered by very few institutions, or had very low enrolments.

Another observation made by Baldauf (1995) concerned the gender imbalance in LOTE courses at the tertiary level (the majority of LOTE students in every language were female, with the exception of Classical Greek). The potential effect of the introduction of compulsory LOTE studies from Years 3-10 on the number of males choosing to study LOTE at the tertiary level was also addressed. Baldauf also noted that the overwhelming motivating factor behind tertiary students’ decision to study a LOTE was the perceived “value of the language for enhancing career and employment prospects” (1995, p. 19). However, it is important to note that this statement was not based on data collected solely from students themselves; rather, the data on which the statement was based were drawn from a survey of both university instructors and students, and this must be borne in mind when considering the value of the statement.

By the mid to late 2000s, language enrolments in the tertiary sector had dropped to such low levels that the Group of Eight (a collective of Australia’s oldest and largest universities) issued “Languages in Crisis: A Rescue Plan for Australia” (2007). According to the Group of Eight:

> Australia has a proud reputation in many areas of education, research and training. Languages Other Than English (LOTE) is no longer one of them and urgent action is required if Australia is to avoid the serious educational, national security and economic consequences of becoming monolingual. Decades of policy neglect and inaction mean Australian school students now spend less time learning a second language than students in all other OECD countries. (2007, p. 1)

Of particular concern in the tertiary sector is the significant reduction in the number of languages offered by Australian universities. In 1997, 66 different languages were available to undergraduate students in Australia, but in 2007, only 29 are offered (Group of Eight, 2007). In a bid to address the situation, the Group of Eight is investigating the possibility of introducing incentives to encourage more secondary students to continue with LOTE study through to Year 12 and then at university (Slattery, 2007). Under the proposed plan, the tertiary entrance scores of students who had studied a LOTE in Year 12 would be boosted, thus improving their chances of gaining access to their preferred course (Slattery, 2007). A similar scheme already exists in several tertiary institutions across the country, and the Vice-Chancellors at all
other Group of Eight institutions are considering implementing the scheme at their own institutions (Slattery, 2007). This development has the potential to significantly affect the numbers of students choosing to study LOTE in secondary schools.

3. **LOTE Policy in Australia: An Overview**

In this section, I examine the policy literature pertaining to the teaching of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in Australian schools, in order to provide a basis for the research problem that this thesis sets out to investigate, which, it will be recalled, is to examine reasons why students choose to study a LOTE after the compulsory years of LOTE study. Accordingly, the various language policies that have been written to justify and encourage the introduction or maintenance of LOTE programs in Australian schools are considered. This will include the National Policy on Languages, as well as the language policies of each of the Australian States and Territories. The literature in this section of the thesis will be organised around the theme of issues confronting the implementation of LOTE policies.

3.1 **LOTE at the National Level**

The development of the National Language Policy has its antecedents in debates during the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to Clyne (1991, p. 213), “the push for a National Language Policy came in two phases - the first in favour of policies on language related issues and the second explicitly for a National Language Policy”. The push for the development of policies on language related issues arose from widespread concern over the lack of provision of services for the migrant community (Clyne, 1991). This resulted in the completion of the Galbally Report, which, as previously indicated, recommended (and led to) an increase in the number of services offered to Australia’s migrant community.

The push for an explicit National Language Policy gained impetus in the mid 1970s, when it became evident that “only a coordinated and comprehensive approach to identifying and responding to language needs could lead to real improvements ... in language education” (Ingram, 1988, p. 18). As Baldauf (1993) notes, the very high levels of immigration experienced in Australia between 1947 and 1971 resulted in changes to Australia’s linguistic and ethnic background that led to it becoming a multilingual and multicultural nation. Consequently, State and national governments were required to develop policies and programs which reflected these new social,
cultural and economic realities. In 1975, Clyne advocated the establishment of a “language planning commission to study and suggest criteria for the extension of multilingualism in Australia for the benefit of all its inhabitants” (Clyne, 1975, p. 38 cited in Clyne, 1991, p. 218, emphasis in the original). Additionally, Ingram argued for “a reorientation of language teaching towards the needs generated by multiculturalism and Australia’s geographical and political location” (Ingram, 1977 cited in Clyne, 1991, p. 219). By 1984, A National Language Policy, a document which made recommendations concerning the structure of a National Language Policy, had been published. This report was followed in 1987 by a report commissioned by the Australian Government, the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987). The Galbally Report, A National Language Policy and the National Policy on Languages were the early results of this change in thinking by the Australian Government.

Lo Bianco was commissioned by the Australian Government’s Minister for Education in mid 1986 to develop Australia’s National Policy on Languages. The policy was to be based on the recommendations contained in “A National Language Policy” (1987, Lo Bianco), as well as the responses to the document that had been made by the various States and Territories (Clyne, 1991). Lo Bianco complied with these specifications after consultation with representatives from all of the State Departments of Education, as well as representatives from other interested groups such as Aboriginal and ethnic communities to ensure that the interests and views of all relevant groups were represented in the policy (Lo Bianco, 1987). Baldauf (1993, p. 124) highlights the importance of the involvement of the States and Territories in national policy development, given that “primary and secondary education is primarily the concern of the States in Australia”. He also notes that this situation has necessitated the coordination of national materials development projects such as the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines (Scarino, Vale, McKay & Clark, 1988) and a variety of school based State initiatives (Baldauf, 1993).

In 1987, the National Policy on Languages was published. According to Lo Bianco, “a national languages policy involves a partnership between the States, Territories and Commonwealth of Australia working towards broadly shared common goals” (1987, p. 5). The primary purpose of Australia’s national language policy “is to make the nation’s choices about language issues in as rational, comprehensive, just and balanced a way as possible” (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 3). The National Policy also explicitly states principles that are to be used to guide the process of decision making in
the area of languages in Australia (Lo Bianco, 1987). Such principles were intended to act as a basis for the development of language policies at the State level.

Given the fact that Lo Bianco worked in cooperation with, and considered the views of, all of the Australian States and Territories, it can be argued that the National Policy involves a partnership between the States and Territories. Furthermore, Lo Bianco ensured that the principles underlying the policy were of a “non-party political” nature (1987, p. 5), in an effort to ensure that these principles would not be criticised by future governments for being those of an opposing political party. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that no policy is value-free or neutral; its underlying ideological foundation is shaped by the political context in which it is developed.

3.2 Policy Aims

In terms of the teaching of LOTE, the main aim of the National Policy is to ensure that all students are engaged in the study of a LOTE during their time at school, preferably for the entire duration of their compulsory education (1987). Furthermore, the policy advocates that languages studied by students should be predominantly community languages and languages that are of major importance to Australia (Lo Bianco, 1987). The policy also stipulates that all LOTE programs offered to students should be of a consistently high standard (Lo Bianco, 1987). Lo Bianco’s recommendations support and build on those stated in previous reports on LOTE teaching, which include The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures (1970), The Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools (1976), The Galbally Report (1978), The Review of Migrant and Multicultural Education (1980) and A National Language Policy (1984). All of the aforementioned reports stress the importance of the widespread expansion of programs teaching ‘migrant’ (community) languages in schools, as does the National Policy on Languages.

3.3 Justification for the Introduction of LOTE Programs

The political and educational rhetoric and the widespread introduction of LOTE programs have been justified on the basis of the educational, cultural and economic benefits to be gained from engaging students in the study of a LOTE (see, for example, Braddy, 1991). For example, claims about the improved educational and learning outcomes are widespread. It has been argued by researchers such as Ingram (1993), Carr (1993), Clyne (1983 cited in The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984) and Baker (1996) that studying a LOTE can enhance students’ ability to
learn, as well as increase their linguistic competence in English. The study of a LOTE is also thought to heighten students’ awareness and appreciation of cultures other than their own (Ingram & John, 1990; Byrnes, 1991; Carr, 1993). In addition, engaging students in the study of LOTE is believed to result in economic benefits, in the form of Australia’s increased ability to deal with foreign companies (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994). Scarino, Vale, McKay and Clark’s Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines (1988) also expounded the benefits to be gained from engaging students in the study of LOTE, and Scarino reiterated these benefits in 1999. Liddicoat (2002a) has also written on the justification of including LOTE programs in school curricula, and has highlighted the need to strengthen the profile of LOTE in education by ensuring that the community is fully informed of its value to students. The perceived economic, cultural and educational benefits to be gained from engaging students in the study of LOTE will be further explored. However, it is important to note that currently, there is no solid evidence to support such claims. Indeed, it will be a number of years before it will be possible to determine the benefits (if any) of the introduction of widespread LOTE programs.

3.4 Priority Languages

In 1992, all States and Territories were required to formulate a list of eight ‘priority’ languages “for the purposes of the Commonwealth’s [1993] Australian Languages and Literacy Policy” (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994, p. 86). With reference to State language policies, priority languages are languages that are given maximum government support in terms of curriculum development, teacher training and resource allocation (Nicholas et al., 1993). Priority languages are chosen on the basis of their relevance to the needs of the local community, with these needs being identified as the maintenance of community languages and international trade interests. The Australian Language and Literacy Policy encourages “the widespread promotion of the teaching and learning of key languages in the national interest, including languages important for trade and international communication, languages of major community groups and Aboriginal languages” (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991, p. 61). Such broad guidelines ensure that the major LOTE spoken in Australia are included in the lists of priority languages. However, the selection of priority languages does not mean that the teaching of other languages is not encouraged. Rather, all State and Territory
Departments of Education in Australia actively promote the teaching of all LOTE, regardless of whether they are considered to be priority languages or not.

Since they were first formulated in 1992, each of the State and Territory lists of priority languages has been revised, and several of the lists now feature more than the original eight languages required by the Australian Language and Literacy Policy. Table 1.1 presents a summary of the priority languages of each of the Australian States and Territories as at October 2007:

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* Information has been compiled from relevant State documents

** Modern Standard

Fifteen LOTE have been chosen by the various States and Territories of Australia as being priority languages. It is important to note the presence of Aboriginal Languages among the priority languages of several States and Territories. In Western Australia, for example, the study of Aboriginal Languages is seen to promote “language and cultural awareness, preservation and maintenance for Aboriginal communities”, “increases self-esteem for Aboriginal students and their community” and “recognises
and fosters the reconciliation process between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people” (Department of Education, Western Australia., 1988, p. 54). While the teaching of Aboriginal Languages is not considered to be a priority by most States and Territories, in specific geographic regions in which there is a large Aboriginal population, the teaching of Aboriginal Languages is considered to be a core component of the school curriculum (for example in north-western Queensland and western New South Wales).

In June 2005, the Australian Government reaffirmed its support for the teaching of Languages Other Than English by issuing the National Statement for Languages in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008 (Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA]). The document, which endorses the use of the term ‘languages’ to describe “all Languages other than English, including Australian indigenous languages and AUSLAN” (MCEETYA, 2005, p. 2), highlights the need for Australia to develop in its young people an understanding of other cultures and the ability to communicate in other languages (2005). It acknowledges that although in 2003, 50% of all Australian students were learning a LOTE at school, there is still a need to “further integrate quality languages education into the mainstream curriculum, and into program delivery by all schools” (2005, p. 4). According to the statement, the skills gained as a result of studying a LOTE “assist learners to live and work successfully as linguistically and culturally aware citizens of the world” (2005, p. 3), and it is essentially for this reason that the widespread teaching of LOTE is supported by the government. Nevertheless, funding to the Federal Government’s National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) program had been discontinued in 2002.

In addition to outlining reasons why LOTE studies should be a part of every child’s formal education, the National Statement also provides a list of six interdependent strategic areas, which is to be used by the various educational jurisdictions when planning for language education between 2005 and 2008 (2005, p. 11). Each State has followed the guidelines of the various national policies in the development and implementation of their LOTE policies.

3.5 State Policies

In order to gain an overview of LOTE activities in the different States, the following section provides a summary of the major features of the language policies currently being implemented in each of the Australian States and Territories. A number
of commonalities are evident. All recommend that students should be given the opportunity to study a LOTE at the secondary level of schooling, while most make provisions for the introduction or expansion of LOTE programs at the primary level. The majority of the policies stipulate that the study of a LOTE should be compulsory for at least two years, usually the final year of primary school and the first year of secondary school, although in some States and Territories, the period of compulsory LOTE study is longer. A number of the policies (for example, the policies of the Northern Territory and Victoria) also indicate that compulsory LOTE study is under consideration for all year levels, primary to Year 10 inclusive, although a timeline has not been specified. The main area in which the policies differ is in their recommendation of the minimum number of hours that students should spend learning a LOTE per week. Most policies do not specify minimum times for instruction in LOTE. However, in the policies that do specify such times, 90 minutes at the primary level and 2-3 hours at the lower secondary level appear to be the recommended times of instruction. I now turn to examine each of the State LOTE policies in more detail.

3.5.1 Victoria.

*Languages for Victoria’s Future* (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002), examines the teaching of languages in government schools, and affirms the Victorian government’s commitment to providing students with language instruction. The basic assertion made in the document is that all students in the compulsory years of schooling (Preps to Year 10 – ages four to sixteen in Victoria) should be studying a LOTE (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002). The recommended minimum amount of time in which students should be engaged in LOTE study per week is 150 minutes (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002). In 2006, 79.5% of all Victorian government primary school students studied a LOTE (ranging from 68.9% of Prep students to 88% of Year 6 students), and LOTE was offered in 82.9% of government primary schools (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2007). At the secondary level, 92.9% of government secondary schools offered LOTE subjects to their students, while 48.8% of all secondary students studied a LOTE (ranging from approximately 95% of Year 7 students to 8.4% of Year 12 students) (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2007). The study of LOTE was compulsory in Year 7 in 85% of all government schools.
and in Year 8 in 76% of schools (down from 95% in Year 7 and 86% in Year 8 in 2003) (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2007).

3.5.2 Western Australia.

Over the past decade, the Education Department of Western Australia has developed a number of initiatives to facilitate the expansion and consolidation of LOTE programs in state schools. In 1995, *LOTE 2000: New Horizons*, a policy allowing for the introduction of compulsory LOTE programs, was implemented. By 2000, as a result of the new policy, almost all students in Years 3 to 7 were studying a LOTE (Education Department of Western Australia, 2001). *LOTE Beyond 2000*, a new document designed to expand LOTE programs in the secondary sector, was developed in 2001. The main aim of this policy was to introduce compulsory LOTE programs for all students in Years 8 – 10 by 2003, a scenario which, when combined with the successful outcomes of the *LOTE 2000: New Horizons* initiative, would have resulted in all students from Years 3 to 10 studying at least one LOTE (Education Department of Western Australia, 2001). In addition, scholarships for “talented Year 11 students of languages” were to be offered to encourage continued LOTE study through to the senior secondary school (Education Department of Western Australia, 2001, p. 8). As of September 2003, enrolments in LOTE programs in Western Australian State schools had reached 95% in Years 3-7, 85% in Year 8, 68% in Year 9 and 32% in Year 10, which indicates that although the main aim of the policy had not been met, the majority of students in Years 3-10 were engaged in LOTE study in Western Australia (Education Department of Western Australia, 2003). More recent enrolment figures for Western Australia are not readily available.

3.5.3 Northern Territory.

According to Ingram (1993, p. 14), the Northern Territory “was one of the first parts of Australia to adopt a systematic language policy”. This is not surprising considering the high proportion of people living in the Northern Territory who speak Aboriginal languages. In 1999, *Languages Other Than English: Policy and Guidelines for Implementation Transition to Year 12* (Northern Territory Board of Studies) was issued, and it remains the sole policy document guiding the teaching of LOTE in the Northern Territory, although the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework* (Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, 2003) also includes descriptions of standards required in language subjects at various levels of schooling.
According to the policy, “all students should have the opportunity to learn a language other than English as part of a broad and balanced education” (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1999, p. 1). Furthermore, the document states that LOTE study should be compulsory for all students in Years 4-10 by 2006 (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1999), although no minimum number of contact hours was specified. The study of LOTE is not currently compulsory for students in the lower primary school (Transition to Year 3), nor is it compulsory in Years 11 or 12, although one of the goals of the Northern Territory’s policy was to have 25% of all Year 12 students studying a LOTE by 2006 (Northern Territory Board of Studies). It is not known whether this objective has been achieved, although the low enrolments in LOTE subjects nationally would indicate that an enrolment level of 25% in the Northern Territory is unlikely, particularly considering the absence of any mention of compulsory LOTE study in the 2003 *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework* (Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training).

3.5.4 Tasmania.

According to the document, *Languages Other Than English (LOTE)*, the study of a LOTE is not compulsory in Tasmanian schools, “but is strongly supported and encouraged within the overall curriculum” (Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania, 1995, p. 1). One of the main goals of the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Arts’ LOTE policy (1995) is to ensure that by 2007, 100% of all Tasmanian government school students in Years 3-10 are studying a LOTE. The policy also states that by the same year, 25% of all senior secondary students in Government schools will be engaged in the study of a LOTE (Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania, 1995). The teaching of both European and Asian languages is encouraged, although it is expected that more students will be engaged in the study of an Asian language than a European language (Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania, 1995). Although this document was produced over ten years ago, it remains the official policy for the teaching of LOTE in Tasmanian schools. LOTE also features in the document, *Essential Learnings* (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007), and in January 2008, K-10 syllabi were published for several languages (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2008). As of 2000, 97% of secondary schools offered LOTE subjects to their students and 67% of primary schools engaged their students in LOTE study (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2000). Current figures are not available,
although as LOTE study has not been mandated, it is unlikely that the aim of having 100% of students in Years 3-10 studying a LOTE by 2007 was achieved.

3.5.5 Australian Capital Territory.

In 1994, *Setting Directions for LOTE 1994-2006: Revised Action Plan* was written. According to this document, all primary schools are to give their students the opportunity to study a LOTE (Australian Capital Territory Department of Education, 1994). LOTE study should also be a core element of the curriculum in Years 7 and 8, and at the time, it was anticipated that by 2000, 50% of Year 9 and 10 students would have elected to study a LOTE (Australian Capital Territory Department of Education, 1994). Detailed enrolment figures are not available for ACT schools, so it is not possible to determine whether these targets have been met. However, in 2002, it was reported that 54.4% of all students in ACT government schools were involved in LOTE study, which represented a drop of 2.2% since 2001 (Australian Capital Territory, Education, Youth and Family Services, 2003). By 2006, it was estimated that 25% of students in Years 11 and 12 would be studying a LOTE (Australian Capital Territory Department of Education, 1994). The ACT government has also gained the cooperation of a number of foreign governments, which have agreed to support language programs in Italian, Japanese, French, Spanish, Indonesian, Greek and German (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994). More recently, the Australian Capital Territory (2006) indicated that all students at every level of schooling should have the opportunity to learn LOTE, although LOTE study is not compulsory.

3.5.6 New South Wales.

Currently, there is no official Languages Policy in New South Wales (note that the acronym LOTE has recently been superseded in New South Wales by the more general term, ‘languages’) (New South Wales Department of Education, 2004). New South Wales is also one of the only States not to have implemented compulsory LOTE programs for primary students, instead choosing to retain them as an optional subject for all students in K-6 (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1996). At present, it is mandatory for all secondary students to be engaged in the study of one LOTE for 100 hours over a 12-month period (New South Wales Department of Education, 2004). This will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future, as the current K-10 syllabi developed for all languages, which were implemented with students in Years 7 and 9 in 2005, and Years 8 and 10 in 2006, retain this requirement (Board of Studies, New South
Wales, 2003). Completion of the compulsory period of LOTE study is a requirement of all students who wish to receive a School Certificate issued by the Board of Studies at the end of Year 10 (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2002). Figures available for enrolments in Year 12 LOTE subjects indicate that after peaking at approximately 14% in 2003 (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2003), enrolments have declined slightly over the past four years to 12.8% in 2007 (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2007).

3.5.7 South Australia.

*The Languages Other Than English Plan 2000-2007*, the South Australian LOTE Policy document developed in late 1998, specifies that “by the year 2007, all R-10 students … will be learning at least one language other than English in quality programs that are an integral and valued part of a broad and balanced curriculum” (South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment, 1998, p. 3). The policy outlines several “crucial milestones” for schools to reach within a certain timeframe. By 2004, all primary schools in the State were to have implemented “quality” LOTE programs, while by 2007, all secondary schools were required to have implemented “quality” programs for their students (South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment, 1998, p. 4). According to the policy, schools have flexibility in:

- the language(s) that they offer
- the type of program(s) that they implement
- the frequency and intensity of their program(s)


The policy does not specify minimum or suggested instruction times for LOTE programs, but it is implied that decisions regarding the timing of programs will be made at the school level. *The South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework* (Department of Education and Children’s Services, South Australia, 2005) includes LOTE as one of eight key learning areas. This document was followed by the development of the “Languages Statement: 2006-2010” (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2006), which states that all students in South Australian government schools “will be engaged in quality Languages programs” (p. 8), although no time requirements are specified.
3.5.8 Queensland.

The current official\textsuperscript{2} Queensland LOTE policy, in terms of its scope and intent, is the most ambitious of all the current State policies. In 1991, the decision that the study of a LOTE should be compulsory for all students in Years 6, 7 and 8 was made (Braddy, 1991), and in 1994, this was achieved. In 1993, the Languages and Cultures Unit of the Queensland Department of Education (LACU) proposed that in 1995, compulsory LOTE study should be extended to include Years 5 and 9 and that by 1996, all students in Years 3-10 should be engaged in compulsory LOTE study. This did not occur, as a major review of the Queensland LOTE Initiative was commissioned at the end of 1994, with the result being that expansion of the program was postponed until further notice.

At the beginning of 1998, many schools across the State introduced compulsory LOTE study for students in Year 5, while more schools were expected to follow in subsequent years. The introduction of compulsory LOTE programs is dependent on the availability of qualified teaching staff to run such programs. According to the \textit{Shaping the Future Report} (Wiltshire, 1994, p. ix), “from 1998, LOTE [will] be included in the core [curriculum] for Years 9 and 10 as resources become available.” It was suggested at the time that it could be 2001 before all Year 9 and 10 students were required to study a LOTE (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994), but by the end of 2007, compulsory LOTE programs for those year levels still had not been implemented. In 1999, a review was conducted of LOTE program implementation in Queensland State schools, with one of the recommendations being that LOTE study should not be mandated in Years 9 and 10, but that compulsory LOTE study should be extended in the primary sector to Years 4 and 5 by 2003 (Rix, 1999, p. 19). It was suggested that an additional review of the policy be conducted in 2003. As of January 2008, the study of LOTE in Queensland is still compulsory only for students in Years 6-8. While the planned expansion of compulsory LOTE programs in Queensland beyond Years 6-8 has not occurred, in 2000, the Queensland School Curriculum Council issued syllabi for seven of the eight priority languages currently taught in schools across the state (French, German, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese and Korean), providing guidelines for their teaching in Years 4-10.

\textsuperscript{2} Queensland LOTE Policy is currently undergoing a period of significant change, as described in this section, but these changes will not be implemented state-wide until 2009.
Currently, a new LOTE initiative is being developed in Queensland, which after a successful trial in one region of the state in 2007, will be trialled in five regions of Queensland in 2008 (Department of Education, Training and the Arts, 2007). If the trials are successful, the policy will be implemented state-wide by the end of 2009 (L. Kirwan, personal communication, May 17, 2007). One of the major features of the new initiative is the abolition of the current mandated period of LOTE study from Years 6 to 8, with secondary schools now only required to offer their Year 8 students the opportunity to study a LOTE (L. Kirwan, personal communication, May 17, 2007). One of the main aims of the policy is to encourage more students to continue with LOTE study to Year 12 (Department of Education, Training and the Arts, 2007) by allowing schools greater flexibility in the scope and delivery of their LOTE programs, thus allowing schools the opportunity to better tailor programs to their students’ needs (L. Kirwan, personal communication, May 17, 2007). At present, approximately 9% of Year 12 students in Queensland elect to study a LOTE, but it will be several years before the effect of the new LOTE initiative can be measured.

Table 1.2 summarises the information presented above for each State and Territory.

Table 1.2 *Summary of Australian State and Territory LOTE Policies*

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Compulsory Programs</th>
<th>Recommended Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>Years 6-8</td>
<td>Minimum 90 mins per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Years P-10 (NYA* Yrs 9-10)</td>
<td>150 minutes per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Year 7-10 (by 2006)</td>
<td>100 hours over 12 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Years R-10 (by 2007 - NYA)</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Years 3-10 (by 2003 – NYA)</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>Years 3-10 (by 2007 - NYA)</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>Years 4-10 (by 2006 – NYA)</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Years 7-8</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
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*NYA – not yet achieved*
3.5.9 Summary

As revealed above, the majority of LOTE Policies in Australia allow for the implementation of compulsory LOTE programs in both primary and secondary schools. The number of years that children are required to study a LOTE differs from State to State, although most seem to support a minimum of two years. Based on the information contained in the policies, it seems likely that the majority of upper primary and lower secondary students in Australian government schools are currently engaged in the compulsory study of a LOTE. A comprehensive report outlining the various policies governing the teaching of LOTE in Australian schools is currently being completed and will be published in 2008 (Babel, 2007).

In the following sections, I consider the overall aims of the LOTE programs and the issues affecting their implementation.

4. Aims of LOTE Programs

The broad aim of all LOTE programs is to develop students’ ability to communicate in a LOTE (Queensland Department of Education, 1991; Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Association, 1987; the Northern Territory Department of Education, 1987). In addition, most programs endeavour to equip students with a knowledge of a culture other than their own which, as discussed previously, may lead to a better understanding and a greater tolerance of other cultures.

It is interesting to note a difference in views regarding the aims of language programs. Some theorists, such as Ingram (1993) and Berthold (1991), make specific reference to the development of high levels of proficiency in students participating in LOTE programs: “language teaching is about ... the development of proficiency ... the longer learners spend in language classes, the more likely they are to attain high levels of proficiency” (Ingram, 1993, p. 8). However, most theorists appear to support the view that the main aim of LOTE programs is to enable students simply to communicate at a basic level in the language, rather than to reach high levels of proficiency. A study by Sachs (1985) of LOTE in Queensland primary schools in the early 1980s, supports this view. Sachs revealed that none of the schools participating in the study expected their students to become “orally fluent” in the language that they were studying (1985, p. 26). Rather, as in most other LOTE programs, the students were expected to develop basic communication skills in the language (Sachs, 1985).
4.1 Benefits Attributed to Teaching LOTE

As mentioned previously, it has been argued that there are a number of benefits to be gained from engaging students in the study of LOTE. Most of the justifications for the implementation of LOTE programs are concerned with the educational, economic or cultural benefits of having students study a LOTE. In the following sections, these benefits will be discussed.

Much has been written about the value of engaging students in the study of a LOTE. Sachs (1985) has claimed that most LOTE programs are “implemented for one of two reasons. These [are] experiencing and enjoying another language or learning about language” (1985, p. 27). The Queensland Department of Education has claimed that learning a LOTE will help children to “learn to appreciate their own and other cultures; become aware of new concepts and ways of thinking; prepare for a world in which nations and peoples are increasingly interdependent, and develop study skills essential for the learning process” (1991, p. 1). The Queensland Department of Education’s statement encompasses both cultural and educational benefits. The following section consists of a discussion of the educational benefits to be gained from the study of a LOTE.

4.1.1 Educational Benefits.

There are a number of educational benefits to be gained from having students study a LOTE. The major educational benefit involved in learning a LOTE is that it enhances a child’s intellectual development. Braddy, in his statement on LOTE teaching in Queensland, claimed that:

The principal reason to give priority to language learning is its impact on the intellectual development of children ... language learning provides an analytical and communicative skill that enhances learning in other fields ... [it] develops the mind in some special and valuable ways. (1991, p. 1)

The benefit of learning a LOTE to the intellectual development of children is referred to by many authors (Ingram, 1993; Carr, 1993; Scarino, 1997; Parkinson, 1999; Swarbrick, 2002). Lo Bianco (1987, p. 45) has claimed that traditionally, learning a LOTE “was held to maximise logical approaches to problem-solving and contribute significantly to clear thinking, both central aims of general education”. He argues that such intellectual benefits are a major reason why LOTE should be taught in Australian schools (1987). The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts has also
cited intellectual benefits as a major reason for the teaching of LOTE in schools (1984). The Ministry of Education Victoria (1988, p. 11) supports the belief that learning a LOTE “promotes cognitive growth and divergent thinking” and in addition, claims that LOTE learning aids the development of communication skills and literacy.

The writers of LOTE policies are not the only authors to highlight the educational benefits to be gained from engaging students in the study of a LOTE. Clyne (1983 cited in The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984, p. 138) has argued on the basis of Canadian research that “bilinguals are superior to monolinguals in logical thought and conceptual development, verbal intelligence and divergent thinking”. Ingram (1993) and Carr (1993) are also advocates of the educational benefits of engaging students in the study of a LOTE, in that they both claim that learning a LOTE can have a beneficial effect on the intellectual and cognitive development of children.

4.1.2 Cultural Benefits.

The cultural benefits for students of learning a LOTE are cited by many as being a major reason why LOTE programs should be expanded in schools. There is no doubt that Australian society is characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity. A large number of Australians were born overseas and came to Australia from such diverse places as Italy and Korea. Ingram and John have claimed that “Australia and, in particular, Queensland are multicultural, multiracial and multilingual societies, have been so since before European settlement in 1788, and have become increasingly so in the two hundred years since then” (1990, p. 15). Given that Australia is such a multicultural society, it is vital that all Australians learn to appreciate and understand cultures other than their own. Lo Bianco argues that:

Since language and culture are inextricably linked, learning languages can contribute to cultural enrichment and intercultural understanding between members of different groups in several ways ... since language is probably the deepest and most shared manifestation of a culture, successful learning of a second language can provide deep insights into other cultures. (1987, p. 45-46)

Braddy, the Minister for Education in the Queensland Government in the early 1990s (1991), has claimed that equipping students with a knowledge of a culture other than their own leads to a better understanding and a greater tolerance of other cultures. Curtin (1994), who conducted a study of students who had been learning a LOTE for at least two years, argues against this belief, claiming that such students still display a
certain level of prejudice towards people whose cultures differ from their own. While studying a LOTE may lead to a better understanding of other cultures among students, Carr (1993) argues that there is little evidence to suggest that it leads to a greater tolerance of them.

Closely linked to culture and one of the underlying aims of LOTE study is the concept of intercultural teaching and learning, which goes beyond simply learning about the culture of countries where the LOTE being studied is spoken, to explore the inextricable link between language and culture (see, for example, McLaughlin & Liddicoat, 2005; Liddicoat, 2002b; Papademetre & Scarino, 2000). According to Liddicoat, often it happens that:

\[
\text{a cultural lesson is viewed as teaching pieces of information about the culture that are often separated from the other material being taught in the language. As such the cultural component is self-contained and is often very remote from the language itself. This separation of language and culture … means much of the information taught could be taught just as effectively outside the classroom. (2002b, p. 8)}
\]

Intercultural learning, however, requires students to understand the link between language and culture, including “knowing some of the common cultural conventions that are used by speakers of the language” (Liddiocat, 2002b, p. 10). The main aim of intercultural teaching is to equip language learners with the ability to interact with members of the other culture, while still maintaining their own cultural identity (i.e., they are able to act comfortably in a place somewhere between the two cultures). The recent interest in intercultural teaching and learning has led to its being mentioned in LOTE policy documents and guidelines developed over the past decade (see, for example, the curriculum frameworks of South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory outlined above), and its promotion was recommended in the *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme* (Erebes Consulting Partners, 2002).

4.1.3 Economic Benefits.

The study of a LOTE is believed by many to be of benefit to Australia’s economy. Lo Bianco, for example, claimed that “all Australians conducting business in non-English-speaking countries or who are involved in formal and informal arrangements between Australia and such countries will be greatly advantaged by having language skills and cultural knowledge appropriate to their task” (1987, p. 49).
Ingram (1993) also supports the economic value of the study of a LOTE and has claimed that instilling the youth of today with a knowledge of LOTE will help to contribute to Australia’s economic development. Braddy (1991) stresses the economic importance of studying a LOTE by highlighting the fact that Australia’s most powerful trading partners are countries whose first language is not English. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government has expressed a desire to promote the study of Asian languages in schools (for example, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean and Thai) for commercial reasons (Nicholas et al., 1993), which serves to strengthen the belief that the study of LOTE is an important aspect of the development of Australia’s economy. According to MacKerras (1995), these policies were also implemented at least in part to address “the importance of minimising resistance to export growth due to linguistic, cultural and attitudinal resistance to Asia” (p. 5).

In 1994, *Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future* (commonly known as “The Rudd Report”), was published (Council of Australian Governments Working Group). In the report, which was commissioned by the Council of Australian Governments, the National Languages and Cultures Working Group argues that “the acquisition of [Asian] language … skills will contribute to improved Australian economic performance in the [Asian-Pacific] region” (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994, p. 49). Whether the widespread introduction of LOTE programs (in particular programs focusing on Asian languages) will result in economic benefits for Australia remains to be seen. Considering only 12.5% of Year 12 students in 1992 were studying a LOTE, and that less than 4% of Year 12 students were studying an Asian language (the languages deemed most important for Australia’s economy), it will be some time before the long-term effects of the introduction of LOTE programs are able to be measured.

### 5. **Introducing LOTE to Primary Schools**

When deciding which languages their schools should offer to their students, educational administrators at every level (departmental and school-based, such as principals) must take into consideration a number of important points. Naturally, they must ensure that the guidelines regarding the compulsory study of LOTE and the number of contact hours specified in State policies are adhered to (Scarino, Vale, McKay & Clark, 1988). It is important to note that all of the policies currently being used by each of the Australian States and Territories were developed after the
publication of The National Policy on Languages (1987). Consequently, the major underlying principles of each policy are derived from the National Policy (Nicholas et al., 1993). By ensuring that State policy guidelines are adhered to, school administrators are, in effect, ensuring that National Policy guidelines are implemented in schools.

5.1. Administrative Considerations

Language(s) taught at a school must be relevant to the needs of its students and the community. According to Scarino et al. (1988), administrators must ensure that they consider the needs of both their students and the community at large when introducing LOTE programs into schools. If, for example, there is a large Italian community in the vicinity of the school, then it would be logical for the school to offer Italian to its students, although this does not always occur. The wishes of parents should also be considered when choosing the language (Scarino et al., 1988), although for a variety of reasons, this is not always possible. One of the key reasons is the availability of qualified teachers (Scarino et al., 1988). Practical and resource issues may well be significant factors in shaping which languages will be implemented at the school level. For example, if many of the parents at a school would prefer their children to study Japanese, but there are no qualified teachers available to teach the language, then it would be impossible to comply with the wishes of the parents and introduce Japanese at the school. Similarly, while many of a school’s students may be of Aboriginal background, the absence of suitably qualified teachers may prevent the school from offering Aboriginal languages to their students. Consequently, administrators need to consider the availability of qualified teachers when choosing a LOTE for their school. Administrators also need to consider the range of languages offered at local secondary schools and choose one of these for their school, so that continuity of language learning is available for their students (Scarino et al., 1988). Such an arrangement links secondary schools to local primary schools in that language decisions made at one level of education impact on programs offered at the other level.

Before the introduction of a new LOTE into the school curriculum, the policy documents advise principals to conduct information sessions for parents and teachers, explaining the role of LOTE in the curriculum and reasons why a particular LOTE was chosen (South Coast Region LOTE Coordinators, 1993). Such sessions should be attended by the LOTE teacher and the Regional LOTE Coordinator, who would be able
to address any concerns that parents may have about the program (South Coast Region LOTE Coordinators, 1993). Once established, language programs should be constantly reviewed to cater for new initiatives in LOTE teaching and the changing needs of the students (Scarino et al., 1988).

In 1999, Rix (p. 17) highlighted that the success of LOTE programs in schools can depend on the support of such programs by school administrations, an assertion that is supported by the research of Clyne et al. (1995). The findings of a 1998 study conducted by the NALSAS Taskforce suggest that the guidelines outlined above to be followed when introducing LOTE programs are not always adhered to by schools. According to the report, the schools involved in the study were not able to clearly outline the purposes of their LOTE programs. This resulted in members of all sections of the school community (parents, teachers and students) not being fully aware of the expectations associated with LOTE study (NALSAS Taskforce, 1998). Some schools also reported having little choice concerning the particular language or languages to be offered to their students, due to economic and systemic issues, such as a lack of external funding provided by government departments, or an education authority imposing a certain language upon a school (NALSAS Taskforce, 1998). The report also suggests that parental support of LOTE programs is dependent on their perception of the value of LOTE study, which is “subject to the vagaries of politics and the global economy” (NALSAS Taskforce, 1998, p. 104). Such findings indicate that often, schools do not fully inform the community of the reasoning behind their choice of LOTE programs, which can serve to undermine the success of such programs.

An important issue to consider here is the use of primary LOTE lessons by school administrative staff as a timetabling mechanism to provide non-contact time for classroom teachers. This, coupled with the fact that itinerant LOTE teachers often service two to three schools, can lead to high attrition rates, as it is difficult for them to feel as though they belong to a particular school (Hirst, 2003 & 2004).

5.2. **The Training of LOTE Teachers**

If current LOTE initiatives are to be successful, there needs to be sufficient numbers of suitably qualified teachers available to teach in LOTE programs. Much has been written about the importance of increasing the number of LOTE teachers in Australia. According to Berthold (1991, p. 19), students completing primary teaching degrees should be “strongly encouraged to choose language units, and to take courses in
language program design and method”. Ingram (1993) supports this belief and in addition, advocates the use of inservice education to ensure that current LOTE teachers are aware of, and, where possible, implement current initiatives in language teaching.

After a comprehensive investigation into the growing demand for LOTE teachers in the Australian education system, the Australian Language and Literacy Council made the following observation:

Even after erring on the side of conservatism, between 1995 and 2003, there is a need for a five-fold increase in the number of equivalent full-time language teachers, if the enrolment goals implicit or explicit in the current national, State and Territory language policies are to be achieved. (1996, p. 34)

The Council was scathing in its analysis of the situation regarding language teaching in Australia, claiming that the lack of proficient LOTE teachers in the education system is a direct result of “a century of continuous failure in language learning in our schools” (1996, p. 34). Furthermore, they assert that the failure of Australia’s governments (both State and Federal) to provide adequate training and retraining for LOTE teachers, while still expecting to increase the number of students studying LOTE in schools, indicates a certain degree of “madness and irresponsibility” on their part (1996, p. 34).

The Australian Language and Literacy Council’s assertions are supported by Djite, who in 1994 highlighted the low numbers of students enrolled in language teacher preparatory courses at the tertiary level, and that this situation would have serious implications for the successful implementation of LOTE programs. An important feature of adequate teacher preparation is the attainment of high levels of proficiency in the LOTE, and Djite (1994) recommended that in-country training should be an integral component of preparatory courses. In 1993, Nicholas et al. found that many LOTE teachers rated their proficiency in the LOTE as quite low, a finding which emphasises the need for teachers to be given adequate pre-service training and ample opportunities to maintain their language skills once they have entered the workforce. Such findings are also supported by Rix (1999), who argues that minimum proficiency levels of staff are essential for the successful maintenance of LOTE programs in schools.

The language proficiency level of LOTE teachers is an issue of great importance to the expansion of LOTE programs. The majority of the States and Territories of Australia have proficiency levels that must be met by all teachers wishing to teach LOTE in State schools. In the Northern Territory and Queensland, prospective language teachers must have reached at least Level Three proficiency on the Australian
Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR), which was developed by Ingram in 1982 (Ingram & John, 1990; the Northern Territory Department of Education, 1987). Other requirements of LOTE teachers include current registration as a teacher in the relevant State, and the completion of language teaching methodology courses, although this is not yet compulsory (Ingram, 1992). Rix (1999) recommends that LOTE teachers at the primary level should possess the same high levels of proficiency as those required by secondary LOTE teachers, even though the content of primary language courses does not actually require teachers to be fluent in the language to successfully teach the course. The justification for universal levels of proficiency across the two education systems is that “the pronunciation, vocabulary, writing skills, capacity to read and interpret realia, to respond in adult language to questions, are all as necessary [for primary students] as they are for high school classes” (Rix, 1999, p. 27). Rivers (1988) summarises the desired attributes of all LOTE teachers in the following statement: “[LOTE teachers should be] fluent in the language, with a background in culture, language learning, educational principles ... and in course design and teaching methodology, with growing expertise in actual teaching...” (p. 4).

Of relevance here is the employment of overseas trained teachers, a practice which became more widespread in the 1990s in response to the shortfall in numbers of proficient LOTE teachers (Djite, 1994; MacKerras, 1995; Hirst, 2003). According to Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998), this can create additional problems for LOTE, as overseas trained teachers often do not receive systemic support and are not fully accepted by teachers or other staff. This situation can also serve to undermine the status of LOTE in the curriculum, as it can convey to students and teachers the perceived value given to LOTE (Miller, 1997).

6. Evaluation of the Principles Underlying LOTE Policies

Because most of the LOTE policies currently in use in the various States and Territories of Australia were written quite recently, very little has been published regarding the evaluation of such policies. However, there has been some debate regarding the “National Policy On Languages”. Ingram (1988), for example, was initially supportive of the initiative: “Lo Bianco ... carried off his task admirably. He has produced a coherent, practical and insightful policy ... and has taken the policy recommendations through to practical implementation provisions and necessary support
structures” (Ingram, 1988, p. 21). However, in 1993, Ingram had the following to say about Lo Bianco’s policy:

The recommendations [of the policy] and their implications are not spelt out as systematically as one might expect if they are to lead to major change in educational practice across the nation and, in fact, they did not produce systematic or system-wide introduction of language teaching in primary schools. (Ingram, 1993, p. 12)

Ingram’s statement concerning the failure of the policy to produce a system-wide introduction of language teaching in primary schools is debatable, since the majority of the current State and Territory LOTE Policies provide for the widespread introduction and expansion of primary LOTE programs. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, all of these policies were written after the publication of Lo Bianco’s “National Policy on Languages”. The opinions of Ingram are difficult to ignore, however, since he has been at the forefront of initiatives in the teaching of LOTE for two decades, and has written extensively on the topic. Furthermore, the LOTE policy adopted in Queensland is based on a report co-written by Ingram in 1990. However, Ingram’s criticism may well have been premature. Given that much of the literature regarding the concept of change in the school system (for example, Fullan, 1992) indicates that it takes at least five years to implement a new policy successfully, Ingram’s criticisms of the policy may have been premature.

7. Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed recent policy documents and research pertaining to the teaching of Languages Other Than English in Australian schools. An examination of the various policies governing the implementation of LOTE programs in State schools reveals that each of the policies has one important aspect in common - they all aim to ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop the ability to communicate in a LOTE. One of the main concerns regarding the implementation of each of the policies, as revealed by the literature, is the current shortage of qualified language teachers. The literature about the reasons why students should be engaged in the study of a LOTE reveals that most of the justifications for the implementation of LOTE programs are concerned with the educational, economic or cultural benefits of having students study a LOTE.

In Chapter Two, I will explore the attitudes held by students, teachers and parents towards the study of LOTE and briefly examine the issue of motivation in
LOTE study. Historical enrolments in LOTE subjects in Queensland schools will also be examined.
Chapter 2: Attitudes and Influences in LOTE Study

In considering the reasons why students in Years 9-12 choose to study or not to study Languages Other Than English, it is important to address the attitudes held by all those involved in the teaching and learning of LOTE in Australian schools, and to consider what motivates students to continue to study LOTE when it is no longer a compulsory curriculum subject. Initially, the concept of attitudes will be explored, and the attitudes expressed by teachers, parents and students towards the teaching of LOTE will be examined and discussed. Then, the intricate relationship between attitudes and motivation will be considered.

According to Ajzen, “an attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event” (2005, p. 3). In conjunction with Fishbein, Ajzen has also described the term ‘attitude’ as referring to “the evaluation of an object, concept, or behaviour along a dimension of favour or disfavour, good or bad, like or dislike” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000, p. 3, emphasis in original). While other definitions exist for the term, contemporary literature tends to support the notion that the primary attribute of attitude is its evaluative nature (i.e., positive or negative, pro or con) (Ajzen, 2005. See also Scholl, 2002; Petty, Wegener and Fabrigar, 1997). Scholl (2002) argues that the formation of attitudes is based on experiences, which lead a person to hold a specific attitude, while Wilson and Hodges (1992) indicate that past behaviour can affect a person’s attitude. Scholl (2002) also argues that attitude can be shaped by genetic disposition and the influence of parents, school, the peer group and mass media, but maintains that direct personal experience is the most fundamental aspect of attitude formation. The attitudes held by teachers, parents and students towards the teaching and study of LOTE all impact on students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE subjects. Consequently, they are an integral component of this study and each will be examined in detail in the following sections of this chapter.
1. **Attitudes towards LOTE study**

I argue that students’ attitudes and what motivates them to choose or not to choose to study LOTE are the key factors to examine in this thesis. These attitudes cannot be considered without reference to teachers, school administrators, parents and community attitudes. Thus, before examining studies of student attitudes, I briefly consider these groups.

1.1 **Teachers**

The importance of the role played by teachers and their attitude towards LOTE teaching and learning in the implementation of LOTE policies cannot be underestimated. As mentioned previously, if LOTE policy initiatives are to be successful, there must be a sufficient number of qualified LOTE teachers to ensure that the teaching of LOTE becomes widespread. A 1986 report indicated that in 1983, while only 5.6% of all teachers were teaching a LOTE, a further 5.1% were willing and suitably qualified to teach a LOTE if required (Commonwealth Department of Education, 1986). Furthermore, an additional 3% of all teachers were willing to teach a LOTE if they were given further training (Commonwealth Department of Education, 1986). This means that at the time, 13.7% of all teachers teaching in Australian schools were either teaching or willing to teach a LOTE, which indicates that there was a substantial number of potential LOTE teachers that were not being utilised. Even more importantly, this substantial level of support from teachers for the teaching of LOTE in schools indicated that the attitudes toward the teaching of LOTE held by these teachers were positive. However, more recent studies do not show this to be the case.

In 1999, Crawford reported on a study of LOTE teachers in Queensland schools, which sought to examine teachers’ views on the teaching of LOTE. The study indicated that only 7% of LOTE teachers felt that teachers in other subject areas had a very favourable view of LOTE study and considered it to be equal in status to Mathematics or English, in spite of its inclusion as a core subject in the Queensland curriculum (Crawford, 1999). More detailed and comprehensive current figures relating to this issue are not available, although of significance is the observation made in the Rix Report (1999) that the general feeling of unhappiness amongst the LOTE teaching community has contributed to unusually high attrition rates in the field, rates which are amongst the highest in all areas of teaching.
1.2 Administrators

A meeting of the Queensland South Coast Region LOTE Reference Group in 1993 indicated that the majority of LOTE teachers in the region were in favour of the compulsory study of a LOTE for students in Years 6, 7 and 8. However, there was some concern regarding the (then) Queensland Department of Education’s plans to introduce compulsory LOTE study for students in Years 9 and 10, since such an initiative would “further limit students’ electives at a time when they are demanding more choice” (South Coast Region LOTE Reference Group, 1993). The Group agreed that for such an initiative to be successful, a great deal of publicity would have to be generated to ensure that students, parents, schools and the community were convinced that the initiative was valid and worthwhile (South Coast Region LOTE Reference Group, 1993). Advice received from the Languages And Cultures Unit (LACU) of Education Queensland indicated that in 1997, although no official steps had been taken to introduce compulsory LOTE programs into Years 9 and 10, the long-term goal of LACU was to have such programs in place by the year 2000 (R. White, personal communication, September 17, 1997). The Rix Report of 1999 advised against the expansion of LOTE programs in the secondary school and recommended that the issue be reassessed in 2003. As stated previously, there are currently no plans to expand compulsory LOTE programs in Queensland schools, and the recent developments outlined in Chapter One indicate that the compulsory nature of LOTE study in Years 6-8 is under review.

Of relevance to this topic are the views of principals and administrators to the teaching of LOTE in schools. In 1999, Rix reported that in spite of widespread promotion by Education Queensland, the compulsory study of LOTE subjects was still opposed by some schools because it was felt that students should be spending more time on literacy and numeracy than on studying a LOTE. Some teachers and principals also felt that compulsory programs should not be expanded into Years 9 and 10 (as proposed at the time), as students who had chosen to study LOTE subjects in those year levels had proven to be more effective learners than those who were given no choice over the subjects that they studied (Rix, 1999). It would appear, then, that while the study of LOTE was mandated in certain year levels in Queensland schools, this mandate was not (and, perhaps, is still not) completely supported by all administrators, although there is no evidence to suggest that action was taken to oppose the compulsory study of LOTE. The report issued by the ACSSO & APC (2007) indicates that principals continue to be...
supportive of LOTE study in schools, although it must be noted that since the report was conducted, the Australian Primary Principals’ Association has decided not to include LOTE as part of the core curriculum (Slattery, 2007).

1.3 Parents

A number of studies indicate that the majority of parents are in favour of their children studying a LOTE at school. In 1987, a study conducted in Western Australia revealed that 71.4% of parents surveyed wanted their children to study a LOTE at primary school (Berthold, 1991). A 1988 study conducted in Adelaide showed that 82% of respondents believed that all school children should be taught a LOTE (Kee, 1988). A national study conducted in 1993 produced a similar result, with 81% of respondents believing that all students should study a LOTE (Council of Australian Governments Working Group, 1994). With regard to the compulsory study of LOTE, almost two thirds of parents surveyed in New South Wales in 1985 agreed that students should be required to study a LOTE for at least one year (Eltis & Cooney, 1985). The same survey revealed that almost all parents agreed that students “should be given the opportunity to study a LOTE should they so desire” (Eltis & Cooney, 1985, p. 22). Victorian studies also show high levels of support for primary LOTE programs, with 92.8% of parents surveyed at two Melbourne schools expressing their support for such programs (both schools featured a LOTE in their curriculum at the time of the survey) (Clyne, 1986). The findings of the NALSAS Taskforce study into LOTE programs outlined earlier in Chapter One are also relevant here, as they highlight that although parental support of LOTE programs is generally high, this support is dependent on parents’ perception of the relevance and value of LOTE study, which is “subject to the vagaries of politics and the global economy” (NALSAS Taskforce, 1998, p. 104).

Based on the above data, it would appear that at the time of their introduction, compulsory LOTE programs were supported by a majority of parents. It is important, however, to acknowledge the impact of the political climate when these policies were introduced. While globalisation and international business remain powerful incentives to engage students in language study in the 21st century, it is unclear whether parental support for compulsory LOTE study is as high now as it was in the mid to late 90s, although the June 2007 publication of a new study concerning the attitudes of parents, teachers, administrators and students towards LOTE study has helped to address this issue (ACSSO & APC, 2007).
The data presented in the new study described above indicate that in general, parents are supportive of compulsory LOTE study, although they do not believe that current LOTE programs are effective (ACSSO & APC, 2007). For example, while nearly 70% of parents felt that LOTE study should be compulsory in primary and lower secondary school, only 25% of parents felt that languages were well taught (ACSSO & APC, 2007). The majority of parents believed that LOTE study helped students to understand the world (90%), while 74% believed that it improved their children’s prospects for future employment. Half of the parents surveyed expressed concern over the low numbers of Year 12 students choosing to study a LOTE. Accordingly, only 23% felt that LOTE held a strong position in the school curriculum. Approximately two thirds of the respondents to the survey felt that Australians do not see the relevance in learning LOTE. At this point, it should be noted that all respondents to this survey were required to visit a website and complete the survey form online, which required a certain level of motivation to do so. The authors of the survey acknowledge this and suggest that those responding may have stronger opinions concerning LOTE study than would members of the general population (ACSSO & APC, 2007). Nevertheless, in spite of the potential for bias in the survey, its results are still worthy of consideration here, as they provide the most recent analysis of parental attitudes towards LOTE study in Australian schools.

Of relevance to the discussion of parental attitudes towards LOTE study is Lo Bianco’s notion of the “cultural envelope”, which is formed by a country’s past practices and attitudes towards languages, and “predisposes policy to success or retards its achievement” (1998, p. 8). Lo Bianco argues that “in the past, Australian linguistic culture made a history of steadfast monolingualism […] these broad patterns of background civilisation have an impact on the implementability of ambitious plans for languages, for these plans can never be divorced from the society which gives them life” (1998, p. 8). In schools, this is evidenced by the different enrolment levels in LOTE subjects in different schools, and also differing enrolment levels in various languages taught at the same school. In some areas, support for LOTE study is high and in others, there is very little support. This support (or lack thereof) can be influenced by a number of factors, including the language or languages offered by the school. The cultural envelope of the school or area can influence the choices made by students in terms of their LOTE study. While students may choose not to study the language offered by their school, they may have been interested in studying a different language,
had it been offered. This attitude may also spread to the local community; support for languages in general may be shaped by long held attitudes towards language study and this can extend to support for individual languages. As the main aim of this study is to determine the reasons why students choose to study LOTE in secondary schools, this issue will be explored further in subsequent chapters.

1.4 Students

The issue of students’ choices and attitudes with respect to their career aspirations is worthy of mention here. Alloway, Dalley, Patterson, Walker and Lenoy (2004) found that students had high aspirations for their future careers and that the majority of students in their study seemed to have put a good deal of thought into their choices, with few indicating that they had no idea at all about their plans beyond school. According to Alloway et al. (2004), most intended to undergo tertiary studies, with relatively few students indicating that they wanted to enter a trade straight after completing school. Students’ choices were based on their attitude towards future career options, which had been shaped by influences from parents, other family members, level of achievement in various school subjects and advice from school careers counsellors (Alloway et al., 2004). Gender, overall academic achievement and socio-economic status were also found to influence students’ career aspirations to varying degrees (Alloway et al., 2004). For example, students interested in seeking trade apprenticeships were more likely to be males attending schools in lower socio-economic areas, and who were described as “non-academic” (Alloway et al., 2004, p. viii). Students intending to become teachers were generally female and from lower socio-economic areas (Alloway et al., 2004). Overall, the report found the relationship between students’ attitudes and their career aspirations to be complex, as were the influences on these attitudes.

Little information is currently available on students’ attitudes towards LOTE programs. In the past 25 years, only four comprehensive Australian surveys have been completed in this area. One focuses on Year 12 students in Queensland (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983), another focuses on Year 9 and 11 students in Victoria (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, Victoria 1987 in Nicholas et al., 1993), the third examines the attitudes of Year 11 students in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia (Djite, 1994) and the fourth discusses the attitudes of
students in Years 5-12 (ACSSO & APC, 2007). The results of all four of the surveys, and their implications for this study, are discussed.

The survey conducted by Fairbairn and Pegolo (1983) sought to determine the attitudes of Year 12 students towards LOTE study. In terms of the focus of this study, the most startling finding of the survey is the fact that 80% of the students surveyed believed that it should be compulsory for all students to study a LOTE in Year 8 (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983). Even more surprising is the fact that 18% of students thought that they should be required to study a LOTE in Year 9 as well as in Year 8. It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of students than parents believed that the study of a LOTE should be compulsory for at least part of the compulsory years of schooling.

One section of the 1983 report on the attitudes towards LOTE study of Year 12 students deals with the motivating factors behind students’ decisions to continue or discontinue to study a LOTE after they had studied it for at least one year. The data obtained in the 1983 study are highly relevant for the present study, since the purpose of this study is to determine reasons why students choose to continue or to discontinue to study a LOTE after it is no longer compulsory for them to do so. Although the data obtained from Year 12 students in the early 1980s are likely to be considerably different to those obtained from students nearly 20 years later, it is interesting to note reasons given by students in a period when the study of a LOTE was not compulsory and when LOTE were not generally taught in primary schools.

In their study of students who had continued to study a LOTE to Year 12, Fairbairn and Pegolo (1983) found that 43% of the students had done so because they had achieved highly in the LOTE. This was by far the most frequent reason nominated by the respondents in the survey. The next four most common reasons why Year 12 students decided to continue to study a LOTE were as follows: “I found the foreign language interesting in the lower grades (26%); “It gives me an appreciation of my own culture and that of others” (25%); “I wanted to be able to get around overseas” (24%), and “I wanted to be able to speak to people whose native language I was learning” (24%) (p. 11). Of those students who had decided not to continue to study a LOTE until Year 12, 60% had decided not to do so because they thought that the language was irrelevant to their future studies or career. The next five most common reasons why Year 12 students decided not to continue to study a LOTE were: “There was a timetable clash which would have made it difficult to do the foreign language” (32%); “I could
see that I wouldn’t get far enough in speaking, listening, reading or writing to be able to really use the language” (30%); “I found the subject boring” (29%); “I thought it was an unimportant subject” (27%), and “I failed or performed badly” (21%) (p. 13).

In 1987, a study was conducted in Victoria of 527 Year 9 and 11 students, concerning their decision to discontinue to study a LOTE. The seven most frequent reasons nominated by the students surveyed were: “I didn’t like it or find it interesting” (40.4%); “I couldn’t see that it would be useful to me in the future” (30.4%); “To continue I would have had to drop some other subject I wanted to do” (30%); “It took too long to learn it well” (28.1%); “It was too difficult” (26%); “It wasn’t useful at the time” (25.6%), and “I didn’t like the teacher” (25.6%) (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, Victoria 1987, cited in Nicholas et al., 1993). It is interesting to note the similarities between the responses given by the Year 12 students in 1983 and the Year 9 and 11 students in 1987. It is unfortunate, though, that the Ministry of Education did not conduct a similar survey of students who had continued to study a LOTE, for it would have been useful to be able to compare the results obtained with those from the 1983 survey.

The survey of Year 11 students reported by Djite (1994) was conducted in 1992 as part of the research involved in the development of the Profiles of 9 Key Languages, a series of documents which examines the status of the nine most prolific languages taught in Australian schools. One of the main aims of the survey was to “explore the reasons and/or motivations for continuing or discontinuing the study of a LOTE” (Djite, 1994, p. 147). All of the 2145 Year 11 students surveyed had been involved in the study of at least one LOTE in Year 10, but only 48% had chosen to continue to study a LOTE in Year 11. Of the students who had chosen not to continue the study of a LOTE in Year 11, the most common reason given for their choice was “I considered other subjects more important” (45% of respondents) (p. 151) (NB: Students were able to nominate more than one reason for deciding to discontinue to study a LOTE in Year 11). The second most common response was the non-specific “Other reasons” (38.1%) (p. 151). The next seven most common reasons for students choosing not to continue to study a LOTE in Year 11 were as follows: “The subject was too difficult” (35.4%); “I did not like the teacher” (21%); “I do not like languages” (13.8%); “There were timetable clashes” (13.4%); “There were too many native speakers [in the class]” (9.9%); “The language was not available” (5.1’), and “My friends did not take this language” (3.9%) (p. 151).
Of the students who had opted to continue with their study of a LOTE in Year 11, the majority (65.1%) claimed that they had done so because, although they had no definite plans for the future, they believed that knowing another language would enhance their future careers (Djite, 1994). Again, it is important to note that students were able to indicate more than one reason for choosing to continue with their LOTE study. The next four most frequent responses given by the students surveyed were as follows: “I like studying languages” (58.1%); “I have had good marks in the past” (55%); “I want to travel or live in the country where the language is spoken” (50.8%), and “I like studying the culture and society where the language is spoken” (45.8%) (Djite, 1994, p. 151).

It is possible to make a number of important comparisons between the survey conducted of Year 12 students in 1982 and that conducted of Year 11 students in 1992. It is important to note, however, that all of the students in the Year 11 survey had actually chosen to study a language to Year 10, whereas it is not clear when those students in the Year 12 study who were not studying a language at the time, had ceased to study a language. With respect to the reasons given by students for deciding not to study a LOTE in the senior years of schooling, both surveys revealed that students did not consider LOTE subjects to be overly relevant or important to their futures (whether it involves their future studies or their future careers). Both surveys also revealed that many students discontinued studying LOTE subjects in the senior years because they perceived them to be too difficult.

The most striking differences between the two surveys are found when comparing the reasons why students continue to study a LOTE. The Year 11 students surveyed in 1992 placed great emphasis on the relevance of LOTE study to their future careers, while the issue of enhanced career opportunities did not figure prominently among the reasons given by Year 12 in 1982 for studying a LOTE. An examination of the original survey administered to the Year 12 students revealed that one of the statements that the students could choose as a reason for continuing to study a LOTE, was “A knowledge of the language will help me get a good job” (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983, p. 44). This is an important point to note, as it indicates that the Year 12 students of 1982 did not consider the advantages for their careers of knowing a language as being a major motivating factor in their choice to study a LOTE (i.e., the issue of relevance to career was not overlooked by the researchers - its importance was downplayed by the respondents). Other reasons given by respondents in both surveys for
continuing to study a LOTE were of a similar nature, with an interest in learning language, success in the past in language study and an interest in travel and other cultures featuring prominently.

In 1992, Zammit conducted a nation wide quantitative study, researching the issue of the motivation of students to study LOTE subjects in secondary schools. According to the findings of her research, students often chose not to study a LOTE because languages were perceived as being “difficult subjects, harder than English, mathematics or science” (Zammit, 1992, p. 52). Over one third of respondents who were not studying a LOTE said that they were not studying a LOTE because “the language they wanted to study was not offered” at their school (Zammit, 1992, p. 52). Other reasons identified by Zammit (1992) for students not studying a LOTE included their belief that they were not good at LOTE subjects, they did not like learning the LOTE, they did not like the LOTE class and the belief that LOTE would not help them to get a better job. Reasons for choosing to study a LOTE included enjoying LOTE study, believing that it is important to study LOTE subjects, finding LOTE easy, and wanting to travel in the future or gain employment in a field in which proficiency in a LOTE would be useful (Zammit, 1992).

As mentioned previously, in 2006, a survey was conducted concerning the attitudes of parents, teachers, administrators and students towards LOTE study (ACSSO & APC, 2007). Of the students surveyed, 40% believed that LOTE study should be compulsory in primary school and early secondary school, although much higher proportions believed that studying LOTE helps learners to understand the world (70%) and improves students’ future employment prospects (66%) (ACSSO & APC, 2007). The students surveyed had very positive attitudes towards LOTE teachers, with approximately 70% holding such teachers “in high regard” and feeling that languages are “well-taught”. Over 50% of the students did not feel that languages were “too hard”. Again, it is important to note that all respondents to this survey were required to visit a website and complete the survey form online. According to the background information provided for the survey, 56% of the respondents were in Years 8-12 (36.7% in Years 9-12) and approximately 97% were engaged in LOTE study at the time of the survey (ACSSO & APC, 2007). No breakdown of the responses given by primary and secondary students was provided.

In recent years, a small number of case studies exploring the issue of boys’ attitudes towards LOTE study have been conducted. In 2002, Carr reported that
according to the boys interviewed for her study in Queensland private and public secondary schools, language study was viewed as being a feminised project; difficult; boring and uninteresting; irrelevant to their future, and unpopular (both amongst academically-minded students and those who were more interested in practical subjects). Many positive comments were made concerning language study, however, indicating that some boys do find it enjoyable and interesting and have positive attitudes about languages and their language teachers (Carr, 2002). Worthy of note is the fact that such comments came both from boys who had ceased to study a LOTE and those who were still actively involved in LOTE study, indicating that even though students may choose not to study a LOTE, some still have positive attitudes towards its study. Nevertheless, the overall findings of the study were that boys do not have positive attitudes towards LOTE study and that this is reflected in the number of boys opting not to study languages once it is no longer compulsory for them to do so (Carr, 2002).

A 2005 study of Year 8 students at a Victorian private school did not support Carr’s findings that boys felt that LOTE subjects were irrelevant to their futures, and that they were mainly for girls (Hajdu, 2005). Rather than ascertaining whether students found language study to be difficult or not, the researcher chose to ask the students to identify which aspects of language learning they considered to be difficult, although she did highlight that in a 2004 study by Davies, 81% of boys and 65% of girls in Year 7 considered French to be a difficult subject to study (Hajdu, 2005), indicating that the issue was of relevance to her own study. Of some interest to this study is Hajdu’s identification of the factors that motivate students to do well when studying a language. Students were provided with a list of ten potential influences on their motivation to study LOTE and were asked to rank these influences in order from strongest to weakest (Hajdu, 2005). Students of both genders placed themselves, parents and teachers in the top three positions on the list, while boys then chose career and travel as the next most important factors, as opposed to girls, who chose friends and travel (Hajdu, 2005). Students of both genders placed the media, relatives, entertainment purposes and neighbours in the bottom four positions on their lists, with both genders indicating that their neighbours had the least influence on their motivation to learn LOTE (Hajdu, 2005). This issue will be discussed further when the concept of motivation and its role in language study is explored later in the chapter.

In the absence of more recent comprehensive data about the attitudes of students towards the study of LOTE, it is relevant and useful to examine the numbers of students...
studying a LOTE at various year levels of secondary school over the past two decades, as such data provide the reader with an indication of the status of LOTE subjects in the eyes of students and their parents. In 1988, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (cited in Nicholas et al., 1993, p. 164) compiled statistics relating to the participation of students in LOTE programs offered in secondary schools across Australia. Such statistics reveal that between Years 8 and 9, there is a significant decrease (43.1%) in the number of students studying a LOTE, resulting in only 25% of Year 9 students participating in LOTE programs. The downward trend in the number of students studying a LOTE continues between year levels, with 16% of students studying a LOTE in Year 10 and only 9% of Year 12 students choosing to study a LOTE.

Similar statistics available for Queensland indicate that in 1983, only 19.9% of students studied a LOTE in Year 9. The figure for Year 12 students stood at 7.8%, which was marginally lower than the national average.

Data collected in the state of Victoria in 1991 produced averages similar to those of the national survey outlined above, although only 2.8% of Year 12 students were engaged in a study of a LOTE (Nicholas et al., 1993). By 2002, however, enrolments had risen in Victoria, to the extent that 56.8% of Year 9 students were enrolled in language courses at school, although enrolments had dropped each year since reaching a peak of 60.8% in 1999 (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003). Enrolments in Year 10 stood at 28.9% (down from 35.5% in 1999), while enrolments in Years 11 and 12 stood at 9.4% and 8.4% respectively (an increase over previous years) (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003). In 2006, enrolments stood at 22.9% in Year 10 (down from 25.7% in 2005), 9.7% in Year 11 (down from 10.4% in 2005) and 8.8% in Year 12 (up from 8.6%) (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2007). Recent enrolment figures available for New South Wales indicate that in 2004, 14.4% of Year 10 students were engaged in the study of a LOTE, while the corresponding enrolments for Years 11 and 12 were 12.4% and 13.2% respectively (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2004). The 2007 figure for Year 12 in New South Wales is 12.8% (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2007). Nationally, enrolments in Year 12 LOTE subjects have averaged 13% since 2000, ranging from a peak of 13.9% in 2001 (MCEETYA, 2002) to a low of 12.6% in 2002 (MCEETYA, 2003). The most recent official figure available is 12.7% for 2006 (MCEETYA, 2007). While such statistics as those described above do not describe the attitude held by students towards the study of LOTE, they do indicate that the majority of students do not feel strongly...
enough about its study to select languages as electives once compulsory periods of study have finished.

2. **Year 12 Historical LOTE Enrolments**

   At this point, it is useful to examine historical enrolment figures in LOTE subjects in Queensland, as this provides the reader with an indication of the popularity of LOTE in schools over the past several decades. Figure 2.1 depicts enrolments in LOTE subjects expressed as a proportion of the total enrolment in Year 12 for each year from 1967 to 2006. For the recorded period, enrolments in LOTE subjects peaked at 60.1% in 1967 and declined rapidly over the next decade, reaching 10% by 1981 and then a low of 7.3% in 1985. Enrolments remained reasonably stable until the early 90s, when the proportion of students electing to study a LOTE in Year 12 began to rise again, reaching a peak of 11.8% in 1996, the highest figure recorded since 1979. The rise in enrolments coincided with an increase in State government funding for LOTE programs in both the primary and the secondary sectors. As a result of increased government support for the teaching of LOTE, all students in Years 6-8 were required to study a second language, with the expectation that this would result in 25% of Year 12 students studying a LOTE by the year 2000. However, when the first cohort of students to participate in compulsory LOTE study reached Year 12 in 1998, there was a second consecutive year in which overall LOTE enrolments in that year level dropped. In spite of increased funding and the government’s stated aim concerning higher participation rates in LOTE subjects in Year 12, enrolments continued to decline, reaching a nine-year low of 9.3% in 2002. A slight reversal of this trend occurred in 2003, when enrolments rose to 9.6% of the Year 12 cohort, but by 2006, the enrolment figure had dropped to 9.1%, the lowest since 1993.
Figure 2.1 Year 12 Historical LOTE Enrolments 1967 - 2006
An analysis was conducted on the breakdown of enrolments in Year 12 across the languages studied. In 1967, French (68.7%) and German (21.7%) accounted for 90.4% of enrolments in LOTE subjects in Year 12, while Latin (7.2%), Italian (1.9%) and Russian (0.4%) accounted for the remaining 9.6% of enrolments. With the exception of two students who completed studies in Japanese in 1969, Asian languages were not studied in Year 12 until the 1970s, when Japanese (1971), Indonesian/Malaysian (combined in all statistics available - 1975) and Chinese (1978) were introduced to the senior curriculum. Throughout the 1970s, enrolments in European languages fell markedly, while enrolments in Asian languages gradually rose. Enrolments in Latin appeared to suffer the most, with only five or fewer students per year completing the subject between 1973 and 1979.

In 1980, French (50.7%) and German (37%) still accounted for the vast majority of enrolments in LOTE subjects in Year 12 (87.7%). Japanese (5.9%), Italian (3.9%), Indonesian/Malaysian (1%), Chinese (0.7%) and Latin (0.7%) accounted for the remaining 12.3% of enrolments. While Russian was still offered to students, none had elected to study it in Year 12 in 1980. Throughout the 1980s, while overall enrolments in languages continued to fall in the first half of the decade, a greater proportion of students elected to study Asian languages in Year 12. The only new language offered to students throughout the 1980s was Modern Greek, which was studied for the first time by Year 12 students in 1989. By 1990, Japanese (32.5%) had moved past French (28.8%) and German (28.8%) as the language most studied by Year 12 students, while Italian remained the fourth most studied language, increasing its share to 4.8%. Other languages studied by Year 12 students were Indonesian/Malaysian (2%), Chinese (1.5%), Modern Greek (0.7%), Latin (0.5%) and Russian (0.4%).

In the early 1990s, enrolments in Asian languages continued to increase, accounting for 58.9% of Year 12 enrolments in LOTE subjects in 1996, which also marked the peak year of enrolment in LOTE subjects overall. Japanese was studied by 48.8% of Year 12 LOTE students in 1996, while the other languages studied were German (18.5%), French (17.9%), Chinese (5.8%), Indonesian/Malaysian (3.2%), Italian (2.6%) and Vietnamese (1%), which was introduced to the senior curriculum in 1993. French Extension and German Extension (introduced in 1996), Spanish (introduced in 1995), Latin, Russian and Modern Greek each had enrolments accounting for less than 1% of the total enrolment in LOTE subjects.
Data were collected for this study from students in 1999 and 2000. Table 2.1 contains the breakdown of enrolments in Year 12 in these years across the languages studied.

Table 2.1 Breakdown of LOTE enrolments in year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian/Malaysian</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Extension</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Extension</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1999, enrolments in Asian languages accounted for 59.22% of all LOTE enrolments in Year 12, while Japanese alone attracted 42.5% of students studying a second language. In 2000, the figure for Asian languages had risen to 59.95%, owing to a slight increase in Japanese enrolments (43.6%). Korean was introduced to the senior curriculum in 1998, Indonesian Extension in 2003 and Polish in 2005.

The final year for which enrolment data in LOTE subjects are available is 2006. Although overall LOTE enrolments have continued to decline, Asian languages still attract a greater proportion of LOTE students, accounting for 56.1% of total LOTE enrolments in Year 12 in 2006 (a decline from its peak proportion of 59.95% in 2000). As in every year since 1971, Japanese was the most studied Asian language and the most studied language overall (38.1%), as it has been since 1990. All five of the languages offered to students in 1967 are still being studied 39 years later, although the inclusion of another eleven language subjects has helped to significantly reduce
enrolments in Latin (0.6%, down from 7.2%), while Russian continues to attract only a very small proportion of LOTE students (0.4%). Table 2.2 contains a breakdown of enrolments in 2006 in Year 12. Enrolments for the year 2000 (the second year in which data were collected for this study) are included to illustrate how enrolments have changed over the past six years.

Table 2.2 Breakdown of LOTE enrolments in Year 12 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian/Malaysian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Extension</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Extension</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>Not Offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian Extension</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Not Offered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Japanese, French and German continue to be the three most studied languages, the proportion of students choosing to study Japanese and German has dropped over the past six years (5.5% for Japanese and 2.9% for German). Enrolments in French have remained relatively stable, while enrolments in Chinese have improved from 9.1% in 2000 to 13% of the total enrolments in LOTE subjects in 2006. Minor fluctuations have occurred in enrolments in all other languages, although the difference between the 2000 and 2006 enrolments in all instances was below 2%.
3. **Year 11 Historical LOTE Enrolments**

Figure 2.2 depicts enrolments in LOTE subjects in Queensland secondary schools expressed as a proportion of the total student enrolment in Year 11 for each year from 1972 to 2006. For the recorded period, enrolments in LOTE subjects peaked at 29.9% in 1972 and declined rapidly, reaching 8.9% in 1980 and then a low of 6.2% in 1985. Between 1986 and 1991, enrolments remained reasonably stable, ranging between 6.9% and 7.9%, before slowly increasing again, reaching a peak of 10.6% in 1995 and 1996, a level not reached since 1978. The first cohort of students to participate in compulsory LOTE programs in Years 6-8 reached Year 11 in 1997, although this does not appear to have had a positive impact on retention rates, as enrolments in Year 11 LOTE subjects have suffered declines in every year since 1996, with the exception of a slight (0.2%) increase in 2002. The 2006 enrolment figure of 7.6%, therefore, represents a seventeen-year low.
Figure 2.2 Year 11 Historical LOTE Enrolments 1972 - 2006

Chapter 2: Attitudes and Influences in LOTE Study
An analysis was conducted on the breakdown of enrolments in Year 11 across the languages studied. In 1972, French (67.1%) and German (29.3%) accounted for 96.4% of enrolments in LOTE subjects in Year 11, while Italian (1.9%), Japanese, (1.4%), Russian (0.2%) and Latin (0.1%) accounted for the remaining 3.6% of enrolments. By 1990, Japanese had become the most studied language (36.9%), followed by French (27.3%), German (24.8%) and Italian (4.2%). Asian languages continued to grow in popularity as the decade progressed, reaching a peak enrolment of 60.9% in 1999, which was the first year in which data were collected from students for this study. Table 2.3 contains the breakdown of enrolments in Year 11 across the languages studied in 1999 and 2000.

Table 2.3 Breakdown of LOTE enrolments in year 11 1999 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian/Malaysian</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Greek</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2000, enrolments in Asian languages dropped slightly to 59.7%, most likely due to a drop in enrolments in Japanese (to 43.7%).

After having peaked at 61.3% in 2001, enrolments in Asian languages declined slightly to a total of 57.9% of all LOTE enrolments in 2006. After showing annual declines until 2004, when it reached its lowest figure in over a decade (38.5%), enrolments in Japanese rose slightly to 38.9% in 2005, but then fell to a sixteen-year low of 38.3% in 2006. Over the same period, enrolments in French rose slightly to 18.9%, while enrolments in German fell (to 15.2%). After having reached a 30-year
high of 15.1% in 2004, enrolments in Chinese dropped by 0.4% to 14.7% in 2006, whereas 2006 enrolments in Italian (4.8%) have continued to decline after reaching a 30-year high of 5.4% in 2002. Polish was introduced to the senior curriculum in 2004 and although it accounted for 0.2% of enrolments in Year 11 LOTE subjects in that year, this figure dropped to only 0.05% in both 2005 and 2006.

4. **Year 10 Historical LOTE Enrolments**

Figure 2.3 depicts enrolments in LOTE subjects expressed as a proportion of the total enrolment in Year 10 in Queensland secondary schools for each year from 1981 to 1995. Detailed enrolment data were not collected by the State education authority prior to 1981 or after 1995, so it is not possible to conduct a full analysis of enrolment trends in this year level, nor is it possible to discuss enrolment in LOTE subjects in the years in which this study was conducted. From the data available, however, it is clear that after reaching a low of 16% in 1987, enrolments in LOTE subjects slowly rose, reaching a 15-year peak of 23.8% in 1994 before dropping slightly to 22.4% in 1995. Unfortunately, data for 1996, the year in which the first cohort of students who had completed the three-year compulsory LOTE program reached Year 10, are not available, so it is not possible to determine whether the implementation of the program had a positive impact on the number of students electing to study LOTE subjects in that year level. As in Years 11 and 12, students tended to choose to study European languages more often than Asian languages in the 1980s (92.6% in 1981, although this figure declined steadily to 65.4% in 1989), but by the early 1990s, Asian languages were studied by a higher proportion of students than European languages and had reached a peak of 57.1% in 1994. From 1989 onwards, Japanese was the most studied language by Year 10 students, reaching a peak enrolment of 49.5% of total LOTE enrolments in 1994. French and German were the most popular European languages for the period 1981 to 1995, although enrolments in both languages dropped significantly when Asian languages became more popular as they became more available.
The above data indicate that at every level of secondary schooling for which long-term statistics are available, enrolment figures in LOTE subjects reached their lowest levels in the mid to late 1980s, before experiencing an increase in the mid 1990s. However, this trend was relatively short-lived, and by the late 1990s, enrolments in

Figure 2.3 Year 10 Historical LOTE Enrolments 1981 - 2005
LOTE subjects in Years 11 and 12 had declined again, with this downward trend continuing into the mid 2000s. In the 1970s, enrolments were concentrated in the European languages, a trend which continued until the early 1990s, when Japanese enrolments reached peak levels and accounted for almost half of all enrolments in LOTE subjects across the State. Although enrolments in Japanese have declined steadily since the mid 1990s, overall enrolments in Asian languages have accounted for approximately 60% of the total enrolments in LOTE subjects in every year since, as languages such as Chinese, Indonesian and Korean have increased in popularity. After experiencing a gradual decline in the 1970s, enrolments in European languages fell markedly throughout the 1980s and reached their lowest levels in the mid 1990s. Overall enrolment proportions in European languages have remained relatively stable over the past decade, with slight increases noted in recent years.

5. **Motivation and its role in LOTE Study**

Studies that explore students’ reasons for choosing to study a subject often draw on theories of motivation, and students’ motivations to study a language have been shown to be influenced by their attitudes towards language study (see, for example, Gardner & McIntyre, 1991). The purpose of this thesis is to discover and examine the reasons why students choose to study a LOTE once it is no longer compulsory for them to do so. Much of the research conducted in the field of LOTE concerning the role of motivation towards LOTE study explores how students’ individual motivations affect their acquisition of another language, with the issue of why students choose to study another language being largely unexplored. Consequently, while much is known about the link between motivation and achievement in the study of a second or additional language, very little is known about what motivates students to choose to study another language. It should be noted that this thesis does not set out to explore or expand upon the concept of motivation and its link to student achievement in LOTE study. However, the research conducted into the role played by motivation in second language acquisition provides a number of valuable points of reference for this study and a brief review of the literature follows.

Over the last 40 years, the field of second language acquisition has been greatly influenced by the work of Gardner, Lambert and their associates. The most widely publicised model of second-language learning over the past three decades has been Gardner and Smythe’s socio-educational model (Schneider, 2001), which was proposed
by the researchers in 1975 “in an attempt to explain the role of some individual-difference variables (intelligence, language aptitude, anxiety, and motivation) in influencing proficiency in a second language” (Gardner, 1989, p. 101). One of the most important aspects of this particular model is “the proposition that [students’] attitudes play a role in language learning through their influence on motivation” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, p. 57). While additional models of second-language acquisition have been developed over time (see, for example, Schumann, 1975; Giles & Byrne, 1982, and Krashen, 1981), the model developed by Gardner and his associates is considered by many to have been the most influential (see, for example, Keenan, 1998, McIntosh & Noels, 2004, and Wu Man Fat, 2004). One of the strengths of the socio-cultural model of second language learning, according to Norris-Holt (2001), is that it examines learning that takes place specifically in a second language classroom, rather than in other environments. This makes the model particularly relevant to this study.

In 1959, Gardner and Lambert set out to explore the role of motivation in the study of a second language, emerging with the concept of integrative and instrumental motives. An integrative motive is one which is driven by a learner’s desire to identify with another ethno-linguistic group, “and may be described as a desire for affiliation with the target language and culture” (Parkinson, 1995, p. 17). One of the main characteristics of an integrative motive is the learners’ “willingness to be like valued members of the language community” (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271).

Instrumental motivation, according to Oxford (1996, p. 3), “is motivation to learn [another] language for an instrumental (i.e., practical) purpose, such as getting a better job, earning more money, entering a better college or graduate school, and so on.” In summary, these two different concepts of motivation to learn another language may be described as follows: students motivated predominantly by an integrative motive learn another language because of a desire to know and understand that language and the culture of those who speak it, while students motivated predominantly by an instrumental motive learn another language because they perceive that language to be useful to them for a variety of practical reasons.

As well as exploring the concept of integrative and instrumental motives in the acquisition of a second language, Gardner and his colleagues argued that people choose to study languages for a variety of reasons, which they referred to as “orientations” (Gardner, 1985, p. 23). Gardner and McIntyre (1995, p. 207) state that “there is … a major distinction between orientations and motivation. Orientations refer to reasons for
studying a second language, while motivation refers to the directed, reinforcing effort to learn a language”. According to Gardner and McIntyre, people may choose to study another language for reasons which may be categorised as being either integrative or instrumental. Understandably, Gardner and his associates’ definitions of integrative and instrumental orientations for learning another language are very similar to those they offer for integrative and instrumental motives for acquiring another language. “An integrative orientation reflects an interest in learning another language because of ‘a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group’” (Lambert, 1974, p. 98, cited in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1995, p. 207). By Lambert’s definition, an instrumental orientation emphasises “the practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (1974, p. 98, cited in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1995, p. 208). The concepts of integrative and instrumental orientations and motivation are of direct relevance to this study, since its purpose is to determine the reasons why students choose to study another language, after the study of another language is no longer compulsory.

Integrative and instrumental motivation and orientation are differentially related to attitude. For example, a student may have a positive attitude towards LOTE and feel encouraged to study it, which would suggest that their orientation and motivation are integrative. On the other hand, a student may have a negative attitude towards LOTE and its speakers, but may want to learn how to speak it for instrumental reasons (for example, in order to join ASIO). The relationship between motivation and attitude, therefore, is not straightforward and it is quite possible that some students may exhibit both instrumental and integrative motives and orientations for wanting to study a LOTE.

A 1990 study by Baldauf and Lawrence of factors contributing to high attrition rates amongst language subjects in Queensland State schools provided some insight into the reasons why Year 8 students choose to study or not to study LOTE subjects in Year 9. The study, which was “informed primarily by Gardner’s social psychological model of second language learning” (Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990, p. 227), used quantitative methods to determine the attitudes towards LOTE study of students in three secondary schools shortly before they were due to make their subject selections for the following year. Given that at the time of the study, compulsory LOTE programs were limited to only one year (Year 8) as opposed to the current three years, students’ exposure to language study was not as extensive as it is in schools today. Exposure to language study was further limited by the lack of compulsory primary LOTE programs, which
were not introduced until the early 1990s. However, in the absence of more recent published studies conducted in this specific field in Queensland, the results of Baldauf and Lawrence’s study represent the most current examination of Queensland students’ reasons for choosing to study or not to study LOTE subjects, and as such are worthy of discussion.

Baldauf and Lawrence found that students’ gender, past achievement in LOTE subjects, the school they attended, the language they were studying and the teacher of the language were all variables that seemed to influence students’ decisions to continue or to discontinue to study LOTE in Year 9 (1990). Furthermore, they found that affective domain variables (i.e., Gardner’s integrative and instrumental motivational factors), such as being interested in learning a LOTE in order to understand the culture and to communicate with speakers of the language, parental influence, and the desire to enter a profession for which the ability to use a LOTE would be beneficial, also influenced students’ choices regarding LOTE study (Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990). Based on the findings of their research, Baldauf and Lawrence asserted that for retention rates in LOTE subjects to increase, additional Asian language programs (in particular, Japanese), should be offered in schools due to the widespread perception amongst parents and society in general that Australia’s economic future lay within the Asian region, and, therefore, that students should be studying Asian languages rather than European ones (1990). Furthermore, while some teachers were able to sufficiently motivate all of their students to continue with LOTE study in Year 9, others had only 12% of their students continuing to study a LOTE, although it is important to note that the teachers involved in the study may not necessarily have been the only motivating factor in their students’ decisions regarding LOTE study. In addition, more students chose to study Japanese than Indonesian or German, which led Baldauf and Lawrence to identify that “language, teacher and school climate are … important variables in student attrition rates” (1990, p. 236). In summary, Baldauf and Lawrence felt that the presence of skilled teachers was vital for the future success of LOTE programs, given that teachers are responsible for ensuring that their students are motivated in the language classroom (1990).

Since the early 1990s, significant research has been conducted into the role of teachers’ use of LOTE in the classroom and its effect on students’ levels of motivation (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Reporting on Turnbull’s research with his own language class and studies conducted by MacDonald (1993) and Macaro (1997), the researchers
highlighted the proposal that students whose teachers made maximal use of the LOTE during lessons were more motivated to learn the language than were students whose teachers relied on English during their LOTE lessons (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). MacDonald further argued that the overuse of English in LOTE classes can serve to “de-motivate” students, as the teacher is reinforcing to the students the idea that it is easier to communicate in English rather than to acquire proficiency in the LOTE, so they do not see an immediate need to improve their understanding of the language that they are studying (1993, cited in Turnbull & Arnett, 2002, p. 206). Although its discussion of motivation in language learning makes this theory of interest to this study, it contributes more to the field of motivation in second language acquisition, rather than providing insight into why students actually choose to study languages.

While it is widely acknowledged that Gardner’s social psychological model of second language learning has had a great impact on the way in which language learning is viewed, it has drawn criticism from some theorists, who believe that it does not fully encapsulate the processes involved in second language learning. Peirce, for example, argues that Gardner and his associates’ concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation “do not capture the complex relationship between relations of power, identity, and language learning” (Peirce, 1995) that she observed in her study of immigrant women. An integral component of Peirce’s theory is that language learners need to “claim the right to speak [in the target language] outside the classroom” (1995, p. 26), and to this end, she argues that the concept of investment is more appropriate than that of motivation, as in her view, it more accurately depicts the “socially and historically constructed relationships [between second language learners and] the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (1995, p. 17). Peirce’s concept of investment in language learning borrows from the world of finance, as it is based on the assumption that if learners invest in a second language, they will hope to receive a return on their investment (Peirce, 1995, p. 17). The extent to which learners are prepared to invest in the second language will determine how willing they are to claim the right to use the language outside of the classroom environment. Peirce’s discussion adds another dimension to the role of motivation and its relationship to second language learning.
6. **Summary**

In this chapter, I have explored the issue of attitude and LOTE study, as well as briefly examining its relationship to motivation as it relates to the study of LOTE. The attitudes towards LOTE programs of teachers and parents appear to be very favourable. However, from the review of literature, it appears that in general, students do not seem to have very favourable attitudes towards the study of LOTE once they have completed the compulsory years of LOTE study. Studies have also demonstrated a link between integrative and instrumental motivation and LOTE study, and indicate that students may be motivated to learn LOTE for such reasons. In summary, the literature review indicates that by the time students reach a decision point about curriculum choice, the decision is already shaped by factors which are as yet unknown. These factors may include issues such as prior experience with the subject; future study and career plans; personal interests, and influence from others such as parents, teachers, friends and family, given that these are issues that were raised quite frequently in the literature. This thesis aims to contribute to this area of knowledge.

In light of the review of the literature conducted in Chapters One and Two, the problem of this thesis can be restated as: In Queensland State schools, what are the factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12?
CHAPTER THREE

The Factors Influencing Student Choice:

A Theoretical Framework

As outlined, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12 in Queensland State Schools. It could be argued that students achieve subject selection on their own, using individual volition. In contrast, this thesis proceeds on the presupposition that when selecting subjects, students draw on a variety of sources ranging from personal interests to the requirements for entry into institutions of higher education, but that they do not do this independently of contextual influences. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to propose a theory of student subject choice which provides an interpretive framework for the analysis of the data presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six of this study. This theory will also provide a framework for understanding the reasons why students choose to study languages.

1. The Factors Shaping Students’ Subject Choices

I argue that subject choice in high school is shaped by structural and individual factors, which affect students’ choices in different ways and to different degrees. In this context, structural factors include the cultural and social configurations of broader society, while individual factors include influences from parents and teachers. In order to develop the argument, this part of the chapter is organised into two main sections: the structural factors shaping students’ subject choices and the individual factors shaping their choices. The first deals with the factors influencing subject selection that I argue are external to students, in that they are factors over which students have little or no control. These factors are choice of school, the socio-economic class or group to which students belong, the culture of the school attended by the students, subject timetables, job markets and anticipated future study, and employment opportunities.

The second section deals with factors influencing subject selection which I refer to as ‘individual’, in that they affect students on a personal level. Furthermore, to a certain extent, students are able to control the degree to which they are influenced by these factors, which include the influence on students of teachers, parents, the students’
interests and those of other students, gender and past achievements at school. The categories outlined above have been formulated for the purpose of this study, although I concede that there is a degree of overlap between the two main categories and that there is some mutual influence between the two.

Control infers that there is some degree of choice, thus before examining the factors influencing students’ choice of subjects, it is appropriate to discuss the concept of ‘choice’ as it relates to education. Such a discussion is essential for an understanding of student subject choice, as choice of school has a direct influence on the subjects available for a particular student to study. The increasing array of choice for parents and students provides them with a wide range of options when deciding which school is best suited to the student’s needs. However, for many the notion of choice is illusory, as the local state high school is the only option. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight the effect that this wider range of choices has on students’ educational opportunities and outcomes.

1.1 Choice

According to Peter and Olson (2001), choice is the outcome of the integration processes involved in decision making when faced with alternative actions or behaviours. Krausz (2004, p. 355) provides a less scientific explanation of the concept, asserting that “choice can be defined as the decision to act (or not act) in a certain way when faced with one or more possibilities of action”. Krausz (2004, p. 355) also highlights that deciding “not to choose from an array of possible actions is itself a ‘choice’, [as] it, too, produces an effect”. For this study, the action described in the definitions above is the study of LOTE. The integration processes involved in decision making referred to by Peter and Olson will be explored throughout this thesis.

1.2 Choice and Education

A significant body of research exists concerning the issue of school choice, the processes followed, and factors considered by parents when choosing which school they want their children to attend. In England, David, West and Ribbens (1994, p. 78) found that the three most common issues considered by parents when choosing a school for their children are the academic performance of the school, the “atmosphere/ethos” of the school, and the school’s proximity to their home. Other issues raised by a significant number of parents in the study included the subjects offered by a school, and the standards of behaviour exhibited by its students. Research conducted by Gewirtz,
Ball and Bowe (1995) revealed that parents also took into consideration a school’s overall reputation, the happiness of their children, and which school their children’s friends would be attending when choosing a secondary school. However, it is important to note that Gewirtz et al. argue strongly that school choice is effected in different ways by members of different social classes (1995). This point will be elaborated upon presently.

Rogan (1994) claims that the Australian education system offers parents a wider choice of schools than do systems in most other countries. In spite of this, a number of factors restricting the educational choices of parents have been identified. The OECD (1994), for example, highlights the fact that parents are often restricted in their choice of school by geographic factors. Furthermore, a number of cities and States in Australia implement policies of “zoning”, which require that all students living in a certain area (and who do not attend a private school) must attend the local State school (Rogan, 1994, p. 48). Within the private (non-government) sector, choice may be constrained by the availability of certain types of schools (for example schools based on Catholic, Anglican or other religious ideologies), the socioeconomic status of the family, and the geographical location of schools, since as Anderson (1994, p. 20) notes, “private schools are unevenly distributed between city and country, and within urban areas”. It would appear, then, that not everyone has the same range of options from which to choose, thus giving credence to Anderson’s (1994, p. 19) claim that “in schooling, unrestrained choice is likely to exacerbate problems of social division, creating advantages for some and disadvantages for others”. Parental choice is further limited by socioeconomic status, as clearly not all parents can afford to send their children to non-government schools.

Additional Australian research into the topic of school choice has revealed that almost 60% of all parents of school-aged children would prefer to send their children to non-government schools as opposed to government schools, but the majority cannot, due to socioeconomic constraints (Marginson, 1997). Other research has shown that over 90% of a sample of parents who attended non-government schools themselves intended to send their children to similar schools (Carpenter & Western, 1992 cited in OECD, 1994). The main reason for the preference of non-government education is their reputation for achieving high standards. This reputation, according to Marginson, is built on the fact that “at the end of school examinations … there is a layer of private [non-government] schools whose students perform very well” (1993, p. 203). While
there is a small number of government schools whose students also perform well, it is the elite group of non-government schools that is more successful (Marginson, 1993). Research has shown that there is little evidence to suggest that the academic success enjoyed by students at the most prestigious non-government schools is a result solely of the educational practices of the school, but rather that “academic success is a result of a combination of schooling, home and university requirements” (Marginson, 1993, p. 204). In spite of this, many parents still consider that educating their children in non-government schools places them in a better position to compete for positions in the university and employment markets (Marginson, 1993).

As outlined, freedom of educational choice clearly is not available to all. The extent to which families are able to choose which educational institution their children will attend is limited mainly by the socioeconomic status of the family and their geographic location. Choice is a key term often used in economic rationalist discussions. When used in an educational context, there is an assumption that education is a commodity that can be bought and sold. These factors affect the structural and individual factors that shape student subject choice in that the type of school attended by students constrains or enables the individual subject choices available to them. The extent of this impact will be further explored in subsequent sections of this chapter.

1.3 Education as a Commodity

Over the past 15 years, a number of researchers have likened schools to businesses, in that they offer a ‘product’ to ‘consumers’ - education being the ‘product’ and parents of prospective students, as well as students themselves, being the ‘consumers’ (Ball, 1990, p. 11 and Prior, 2005, p. 15). In this sense, education has become a commodity, which can be exchanged for job opportunities and prestige. Marginson explores this concept in an Australian context, and notes that by the mid 1990s:

The dominant paradigm was no longer that of education as a common public service. It had become an education market, steered from the background by government, in which students and parents were consumers, teachers and academics were producers, and educational administrators had become managers and entrepreneurs. (1997, p. 5)

One of the driving forces behind this shift has been the widespread belief that “educational qualifications are now required in order to enter almost any form of long-term career-oriented work” (Marginson, 1993, p. 13). Further to this, Connell (1998, p.
92) highlights the notion that “ruling class” families who choose to send their children to private schools rather than government schools are “buying an educational and social advantage for their children”, which suggests that private schools hold a very strong place in the education market. Indeed, Marginson (1993) asserts that students who are educated in non-government schools are seen to be in a better position to compete for university places than their government-educated peers, and notes that this has encouraged the growth of non-government education in Australia. This has also led to a push within the government sector for educational institutions to be restructured “on the model of firms competing in a market” (Connell, 2003, p. 236).

Since education has been constructed as a commodity and, therefore, a ‘saleable’ product, schools employ marketing strategies in order to attract enrolments, much like a business would employ to increase profitability (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). In Britain, schools are often encouraged to develop their best attributes, for example, academic success in a particular field, thus giving them something to “market” (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 30), and schools that deliver “shoddy” product (that is, poorly-educated students) “will lose custom” (Ball, 1990, p. 11). Not surprisingly, as Bowe et al. (1992) point out, school principals, as well as senior staff, are encouraged to be aware of the needs of their ‘consumers’ and to utilise the concept of consumerism.

The notion that schools are businesses with a marketable product implies that certain expectations are placed on students to perform at levels acceptable for a particular school. If a school markets itself as one that has a 90% pass rate for senior students, then pressure would be placed on students to perform to that standard. Similarly, a school that does not market itself on its pass rate or another similar academic attribute, may not place as much pressure on its students to perform well academically. The pressure may not be explicit, but research suggests that the publication of ‘School Performance Tables’ in Britain in the early 1990s led to the adoption in some schools of selective intake policies and the diversion of resources to improve students’ performance in assessment tasks (Bradley, Draco & Green, 2004). The publication of similar tables in Victoria in 2002 was largely welcomed by both the media and the public (Bradley et al. 2004), although it is unclear whether the publication of schools’ results has had the same impact on Victorian schools as they did in Britain. The year 2006 also saw the publication of such tables for Queensland secondary schools, but it is too early to know whether this has had an impact on individual schools and their performances.
It is important to note that while schools are now being encouraged to attract prospective clients, marked differences occur between the student selection processes employed by non-government schools and those employed by government schools. Non-government schools can deny entrance to students who are seen as unsuitable for their schools. Ball (1993, p. 7) argues that it is to be expected that private schools “seek to recruit more able students ... to ensure good performance outcomes”. This notion is supported by Moore and Davenport (1990, p. 201 in Ball, 1993, p. 7) who discovered in a study of schools in four US cities that:

There was an overwhelming bias toward establishing procedures and standards at each step in the [schools’] admissions process that screened out ‘problem’ students and admitted the ‘best’ students, with ‘best’ being defined as students with good academic records, good attendance, good behaviour, a mastery of English and no special learning problems.

Government schools, on the other hand, are unable to refuse entry to any student on the basis of academic ability (except in unusual circumstances). Consequently, non-government schools often tend to contain the ‘best’ pupils, while government schools have a student body that is far more varied in terms of academic ability and socio-economic background.

Connell (2003) explores the relationship between the working class and government education. Up until the 1970s and early 1980s, “the ruling class was linked to a system of elite private schools through a market, whereas the working class was linked to the system of state-provided and Catholic system schools through bureaucracies” (Connell, 2003, p. 237). The neo-liberal movement and the push towards a singular education market has altered this situation, although research conducted in British schools indicates that rather than providing parents with greater choices, the marketisation of public education serves mainly to segregate the public system on class lines (Connell, 2003). Schools that are able to establish links with a middle-class clientele are in a position to attract more able students who perform well in exams, and therefore, the school is able to function effectively in the market, while other schools tend to attract only a local clientele and often lose more able students to other public schools with better marketing schemes (Connell, 2003). As a result, working-class parents in Britain tend to be “ambivalent about the idea of ‘school choice’” (Connell, 2003, p. 237), although this was not necessarily the case in Australia.
Australian working-class parents have a tendency not to view their children’s education from a marketing perspective and consequently, Connell noted a “certain absence of … market-type behaviour” (2003, p. 248). There is an assumption that working-class parents will send their children to the local high school and have them participate in the program that it offers, rather than examining the educational opportunities available to them. The main aim of many of the working-class families in Connell’s study was to have their children finish secondary school, so that they would have a greater chance of finding employment in the future. In effect, working-class parents were not participating in the education market. Middle-class families, however, were much more involved in the market and would make choices to maximise their children’s chances of success by examining the full range of schools available to them and selecting one based on their children’s needs. Connell proposed that this difference was connected to the Australian working-class ethic of ‘the fair go’, which entails not pushing oneself forward as an individual, focusing on what is best for the group and ensuring that everyone has a fair chance at success, rather than making decisions based on individual needs. Meanwhile, the middle-class families wanted “more, individually, and tended not to count the cost to others” (2003, p. 248), which is incongruous with the ethic of a ‘fair go’. Connell’s findings are interesting in that they highlight the different factors informing the choice of school by members of the two classes from which the majority of public school students are drawn.

2. **Structural Factors**

A number of the factors which shape students’ subject choices may be described as being ‘structural’. In this section of the chapter, each of these factors will be discussed in detail. I argue that all of the structural factors discussed below are external to students, in that students have little control over them.

2.1 **Social Class and Choice of School**

The type of school attended by a student can have a great effect on the range of choices (both subject and career) available to him/her. In most instances, the choice of which primary or secondary school a student will attend is made by the parents of the child. Gewirtz et al. (1995, p. 55) argue that “choice [of school] is very directly and powerfully related to social-class differences” and draw on Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to explain why this is the case (p. 25). ‘Cultural capital’ refers to the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and “style” that a person acquires through their family
(Young, 1990, p. 40). According to Laureau and Weininger, due to different forms of cultural capital possessed by members of different social classes, “students and parents … have different skill levels for managing institutional encounters” (2003, p. 597). Dumais (2002) also discusses the strong link between social class and cultural capital, asserting that the ability to acquire it “depends on the cultural capital passed down by the family, which, in turn, is largely dependent on social class” (p. 44). An understanding of this concept is useful when considering the research of Gewirtz et al. (1995) outlined below.

According to Gewirtz et al. (1995), there are three main types of ‘choosers’ - the privileged/skilled chooser (predominantly middle class parents), the semi-skilled chooser (parents from both the middle class and the working class), and the disconnected chooser (predominantly working class parents). Although the processes followed by each of the three different types of ‘choosers’ exhibited a number of commonalities, Gewirtz et al. (1995) noted a number of important differences. Firstly, members of the middle class tend to have a broader range of choices available to them, since they have the “financial resources to be able to move their children around the school system” (Gewirtz et al., 1995, p. 26). In addition, as a result of their privileged background (and, therefore, their possession of the appropriate forms and practices of cultural capital), they are better equipped to make more informed choices with regard to school, as they are able to “discriminate between schools in terms of policies and practices, to engage with and question … teachers and school managers, to critically evaluate teachers’ responses and to collect, scan and interpret various sources of information” in a way that members of the other social classes are less able to (Gewirtz et al., 1995, p. 25).

Semi-skilled choosers differ from privileged/skilled choosers in that while they have the desire to make informed choices with regard to schooling, their background and life experience limits their ability to do so effectively (Gewirtz et al., 1995). More specifically:

Although many of the semi-skilled are oriented to the same [types of] schools as the privileged/skilled, the biographies and family histories of these families have not provided them with the experiences or inside knowledge of the school system and the social contacts and cultural skills to pursue their inclination to choice ‘effectively’. (Gewirtz et al., 1995, p. 40)
Gewirtz et al. summarise their concept of the semi-skilled chooser by stating that “overall … the process of school choice [for the semi-skilled chooser] is abstract, more a matter of finding the ‘good’ school, rather than the ‘right’ one” (1995, p. 44). Again, this is linked to the concept of cultural capital, as Gewirtz et al. (1995), argue that through no fault of their own, semi-skilled choosers do not possess the appropriate cultural capital required to seek the ‘right’ school and that to them, the choice of a ‘good’ school is the ‘right’ thing to do.

For disconnected choosers, “the idea of examining a wide range of schools is not something which enters their frame of thinking” (Gewirtz et al., 1995, p. 45). Typically, they will make a choice between only two schools, and will not consider or attempt to gather information concerning any more than those two schools, both of which will generally be within close proximity to the family home (Gewirtz et al., 1995). As Rogan points out, working-class parents generally only have the option of sending their children to government schools, since the fees charged by non-government schools are often beyond their means (1994). It can be argued, then, that the issue of choice of school for such parents is less complicated than it often is for parents of the ‘higher’ social classes, since choosing between two or perhaps more schools in one sector of education would be less difficult than choosing between a number of schools across two different sectors of education.

The idea that choice of school is greatly affected by social class is strongly supported by Marginson (1993, 1997), Anderson (1992, 1994) and Connell (1998, 2003). Using parental occupation as a determinant of social class, Anderson noted that members of the “upper” and “middle” classes were far more likely to send their children to private schools than were members of the working class (1992, p. 225). Marginson also highlighted the trend for parents belonging to higher income brackets to send their children to private schools, and noted that such schools tended to be located in wealthier suburbs, while the majority of government schools were located in middle and working-class suburbs (1997). It is important to note, however, that sometimes even wealthier parents are not able to choose to have their children privately educated, if only because “not all localities provide private schools” (Marginson, 1997, p. 186).

2.2 Influence of Social Class on Subject Choice

Similarly, research studies conducted in the mid-1990s showed that student subject selection is also influenced to a certain extent by the social class to which the student and his/her parents or guardians belong (Ainley, Jones & Navaratnam, 1994).
From their data, Ainley, Jones & Navaratnam (1994) indicate that members of the “upper (ruling) class” are more likely to choose to study mathematics, humanities, social sciences and physical sciences (chemistry and physics) than are members of the working class (p. 72). Working, or “lower class” students, as Ainley et al. refer to them, are more likely to choose to study economics and business, technical studies, home science, physical education, and computer studies (Ainley et al., 1994, p. 74). An earlier study by Ainley et al. (1990, p. 29) revealed that “lower class” students were more likely to study languages than “upper class” students, but recent data show that this trend does not appear to have continued. In fact, more recent research conducted by Fullarton and Ainley (2000) indicates that upper class students are almost twice as likely to study languages than working class students, which is in direct contrast to earlier findings. This phenomenon may be attributed to the changing economic climate during the course of the 1990s, leading to more parents and students acknowledging the economic benefit in possessing skills in a second language. The subjects identified in the 2000 study as being chosen most frequently by students of both classes were the same as those identified in previous studies (Fullarton & Ainley, 2000).

2.3 School Culture

The culture of a school can affect the subject choices made by its pupils. For Woods (1990, p. 27), a “culture” consists of “values and beliefs, rules and codes of conduct and behaviour, forms of language, patterns of speech and choice of words, understandings about ways of doing things and not doing things”. Deal and Peterson have explored the concept of culture in relation to schools in great detail over the past two decades (e.g., 1990, 1999, 2002). For them, ‘school culture’ is the pattern of values, traditions and beliefs that have been formed over the course of a school’s history and which are understood (perhaps to varying degrees) by all of the members of the school community (staff, administration, students and parents) (Deal & Peterson, 1990). According to the Small Schools Project, “a school’s culture includes the obvious elements of schedules, curriculum, demographics and policies, as well as the social interactions that occur within those structures and give a school its look and feel as ‘friendly’, ‘elite’, ‘competitive’, ‘inclusive’ and so on” (p. 103). A group’s culture indicates what is valued by its members and this is reflected in the practices developed within this framework. For example, a school that has a strong sporting culture will develop practices that convey the idea that sport is valued by the school community. This, in turn can shape the choices made by the students, although the influence may not
necessarily be obvious to them but rather shaped subtly by the underlying values of the group.

2.4 The Effects of Social Class on School Culture

School culture does not exist in a vacuum, and as McCulloch (1992) suggests, a school’s culture is influenced by the social class to which the majority of its pupils belong, in that historically, a direct relationship between the social characteristics of a school’s neighbourhood and the character of the school was thought to exist. In effect, this meant that “middle-class residential areas were seen as the proper constituency of academic secondary schools ... industrial districts were assumed to provide pupils appropriate for technical education” (McCulloch, 1992, p. 153). It would appear, then, that in general, students who come from middle-class families may tend to go to schools in middle-class areas, which in turn may tend to produce students of high academic ability because the culture of such schools would be likely to be one that strongly encourages academic achievement. Conversely, students who come from lower-class families may tend to go to schools in less affluent areas, which in turn may tend to produce students of technical ability. The culture of these schools would be likely to encourage the acquisition of a trade, or skills that would contribute to the industrial workforce.

As argued, a school’s culture can have an effect on the choices made by its students. If a school’s culture reflects the values of the middle-classes, then its students may be more likely to make choices that would enable them to continue on to higher education or enter middle-class professions. If the school’s culture reflects the values of the lower classes, then its students may be more likely to make choices that would enable them to acquire the skills necessary to enter the industrial workforce. Since this study seeks to identify and understand reasons why students make certain subject choices, it is important to be aware of the possibility that when choosing their subjects, many students may be indirectly influenced by the social class to which they and their schools belong.

Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital”, which refers to the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and “style” that a person acquires through their family (Young, 1990, p. 40), is useful here. If members of different social classes possess different types of cultural capital, which is reflected in students’ academic performance at school, this then may provide the basis for students being directed into one course of study as opposed to another.
As Harker (1990, p. 87) observes, schools tend to adopt as their own the culture of the dominant group of students at the school, such that “those with the appropriate cultural capital are reinforced with ‘success’, while others are not”. Consequently, students who do not possess the cultural capital favoured by the school have to work harder to achieve success than those who already have the cultural capital. Furthermore, ‘success’ at one school may not be considered to be ‘success’ at another.

2.5 Structural Constraints

The following section deals with structural factors that can restrict students’ subject choices. As outlined above, structural factors are those over which students have little control.

A school’s subject timetable is a factor that can limit students’ subject choice options. Schools generally arrange their subjects into a system of five or six lines, whereby students must select one subject from each line (see Ball, 1981, p. 123 for an example of such a system). Due to the structure of the timetable, “some combinations of choices are logistically impossible” (Ball, 1981, p. 123), such that subjects may be offered on a number of lines or only one line, depending on the perceived demand for each particular subject. Consequently, many students may have no other option but to study subjects in which they have no interest, simply because there is nothing else available to them. Recent Australian studies indicate that the majority of students in Years 11 and 12 in Australia study five or six subjects (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley & Hillman, 2003), with the line structure described above continuing to be the standard timetabling model used in schools.

Ainley et al. (1994) reported that 43% of the Year 12 students they surveyed wanted, but were unable, to study a particular subject. Over one quarter of these students were unable to study a particular subject because “the subject clashed with my other subjects on the timetable” (p. 152). Another issue impacting on students’ ability to choose to study particular subjects is the breadth of the curriculum offered by the school that they attend. Due to lower enrolments, rural schools are often not able to offer their students as broad a variety of subjects as schools in metropolitan centres, and this is particularly so in “languages, specialist sciences, humanities and the arts” (Lamb & Ball, 1998, p. 23). Other studies have indicated that students have been prevented from choosing a particular subject because they had not completed prerequisite studies in the subject area (Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002b). As outlined in Chapter Two, several studies focusing on LOTE have identified issues regarding the availability of particular
LOTE subjects as having an impact on students’ subject choices (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1992).

2.6 The Current Job Market and Future Employment and Study

Job-relatedness was identified by Woods (1990) as being an important factor in subject choice. Ainley et al.’s (1994) national survey of Year 11 and 12 students also indicated that a significant proportion of students choose certain subjects because of the relevance of the subject to the students’ anticipated future employment. Subjects such as mathematics, science subjects (physics, chemistry and biology), physical education, computer and business studies were commonly chosen by students for their job-relatedness. Ainley et al.’s 1990 study of Year 12 students yielded similar results. More recent studies confirm that students consider the perceived relevance of subjects to their future career and study plans with making their decisions (Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002b; Connell, 2003). Vaughan and Hipkins (2002b) found that English, mathematics and science were identified by students as being particularly useful for their future careers, although they also noted that “most students perceive only the broadest and most instrumental of links between what they learn in their subjects and their future lives” (p. 5). Connell (2003) makes a direct link between students’ subject choice and “relevance to a working life in the future”, identifying this as one of the important factors considered by students and their parents when selecting their subjects for Years 11 and 12 (p. 245).

A number of students in Ainley et al.’s studies claimed that the reason they chose to study particular subjects was because they were necessary for future studies (1990 and 1994). This relates closely to the choice of subjects for their job-relatedness, since future studies are generally related to future employment. In 1990, a large proportion of students claimed that mathematics, sciences, physical education and computer and business studies were chosen for their relevance to future studies (Ainley et al., 1990), although by 1994, only mathematics and science were mentioned by a significant number of students as having been chosen for this reason (Ainley et al., 1994). James (2002) also highlights the important role played by future study plans and university requisites in students’ decision making at secondary school. Thus, plans for future study may have a considerable effect on the subject choices made by students.
3. **Individual Factors**

Thus far, this chapter has dealt with the structural factors that shape students’ subject choices at high school. The next section of the chapter will be concerned with the discussion of the individual factors which shape students’ choice of subjects. I argue that the factors discussed below are individual in that they affect students on a personal level. Furthermore, to a certain degree, students may exercise control over these factors, in that they may determine the extent to which they are influenced by them.

3.1 **Teacher Influence**

Many studies recognise that in terms of subject choice, teachers can have considerable influence over their students (Pavy, 2006; Dalgety & Coll, 2004; Northern Ireland Statistics Agency, 2004; Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002c; Warton & Cooney, 1997; Ball, 1981). Older Australian studies have indicated that in general, Australian students do not ask their teachers for advice on which subjects to study (Lynch & Ramsay, 1985; Ainley et al. 1990). Lynch and Ramsay (1985) revealed that only 15% of students consult their teachers when choosing their subjects. Similarly, Ainley et al. (1990) revealed that a small proportion of students consider the advice of teachers to be important when selecting their subjects. A more recent Australian study, however, indicates that some students do seek the advice of their teachers regarding their subject choices, and that they consider this advice to be valuable (Warton & Cooney, 1997).

This is consistent with the findings of other recent studies (Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002c; Adey & Biddulph, 2001), although both note that students indicate that they are influenced more by their parents than by their teachers.

Occasionally, teachers may encourage students to take, or not to take, their particular subject for the purpose of promoting enrolment levels in the subject (Woods, 1990). ‘Good’ students, or students who achieve highly in the subject are encouraged to study it, while ‘undesirable’ students, or students who would not serve to enhance the image of the subject are not encouraged. Woods (1990) maintains that pupils are made aware of whether or not they succeed or fail at the subject, thus improving or lessening the chance that the student will opt to continue studying the subject. In this instance, teachers attempt to, and often do, have a great influence over the subject choices made by their students. In addition, MacPhail (2002) indicates that “teachers need to be prepared to promote their subjects to students, not only attracting a sufficient number to
retain a reasonable level of staffing but also capable students in order to compete with other subject examination results” (p. 310). The impact that this advice has on students varies from actively shaping their choices to having little impact at all (Pavy, 2006; Dalgety & Coll, 2004; Northern Ireland Statistics Agency, 2004; Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002c; Warton & Cooney, 1997; Adey & Biddulph, 2001; Ball, 1981)

While teachers may not always have a direct influence on students’ subject choices, they may have an indirect or unintentional influence on their students. The personal and professional characteristics of a teacher can affect enrolment rates in subjects - teachers who are well-liked may find more students opting to study their subject than teachers who are not liked by their students (Colley & Comber, 2003; Evans, 1993; Nicholas et al., 1993; Rivers, 1988). Consequently, while they may not be actively encouraging or discouraging students to continue to study a subject, teachers may still be influencing the subject choices made by their students. This view is also acknowledged by Alloway, Dalley, Patterson, Walker and Lenoy (2004), who indicate that parents also highlight the impact certain teachers can have on their children’s decision to study or not to study particular subjects.

3.2 Influence of Parents on Subject Choice

Parents are involved in their children’s school education from the day of enrolment. It is the parents who must decide which school their children will attend and, as revealed above, the school attended by a student can have a great effect on the subject choices available. Parents, therefore, have both an indirect and a direct influence on the subjects that their children will study at school.

Many students are influenced by the wishes of their parents when selecting their subjects. Ball (1981) discovered that the parents of students who were academically-minded (i.e., students who performed well in their studies and tended to achieve high grades) were more likely to be heavily involved in the selection of their children’s subjects, than were parents of less academically-minded students. The parents of less academically-minded students were generally only likely to become involved in the subject selection process if their children were denied access to a certain subject, or if they disagreed with the advice given to their children by teachers (Ball, 1981). Blenkinsop, McCrone, Wade and Morris (2006) found that students in Years 9 and 11 indicated that their parents were among the main influences on their choice of subjects (along with teachers, their enjoyment of the subject and their future career plans). Other
research suggests that parental influence over students’ subject choice is minimal (Joseph & Joseph, 1998; Johnson & Selepeng, 2001).

The Australian research data also seem somewhat inconclusive and contradictory. Lynch and Ramsay’s (1985) study revealed that over 50% of students consult their parents when selecting their subjects. However, the extent to which the final subject choices of the students were influenced by their parents was not clear. In 1997, Warton and Cooney reported that 70% of students sought information regarding subject choices from their parents. When asked to rank the usefulness of the information given on a four-point scale (with four being “very useful” and one “not at all useful”), however, the mean score was 2.85, indicating that while most students consulted their parents when choosing their subjects, they did not find this advice to be overly useful to them. On the other hand, the two studies conducted by Ainley et al. (1990 and 1994) both revealed that students did not rate ‘influence from parents’ highly as a reason for choosing to study a particular subject. It would appear, then, that while students discuss their subject options with their parents, the final choice is not necessarily influenced by them, a notion which is supported by the findings of Young, Fraser and Woolnough (1997), who asserted that the majority of students indicated that their parents were supportive of their choices without necessarily influencing them.

3.3 The Influence of Students’ Interests on Subject Choice

Research has revealed that the types of activities in which students are interested, or in which they enjoy participating, can influence the subjects that they choose to study at school. Ainley et al. (1994, p. 128), citing the work of Holland (1985), identified six major fields of interest - realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Holland’s fields have been used by many researchers to explore the relationship between students’ interests and their subject choices at secondary school (Barnes, McInerney & Marsh, 2005; Elsworth, Harvey-Beavis, Ainley & Fabris, 1999) and course selection at university (Trusty, 2003). According to Tracey & Rounds (1995), by the mid-90s, its use in studies examining vocational interests had become so widespread that it was considered the “standard” model (p. 431). The model is also used to examine the relationship between interests and career choice and, as such, is utilised by school and university counsellors (Farmer, Rotella, Anderson & Wardrop, 1998; Mullis, Mullis & Gerwels, 1998).

Students interested in ‘investigative’ activities tend to select subjects related to the physical sciences and mathematics (Barnes, McInerney & Marsh, 2005; Elsworth et
Studies indicate that students with interests in 'realistic' activities are likely to choose subjects related to technical studies, computer studies, and physical sciences, but are less likely to study languages or home sciences (Elsworth et al., 1999; Ainley et al., 1994). Students interested in 'artistic' activities have a tendency to study subjects related to performing and creative arts, as well as languages, but are not likely to choose technical studies, computer studies, or physical sciences (Elsworth et al., 1999; Ainley et al., 1994). Those with 'conventional' interests tend to enrol in computer studies, economics and business-related courses (Elsworth et al., 1999). Such students tend not to enrol in subjects dealing with arts or humanities (Elsworth et al., 1999; Ainley et al., 1994). According to Ainley et al. (1994), students with 'social' interests are attracted to biological science and home science, while they are less likely to study mathematics, physical sciences, and technical studies. Students who have 'enterprising' interests tend to select subjects relating to economics and business, although Ainley et al. (1994, p. 136) note that "generally there are fewer subject areas within the curriculum which cater for students with high enterprising interests, so the relationship with curriculum time is weakest for this interest dimension."

Numerous studies conducted over the past 25 years have indicated that the majority of students claim that they choose to study particular subjects because they enjoy them or find them interesting. As well as being given as a general reason for subject choice (Colley & Comber, 2003; Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002; Stables & Wikeley, 1997; Lightbody, Siann, Stoels & Walsh, 1996; Ainley et al., 1994; Ainley et al., 1990; James, Lazonby & Waddington, 1984), interest and enjoyment were identified in many studies as reasons for choosing particular subjects, including physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, history, geography, physical education and LOTE (Cousins, 2007; Pavy, 2006; Hajdu, 2005; Barnes, et al., 2005; MacPhail, 2002; Adey & Biddulph, 2001; Fisher, 2001). This is consistent with the findings of James et al. (1984, p. 475), who posit that “most pupils...claim to choose [subjects] for the positive reason that these are the subjects which interest them”.

3.4 Gender and Subject Choice

Woods (1990, p. 61) highlighted the fact that there are distinct differences between boys’ and girls’ reasons for choosing to study various subjects. He concluded that “girls appeared to be more influenced by an affective factor, especially dislike of
other subjects, and boys put more emphasis on ability” (Woods, 1990, p. 61 emphasis in the original). Woods attributes this difference to gender socialisation, which results in girls “being more person-oriented and attaching more weight to feelings” (1990, p. 61). Woods also noted tendencies for subject enrolments similar to those of Ainley et al. (1990), in that boys tended to be highly represented in physical sciences and girls in home sciences, although he added metalwork and woodwork to the boys’ list of subjects and English literature and environmental studies to the girls’ list (Woods, 1990).

Further studies by Ainley et al. (1994) also found that girls tended to constitute the majority of enrolments in LOTE subjects, while boys predominated in technical studies and physical education. Interestingly, however, Stables & Wikeley (1997) found that languages figured amongst the least popular subjects for both boys and girls, with PE, technology, science, maths and art ranking highest for boys and art, English, drama, technology and PE ranking highest for girls. Other studies conducted concerning student subject choice have also highlighted differences between genders in the choices made by students (Barnes et al., 2005; Colley & Comber, 2003; Vaughan & Hipkins, 2002; Stables & Wikeley, 1997; Lightbody, Siann, Stoels & Walsh, 1996).

Numerous studies indicate that two subject areas appear to be greatly affected by the issue of gender: mathematics/physical sciences and home sciences (Fullarton et al., 2003; Fullarton & Ainley, 2000; Ainley et al., 1994; Ainley et al., 1990; James et al., 1984). For example, while almost one fifth of boys enrol in maths and physical science courses, less than 10% of girls enrol in such courses (Ainley et al., 1994). Girls are also far less likely to enrol in subjects dealing with technical studies than are boys (Ainley et al., 1994). Although Ainley et al.’s 1994 study found that arts subjects were becoming more popular with boys, Teese et al. found that boys are “poorly represented” in these subjects (1995, p. 7), a finding that is supported by more recent studies (e.g., Fullarton et al., 2003). All Australian studies examined found that enrolments by females continue to predominate in subjects dealing with home sciences (Fullarton et al., 2003; Fullarton & Ainley, 2000; Teese et al., 1995; Ainley et al., 1994).

Nicholas et al. (1993) have noted that in the senior secondary school, female enrolments in languages far outnumber those of males (70% of senior language students are female), while Carr (2002, p. 5) highlights that students who choose to continue to participate in post-compulsory LOTE programs (i.e., beyond Year 8 in most states) in State schools are “almost exclusively female”. Teese et al. assert that “in most languages … boys in Queensland contribute between one-quarter and one third of
candidates only” (1995, p. 7). Evidence suggests that this is because LOTE subjects are widely considered to be “feminine” subjects and, as such, are more appealing to girls (Carr, 2002, p. 8; Davies, 2004; Hadju, 2005; Pavy, 2006). Languages are also seen by some boys as appealing only to male “geeks” (Carr, 2002, p. 8). It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that at least a proportion of males choose not to study languages in order to avoid being labelled a geek or be considered a ‘girl’ by their peers.

3.5 Past Achievements and Subject Choice

Nicholas et al. (1993) report that students tend to continue to study subjects in which they have previously achieved highly, while they generally decide to discontinue to study subjects in which they have performed poorly. Consequently, prior achievement in a subject can have a great influence on whether or not a student decides to study the subject in the following year. This notion is supported by the findings of many research studies, including that of Ainley et al. (1994), who note that there is a strong association between earlier school achievement and participation in various subjects. Studies conducted into students’ reasons for choosing to study various subjects also indicate that students draw on their past achievements in a subject when deciding whether to study that particular subject or not (Barnes et al., 2005; Carr, 2002; Stokking, 2000).

4. Models of Choice

Thus far, this chapter has argued that students’ subject choice is shaped by factors which are external to students (e.g., choice of school, socio-economic status and gender) and those which are internal (e.g., influence from parents and teachers, and students’ personal interests). Given this, it can be argued that it is the interplay between these two factors that shapes students’ subject choices. The remainder of this chapter deals with the exploration of a theory which provides a framework for understanding the reasons why students choose to study languages.

The process of choosing a theory to provide the framework for this study involved the examination of a number of models of choice. Rational Choice Theory is a theory that has been utilised in a variety of fields over the past several decades (Elster, 1989; Scott, 2000; Gandhi, 2005; Satz & Ferejohn, 1994; Ostrom, 1998). According to Scott (2000), “Rational Choice Theory holds that individuals must anticipate the outcomes of alternative courses of action and calculate which will be the best for them”
The underlying assumption of the theory is that all decisions are made based on a person’s rational assessment of the choices available to them, and that an individual who is thinking rationally will choose the alternative that they believe is the most likely to give them the greatest satisfaction (Carling, 1992). Scott (2000) asserts that “individuals are … motivated by the wants or goals that express their preferences” (p. 127). The theory has also been described as providing a “complete conception of action” (Bouden, 1998, p. 817) that explains the reason for a person’s choice with no further investigation necessary. However, it has also been the subject of criticism for its assumption that “individual action is instrumental” (Bouden, 1998, p. 818, emphasis in the original), since, as most sociologists acknowledge, action can be “noninstrumental”. The inability of this theory to address such actions serves to limit its use, particularly in a study that aims to explore in as much detail as possible the reasons for people’s choices.

Of particular interest for this study was the model of consumer behaviour developed by Peter and Olson (1987), which acknowledges the influence of consumers’ use of memory, their knowledge of products, their attitudes, intentions and information integration processes on decision-making. According to Peter and Olson (2001, p. 173), consumers make decisions based on “their beliefs about the consequences of buying those products or brands.” They argue that “the specific consequences that are used to evaluate and choose among choice alternatives are called choice criteria” (Peter & Olson, 2001, p. 173). Peter and Olson’s theory involves five stages in explaining how decisions are made, including recognition of the problem to be solved; searching for alternative solutions; evaluating these alternatives; purchasing the product, and then evaluating the choice (1997). One of the principal components of the model is that the degree of involvement in the decision-making process differs from person to person and from choice to choice (i.e., a person may be highly involved in the decision-making process regarding one particular activity, but may have low involvement in another). For Peter and Olson (2001), ‘involvement’ is “the degree of personal relevance a product, brand, object or behaviour has for a consumer” (p. 552). Ultimately, a consumer’s choice is shaped by the combination of their level of involvement and the amount of knowledge that they have of the product under consideration (Peter & Olson, 1987). It has been argued that education has become commoditised and, consequently, a model of consumer behaviour could be considered suitable for use in this study. However, this is again limited and does not provide a broader understanding of the
social and structural issues involved in educational provision. Although the uptake of utilitarian discourses suggests that students may be operating as consumers in their choice of subject, there is ample evidence that other discourses are also operating, which are not informed by consumerism. Thus, models grounded in consumer choice theory such as Peter and Olsen’s were not considered to be ideal for this study.

5. **The Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The issue of students’ attitudes towards LOTE subjects is of great importance to this research study. Much has been written about the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, with the majority of research having been conducted in the field of social psychology. Of the many theories developed to attempt to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, those of Ajzen and Fishbein (1975, 1980) have received support and acceptance in their field (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Astrom & Okullo, 2004; Townsend & Dawes, 2007; Sutton, 1998). Their Theory of Reasoned Action was first introduced in 1975, and was refined in 1980. In 1985, Ajzen, in response to criticism concerning the theory (most notably from Liska in 1984) further developed it, resulting in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which was refined again in 2005. It is in this theory that I have chosen to ground my research, as it has several applications relevant to the present study of students’ behaviour.

The Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour have been utilised in studies conducted in a broad range of fields over the past three decades. Their use in the field of health sciences has been particularly extensive (Godin & Kok 1996), and the theories have been used to examine and predict people’s intentions to participate in a range of health-related activities, including exercise programs (Courneya, Plotnikoff, Hotz & Birkett, 2000); quitting smoking (Babrow, Black & Tiffany, 1990); breastfeeding (Wambach, 1997), and dieting (Armitage & Conner, 1999). Studies investigating people’s attitudes toward voting (Granberg & Holmberg, 1990); seeking employment (Casca, 1998); conserving water (Lam, 2006), and their intention to care for orphans (Townsend & Dawes, 2007) have also made use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Many research studies in the field of education have also used the theory, including an examination of students’ intention to finish secondary school (Davis, Saunders & Williams, 2002); an exploration of students’ attitudes towards science subjects (Stokking, 2000) and less widely taught languages in the UK (King, 2005). Two investigations were particularly relevant to the present study in that
they sought to examine students’ reasons for studying certain subjects. Myeong and Crawley (1993) used the Theory of Reasoned Action to explore students’ science study choice in Korean secondary schools, while Randall (1994) explored students’ decision to study elective business courses, using the Theory of Planned Behaviour to underpin his study. The extensive use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in such a wide range of settings (including secondary schools) suggests that it could be suitable for use in the present study, particularly since, unlike other theories examined, it allows me to theorise choice in terms of individual and structural factors and their potential influences on students’ behaviour.

As outlined above, the Theory of Planned Behaviour has been used in many different research studies. Given its prevalence in the field, several meta-analyses of the theory’s use have been conducted over the past decade, in order to examine its efficacy (Godin & Kok, 1996; Symons Downs & Hausenblas, 2005; Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2002). According to Darker, French, Longdon, Morris & Eves (2007), support for the use of the theory is strong, particularly in the field of exercise science. Although Eiser (1994) criticised the underlying assumption of the theory that behavioural beliefs consistently predicted attitudes, Armitage and Conner’s 2001 analysis of the efficacy of the theory supported its use as an instrument to predict attitude and explain behaviour. Similarly, Randall’s 1994 exploration of students’ decision to study elective business courses found that the theory was a useful tool for understanding students’ choices. Concern has been expressed that the theory is not as effective as it could be in explaining variance among behaviours (Conner & Armitage, 1998), but Sutton (1998) argues that as the Theory of Planned Behaviour generally accounts for up to 38% of variance, its use as a reliable tool in predicting and explaining behaviour is justifiable.

The main function of the Theory of Reasoned Action and, therefore, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (since the latter is an extension of the former) is to predict and understand human behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). The basic underlying assumption of both theories is that “human beings usually behave in a sensible manner; that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions” (Ajzen, 2005, p. 117). Ajzen (2005, p. 117) claims that “a person’s intention to perform (or not to perform) a behaviour is the immediate determinant of that action.” According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, intention is shaped by three basic determinants - the person’s attitude toward the behaviour, the person’s “perception of social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour under
consideration” (subjective norm) (Ajzen, 2005, p. 118), and the person’s “perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour” (perceived behavioural control) (Ajzen, 2005, p. 111).

5.1 Attitude Toward the Behaviour

According to Manstead (1996, p. 14), attitude toward a behaviour is “an individual’s evaluation of the behaviour in question - broadly speaking, the extent to which the person sees performing the behaviour as good or bad.” Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 7) claim that a person’s attitude towards a behaviour “is determined by the person’s salient beliefs about that [behaviour]”. For example, a student’s attitude towards choosing to study a LOTE is shaped by his/her beliefs concerning the study of LOTE. If the student believes that studying a LOTE is a useful activity, then his/her attitude towards it is likely to be positive. Conversely, if the student does not believe that studying a LOTE is useful, then s/he is likely to have a negative attitude towards the behaviour. In general, a person has a number of salient beliefs about a behaviour, and it is the combination of these beliefs which forms the person’s attitude towards that behaviour, although they are not the only factors which contribute to the formation of attitude.

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, in addition to holding a number of salient beliefs about a particular behaviour, a person evaluates the outcomes of performing that behaviour, giving each one a positive or a negative value. This practice is known as ‘outcome evaluation’, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour asserts that along with a person’s salient beliefs (or “behavioural beliefs”, as they are referred to by Manstead [1996, p. 14]), these evaluations determine the person’s attitude towards a behaviour.

5.2 Subjective Norm

The term ‘subjective norm’ refers to a person’s perception that most people who are important to them think that they should or should not perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A person’s subjective norm is determined by his/her “normative beliefs” (Manstead, 1996, p. 16), which is how the person believes each individual person who is important to them, wants them to behave. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, “the more a person perceives that others who are important to him/her think that s/he should perform the behaviour, the more s/he will intend to do so” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 57). In the context of this study, such
people could include a student’s parents, siblings, friends and teachers. The extent to which an individual is inclined to conform to what they perceive each of these “significant others” wants them to do, is known as “motivation to comply” (Manstead, 1996, p. 16). Students who perceive that their parents want them to study a LOTE, and who are eager to conform to the wishes of their parents, are more likely to choose to study a LOTE than those students who are not as keen to conform to the wishes of their parents.

Thus far, the assertion of the Theory of Planned Behaviour that a person’s intention to perform or not to perform a certain behaviour is shaped by their attitude towards the behaviour, in conjunction with the subjective norm that they have regarding that behaviour, has been discussed. It is important to note at this point that both factors do not necessarily have an equal influence on intention to engage in a behaviour. The relative importance of attitudinal and normative factors in determining a person’s intention to engage in a certain behaviour is recognised by Ajzen (2005). The relative importance of the two factors varies according to the behaviour in question, and it may also vary between individuals. This aspect of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is measurable, with the data required for its measurement being collected as part of the process of data collection for the entire study.

5.3 External Variables and their Effect on Intention

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 82), in terms of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, “external variables will be related to behaviour only if they are related to one of more of the variables specified by [the] theory”. The theory does not allow for the belief that external variables have a direct and measurable influence on a person’s intention to engage in a behaviour, but rather that they have an indirect influence on intention in that they can help to shape a person’s attitude towards the behaviour, as well as their subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 82). Such external variables include demographic variables (age, sex, occupation, socio-economic status and education), attitudes towards people and institutions, and individual personality traits (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 84). For this study, an external factor such as gender will most likely prove to be of interest. However, it is important to note that under the guidelines of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, such a factor can have no more than an indirect influence on students’ decision to choose to study a LOTE after the compulsory years of LOTE study. The data collected for the study should allow the influence that this factor has on attitudes and subjective norms to be determined.
5.4 Perceived Behavioural Control

In 1985, Ajzen proposed the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which “extended the theory of reasoned action by including the concept of behavioural control” (Ajzen & Madden, 1986, p. 456). The Theory of Reasoned Action proved useful in explaining and predicting subjects’ intention to engage in a behaviour, in situations where the behaviour in question was under the volitional control of the subject. However, it proved to be not as accurate in predicting and explaining intentions in situations where the behaviour was not completely under the subjects’ volitional control. For example, a student may want to study a LOTE, and may believe that all of those people important to him/her think that s/he should study one, but s/he may not possess the requisite skills for successfully taking the subject (e.g., they may not have studied it in Year 10, which may make them ineligible to study the subject in Years 11 and 12). Ajzen (1985, cited in Ajzen & Madden, 1986, p. 457) proposed that it is possible to measure a person’s “perceived behavioural control, the person’s belief as to how easy or difficult performance of the behaviour is likely to be”. A behaviour which is seen to be easy to engage in is considered to be high in perceived behavioural control, while a behaviour which is seen to be difficult to engage in is considered to be low in perceived behavioural control (Manstead, 1996).

Perceived behavioural control can be strongly linked to an individual’s belief in his/her own abilities and opportunities to engage in a behaviour (Manstead, 1996). Just as attitudes and subjective norm were shown to be determined by behavioural beliefs and normative beliefs respectively, perceived behavioural control is determined by another type of beliefs - control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). Such beliefs deal with the “presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 196). A student who believes that s/he is very good at Japanese is likely to have high perceived behavioural control over the choice of Japanese as a subject, while a student who believes that Japanese is too difficult for them is likely to have low perceived behavioural control over choice of that subject. Strictly speaking, the student has volitional control over the choice to study or not to study Japanese, but his/her perceived lack of ability prevents him/her from doing so. The perceived behavioural control component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is designed to determine the influence that such a belief as the one described above has on a subject’s intention to engage in a behaviour.
In addition to having an influence on a person’s intention to engage in a behaviour, Ajzen (1988, p. 134) proposes that perceived behavioural control may have a direct influence on behaviour. He asserts that:

Perceived behavioural control can help to predict goal attainment independent of behavioural intention to the extent that it reflects actual control with some degree of accuracy. In other words, perceived behavioural control can influence behaviour indirectly, via intentions, and it can also be used to predict behaviour directly because it may be considered a partial substitute for a measure of actual control.

In the context of this study, an example of a direct influence on behaviour of perceived behavioural control would be the instances where students believe that they are unable to study a LOTE because of timetable clashes. While students actually do have the opportunity to study a LOTE in such circumstances, their low perceived behavioural control over the choice may lead them to choose not to study a LOTE, regardless of their attitude towards choosing to study a LOTE, or their subjective norm.

Having considered the elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, it is possible to make the following statement concerning this research study: A student’s choice to study or not to study LOTE is shaped by three main factors:

- Their attitudes towards LOTE study
- Their subjective norms
- Their perceived behavioural control (i.e., the extent to which they believe that they are able or unable to choose to study a LOTE).

In this study, each of these factors will be identified through semi-structured interviewing and then used to construct a survey instrument, as described by Ajzen and Fishbein. Earlier in this chapter, the external and individual factors which influence students’ subject choices were discussed. Each of these factors may be categorised according to how they relate to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and this activity will be completed as part of the analysis of the results of this study.

Each of the main elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour has been detailed. The theory, as described above, is best demonstrated by the structural model in Figure 3.1 which was developed based on structural models formulated by Manstead (1996, p. 15), Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 84) and Ajzen (2005, p. 135). Although it is possible to depict the Theory of Planned Behaviour in a simpler format, I believe that the following model is comprehensive and describes the aspects of the theory in detail.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

External Variables

Demographic Variables:
- Age, gender
- Parents’ occupation
- Parents’ socioeconomic status
- Cultural diversity of the area in which the subject lives

Attitudes Toward Targets:
- Attitudes toward people
- Attitudes toward Institutions

Personality Traits:
- Introversion-Extroversion
- Interests

Behavioural Beliefs

Outcome Evaluations

Normative Beliefs

Motivation to comply

Subjective norm

Intention

Perceived Behavioural Control

Attitude towards the behaviour

Behaviour

For external variables, ————► signifies possible explanation for observed relationships between external variables and behaviour.
For Perceived behavioural control, ————► signifies the possibility of a direct link between perceived behavioural control and behaviour.

Figure 3.1 Model of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, developed from Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), Ajzen (2005) and Manstead (1996)
6. **Summary**

When choosing which subjects to study at school, students are influenced by a range of factors. It is important to note that subject choice is shaped by structural and individual factors which affect students’ choices in different ways and to different degrees. It has been argued in this chapter that both the social class to which a student’s parents belong, and the culture of the school attended by the student can have an effect on the subject choices made by the student. Both of these factors are examples of the cultural and social configurations of broader society that may influence students’ subject choices, and as such, are factors over which students have little or no control. The job market is also an example of the social configurations of broader society that may affect the subject choices made by students. To a lesser extent, a school’s timetabling procedures, and any requirements of future study that students may wish to undertake are structural factors that may also influence students’ subject selection.

In addition to the structural factors shaping students’ subject selection, individual factors also have a significant influence on the subject choices made by students. The advice of teachers and parents may affect the choices made by students, while students’ own personal interests, gender, and past achievements at school are also factors that may position students to make certain subject choices over others. The main difference between individual and structural factors is that students are able to control the degree to which they are influenced by individual factors, whereas the influence of structural factors cannot be controlled or eliminated.

The extent of the influence of each of the factors discussed in this chapter varies from student to student, but it is certain that no student makes a decision about their subjects without being influenced by at least some of them, whether it be through direct influence from individual factors, or indirect influence from external, structural factors.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour provides a means for understanding the motivating factors behind students’ subject choices. According to the theory, student subject choice is shaped by three main factors, namely the student’s attitude towards the subject, what they feel that those people who are important to them want them to choose, and the student’s perceived behavioural control over choosing their subjects (i.e., the extent to which they believe that they are able to make their choices of their own free will, rather than being restricted in their choice by various factors which they feel are beyond their control).
In this chapter, I have proposed a theory of student subject choice. I have argued that it is the interplay between structural and individual factors that creates the basis by which students make choices about whether to study LOTE or not, and that these factors may be understood through the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The complex relationships between these factors have been outlined in Figure 3.1. Table 3.1 below summarises the structural and individual dimensions of students’ subject choice:

Table 3.1 *The Structural and Individual Dimensions of Students’ Subject Choice.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Individual</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Class</td>
<td>Teacher Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>Parental Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Timetabling</td>
<td>Personal Interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Job Market</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Employment</td>
<td>Past Achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12 in Queensland State Schools. The theory of student subject choice developed in this chapter will be used as the basis for the collection and analysis of the data in this study. The next chapter deals with the methods adopted for this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

Method

In this chapter, the research methods used in the study are described. As outlined, the problem of this thesis is to identify and explore the factors shaping students’ decisions to study a LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12. Previous studies in this area have tended to be quantitative, for which students usually have completed surveys. For this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilised, with qualitative methods acting as a major source of data collection to elucidate upon students’ views and motivations. This approach allows comparison with earlier studies, as well as providing an integration of data from both qualitative and quantitative sources.

Qualitative methodology has been described by Marvasti (2004, p. 1) as “the act of re-examining the social world with the goal of better understanding or explaining why or how people behave.” Quantitative methods of data collection have also been used in this study in order to examine the internal consistency of the study data and to ascertain whether the findings of the qualitative phase of the research may be applied to a larger student population in Queensland State secondary schools. As mentioned previously, Ajzen and Fishbein’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (1980, 2005) provides the framework around which the study is designed. The theory allows for human behaviour to be both predicted and understood, with the latter being the primary motivating factor behind its use for this study. Given that all of the participants in this study have already made their choice concerning LOTE study, the prediction component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is not as relevant as the understanding component.

The decision to adopt a qualitative approach in addition to a quantitative approach was based on an attempt to gain an understanding of the factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE in Years 9-12, rather than simply to identify and list these reasons. That is, a mixed-method approach was seen as the most appropriate approach for identifying the proportional distribution of choice factors, and to examine the reasons why students said that they made such subject choice decisions. More specifically, a sequential mixed-methods approach was adopted, in which one data
collection method is used to further explore and expand on the findings of another (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998b).

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section justifies the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches for this study and examines the issues associated with these. The second section deals with the specific methods used to collect the data, while the third section details the process followed during the data collection phases of this study.

Before discussing the decision to adopt a mixed-method approach in this research study, it is appropriate to briefly outline the five data collection and analysis phases of the present study (see Figure 4.1). These phases are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Analytical Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Queensland enrolment figures</td>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Specific school enrolment figures</td>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Design</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students in Study Group 1 Survey instrument 1</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Design</td>
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<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Thematic categories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students in Study Group 2 Survey instrument 2</td>
<td>Descriptive and Inferential analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integration and Interpretation of analyses

Figure 4.1 Five-phase sequential research design: Mixed method study
1. Justification for Applying a Mixed Method Approach

1.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Compared

Qualitative research methods have long been compared to quantitative research methods. According to Halfpenny (1979, p. 799), qualitative methods have often been described as being “soft”, “flexible” and “descriptive” or “exploratory” as opposed to the “hard”, “fixed” and “explanatory” methods used in quantitative research (this notion is also discussed by Flick, 2006). The main purpose of quantitative research is to “establish relationships and explain causes of changes in measured social facts” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 15 emphasis in the original). Qualitative research, on the other hand, seeks to describe and understand social phenomena from the participants’ perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This is an important point to note, since quantitative researchers, unlike their qualitative counterparts, generally do not always attempt to understand phenomena from the point of view of the participants. Rather, they are frequently concerned with collecting data to examine hypotheses and to develop and inform theories, and making statistical generalisations based on the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Research design and research process are two areas in which qualitative and quantitative approaches to research can differ greatly. In qualitative research, an emergent design is often used, whereby the researcher makes decisions about the methods to be used and steps to be followed during the course of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The qualitative researcher is not always obliged to design the process of the research, or select the data collection methods to be used, prior to the commencement of the study. In this respect, qualitative approaches to conducting research can be very flexible. Quantitative approaches, however, are not as flexible. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), quantitative researchers are guided by a set of pre-established steps and procedures. This is often described as “pre-established research design” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 14). In such studies, research methods are selected before the commencement of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). After the commencement of data collection, quantitative researchers are unable to change the methods they are using - they must strictly adhere to the guidelines of their research design, although it is possible for them to conduct ‘post hoc’ analyses of the established variables. Consequently, qualitative approaches are useful in situations where it is not necessary or inappropriate to use a pre-established
research design. As in this study, however, they may also be used in collaboration with quantitative methods.

1.2 Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Burns (1990, p. 9) has argued that “qualitative forms of investigation tend to be based upon a recognition of the importance of the subjective, experiential ‘lifeworld’ of human beings”. This idea is extended by Silverman (2001, p. 13), who asserts that usually, the aim of qualitative research is to “gather an ‘authentic’ understanding of people’s experiences.” The basic assumption underlying qualitative research approaches is that “multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of [a] situation” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 14). A fundamental aspect of this belief is that “people are seen as acting according to the meaning of things and persons to them” (Krathwohl, 1993, pp. 322-323). In other words, a person’s behaviour is influenced by how that person perceives the world and other people. Krathwohl (1993) maintains that for qualitative researchers, a person’s perceptions are formulated as a result of his or her life experiences. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) suggest that human behaviour is heavily influenced by the context in which it occurs. Qualitative research, then, is concerned with examining the behaviours of human beings in an attempt to understand what causes them. Furthermore, as discussed above, qualitative research attempts to understand and describe social phenomena from the point of view of the participants.

Another important feature of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1990; Burgess, 1985; Tuckman, 1999; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative researchers interact with their research participants in an effort to collect data that give them a detailed insight into how the participants act and why they act this way (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Such interaction frequently takes place in the participants’ natural setting (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Bogdan & Biklen, 2002). In qualitative research, there is an emphasis on process, rather than product (Eisner, 1979, cited in Burns, 1990), since qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding why people behave the way they do, rather than simply how they behave.

In general, qualitative researchers do not set out to prove or disprove existing theories or support stated hypotheses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Instead, as McMillan and Schumacher (2001) argue, theories are generated as a result of detailed
and continued analysis of data as they are collected. This approach to collecting data is known as the ‘empirico-inductive approach’ (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

According to McMillan and Schumacher:

> The researcher [using an empirico-inductive approach] reconstructs a picture that takes shape as he or she collects and examines the parts. The process of data analysis is like a funnel: things are open at the beginning and become more directed and specific at the end as limited generalisations are slowly induced. (2001, p. 12)

Theory developed in this manner is known as “grounded theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 12). Both grounded theory and the empirico-inductive approach are characteristic of qualitative studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Qualitative researchers tend to rely on specific research methods to collect their data. Krathwohl (1993, p. 311) claims that “qualitative research methods permit the description of phenomena and events in an attempt to understand and explain them”. A qualitative study generally makes use of such techniques as observation, interview and analysis of documents (LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992; Flick, 2006), all of which allow the researcher “to obtain firsthand knowledge about the empirical social world in question” (Filstead, 1970, p. 6). The data collected are usually analysed and “written up as a case study” (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 312), a genre which, by nature, requires a very descriptive form of language to be used.

### 1.3 Characteristics of Quantitative Research

According to Marvasti, (2004, p. 7), “quantitative research involves the use of methodological techniques that represent the human experience in numerical categories, sometimes referred to as statistics”. Tuckman (1999, pp. 16-17) outlines the research process typical of quantitative studies as follows: “pose a problem to be solved, construct a hypothesis or potential solution to that problem, state the hypothesis in a testable form, and then attempt to verify the hypothesis by means of experimentation and observation.” Sale, Lohfeld and Brail (2002, p. 44) argue that in quantitative research, “the investigator and the investigated are separate entities. Therefore, the investigator is capable of studying a phenomenon without influencing it or being influenced by it.” Further to this, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) assert that the quantitative researcher is detached from the subject and makes use of an instrument to
collect data. This is markedly different to the qualitative researcher, whose role is to interact with the investigated in an attempt to understand their behaviour.

Another important feature of quantitative research is the existence of variables in the study (Creswell, 2003). In addition to identifying variables and their relationships, the quantitative approach is often interested in testing or verifying theories or explanations of phenomena (Creswell, 2003). In general, two main methods of inquiry can be employed within a quantitative study – experimental and non-experimental (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Experimental modes of enquiry involve the researcher manipulating “what the subjects will experience. In other words, the investigator has some control over what will happen to the subjects by systematically imposing or withholding specified conditions” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 32). In such research, control groups are often used so that results obtained from the different group can be compared and “cause-and-effect relationships between manipulated conditions and measured outcomes” can be investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 32). Non-experimental modes of inquiry “describe something that has occurred or examine relationships between things without any direct manipulation of conditions that are experienced” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 33). The type of inquiry method chosen is determined by the purpose of the study.

1.4 The Mixed-Method Approach to Research

Until the early 1980s, a majority of social and behavioural research was conducted using quantitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a). During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the use of qualitative methodologies became widespread and promoted “a more subjective, culture-bound, and emancipatory approach to studying individual behaviours and social phenomena, and … introduced innovative new research methods for answering questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p. ix). Due to their fundamental ideological differences (quantitative research is seen as being based on a positivist worldview, while qualitative research is typically seen as being based on a constructivist worldview), both methodologies have been heavily criticised by proponents of the other orientation during what has been referred to as the “paradigm wars” (Gage, 1989 cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p. ix). These paradigm wars led to the emergence of a third research methodology, known as the mixed-methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p. x) which, according to Flick (2006, p. 33), is “a pragmatic combination of qualitative and quantitative
research”. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a) expand on this notion by asserting that the new approach combines the strengths of both methods and allows researchers to “use whatever method is appropriate for their studies, instead of relying on one method exclusively” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, pp. 5-6). Much has been written about the development and emergence of mixed-methods over the past fifteen years (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Kelle, 2001; Flick, 2006) and the movement has also seen the publication of a handbook outlining the use of the mixed-method approaches in social and behavioural research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a). The advantages of the use of a mixed-method approach to conducting research and the justification for adopting such an approach for this study will be outlined below.

One of the major advantages of mixed-method research is “that it enables the researcher to simultaneously address confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b, p. 16). Morse (2003, p. 195) also asserts that a mixed-method approach allows “for research to develop as comprehensively and complementarily as possible”. According to Turner and Johnson (2003, p. 299), the fundamental principle of mixed-methods research is that “methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses”. Often, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods provides stronger inferences, with the qualitative method providing depth to the study and the quantitative method providing breadth (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b). This is the intention in the current study, in which unstructured interviews provide depth and quantitative data provide breadth and scope to the study. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is also considered to facilitate triangulation, as it can provide a means for checking and testing the reliability of the data collected through both methods and is “conceived as the complementary compensation of the weaknesses and blind spots of each single method” (Flick, 2006, p. 37).

In summary, it would seem from the literature that mixed-method research can be conducted utilising the qualitative and quantitative methods in a variety of ways. Studies can be predominantly qualitative and be supplemented by quantitative methods and vice versa, or they may feature each method equally (Morse, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Mixed-method research can also consist of several phases featuring both qualitative and quantitative methods in any combination of orders (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Flick, 2006).
1.5 Interviewing as a Qualitative Method

In qualitative studies, two methods of data collection are frequently used - observation and interviewing. Due to the nature of the research problem being examined in this study, and the population involved, observation was not deemed to be an appropriate method of data collection. Consequently, the main qualitative data collection method used in this study was the interview. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003, pp. 94-95), “an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) that is directed by one in order to get information from the other(s)”. Furthermore, the interview is a very effective means of gathering “data in the subject's own words” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 95). Since one of the aims of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of concepts and social situations from the point of view of the participants, I argue that the interview is an appropriate method of data collection for this phase of the study.

2. The Current Study

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the current study consists of five phases. The phases were conducted in the following order – Phase One: Quantitative → Phase Two: Quantitative → Phase Three: Quantitative → Phase Four: Qualitative → Phase Five: Quantitative. Although only one phase of the research was conducted using qualitative methods, this does not mean that the qualitative data collected for this study are secondary in relevance to the quantitative data. Rather, both types of data are equally important and are crucial to the identification and analysis of the factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12.

In Phase One, data concerning enrolments in LOTE subjects in all Queensland schools were collected from the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (now known as the Queensland Studies Authority). These data date back to 1967 for Year 12, 1972 for Year 11 and 1981 for Year 10, and allowed me to depict in graphical form Queensland enrolment trends in LOTE subjects in general, and to explore enrolments in specific languages through to 1994. For the period 1995-1997, enrolment figures only in State schools for Years 9 and 10 are available (data for all students are available for Years 11 and 12 for this period). Detailed enrolment data have not been collected by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies or the Queensland Studies Authority since 1998, so for the period 1998-2006, it is only possible to present enrolment figures
for Years 11 and 12. This background information was presented in Chapter Two in Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, in order to provide the context for the study.

Phase Two of the data collection involved the examination of enrolment statistics in all State high schools in Queensland, along with the enrolment statistics in LOTE subjects for each of those schools, to determine which schools in the State have the highest and lowest proportions of students choosing to study a LOTE in Years 9-12. Problems encountered during this phase of the data collection caused significant delays to the completion of this study, and forced a number of changes to be made to its scope. Initially, I intended to select the three schools with the highest retention rates in LOTE subjects in the State, and the three schools with the lowest retention rates in LOTE subjects, as the sites for examining my research questions. After experiencing great difficulty in obtaining the data and the independent support that I required from the State Government Authorities, my supervisors and I made the decision to reduce the scope of this phase of the research to cover only Gold Coast region schools, as professional relationships I had developed over a number of years enabled me to obtain data from these local schools. The limited data I was able to obtain from the major education systems authority during this phase of the research were utilised in Phase Five of the study, which is described in Section 2.8 of this chapter.

In Phase Three, a survey (Appendix 1) was administered to the entire Year 9-12 population of three Gold Coast high schools (2030 students). The purpose of this survey was to obtain background information on the students’ experiences with language study. The questions were designed to elicit information concerning such topics as: the languages the students were currently studying (if any); the number of years they had studied languages in the past, and what these languages were. The data obtained were collated and expressed as percentages. The resulting statistics provided an accurate picture of the history of language study of the students in Years 9-12 at the three schools. Based on this information, students were asked if they wanted to participate in the qualitative phase.

The use of a quantitative data collection method for the third phase of this study is justifiable, since it was the most efficient means of gaining the information needed to prepare a profile of the experiences of Year 9-12 students with LOTE, which in turn provided the information needed to select the informants for other phases of this study. While the data obtained from the survey are necessary for this study and therefore
significant, it is important to note that they are complementary to the data obtained through qualitative means, which are described in Phase Four.

Phase Four of the data collection process involved unstructured interviews with 94 students in Years 9-12 at the three research sites. On the basis of these interviews, a Likert scale survey (Tuckman, 1999) consisting of key themes and ideas was constructed and implemented (Phase Five – survey instrument appears in Appendix 2). All interview sessions conducted with students were audio-taped and transcribed. A “content analysis” (Silverman, 2001, p. 12) was then conducted to identify common features among the students’ discourses, which then informed the construction of the Likert survey. The relationships among these features are discussed in Chapter Seven in the context of the results of the Likert survey. The Likert data on a 1-5 scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree) are presented descriptively and inferentially in Chapter Six in terms of the research questions and an analysis of variance using multiple regression was conducted.

The survey instrument described above was administered to students in a stratified sample of State secondary schools across Queensland. The purpose of this survey was to enable generalisations to be made from the qualitative findings about students’ choices concerning LOTE study. Ajzen (2005) provides researchers who intend to use his Theory of Planned Behaviour with detailed guidelines on how to structure surveys so that the data collected may be analysed effectively within the theory. These guidelines were followed during the construction of the survey instrument, the process of which is discussed later in this chapter.

For this study, I explored the principles that guided the behaviour of a number of groups of Year 9-12 students when they were required to choose which subjects they wanted to study at school. More specifically, I explored the principles underlying their decision to study or not to study a LOTE. I have argued that a mixed-method approach is the most appropriate approach for this study, since its aim is to identify the size and scope of this choice and also to gain an understanding of the reasons why students in Years 9-12 choose to study or not to study a LOTE. While a study based solely on quantitative data collection methods may have identified some possible reasons, it would not have led to an understanding of why these reasons exist or explore the variables that formed them. Similarly, a qualitative study may have identified and explained why students involved in case studies made certain choices, but it would not have allowed for the contextualisation and generalisation of those results across a
broader community, which would have limited the applicability of the results of this study.

2.1 Interviews

As discussed previously, the interview is one of the major methods of data collection utilised in qualitative studies. According to Yin (2003, p. 92), an important reason for this is that qualitative research often deals with “studies of human affairs … which should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees.” For this study, I conducted intensive unstructured interviews, which is the most commonly used type of interview in the field of qualitative research (Lofland, Lofland, Snow & Anderson, 2005; Yin, 2003). An unstructured interview is “a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis” (Lofland et al., 2005, p. 12). Questions used in such interviews are generally formulated in advance, although the order of presentation of the questions, as well as the omission or addition of other questions during the course of the interview, is entirely up to the interviewer (Krathwohl, 1993). This proved to be useful in that I was also able to ask my interviewees additional, ‘unscripted’ elaborative questions based on the responses that I had been given to the predetermined questions.

Early in the research process, the decision was made to conduct group interviews with the students rather than individual, one-on-one interviews. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1994), group interviews are not uncommon in qualitative research. They claim that group interviews “may make the interview situation less ‘strange’ for interviewees and thus less of a strain” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994, p. 121). The interviewees in this study ranged in age from 13-18 years. Adolescents of that age generally have not had a great deal of experience with being interviewed, so I wanted to ensure that they felt comfortable throughout the interview process. It was for this reason that I chose to interview the students in small groups. Hammersley and Atkinson (1994) argue that people who have a tendency to be reluctant to talk, or who give one-word answers in an interview situation, are more likely to “open up” if interviewed in a small group. Group interviews can also be referred to as focus group interviews, although subtle differences exist between the two methods in that the key feature of focus group interviews is the active encouragement of group participation, whereas group interviews do not necessarily involve interaction between the members (although this may occur) (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). According to Marvasti (2004,
p. 23), the format of focus group interviews can range from quite formal, where respondents take turns answering each and every question, “to a more flexible brainstorming session where participants voice their opinions at will”. The interviews conducted for this study tended to be of a more formal type in that all of the students were invited to respond to a similar set of questions (i.e., aside from when they were invited at the end of the interview to make any comments about LOTE study that they felt had not been addressed by the questions, the students were not given the chance to ‘voice their opinions at will’). However, the interviews took on an unstructured format in the sense that the schedule of questions was flexible and there was the opportunity to ask additional questions and elaborate on the students’ answers as necessary. All of the decisions made concerning the format of the interviews were made in order to ensure that as much data as possible were obtained from the process. The criteria used to group the students will be described later in this chapter.

2.2 The Initial Survey

Prior to interviewing students, I conducted a survey of all students in Years 9-12 at three local secondary schools, in order to collect essential information concerning the participation rates of the students in LOTE courses at the research sites. Perhaps most importantly, the survey gave me an indication of who was willing to be interviewed and who was not. On the basis of all of this information, I selected the students who acted as informants for this study, as described below.

All students in Years 9-12 at the three secondary schools were required to complete the ‘Language Survey’ (Appendix 1). The main purpose of this survey was to determine which students were currently studying a LOTE, and which were not. The survey also contained questions concerning the students’ prior experiences with LOTE study at school. Students above Year 9 were asked to indicate whether they had studied a LOTE after Year 8 and had since dropped the subject. They were also asked to indicate the results they had received in LOTE the last time they had studied it, and whether they had studied a LOTE at primary school. The survey was intended to provide sufficient information on the students to enable me to compile a profile of their experiences with the study of LOTE at the secondary school level. The results of the survey enabled me to select interviewees who represented the students who were currently studying a LOTE, those who were not, and those who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8, but had since decided to discontinue this study. I also
wanted to ensure that I interviewed students of varying achievement levels, so that my study was not biased in that respect. The process used to select the individual interviewees is described below.

2.3 The Research Sites

The qualitative data presented in this thesis were collected from the Year 9-12 populations of three high schools on the Gold Coast, which for the purposes of this thesis will be known as ‘Northwood State High School’, ‘Southwood State High School’ and ‘Westwood State High School’. In addition, three schools in other regions of the state of Queensland were included in the quantitative phase of data collection, which will be outlined presently.

2.3.1 Northwood State High School

Northwood High is situated in a middle-class area of the Gold Coast. According to the school’s development plan, the community from which the school’s students are drawn consists of a wide range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Most of the pupils at the school completed their primary education at one of the four local primary schools. In the late 1980s, with a total student population of 1700, Northwood High was the largest and, having opened in 1986, the newest, school on the Gold Coast. The opening in 1990 of a new high school in the area served to reduce the enrolment at the school to approximately 1250 by 1995. At the time of the survey, enrolments had further decreased to 1125, while current enrolment stands at 914 students. All Year 8 students are required to study either Japanese or Italian for the full year, depending on which LOTE they studied at primary school. At the time of the survey, two of the local feeder schools offered Italian to students (one to every cohort of students, the other to every second cohort, alternating with Japanese), while all four feeder schools offered Japanese (one to every second cohort, the others to every cohort). At the end of Year 8, the students are given the opportunity to decide whether they wish to continue to study a LOTE. Both Italian and Japanese are offered through to Year 12, although small enrolments in Italian require that classes in Years 11 and 12 are combined to form a single multi-level class, in which both Year 11 and 12 students study the same topics, but at different levels of difficulty. This is a common practice at Northwood State High School (and in many other schools across Queensland) for subjects that have enrolments of fewer than 12-15 students per year level and allows the school to run classes that would otherwise need to be cancelled due to budgetary
constraints (since it in not economically viable to run small classes). Tourist Japanese, a subject specialising in language required to gain employment in the field of tourism, is offered in Years 11 and 12, again in a combined class due to small enrolment numbers. Enrolments in Italian in recent years have dropped to the level that the school is now reconsidering the viability of the subject. Currently, although Italian is offered to students above Year 8, insufficient numbers choose to study the subject for viable classes to be formed.

In the year of the survey (1999), 146 students in Years 9-12 at Northwood High school were studying a LOTE, which constituted 16.9% of the total enrolments in those year levels at the school. Figure 4.2 displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

![Figure 4.2 Northwood SHS Data](image)

2.3.2 Southwood State High School

Like Northwood High School, Southwood High is situated in a similar socio-economic area of the Gold Coast, and is described by school literature as drawing its students from a community featuring citizens of a range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Most of the school’s students completed their primary education at one of the five local primary schools. Within four years of opening in 1996, Southwood High had become one of the largest schools on the Gold Coast, with an enrolment of 1820 students. At the time of the completion of the survey in 1999, the school did not yet have a Year 12 cohort (the first Year 12 cohort was enrolled in 2000), but enrolments in Years 8-11 totalled 1467. Current enrolments in Years 8-12 stand at 1783. All students
in Year 8 study Japanese, German or French for the full year, the choice of language dependent on the LOTE studied at primary school. All feeder primary schools offered Japanese to their students, one offered French and another German, resulting in the majority of students at Southwood studying Japanese in Year 8. At the end of Year 8, the students are given the opportunity to decide whether they wish to continue to study a LOTE.

At the time of the survey, all three languages were offered to students in Years 9-11 at Southwood High School, although due to only a small number of students electing to study French in Year 9 that year, the subject was not offered. Due to declining numbers, the administration at Southwood has since decided not to offer French as an elective any longer.

In the year of the survey, 328 students in Years 9-11 were studying a LOTE, which constituted 30.9% of the total enrolments in those year levels at the school (see Figure 4.3). The following diagram displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

![Figure 4.3 Southwood SHS Data](image)

---

2.3.3 Westwood State High School

Westwood High School, which was established in 1990, is situated at the southern end of the Gold Coast, and, like Southwood and Northwood, has a student body comprising a range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Most of the school’s students completed their primary education at one of the two local primary schools. At the time of the survey, total enrolments were 1069 students, while current
enrolment is 1084. All Year 8 students are required to study LOTE for the full year, although it is not compulsory for them to study the same LOTE in each term. Westwood High School operates a Vertical Unitised Timetable, which means that students choose to study units of subjects from Semester Two of Year 8 through to the end of Year 10. All students are required to complete two units (terms) of LOTE study in Semester Two of Year 8, in order to fulfil the requirements of Education Queensland’s compulsory LOTE program. Students may choose from Japanese or German, the two languages that are taught in the school’s feeder primary schools. Students in Years 11 and 12 are not able to study German at the school, although they may choose to enrol in Education Queensland’s correspondence course. In the year of the survey, 93 students in Years 9-12 at Westwood High School were studying a LOTE, which constituted 10.4% of the total enrolments in those year levels at the school (see Figure 4.4). The following diagram displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

![Figure 4.4 Westwood SHS Data](image)

2.4 Gaining Entry to the Research Sites

Lofland et al. (2005, p. 25) claim that “gaining entry to a setting or getting permission to do an interview is greatly expedited if you have ‘connections’”. This was certainly true in my case. As a student, I attended Northwood High School for five years, from 1986 to 1990. As a student teacher, I completed two teaching practicums at the school in 1993, then in 1995 and 1996, I was employed by Education Queensland to teach at Northwood High School. Consequently, I was well known to both the
Although I was required to seek the approval of Education Queensland to conduct my research at Northwood High School, my eleven year involvement with the school greatly contributed to the ease with which I gained entry. This proved to be particularly advantageous when the scope of this research project was altered due to administrative difficulties encountered in gaining enrolment figures for schools across Queensland, as it helped to allow me to use my professional contacts to ensure the progress of my research.

Access to Southwood High School was also facilitated through contacts that I had established during my time as a teacher at Northwood High School. A member of the middle-management team at the school had been the Head of the LOTE Department at Northwood High during my first year there, and her support for my application to conduct research undoubtedly contributed to its approval. While I did not know any staff members at Westwood personally, I was fortunate to be able to draw on the support of mutual acquaintances who were kind enough to recommend me to the administrators at the school.

I must highlight at this stage that once I had gained entry to the three schools described above, I received nothing but support and cooperation from all of the staff members with whom I came into contact. Such high levels of cooperation helped to facilitate the task of collecting data for this thesis.

2.5 Selection of Participants

The selection of student participants for this phase of the study was a two stage process. The first stage involved the administration of the survey described previously. At each of the three schools, students were involved in a fifteen-minute ‘Form Period’, during which rolls are marked and notices are read to the students. The majority of the surveys were completed during this session (variations to this procedure will be discussed presently). Conducting the surveys in this manner was designed to ensure that there was a high level of return, although in some instances, this was not always the case. At each of the schools, I collected the completed surveys shortly after the end of the Form Period, and immediately began the task of examining them to determine which students would be selected for interview.
2.5.1 Northwood High School

All but one class of students at Northwood High School completed the survey (the teacher of this group chose not to distribute the surveys to his class). Of the total population of 864 students in Years 9-12, 683 participated in this component of the study, which constitutes 79% return. Figure 4.5 displays the proportion of students in each year level who responded to the survey.

![Figure 4.5 Northwood SHS Response Rates]

Figure 4.5 Northwood SHS Response Rates

Of the 683 students surveyed at Northwood High, 101 indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences with LOTE at school. Stage Two of the informant selection process involved sending letters home to the parents of those students who had agreed to be interviewed, requesting permission to interview their children. In order to maximise the potential number of interviewees, all students who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed were sent letters. Of the 101 students who had agreed to be involved in the research process, permission was granted by the parents of 42 of them to be interviewed. The final composition of interviewees from Northwood High is represented in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1 Composition of Northwood High Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>Not Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 19 students in Year 10 had indicated a willingness to be interviewed, only three were granted permission by their parents to attend an interview session (16 permission notes remained outstanding, in spite of repeated attempts to obtain them from the students involved). Several attempts to secure interviews with other students from that year level proved to be unsuccessful.

2.5.2 Southwood High School

Of the total population of 1062 students in Years 9-11 at Southwood High, 866 responded to the survey, which constitutes 81.5% return. Figure 4.6 displays the proportion of students in each year level who responded to the survey.

![Figure 4.6 Southwood SHS Response Rates](image)

Figure 4.6 Southwood SHS Response Rates
Of the 866 students surveyed at Southwood High, 240 indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences with LOTE at school. Permission letters (printed on Griffith University letterhead, at the school’s request) were sent home to the parents of 40 students per year level (approximately equal numbers of students currently studying a LOTE and those not currently studying a LOTE). In spite of the high interest expressed by the students in participating in interviews, the response rate for these letters was poor. Additional letters sent home to the remainder of the students who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed were successful in obtaining several more participants. Of the 240 students who had agreed to be interviewed, permission was granted by the parents of 37 of them to be interviewed. The final composition of interviewees from Southwood High is represented in Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>Not Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.3 Westwood High School

Implementation of the survey at Westwood High proved to be problematic. The most significant problem was the very high absenteeism experienced by the school on the morning of the implementation of the survey (approximately 35%). In addition, an extraordinary assembly was called for Year 12 students, which left only five minutes for students in that year level to complete the survey. Consequently, most Year 12 teachers chose not to distribute the surveys to their students. Upon consultation with the school’s principal, it was decided to distribute the surveys during another session to students in Year 12 and to several classes in Year 11 whose teachers had chosen not to distribute the survey. It was considered to be too disruptive to the school’s routine to attempt to redistribute the survey to students in all year levels in an effort to improve return rates. In spite of the support of the school’s administration, the return rate from Year 12 students remained low after the second distribution.
Of the total population of 877 students in Years 9-12 at Westwood High, 481 responded to the survey, which constitutes 54.8% return. Figure 4.7 displays the proportion of students in each year level who responded to the survey.

![Bar chart showing response rates by year level](chart.png)

Figure 4.7 Westwood SHS Response Rates

Of the 481 students surveyed at Westwood High, 69 indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences with LOTE at school. Permission letters were sent home on school letterhead (at the school’s request) to the parents of all 69 students, but only 15 received affirmative responses. Attempts to obtain additional participants were not successful. The final composition of interviewees from Westwood High is represented in Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>Not Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In total, interviews were conducted with 94 students across three schools. The final composition of interviews is represented in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 Composition of all participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>Not Studying a LOTE</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Conducting Interviews

At each school, students participated in focused small group interviews, which assisted in the structuring of a second survey component for a selected sample. With two exceptions, all participants were interviewed with students of the same year level (the small number of interviewees at Westwood High School necessitated the combination of students from different year levels in order to conduct group interviews). Within these groupings, the students were further divided into two distinct groups - those who were currently studying a LOTE and those who were not. Where possible, students were further grouped according to their past achievements in LOTE subjects. Those who were not currently studying a LOTE were categorised according to their achievement in the most recent LOTE that they studied, while those who were currently studying a LOTE were categorised according to their most recent result (i.e., their Semester One report, as all interviews took place in Semester Two). Where numbers allowed, interview groups were mixed, with at least two boys and two girls in the group. The smallest group interviewed contained two students, while the largest contained five. The majority of the groups consisted of four members.

The students were grouped in the manner described above on the basis of research supporting the notion that small group interviews are most effective when the members of the group are relatively homogeneous (Krathwohl, 1993). Furthermore, research indicates that “too much diversity causes some persons to withdraw” (Krathwohl, 1993:371). Having made the decision to conduct group interviews on the premise that this would make the students feel more comfortable about being
interviewed, I did not want to counteract this effect by grouping the students in a manner that would cause them to feel uncomfortable.

Each school had different requirements concerning the timing of their students’ interviews. At Northwood High, the deputy principal allowed me to interview Year 11 and 12 students during their weekly spare lesson, while students in Years 9 and 10 were interviewed at lunch time. Interviews were conducted in the school library and one of the LOTE classrooms. At Southwood High, all students were interviewed during their lunch break in a conference room located in the administration building of the school. At Westwood High, students were interviewed at the school library. At the principal’s suggestion, students in Years 9 and 10 were interviewed during class time, while students in Years 11 and 12 were interviewed during the weekly assembly. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for the purposes of analysis. Students were informed in advance of the sessions that the interviews would be recorded, and none objected to this process. The students were also told that they would have access to all transcripts if they were interested, and the confidentiality of their comments was assured. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the group and how much the students had to say.

Overall, I did not experience any problems in interviewing students at any of the schools. Each student was given a letter informing them of their interview time, and reminders were replaced in the school’s daily notices for each student on both the day before the interview and the day of the interview. This served to ensure that all but five interviewees attended their scheduled interview. Fortunately, it was possible to reschedule interviews with all five students for a different day with a different group of the same LOTE status (currently studying or not studying) and year level.

2.7 Construction of Survey Two

At the conclusion of the interview phase of data collection, each of the interviews was transcribed, in order to allow the completion of a “content analysis” of the data (Silverman, 2001, p. 12). During a content analysis, categories relevant to the topic of the research are established, then the interview transcripts are examined to determine how often each category occurs within the text. The ultimate goal of this form of analysis was to identify recurring themes within the students’ discourse, which would then inform the construction of the second survey instrument in accordance with the requirements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Appendix Two). As discussed in
Chapter Three, the Theory of Planned Behaviour consists of three components – attitude towards the behaviour (i.e., LOTE study), subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Consequently, these were the three main categories used to examine and analyse the content of the interview data. It is important to note that the themes identified in the data may well have arisen due to what the students thought that I (as the interviewer) expected. Furthermore, the questions asked during interviews will inevitably convey to the students what the interviewer considers important in terms of the content and the themes. While qualitative research does seek to understand and describe social phenomena from the point of view of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), this ‘point of view’ is not necessarily fixed and will inevitably be shaped by the context of the interview, including influence from the interviewer, the topics chosen by the interviewer and the students’ own expectations and understandings of the purpose of the interview.

Each transcript was examined and comments relating to each of the three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour were noted. At the conclusion of the analysis, the resulting notes were further examined to identify the recurring themes within the data. Comments relating to how students felt about LOTE study and what effect they believed that studying a LOTE would have were used to develop questions in the category of ‘Attitude Towards the Behaviour’. Comments relating to groups of people whom the students consulted when selecting their school subjects (e.g., parents and teachers) informed the development of questions in the category of ‘Subjective Norms’, while comments relating to issues such as timetable constraints guided the development of ‘Perceived Behavioural Control’ questions.

One of the purposes of the Theory of Planned behaviour is to attempt to explain the choices that people make. While survey questions relating to ‘Attitude Towards the Behaviour’ may identify aspects concerning how students indicate that they feel about LOTE study, additional information is required in order to determine the extent to which these feelings and beliefs guide the choices that students make. To this end, each question relating to students’ attitudes towards studying a LOTE is accompanied by a question designed to evaluate the relative importance of that attitude to the student. For example, Q14 requires students to identify on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree with the following statement – “Studying LOTE is interesting”. This identifies how students indicate that they feel about studying LOTE, but it does not indicate whether studying interesting subjects is an important issue to the student, hence
the need for Q15 – “How important is it to you that the subjects you study are interesting?” The data obtained from this question allow for a judgement to be made concerning the relative importance placed on this reason for studying a LOTE by the students when making their subject choices.

Questions relating to Subjective Norms were also accompanied by a question designed to identify the relative importance placed on that Subjective Norm by the respondents. For example, Q44 – “My parents think that I should study LOTE” is accompanied by Q45 – “In general, how much do you care about what your parents think you should do?” The responses to these two questions make it possible to consider how much of an influence parental attitude towards LOTE study was perceived by the students to have over their subject choices.

In addition to questions relating specifically to the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Survey Two also contained questions designed to collect background data concerning the respondents’ experiences with LOTE study. As with the initial survey (Appendix 1), a main function of this section of Survey Two was to identify which students were currently studying a LOTE and which were not, and which languages the students had studied. The purpose of this was to provide background information on the students who were participating in this phase of the research study. These data are presented descriptively in Chapter Six.

2.8 Selection of the Research Sites for Survey Two

Once Survey Two had been constructed, it was necessary to select the schools in which it would be implemented. As noted previously, problems encountered whilst obtaining whole State enrolment figures in LOTE subjects from Education Queensland made it necessary to reduce the scope of the initial survey and the resulting interviews, so that rather than selecting research sites across the State, as originally intended, only schools in the Gold Coast region were able to be surveyed. In early 2000, detailed enrolment figures for the 1999 school year were obtained. The data were analysed and a rank-ordered list of schools according to the proportion of students studying a LOTE in Years 9-12 was produced. Similar analyses were conducted on data from 1996 and 1997, so that enrolment trends in each school could be established (data from 1998 were not available – according to Education Queensland, some data were collected but they were not valid or reliable, so I was not given access to them). A final list combining
data from 1996, 1997 and 1999 was compiled and it was from this rank ordering that the research sites for the implementation of Survey Two were chosen.

The next step in the selection process involved dividing the rank ordered list of schools into three sections - top, middle and bottom thirds, in terms of the proportion of students in Years 9-12 choosing to study a LOTE. This was completed so that it would be possible to select schools representing the full range of LOTE enrolments (i.e., ranging from schools in which LOTE subjects were studied by relatively large proportions of students to schools in which relatively few students chose to study a LOTE). Four schools from each section were then selected, providing a list of 12 potential research sites. From each section, I chose two schools from South-East QLD (the most densely populated area of the State), one from a major regional centre (generally coastal), and one from rural QLD, in order to ensure that students from a range of regional backgrounds were surveyed. Table 4.5 presents a profile of the schools originally selected for this stage of the data collection:

Table 4.5 Profile of Original Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of school</th>
<th>Enrolments (9-12)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Proportion Choosing LOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Third:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>Major Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Third:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>Major Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School H</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bottom Third:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School I</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1143</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>South East QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>Rural Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School L</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>Major Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Potential Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td>7876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Letters were sent to each of the schools identified above, asking principals to consider allowing their students to be surveyed. In spite of repeated attempts to contact all of the principals by mail, fax, email and telephone, of the twelve schools contacted, only six responded to my request. The principals at three schools said that while they supported my research and acknowledged the need to examine why students choose to study LOTE subjects, they felt that there was not enough time in their schools’ schedules to allow for the distribution of the surveys. School A responded favourably one day after my request was sent, while School L responded favourably within one week. School D also responded favourably. As was the case with my gaining access to research sites on the Gold Coast, contacts that I had made many years prior to the commencement of my research studies assisted the progress of this study.

Although the original intention was to survey a very large group of students, it was decided that the potential sample size of 1654 at the three schools whose principals had granted permission to administer the survey was sufficient to ensure that the results of the survey were statistically valid, so the participation of additional schools was not sought. Below is a description of each of the schools in which Survey Two was administered. For the purposes of this study, the schools will be referred to as ‘Coastal State High School’, ‘City State High School’ and ‘Western State High School’.

2.8.1 Coastal State High School

Established in 1961, Coastal State High School is a medium-sized school located in a regional centre with a population of approximately 9000 on the northern Queensland coast. As the major high school in the area, the school draws its student population from a community comprising families from a range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, although according to the school’s annual report, a significant number of students are from single-parent families of low socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, approximately 18% of the school’s students identify themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. Most of the pupils at the school completed their primary education at one of the four local primary schools. At the time of the survey, enrolments stood at 630, although enrolments have declined slowly since then to the current figure of 573. Since 1999, all Year 8 students have been required to study Japanese, which is also offered as an elective subject to students in Years 9 and 10 through the Queensland Studies Authority’s Virtual Schooling program, an initiative which allows students to study subjects not offered at
their school through the use of technology (in particular, computers and the Internet). Students in Years 11 and 12 may choose to study Japanese via correspondence. Prior to 1999, French was studied by all Year 8 students, although it was phased out due to low enrolment numbers in Years 9-12. The school’s English Head of Department is also responsible for overseeing LOTE programs at the school.

In the year of the survey, 24 students in Years 9-12 at Coastal State High School were studying a LOTE, which constituted 5.1% of the total enrolments in those year levels at the school. No students in Year 10 or Year 12 had chosen to study a LOTE that year, even though all were given the opportunity to do so. Figure 4.8 displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

![Figure 4.8 Proportions of Coastal SHS Students learning LOTE](image)

As discussed previously, the language or languages offered by schools to students in Year 8 can influence their decision to continue or to discontinue to study LOTE. Enrolment trends in LOTE subjects at Coastal State High School for the year 2000 cohorts were examined for Years 9 and 11 (there were no students studying a LOTE in Years 10 or 12 at Coastal SHS in 2000). At the time of the survey, all students at the school had been required to study French in Year 8. Japanese was offered to students through Education Queensland’s Virtual Schooling program, and was the language of choice of 43% of LOTE students in Year 11 in 2000, while the remaining 57% continued to study French. In contrast, none of the Year 9 cohort of 2000 elected to study French, with all students who had opted to continue to study a LOTE choosing
to enrol in Japanese (through the Virtual Schooling program). Given the apparent lack of interest in the study of French by students at Coastal State High School, the school’s decision to engage their Year 8 students in the study of Japanese rather than French from 2000 is not surprising.

2.8.2 City State High School

City State High School is a large school servicing approximately six suburbs in Brisbane. Established in 1974, the school draws its population from a broad cross-section of society and includes students from a wide range of socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. According to the school’s prospectus, over thirty different languages are spoken in the students’ homes. Most of the pupils at the school completed their primary education at one of ten local primary schools. At the time of the survey, enrolments stood at 1280, although enrolments have increased steadily since then and currently stand at 1400. Students in Year 8 choose to study either Japanese or French, depending on the language studied at primary school, and experienced French students are able to enrol in the school’s French Immersion Program\(^1\), in which students study a number of subjects in French (e.g., Mathematics and Science). French, Japanese and Immersion French are offered through to Year 10, while students in Years 11 and 12 may choose to study either language. Year 12 students are also given the option of studying Extension French in Year 12. The school has a very active exchange program with schools in France, Noumea and Japan, and exchanges are conducted regularly. The LOTE Head of Department is responsible for overseeing all activities and programs relating to languages in the school.

In the year of the survey, 264 students in Years 9-12 at City State High School were studying a LOTE, which constituted 26.5% of the total enrolments in those year levels at the school. Figure 4.9 displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

\(^1\) City SHS is one of the few schools in Queensland to offer an immersion language program.
An examination of retention rates in LOTE subjects at City State High School in the year 2000 cohorts revealed that in general, the proportion of students choosing to continue to study Japanese after Year 8 was greater than the proportion of students choosing to study French. In 1999, Japanese was studied by 46% of Year 8 students at City State High School, while French was studied by 54%. In 2000, when that cohort of students reached Year 9, Japanese had increased its share to 49% of the enrolments in LOTE subjects. A larger increase occurred in the Year 8 cohort of 1997, when Japanese accounted for 43% of the enrolment in LOTE subjects and French accounted for 57%. When that cohort reached Year 11 in 2000, the proportions had changed to 66% Japanese and 34% French, indicating clearly that this particular cohort favoured Japanese over French. An exception to this trend was observed in the Year 8 cohort of 1996. While 77% of this cohort studied Japanese and 23% studied French, a greater proportion of students chose to study French through to Year 12 in 2000, when the proportions had changed to 40% French and 60% Japanese. Unfortunately, enrolment data for 1998 were unavailable, so it is not possible to examine the enrolment patterns of the Yr 8 cohort of that year.
2.8.3 Western State High School

Established in 1978, Western State High school is a small school situated in a town of approximately 2500 in the mid-west of the State, drawing its students from a number of small communities in the surrounding area. Most of the school’s students come from families working in the field of agriculture, and complete their primary education at one of seven small feeder schools. Students are required to study French in Year 8 and are given the opportunity to continue to study it through to Year 12. At the time of the survey, the school’s enrolment stood at 206, although enrolments have been slowly dropping for the past seven years, reaching a current figure of 175. The school’s deputy principal was also the French teacher and was very supportive of the place of languages in her school’s curriculum.

In the year of the survey, 25 students in Years 9-12 were studying a LOTE, which constituted 16.6% of enrolments in those year levels. Figure 4.10 displays the proportion of students in each year level studying LOTE subjects in the year of the survey.

![Figure 4.10 Proportion of Western SHS students studying LOTE](image)

Analyses of retention rates in LOTE subjects at Western State High School were not conducted, as French is the only language offered at the school, thus making such analyses unnecessary.
2.9 Response Rates

The surveys were administered in all three schools in Term Four of 2000. A total of 1259 surveys were completed by the students at Coastal, City and Western State High Schools. The gender breakdown of respondents from each school is represented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Gender Breakdown of Respondents from Each School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City SHS</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>65.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal SHS</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>28.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western SHS</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>1259</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once completed, the surveys were posted back by the teacher responsible for their administration at each of the three schools. A coding manual was developed so that the data from each survey could be analysed by the statistics package, SPSS. The coding was performed by seven undergraduate students from Griffith University, and their data entry work was checked by selecting a sample of ten percent of their entries and verifying the accuracy of the coding. Reliability among the coders was averaged at 97%. Before analysis was conducted using SPSS, the data were checked to ensure that entries were accurate (for example, that digits had not been entered twice, resulting in an entry of ‘44’ rather than ‘4’ etc.), so as to reduce the possibility of errors occurring during the analyses.

Once the accuracy of the data had been verified, all data were analysed using SPSS. The analysis of the quantitative data collected in this phase of the study consisted of four phases. Initially, they were analysed descriptively on a question by question basis. Next, a factor analysis was conducted, which yielded five factors as emerging from the data set. Thirdly, a second order factor analysis of the five identified factors was conducted to identify any clusters that existed among the factors. Finally, a multiple regression analysis using the five factors as discriminating variables for the two groups studied (students who had chosen to study a LOTE after Year 8 and those who had chosen not to study a LOTE after Year 8) was conducted. The analyses will
then be discussed with reference to Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (as outlined in Chapter Three).

In this chapter, the methods used to collect and analyse the data for this study have been outlined. In Chapter Five, the qualitative data collected in Phase Four of the research process will be presented and discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE

Results and Discussion of the Qualitative Phase

In this chapter, the findings of the major qualitative phase of this study are reported and discussed. As discussed in Chapter Four, the aim of qualitative research is to attempt to “gather an ‘authentic’ understanding of people’s experiences” (Silverman, 2001, p. 13), including an understanding of how social reality is perceived and constructed by the members of a particular group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis provide the researcher with ways of examining, comparing, contrasting and interpreting meaningful patterns in data, thus making them the most appropriate for use in this study, which seeks to explore and understand the factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE subjects as electives.

The qualitative data used in this study were collected through the interviewing of 94 students in Years 9-12 at three secondary schools located on the Gold Coast (see Chapter Four for a detailed description of this process). I completed the task of transcribing each interview myself and a colleague checked the accuracy of my work by listening to the interviews and reading the transcripts. Any variations were checked and corrected. This colleague had no connection to any of the schools involved in my study and did not know any of the participants. At no stage during this process were the real names of the student participants revealed to anyone else.

After the accuracy of the interview transcripts had been verified, each transcript was examined and considered in relation to each of the three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. It will be recalled that this study is largely informed by this theory, which was developed by Ajzen and Fishbein between 1980 and 1988. As outlined in Chapter Three, in the context of this study, the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour are:

- Students’ attitudes towards LOTE study
- Students’ subjective norms (i.e., the extent to which they feel societal pressure to study or not to study a LOTE)
- Students’ perceived behavioural control (i.e., the extent to which they believe that they are able or unable to choose to study a LOTE).
According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the three components outlined above can be used to identify and understand the determinants of people’s behaviour. As the main aim of the qualitative phase of this study was to inform the construction of a survey instrument which followed the principles of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the analysis of the qualitative data was guided by these principles. Accordingly, the categories generated during the analysis of the data related to one (or more) of the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

At the conclusion of the initial analysis of the qualitative data, the transcripts were further examined to identify the recurring themes within the data and to explore how these related to the categories within the Theory of Planned Behaviour and to develop items for the survey instrument (see below for additional discussion of this process). Comments relating to how students felt about LOTE study and what effect they believed that studying a LOTE would have were used to develop questions in the category of ‘Attitudes Towards the Behaviour’ (where ‘the behaviour’ in the context of this study is choosing to study a LOTE). Comments relating to groups of people whom the students considered when selecting their school subjects (e.g., parents and teachers) informed the development of questions in the category of ‘Subjective Norms’, while comments relating to issues such as timetable constraints guided the development of ‘Perceived Behavioural Control’ questions. The major themes identified in the interview transcripts will be presented below, and illustrated with a selection of the students’ comments.

1. Thematic analysis

As outlined in Chapter Four, interviews were conducted in groups of four to five students in various locations at each of the three schools selected as research sites. Each of the interviews was audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher. The data derived from the interviews were analysed according to the constant comparison method introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and expanded by Lincoln and Guba (1985) (see also Silverman, 2001). This analysis involves the coding of data in order to generate categories, with the constant comparison of units of data in order to reveal similarities, differences, patterns and consistencies of meaning that identified themes. Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 32) highlight the advantages of using such a system of analysis in qualitative research, stating:
Codes are organising principles that are not set in stone. They are our own creation, in that we identify and select them ourselves. They are tools we think with. They can be expanded, changed or scrapped altogether as our ideas develop through repeated interactions with the data. Starting to create categories is a way of beginning to read and think about the data in a systematic and organised way.

Initially, categories were derived from the questions asked during the interviews and covered such areas as what the students liked/disliked about learning a language, whose advice they sought when choosing their subjects, how languages related to their future plans and their feelings towards studying languages in general. Further coding and analysis of the data resulted in the identification and development of additional conceptual categories and themes. In accordance with Lincoln and Guba’s 1985 guidelines of the constant comparative method of data analysis, as each student comment was coded into a category, it was compared to all other coded comments and subsequently categorised with similar comments or, if no similar comments had been identified, formed into new categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The categories generated during this analysis of the data revealed that each of the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour was evident in the categories. Having established this, the categories were then grouped according to the component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to which they related (see Table 5.1) and final themes were then developed. There was a strong presence of all three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour revealed during the data analysis, which is significant in that it allows the theory to be used to discuss and understand the themes that emerged from the data, thus providing a framework for the interpretation of the data.
Table 5.1 Initial Themes Emerging From Qualitative Data Analysis and their Relationship to the Theory of Planned Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Thematic Categories</th>
<th>Component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future LOTE study</td>
<td>Future Orientation – plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future employment plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Enjoyment of LOTE Study</td>
<td>Enjoyment of Language Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyed studying LOTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not enjoy studying LOTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived difficulty of the LOTE studied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Achievements</td>
<td>Historical orientation – past achievements</td>
<td>Students’ Attitude Towards LOTE Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived good grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraged continued LOTE study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived poor grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discouraged continued LOTE study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of teaching practices on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment of the subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of LOTE by teacher at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in learning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>designed by teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated to study the subject by teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement received from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers – discussed subject choices with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers recommended/advised</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against continued LOTE study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents – discussed subject choices with</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Students’ Subjective Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were supportive of decision to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study LOTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were not supportive of LOTE study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends – discussed subject choices with</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends were supportive of choices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends tried to discourage them from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studying LOTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School timetabling constraints</td>
<td>School administrative arrangements</td>
<td>Students’ Perceived Behavioural Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred language not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, students said that they tend to study languages because they enjoy them and they perceive them to be helpful in gaining employment. Students who decide not to study languages do so for a variety of reasons, ranging from lack of interest in languages, to not considering them to be of relevance to their future careers. All of the
above reasons relate to the Theory of Planned Behaviour category of Students’ Attitude Towards the Behaviour (i.e., LOTE study). Many students also claimed that the teacher played a significant role in their decision not to study a language (which relates to the Theory of Planned Behaviour category of Subjective Norms), as did their own performance in prior LOTE studies. Each of these issues is elaborated below.

This discussion of the interview data is organised around the thematic categories identified in Table 5.1 above, namely: future orientation – plans; enjoyment of language study; historical orientation – past achievements; engaging with teaching; the influence of teachers, parents and friends; school administrative arrangements, and the influence of gender. These issues were chosen following the constant comparison analysis described above, during which they emerged as the overriding themes evident in the data. These themes also relate to the questions asked during the interviews (See Appendix 3), with the exception of gender, which was raised in many interviews as an additional question in response to observations made by students concerning the number of boys and girls choosing to study LOTE subjects. According to Ajzen and Fishbein, gender has an influence on all components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and, as such, it will be discussed at the end of this chapter, after discussion relating to the other components of the theory.

As previously indicated, for interview purposes, students were grouped according to whether or not they were currently studying a LOTE. Depending on which group the students belonged to, they were asked one of two questions: “Why did you decide to study a language this year?” or “Why did you decide not to study a language this year?” The majority of the students’ comments could be categorised as:

- Future orientation – plans
- Enjoyment of language study
- Historical orientation – past achievements
- Engaging with teaching

Data presented in the following analyses exemplify these categories of responses.

2. **Students’ Attitudes toward LOTE study**

2.1 *Future Orientation – Plans*

Both students who were studying a LOTE and those who had chosen not to study a LOTE made reference during their interviews to taking into consideration their career options and future plans when making decisions concerning language study.
Many students indicated that studying a LOTE would help them to gain employment in the future, or that it would be relevant to their intended careers, while other students claimed that knowledge of a LOTE would not be beneficial to them in the future. This utilitarian approach to subject selection was adopted by many students and is reflected in the following comments. The first two comments were made by students who had chosen not to study a LOTE after Year Eight.

Leah: There were other subjects that I preferred, and I didn’t think it was going to help with my career and things like that.

Charlotte: ‘Cause it didn’t have anything to do with the career that I want to do. It wasn’t relevant for me, basically.

For some students, the utilitarian stance that they adopt is more broadly conceived than just job prospects. In their future plans, Sara and Ryan do include employment opportunities, but also mention other reasons for their choice such as quality of life and academic pursuits.

Sara: I’m doing Italian and Japanese ‘cause I thought it would be a good opportunity for later in life and that, if I want a job or something. I thought it would be useful to be able to do two languages other than English.

Ryan: My family’s European, and my grandfather said that it does help to have a second language, or a third, to help you with your schoolwork and everything. So, just about the job prospects and everything.

Eric, Mark and Karen refer to careers in general and indicate that although they may not have decided which career path they would like to follow, they consider knowing another language will ‘help’ them in a future career.

Eric: I just wanted to know another language. It helps when we get a job or something - it helps a lot.

Mark: It helps when you get a job. That’s the main reason, and with Japanese, you need Japanese a lot now for a job.

Karen: I’m mainly doing Italian so that it’ll help me get a job.
Several students made specific reference to their geographical context and related employment opportunities. Anna and Carley suggest that living on the Gold Coast as a reason for choosing to study languages, explaining that language study would be useful, given that the city attracts large numbers of tourists from overseas each year.

Anna: If you do languages, you have a better chance for a job. Like in Surfers they’ve got all different people coming from different countries and you’d have a better chance of getting a job if you knew a language.

Carley: I did well in Year 8 and I was thinking of my future, and thinking about getting a good job with Japanese, especially on the Coast.

Other students made quite explicit links between the choice to study LOTE and an identified career path. These students discussed particular fields and careers that they were interested in pursuing, such as tourism (for example, working as flight attendants), law and interpreting services. A knowledge of LOTE was considered as useful for these careers, as evidenced in the following comments:

Lauren: I want to get into the travel industry and do something like that. My mum’s French-born and so there’s that interest, too. She helps me with my French and that makes a difference, too.

Dee: Um...I reckon it’s going to help me later on, because I want to work in the law area, so I’d like to be able to speak another language. I think that will help me out. I mean, I enjoy the subject – it’s not like it’s something that I don’t like doing, but yeah, I think it will help me in the future.

Amy: I just wanted to. I dunno, I guess, for jobs. ‘Cause they want languages and stuff, ‘cause I wanna be an air hostess and they need languages and that.

Alex: I want to become an interpreter when I leave school, so I want to know a few languages and broaden my horizons.

Juliette: Well for my interest in being an air hostess...I need about three languages to do that, and I’ll have English, Japanese and German, so there’s my three.

Many studies claim that the perceived “job-relatedness” of a subject is an important factor in subject choice (Woods, 1990; Ainley et al., 1990; Connell, 2003). The student comments outlined above appear to support these assertions, since they reveal that many students who are studying a LOTE claim that they had chosen to do so.
because they believe that knowing other languages will help them to find a job once they leave school, while others indicated that their belief that other languages would not be relevant to their future careers influenced them not to study a LOTE. These findings are not surprising, given that one of the stated justifications for the widespread expansion of LOTE programs in both primary and secondary schooling is the economic benefit to be gained by engaging students in language study (see, for example, Braddy, 1991, and MCEETYA, 2005). This perspective appears to have been unproblematically taken up and re-asserted by many of the students who participated in this study.

2.2 Enjoyment of language study

Enjoyment was another theme that emerged when students discussed how their interest or disinterest in learning languages influenced their subject choices. The enjoyment associated with studying LOTE was mentioned frequently by those who had chosen to study a language beyond Year Eight. In order to further explore the students’ comments on this particular theme, a transitivity analysis was undertaken of the clauses that relate to the students’ interest/enjoyment and attitudes towards languages. This kind of analysis reveals the way language users manipulate language to represent their perceptions of reality (cf. Bloor & Bloor, 1995, pp. 107-109). What is of interest in this analysis is whether the enjoyment and/or interest, or lack thereof, is identified as an attribute of the language or of the learner. In the following, students talk about their enjoyment of the language:

Bridget: I really enjoyed it.

Kim: Because it’s interesting and fun.

Rachel: Yeah, I enjoy it, so that’s why I chose to do it.

Dean: I just saw Japanese on the list and I just ticked it! I didn’t really think about it – I don’t know why! I’m not regretting it or anything, though! It’s something different to do and I enjoy it.

Jane: I like it, it’s fun! I like learning about the culture and the different symbols they use and things like that.

Karen: Oh, I enjoyed it and I had good Japanese teachers, so they made it more fun. Um…also it was just one of the subjects that I enjoyed and I wanted to do something other than just maths and science – I wanted something from every area, so I chose Japanese.
Anita: I just enjoyed it. We used to play lots of learning games and stuff, and I think you learn more by playing games.

The following comments were made by students who had chosen not to study a LOTE.

Fiona: I just didn’t think I needed to go on with it. I didn’t like it much. It was pretty boring.

Dylan: I didn’t really want to do it ‘cause I just didn’t really like the subject. I don’t like languages and stuff like that, so I didn’t wanna carry them on into Year 9.

Wes: Oh, I just didn’t enjoy it as much as some of my other subjects, and I thought ‘Well, I may as well go with what I enjoy’.

Andrew: I just didn’t enjoy it.

Tahli: Um…because there were other subjects that I was more interested in. I didn’t really think about whether I’d do well in it. I mean, I got really good marks and everything, but it just didn’t interest me.

Brent: Er…I just decided that I couldn’t stand it any more, and I really wanted to focus on my computer studies.

What becomes apparent from the analysis of these comments is that students who choose to continue with their LOTE studies attribute their choice to a positive attitude towards the language as well as themselves as learners (e.g., the language is interesting, liking the language). Although some students who chose not to continue with their LOTE study attribute this to the language (e.g., “it was boring”), mostly they attributed their choice to discontinue their studies to themselves (e.g., “I didn’t like the language”, “I just didn’t think I needed to go on with it”). Indeed, the second comment (“it didn’t interest me”) is not a general statement about the language (e.g., “it’s not interesting”), but rather relates back to the individual learner.

That students interviewed chose to study or not to study a LOTE because they indicated that they liked or disliked the subject is not surprising, given that all of the previous studies examined in Chapter Two identified this as one of the key factors influencing students’ involvement in elective LOTE study (see, for example, Fairbairn
Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1992; Djite, 1994; Carr, 2002; Hajdu, 2005). Reasons given by students in previous studies included “I found the language interesting”, “I found the subject boring” and “I thought it was uninteresting” (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983, p. 11), “I didn’t like it or find it interesting” (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, Victoria 1987, p. 9 cited in Nicholas et al., 1993, p. 173), “I do not like languages” and “I like studying languages” (Djite, 1994, p. 151). All of these reasons were also mentioned by the students in the current study. The above analysis provides a further layer in understanding the ways in which these learners construct their social realities.

2.2.1 Difficulties in studying languages

For many students, perceived difficulties involving the study of LOTE influenced their decision to discontinue studying languages. Many of the students in the group asserted that the language that they were studying was “too hard”. A number of students felt that language subjects were too difficult for them or that they were unable to achieve grades that they considered to be good. To further explore this issue, a transitivity analysis was conducted on the students’ comments, focusing on the students’ perceptions of ‘the language’.

2.2.2 Difficulty of the language

Several students mentioned that the languages that they were required to study at school were too difficult for them, as demonstrated by the comments below.

Marie: I didn’t do it this year ‘cause it’s boring and too hard.

Jacqui: Just ‘cause I found it too hard and I lost interest in it.

Laura: I was doing Japanese, and I found it getting difficult after Grade 9, and most of the stuff we did in Grade 10 was just recapping what we did in Grade 9. I thought that if I had the basics, I didn’t really need to extend it. Japanese isn’t really what I want to do.

Beau: Well…in Grade 5, I did Italian and I found that really easy. Then when I went on to do Japanese in Year 6 and 7, it was really hard. Then in Year 8, it was even harder, so I just chose not to do it.

In contrast to the previous transitivity analysis, in which students attributed their negative attitude to LOTE study to themselves (e.g., “I didn’t like it”), these students did not attribute their perception of language study as being ‘difficult’ to themselves.
Rather, they made comments such as “Japanese was getting difficult” etc. For these students, it was the language that was difficult, not a lack of ability on their part.

2.3  *Historical Orientation – Past Achievements*

Many students who had chosen to continue to study LOTE claimed that part of the reason why they had done so was because they did not want to waste the years of language study that they had already completed. Both Jemma and Erin indicated that it would be “a waste” not to continue:

Jemma: I thought it would be a waste of time to drop it after so long. We had to do it for three years, and I just decided to keep doing it.

Erin: I’d been doing Italian for three years, and I thought it might be a bit of a waste if I dropped it.

Similarly, Jana and Tania pointed to their previous studies as a key determinant of their choice to continue studying LOTE:

Jana: Probably because I’ve already been doing it for five years…

Tania: Well I did it in Grade 5, and I just kept on going there. I just decided to stay with it because I was used to it.

Other reasons for continuing to study a language for some students also included a knowledge that their past success in the subject would help them to earn good grades; being able to communicate with native speakers of the language; the perception that the subject was quite easy, and interest in the topics to be studied and the cultural aspect of language study.

Carla: I think because I’d been doing it for so long, I just decided to keep on going. I know I can do it when I try. I know that if I try hard enough, I’ll actually achieve, so it's a subject where I know I can do well.

Georgia: Well I was getting good marks, so I thought I might as well continue on, because I’d already done it for four years, so there wasn’t much point in quitting after so long.

Nick: My marks encouraged me, and the fact that I’d been studying it for so long…
Andre: Doing so well in past years motivated me to keep going, and I’d been doing it for so long that it would be a shame to give it up.

Dean: Yeah, my marks helped me decide to go on, and plus I’ve been doing it since Grade 6, so, like what Andre said, it’d be a shame to waste all that knowledge.

It is interesting to note that none of the previous studies examined in Chapter Two indicated that a desire not to waste prior LOTE study was a motivating factor in students’ decision to continue to study a LOTE, although this may be because those studies were of a quantitative rather than a qualitative nature, thus limiting the range of responses from the students.

2.3.1 Past performance in LOTE studies

The role of achievement in making decisions about subject choice was identified in the previous section. The grades received in previous years of LOTE study by the students seemed to have a significant impact on their decision to study or not to study a LOTE in subsequent years. In general, good results in LOTE encouraged students to continue to study them in Year 9 and beyond, while results with which the students were not happy tended to discourage them from studying LOTE. It is important to note that when discussing the influence that their marks had on their decision to study a LOTE after Year 8, all students mentioned the actual levels of achievement they were given in LOTE, or referred to their grades as being ‘good’.

Alex: …getting good marks kind of keeps you going. If you get an E, then you’re not good at the subject, so why bother doing it and getting lower marks next year? I got a B, so I thought I might go on. I thought I’d do well at it again.

Lauren: ...it comes pretty naturally to me, too. I get mostly A’s, and that’s encouraged me to go on. My marks have given me the confidence to believe that I can cope with the other languages that I’ll be doing next year in the International Languages course. Year 11 French is supposed to be pretty hard, so I think it’s better that I’m going to be doing the broader course next year.

Phoebe: I did really well, so it wasn’t an issue. I think if you get good marks in something, you tend to sway that way, because you know that you’re capable of doing well in that subject, whereas if you choose something else, you don’t always know if you’re going to be good at it or not.
Many of the students who were studying a LOTE admitted that their marks in previous years had greatly influenced them to continue to study LOTE. However, in this analysis of the data, it emerges that good grades were not always a key determinant in students’ choices. Students who had also received high grades in Year 8 LOTE (or beyond, if they had continued to study languages), claimed that their marks hadn’t really motivated them to keep studying a LOTE, which suggests that other factors dissuaded them. Getting an ‘A’ in a LOTE subject did not motivate Angela, Mark or Leah to choose to continue with LOTE. Although Leah admitted that she can “sort of do this [French]”, she did not find it interesting enough to continue. This sentiment is echoed by Rhys: “No, I wouldn’t have gone on with it anyway. I did really well, but I just wasn’t interested in studying it any more.”

Despite the fact that students admitted that their high marks in Year 8 languages had made them consider continuing with them in Year 9, the competition between subjects at this important school juncture had led them to choose other subjects:

Curtis: I got a B in Japanese last year and yeah, it did make me think that I should do it again. I thought it would be a good idea, but the other subjects came up and I just chose them instead. In the end Japanese just didn’t grab me enough.

And, as Monica posits, although her ‘good’ grades are useful, “I just wanted to do other things more”.

Monica: Um…yeah, I got A’s, so that was pretty cool. They looked good on my report, and that looks good on my resume, so it works out all ‘round. I thought about it [continuing with Japanese], but no, in the end, I just wanted to do other things more.

While receiving high grades in Year 8 LOTE affected students in different ways, receiving lower grades, especially those that were considered by the students to represent failure\(^1\), seemed invariably to encourage students not to take a LOTE in subsequent grades. Carla states this quite clearly when she is asked if her marks in Japanese had been a deciding factor in her choice: “Well, I failed Japanese so yeah, they did”. In a similar vein, Derek answered, “If you get a bad mark you know you’re not good at it so you just don’t do it”. For Marie, a failing mark not only influenced her

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\(^1\) In general, a grade of C is considered to be an average grade, grades below C (e.g., D & E) are considered by students to represent failure, while grades above C (A & B) are considered to be ‘good’ or ‘high’ grades.
choice not to continue with LOTE, but coloured her whole attitude to her own ability to learn language:

Marie: I failed it so I wasn’t gonna do it again! I’m never gonna do languages, not next year or in Year 11. I just can’t do them!

A number of students indicated that had they received better results when they were studying LOTE, they would not have dropped the subject.

Charlotte: Yeah, I wasn’t good at it – I was just average. If I was a good at it, then of course I would have gone on with it.

Gabby: If we were on high Sounds or low Highs we would have kept on doing it, but getting an LA [Limited Achievement – the equivalent of a D grade] is just too far away from doing well.

For some students, receiving “only” a ‘C’ in LOTE encouraged them to work harder, so that they could boost their marks

Helen: Last year I only got a C, but I still really wanted to go over to Italy so I still wanted to keep going with learning about Italy and the language and that. I’ve boosted my marks up ’cos I know that I really want to do that now, so I’ve really tried harder.

Kylie: Um…in my first semester I got pretty bad – I got a D – but in my last semester, I got a C, and that made me want to improve that and go on to a B, so I thought I’d just give it a go again this year. I thought I could do it.

Rather than discouraging them from doing a subject in which she had an interest and which she enjoyed, not getting high marks encouraged Helen and Kylie to work harder in LOTE, with the result that they both succeeded in improving their overall grades.

Receiving acknowledgment and recognition of achievement, in a form other than a grade or a result on a report, motivated some students to continue with their LOTE studies (for example, receiving awards and performing well in external activities such as the Australian Language Certificates). However, the effect of these awards on students’ attitude towards LOTE study varied. For Leonie, achieving First Place in Italian motivated her to “keep working hard”, while receiving Merit Awards for two consecutive years for finishing in the ‘top five’ in her LOTE class motivated her to continue to study the language. Rebecca’s success in an external language contest had a very positive effect on her desire to study LOTE: “I did a competition in Year 8 and I
got third prize on the Gold Coast, so I felt really good after that and really wanted to keep going.”

However, for other students, getting an award was not considered as a factor that influenced them to choose to continue with their LOTE studies. Wes and Annabelle both received awards, but had different reasons for not continuing. Wes didn’t consider that he had the ability, while for Annabelle, it was about her relationship with the teacher. This latter point is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Wes: Yeah, I got the Academic Award in Year 8, but I still don’t think I was good at it!

Annabelle: Thinking back, I’m actually surprised that I didn’t take into consideration my marks, because I actually got a Merit for Italian and I got an A. I don’t even remember even considering that when I decided that I wasn’t going to do Italian. I guess the teacher really got to me in a big way!

To summarise, from the data presented in this section, it would appear that there is no clear cut relationship between achievement and continuing to study a LOTE, as some students who had achieved high grades chose not to continue to study LOTE, although in general, receiving lower marks tended to discourage students from taking a LOTE. These findings indicate that the issue is more complex than previous studies suggest, as past achievement in LOTE subjects was identified in a number of studies as being a contributing factor to students’ decisions to study or not to study a LOTE (see, for example, Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983 and Djite, 1994). Again, it is important to note that these studies were predominantly of a quantitative nature and did not require the participants to elaborate on their responses.

2.4 Engaging with teaching

In this section, student experiences of engaging with teaching are considered. Their comments relate to issues such as the classroom teaching practices used by teachers in the classroom; how teachers motivate and encourage their students; students’ like and dislike of their teachers, and the promotion of LOTE study at the school level by the LOTE teacher and other staff. The issue of teachers’ effects on students’ enjoyment of language learning will also be explored.

Students’ attitudes towards their teachers varied greatly from school to school and from language to language. At schools where high proportions of students chose to study LOTE subjects as electives, students generally had a great deal of praise for their
language teachers and the efforts that they went to in order to make their subjects interesting. Conversely, at schools where enrolments in LOTE subjects were not as high, the students tended to have a more negative attitude towards either the teachers themselves or the teaching methods used in language classes. At one school where two LOTE were offered, there was a very marked difference between the attitudes expressed by students studying one of the languages compared to the attitudes expressed by students of the other language. The subject in which the teachers were viewed positively by the students had consistently good levels of enrolment, whereas the subject in which the teachers were viewed negatively by the students had consistently low enrolments. This is an interesting point, as some students made comments concerning large class sizes and the detrimental effect that this had on their experiences with language learning. In the following analysis, the three themes that emerged, that is, teaching practices, promotion of LOTE and the teacher’s effect on enjoyment of studying the LOTE, will be discussed.

2.4.1 Teaching practices

For some students, pedagogical issues deterred them from continuing with their LOTE study. These students felt that the methods used to teach languages at their schools were ineffective or flawed and that this made it very difficult to be successful in or enjoy the subject. For example, Jason contrasted his prior experience of learning a language with the present one:

[Previously] you’d have phrases that you could use and there were initiatives to try and achieve something. But here it’s just like “What’s that sentence mean?” “I don’t know” “Well just think about it”. That’s just not the way to do it – it makes things too hard.

Jason continued by arguing for the importance of using the language, and that this is best achieved by students working together in small groups - “To learn a language, they should be teaching us in small groups, so you’re constantly having to use the language”. Penny also indicated that learning a language becomes “too hard” if the groups are too large and, therefore, “teachers can’t help you as much as they should”. Indeed, one of the underlying factors in criticisms of pedagogy was the issue of class size. Jason noted, “It [language learning] cannot be done with a class of 30”. Penny also responded by underscoring the impact that class size has on pedagogy: “The class sizes were ridiculous … you need small classes to learn language properly”. This, she claimed,
was not the case with other subjects: “At least with Maths, you can read the textbook if you don’t understand something”, thus highlighting the central role of the teacher in LOTE learning.

Several students highlighted that the methods used to teach LOTE at their schools were ineffective and that the courses should be changed in order to make them more attractive to students. Often, when numbers are insufficient to run separate classes for each year level, composite classes are formed to avoid having to cancel a subject altogether. While this allows students the opportunity to continue to study the language, the students’ comments indicate that they did not consider that this was necessarily beneficial, particularly for the younger year level of the composite class. Eve commented, “Having a composite class is a bit hard. We’re all at different levels, which makes it hard”. Likewise, Jacqui criticised the practice of forming composite classes. Both Eve’s and Jacqui’s comments were similar to those of many other students. Jacqui pointed out that although this practice might work in some subject areas, it was not working in her Japanese class. She continued by arguing that the teacher was not able to cater for the different year levels that comprised the composite class, suggesting a way of overcoming this:

Jacqui: Well...in some subjects it’s good, but in Japanese, it’s hard, because the Year 10s often seem to grasp it and understand it faster, and I just get left behind with the rest of the Year 9s.....I think they just take us all as one class and don’t worry about the differences. I think the way that they teach Japanese should be changed. Instead of the vertical structure, we should have year levels. In Maths, they have different levels, like hard Maths and easy Maths, and you just progress at your own level. It should be like that with Japanese and German, I think.

While it is impossible to state with confidence that any or all of these students would have continued to study a LOTE if different pedagogical methods had been utilised by their teachers, it is clear that the methods that are currently being used do not suit all learners and that this is deterring some students from continuing to study LOTE.

Many comments made by the students related to the positive impact that pedagogy could have on their attitude towards LOTE study. Students with positive attitudes towards LOTE study and their teachers frequently mentioned that the activities planned by their teachers affected their enjoyment of LOTE subjects, which in turn influenced their decisions regarding LOTE study. Activities such as restaurant visits, cooking, cultural studies and overseas trips all appeared to make language study more appealing and relevant to the students.
Michaela: I loved Italian last year. I had a great teacher – she was Italian, and we did a lot of cooking and we went on excursions and we made a lot of authentic Italian stuff. It was really exciting. We were working on a new syllabus, so we were learning about the water cycle and things like that.

Involving students in activities which demonstrated the use of the target languages in real-life contexts helped them to realise that their study of the language was more than just academic and that they were able to apply their knowledge in a range of different situations with speakers of those languages. Both Ellen and Crystal talk about the importance of using the language; as Ellen says, the students “actually do stuff with it”.

Ellen: Yeah, it’s really good, because we’re not just sitting in a classroom all day, we’re doing lots of different interesting things. We get to speak the language and actually do stuff with it, which is great! We got to dress up and everything for the play.

Crystal: We had Japanese teachers come over and they actually taught the class and they spoke it completely in Japanese, so you were tuned in and trying to work out what they were saying. I thought that was really good, when we had the Japanese teachers.

Eve asserts that where an effort isn’t made to organise such activities for LOTE students, the popularity of the subject is affected, as was the case with Italian at her school, “because there’s no trips to Italy or Italian exchange students who come here so people aren’t interested”, whereas both were organised for Japanese students. It was also important to the students that they were involved in a variety of activities in their language classes, and that their teachers used a variety of teaching methods. For example, Rachel mentions “a good range of activities, which makes everything interesting”, a sentiment which is supported by Rhianna, who makes reference to the “variety of different methods” used to teach her LOTE class, which she says “makes you want to do it [the language]”.

The views outlined above are supported by the research of Carr (2002), Hajdu (2005) and Pavy (2006), who all highlight that the pedagogy employed by language teachers has a significant impact on students’ attitude to LOTE subjects. In Hajdu’s study, boys tended to prefer “activities that were more active and less academic” and they did not particularly like activities that involved writing and grammar (2005, p. 22). The girls surveyed “showed a preference for active engagement in the target culture by
participating in a school trip, staying with a host family, and experiencing the language on excursions and with people” (Hajdu, 2005, p. 22). Links were established by Hajdu between the pedagogy employed by teachers in LOTE classes and students’ perceptions of LOTE subjects. Pavy’s research (2006) focused on boys’ attitudes towards language learning, but she acknowledges that the pedagogical practices identified in her research as being beneficial to boys also benefit girls in their language learning and that the use of practices that students do not find conducive to their learning has a negative affect on their attitude towards language learning.

2.4.2 Promotion of LOTE

Students from schools where LOTE subjects were popular and enrolment figures were high claimed that their teachers worked hard to ensure that languages were well-promoted. According to Monica, “it’s all about the marketing…on assembly, Miss R. always has something interesting to say, and she’ll tell us about our career opportunities if we have these languages.” Bree made reference to the “very high profile” of the language teachers at her school and mentioned the frequent appearances during assembly of language teachers discussing what language students were doing, which gave “languages a positive image in the school.” Leah and Jack both mentioned specific promotional activities organised by their Japanese teachers to encourage students to become involved in language study, such as sumo wrestling displays and a general Japanese Day, which, according to Jack, “was really good for promoting languages, and again that comes back to the teachers and what they’re prepared to do”.

A teacher’s demonstrated enthusiasm for the language that they teach and their willingness and ability to generate enthusiasm amongst their students and the school community in general can have a large impact on how students’ perceive the language and its study. A 2006 study by Kohler, Harbon, Fischmann, McLaughlin and Liddicoat suggested that language teachers “have a responsibility for promoting languages as a valuable learning experience at all levels of schooling” (p. 27). They identified many of the activities mentioned by the students in this study as those which help to enhance the profile of languages in the school. A number of studies acknowledge that studying languages is not considered by students to be a very popular activity (for example, Carr, 2002 and Davies, 2004), and, as evidenced above, students themselves recognise the importance of ‘good marketing’ in making LOTE study an attractive option for students. According to Pavy, “enthusiasm is contagious, and a teacher who is excited about languages [and] about learning … will transfer that energy and passion [to their
In contrast, it seems that students are discouraged from choosing to study a language when it is not held in high regard by their school or teachers. Some students recognised the disparity between the ways in which different languages were promoted. Both Bronwyn and Michaela point to the difference between the status of the two languages offered in their school.

Bronwyn: The school doesn’t really treat Italian as a major subject. Everything is about Japanese – the Japanese students go on excursions and have exchange students and stuff and we don’t do anything. We plan on doing something and then they say “No” and that’s the end of it. Because of that, everyone’s really laid back about it.

Michaela: Italian doesn’t have as many helpers as Japanese. The Japanese classes have student teachers and other people in to help, but Italian just has the one teacher and that’s it. No one seems to care and it’s depressing. If you look around this block, there’s heaps of Japanese rooms and heaps of Japanese stuff, but we’ve got just one Italian room with a few posters. There’s nothing. It was so different at my last school.

Letitia echoed their sentiments and also asserted “it was sad” that although Japanese was promoted in her school, “Italian doesn’t get much of a showing”. When she was prompted to explore the issue she did not directly blame the LOTE teacher, but in what seemed to be a diplomatic manner, stated, “Let’s just say it’s a staffing issue and leave it at that”. Meanwhile, Gabby’s analysis considered the history of LOTE and how the staffing issues referred to by Letitia had made a difference to enrolments:

Gabby: In Year 8, it was really encouraging because there were so many Italian classes, and more things were happening for us. There were big classes further up the school, too, so you could see that Italian was something that the school thought was important, because so many people were doing it. Even in Year 9, there were still two classes, but then in Year 10 and 11, they just don’t seem to consider it a worthwhile subject. Hardly anyone does Italian any more and the classes are getting smaller and smaller.

Michaela was more forthright in her response, and did indicate that it was the teacher’s responsibility to make an effort to promote LOTE:
Michaela: They need to put themselves out for you, because Italian is...well, the school doesn’t really support Italian because the teacher doesn’t bother doing anything extra for the subject.

A number of students suggested that the reason for the school’s perceived lack of support for this particular language was a lack of extra effort by their teacher to promote the subject. It is difficult to determine how accurate the students’ analysis of the situation is, although it should be noted that comments concerning the fall in the number of students enrolling in Italian at the school are accurate, as enrolments have fallen steadily over the past ten years, to the extent that Italian is not currently offered as an elective due to insufficient numbers of students choosing to enrol in the subject (Italian continues to be offered in Year Eight on an annual basis).

Another issue that emerged in these interviews was the effect of staff turnover. It seems that LOTE teachers have to work harder than other teachers to promote their subject. Unlike Maths, English and Science, the space for LOTE is more peripheral in the school curriculum (Hirst, 2006). Although some Queensland LOTE teachers report job satisfaction, in 1999, the Rix report revealed that, in the main, LOTE teachers feel unsupported, overworked, marginalised, and discriminated against, despite their best efforts to fulfil the objectives of the program. Carr (2002) points out that many LOTE teachers burn out after only a few years, and The Australian Language and Literacy Council (1996) also indicates concern for the low retention rate of LOTE teachers, noting that “language teachers suffer rates of attrition from the teaching profession considerably higher than those in nearly all other key learning areas” (p. 26). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the attrition rate of LOTE teachers is as high as 10% per annum. As Hirst (2004) argues, it is therefore not surprising that these material conditions of LOTE teachers’ working lives impact on their students’ attitudes toward LOTE subjects.

2.4.3 Teachers’ positive effect on LOTE study

Nevertheless, many very positive comments were made by the students about their language teachers and a number of students cited their liking for their teacher as a motivating factor for choosing to continue with their study of the language. Indeed, as Annabelle asserts, “It’s all about the teacher”. When asked specifically whether the teacher was a factor in their enjoyment of the subject, students were quite adamant in their responses (“Oh yes, definitely” [Naomi]), and were prepared to provide
corroborative detail in substantiating their assertions. Tarni and Letitia consider the role of teachers generally and their effect on student enjoyment:

Tarni: Well the teaching staff, there’s like, heaps of them, and they’re all really helpful. Especially when we were in Year 8 and doing assignments and stuff, you could just go up to them and they’d really help you. I think that’s a positive thing because people would go back and say “Oh yeah the teacher was really nice and they really helped me out”. That really encourages people to go on with the subject, I think.

Letitia: All my teachers have encouraged me, but I must admit that certain teachers I’ve gotten along with better than others, and that did influence my mark, even…oh, probably not so much my mark, but my willingness to put more into the subject. The teacher can really affect your attitude towards a subject. I think the teacher can really make a difference as to whether the students enjoy the language and want to keep studying it or not.

While Annabelle and Dee focus more specifically on the LOTE teacher, Naomi highlights the importance of communication, particularly in language classrooms:

Annabelle: I have friends who swapped out of Speech and Drama, which is a really cool subject and everyone likes it, just to do Japanese. Japanese students, they enjoy it because they have a good teacher. It’s all about the teacher.

Dee: Yeah, there’s a lot of good teachers doing languages and they’re not the teachers that kids don’t like, so that makes a difference to whether kids want to do the language or not. No one wants to do a subject where no one likes the teacher!

Naomi: It’s all to do with communication, isn’t it? I mean, you can’t really communicate properly with somebody you don’t feel comfortable with, and learning languages is all about being able to communicate. You can’t learn from someone who you can’t communicate with.

The teachers’ enthusiasm for languages and how this enhanced their enjoyment was another factor that students identified as motivating them to continue to study LOTE. Kristie, for example, claimed that at her school, they have “a really good bunch of LOTE teachers, and they’re always really enthusiastic and they just get you really involved.” Dean had a similar comment to make about the teachers at his school: “The teachers are all really well-motivated, too, and this rubs off on the students.” From comments such as these, it is clear that many students appreciated having teachers who showed obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm for languages, and that this had a large
impact on how students perceived the subject, an assertion which is supported by Pavy’s research (2006).

2.4.4 Dislike of the Teacher

While many students reported positive attitudes towards their LOTE teachers, a large number were very vocal in their criticism of their teachers and the way in which they were taught languages. For many, their dislike of the teacher was motivation enough to stop studying languages altogether, while for others, the practices utilised by the teachers in the classroom discouraged them from continuing with the language. Although it is very easy to report comments concerning students’ like for their teachers, dealing with negative comments about teachers is a very sensitive and uncomfortable task, particularly as I am a practicing teacher myself. However, as a researcher, to ignore the negative comments made by students would be unethical, as it would serve to bias the data in that the opinions of the students as expressed in their interviews would not be adequately represented. A large number of students felt very strongly that their teachers had influenced their decision not to study a language and as the aim of this research is to determine why students choose to study or not to study LOTE, it is necessary to report these comments, taking care, however, to protect the identity of the teachers discussed. Unlike the positive comments, these responses from the students do not provide much substantiation – students’ main criticism is that the teacher is “bad”, or that they don’t like the teacher. Gabby does briefly elaborate, indicating “he doesn’t make it interesting at all”. It seems that not liking this teacher has had a profound effect on students’ attitude, as Eve suggests: “Most of my friends don’t like Italian, because they don’t like the teacher.” Other students made similar comments:

Michaela: We’ve actually all dropped it for next year [Year 12], so that we don’t all get LA’s on our Senior Certificates. The whole class has dropped it for next year, mainly because of the teacher.

Melinda: There’s only one Italian teacher, and not many people like him, so that puts a lot of people off. If there were more Italian teachers here, it’d be different, because I know lots of people who liked the subject but didn’t want to have him as a teacher, so they didn’t do it in Year 9.

Annabelle: A lot of people who had chosen Italian for Year 9 dropped it when they knew he was coming back. Maybe if there’d been a different teacher, they would have kept it up. I know I would have. It’s pretty obvious that it is the teacher, because they kept going with Japanese and not Italian. Japanese is a lot
harder, too, so you’d think they’d drop that before Italian. So yeah, it’s the teacher.

It is important to note that all of the students above were referring to one particular teacher. However, negative comments in the data were not confined to this teacher. James, for example, had the following to say about his previous language experiences:

I did French in Year 9 and it was just too boring. It was mainly the teacher – she didn’t teach properly and that put me off. That’s the main reason why I stopped doing French.

Similarly, Sara has developed a dislike for the subject because of her Year 9 teacher.

I was encouraged to do it in Year 8, and my teacher was nice to me, but then I didn’t like my Year 9 teacher, and she kind of put me off learning Japanese totally, because I felt that it was a struggle working with her and I didn’t like her at all. So basically, she put me off the subject – that was it!

Past studies have identified that when asked why they chose not to study a LOTE subject, approximately 20% of students indicated that they “did not like the teacher” (see, for example, Nicholas et al., 1993 and Djite, 1994). A number of students felt that their disposition toward the language teacher played more of a role in deciding whether or not to study a language than it would in other subject areas. Two main reasons for this were given. Firstly, there is frequently only one teacher of that particular language in the school, so students are more likely to have the same teacher for several years than in other subjects. Sally’s comment illustrates this:

If you have a teacher that you really hate, it’s not as if you’re going to do the subject again when you’re going to get the same teacher, no matter how good you are at the subject. With languages, you can pretty much bet you’re gonna get the same teacher most years, so yeah…

Secondly, many students felt that while in most subjects, there are other teachers in the school who can be approached for help if there is a clash with the teacher (or they could seek assistance from parents and friends), for LOTE subjects, the class teacher is often the only source of assistance, which, according to Jack and Alex, can discourage students from electing to study that particular LOTE.
Jack: The only thing is that it’s not something that you can teach yourself at home. The only place you can really be taught is in class, whereas with Maths and English you can go home and read over the stuff again, and if you’ve made mistakes in class, you can go back and read it again and see what you’ve done wrong.

Alex: Also, with a language, you can’t really go to someone else to get help with the work, because your language teacher is usually the only person who speaks the language. In that case, it’s definitely important that you have somebody that you get along with and like.

Students also demonstrated scepticism about teachers’ motives. Many students reported that their teachers had encouraged them to continue to study a LOTE. For some, this helped them to make their subject choices, while for others, the advice of their teachers had little impact on the decision making process. Several students, such as Jane, said that they were sceptical of their teachers’ encouragement, believing that they were only trying to boost numbers in their subjects.

Well we actually got a letter sent home at the end of last year, and I know that probably 80% of the people in the class got one, saying that your child has excelled in this subject. I know that more than 50% of the class got one, and it was saying that you should do it, even if you weren’t doing that well. I didn’t do any good at it, but I still got one of those letters and that was sort of telling you to do it. None of the other subjects did that. I think they just wanted to boost the Italian numbers, to be honest!

Jane’s comments suggest that students are not naïve of the political systems that exist within schools and that they are aware of the importance of subjects maintaining viable levels of enrolment in order to ensure their continued place in a school’s curriculum. This leads to some students viewing teachers’ attempts to encourage them to study particular subjects with some cynicism.

At this point, it is useful to provide a summary of both the positive and negative attributes identified by students as having an impact on their attitude towards language study. Table 5.2) shows the results of a lexical analysis, which identified students’ comments on the attributes of the teacher. These were categorised as positive and negative.
Table 5.2 Attributes of Teachers According to Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Attributes of Teachers</th>
<th>Negative Attributes of Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Really helpful</td>
<td>Don’t make languages fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really nice</td>
<td>Bad teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make languages fun</td>
<td>Doesn’t make the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teacher</td>
<td>interesting at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works for you and with you</td>
<td>Not likeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put themselves out for you</td>
<td>Doesn’t teach properly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Difficult to work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to teach and do a good job of it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always really enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-motivated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get you involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care about students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can joke around with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell the subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evidenced in Table 5.2, students were more willing to give specific reasons for considering teachers as being “good” than they were to identify reasons why they considered teachers to be “bad”. In the majority of instances where students discussed their teachers in a negative light, expressions such as “I didn’t like the teacher” or “the teacher was bad” were used and when clarification was sought, students did not elaborate beyond the points listed in Table 5.2. The research of Carr (2002), Hajdu (2005) and Pavy (2006) also highlights the major role that the teacher plays in shaping students’ attitudes towards languages. According to Pavy (2006), the attitude towards the teacher has a greater impact on the choices that boys are likely to make. She argues that more so than in any other subject, language teachers play a key role in these
choices. This raises the issue of gender and its effect on students’ choice, a topic that is explored later in this chapter.

3. **Students’ Subjective Norms**

3.1 **Teachers**

The analysis of the qualitative data identified teachers as one of the subjective norms of the students who participated in this study. Having discussed the general reasons given by students as to why they chose to continue or to discontinue to study LOTE, as well as what students perceive to be the influences of their teachers on their decision making, the following sections will focus on the influences of other groups of people on students’ choices.

3.2 **Parents**

Each of the students was asked about their parents’ attitudes towards studying languages, and whether their parents had tried to influence them while they were choosing their electives. According to the students, some parents were very supportive of language study and encouraged them to choose languages, while other parents were not supportive of language study or were indifferent. Comments relating to these categories are presented below.

3.2.1 Perceived parental support of language study

Many of the students claimed that their parents were supportive of language study and encouraged them to study languages. Some students, such as Eve, were influenced by their parents’ encouragement, while others, such as Cheree, claimed not to let their parents’ opinions shape their decisions.

Eve: My mum said, “If you’re good at it, you should keep going.” I needed someone else to tell me that I was good at it so I should keep doing it. I wanted to do it, but I just needed someone else to tell me that I should, too.

Cheree: I just told my mum what I chose, because she doesn’t really know what she’s talking about! She had a bit of a say at the start, but it didn’t really matter to me. I just told her what I was doing and she just said, “OK, that’s good!”

According to the students, parental encouragement to continue with language study was based mainly on the perception that an ability to use a LOTE would be beneficial to them in the future. This reflects the findings reported earlier in this
chapter, that for the most part, the perceived benefits are of a utilitarian nature and relate mainly to employment prospects, as evidenced by the comments below.

Jane: My parents think that…well my mum thinks it’s really good, because you can use it a lot in certain careers. It depends what career, but say, Japanese, you can use that a lot in today’s world and stuff. But…yeah, they thought that it was OK.

Anna: My parents told me I should do a language ‘cause I’d have a better chance of getting a job when I’m older and that it’d be better to learn Italian because I don’t like Japanese and I wouldn’t be interested in it.

Emma: My mum thinks it’s pretty good, because she’s seen that the Japanese industry is booming over here at the moment. Basically, you can be one of the lowest people in the company, but if you’ve got Japanese as one of your skills, they’ll put you straight at the top.

Ellen: My dad thinks it’s really important. He thinks that if you learn a different language, you can get a job anywhere.

Parents, according to the students, made comments relating both to employment opportunities in general and to particular jobs for which a knowledge of a LOTE would be beneficial. Brent reported that his parents felt that “languages figure highly in the computer industry all round. If you learn another language, you can go to that country and work in the computer industry there”. According to Kylie, her mother considers that learning Japanese “could help me if I want to do hospitality, or be a tour guide, or go over to Japan and teach English”. These findings support the results of the ACSSO & APC’s (2007) survey of parental attitudes towards LOTE teaching, which indicate that 74% of parents believe that studying LOTE improved a student’s future employment prospects.

According to the students, some parents appeared to be supportive of LOTE study because of its contribution to broader cultural understandings and also because of its potential to enhance future travel experiences by facilitating communication with native speakers of the languages in their home countries. This is another assertion which was supported by the results of the ACSSO & APC’s study (2007). Crystal reports that her parents, for example, liked her “learning about a new culture and stuff”, while Geoff’s parents apparently “tried to encourage me to gain a broader outlook [by doing] a language.” Sonia reported that her parents “think it’s really good to study another language, even if you just get the basics, because you … learn general ways of
communicating with other people.” Both Rebecca and Ryan state that their respective parents highlighted the improved travel prospects to be gained by studying a LOTE.

Rebecca: My parents like the fact that you can learn a language at school and then you’re able to use it when you’re travelling.

Ryan: Um...Mum and Dad think it’s a good idea because the more languages you learn, the easier it is for you if, like, you go to Germany or somewhere, it’s easier to understand what’s going on. Yeah, it’s pretty good.

Students whose parents had either studied a language at school or who were of non-Australian background often reported that their parents seemed to have positive attitudes towards LOTE study or encouraged their children to participate in LOTE.

Phoebe: I was always encouraged to learn another language, particularly German, because my father spent seven years in Germany. He was always keen to go back there.

Carley: My parents have a really positive attitude towards learning other languages. My family actually comes from a Spanish Croatian background, so they all speak other languages.

Monica: My parents…my dad can speak a whole lot of languages, so he likes languages. Mum can speak Chinese, so she likes me learning languages, too.

Ryan: Um, my family background’s European, so yeah, they encouraged me to do that sort of stuff.

The comments above are supported by the ACSSO & APC’s (2007) finding that almost two thirds of the respondents in their study do not believe that Australians appreciate the relevance of language learning, in spite of the fact that that in general, studies have found that parents do support the compulsory study of languages at school (see, for example, Kee, 1988; Berthold, 1991; NALSAS Task Force, 1998, and ACSSO & APC, 2007).

For other students, their parents appeared to be supportive of LOTE study because their children were performing well in the subject or they appeared to enjoy it.

Sally: Yeah they influenced me heaps for Japanese, because that’s one of the subjects that I really like.
Andre: My parents don’t pressure me to do Japanese, because it’s my choice, but they do encourage me to do it. They said that I was really good at it, so I should continue to do it, but it was my choice. I considered their advice, though.

A number of students reported that their parents encouraged them to study LOTE at school because they had not had the opportunity to do so themselves.

Mitchell: Um…my parents think that learning Japanese is a good choice, because I’m gonna need it when I grow up. They think that the schooling system is good for letting us have the chance to do a language other than English, because they said it wasn’t like that when they were young.

Anna: My mum doesn’t really say much about my subjects, but my dad does. I guess it’s perhaps because he didn’t have that opportunity when he was young, to have that second language, because we’ve only been in Australia for seven years.

According to several students, their parents were so supportive of LOTE study that they were disappointed or unhappy that their children had chosen to discontinue to study languages at school. None of the students, however, indicated that they had been placed under parental pressure to continue to study languages.

Penny: My mum hates me for it! She really doesn’t like it. When I came home that day and told her about Japanese…I mean, they’ve never liked anything I’ve done, but Mum wanted me to learn a language so that I could get into the tourism industry…

Michaela: My parents loved the fact that I was doing a language, and my grandparents and uncles and everyone are really, really sorry that I’m dropping it.

Carley: My parents were pretty upset about it, and especially my grandparents, too, because they don’t speak English, and they’re always saying “Oh your cousins speak four different languages, and they write it and blah blah blah!” Just a bit of pressure, but it’s not my fault! So yeah, they’re quite upset…

3.2.2 Perceived lack of parental support for language study

Only a small number of students asserted that their parents were opposed to their studying a LOTE, although most of them claimed that this had not affected their decision regarding LOTE study. For some, the opposition to LOTE study appeared to stem from cultural perceptions, while for one family, it was a relationship issue that had prompted a parent to discourage her child from studying a language. Both Debbie and
Seb identified their fathers’ dislike of Japanese people and their vocal opposition to the study of the Japanese language. This influenced their decision not to continue to study the language, whereas for Leonie, her parents’ reported opposition to the study of Japanese did not dissuade her from choosing it as an elective. Brent claimed that in spite of a long held desire to visit France, he decided not to study French “because of my parents – they discouraged me from doing French.” For Sara, her parents’ assertions that the amount of Japanese that she was learning at school wasn’t enough to allow her to communicate effectively with native speakers successfully persuaded her to discontinue her LOTE studies:

Because what my dad said was true, about how the amount of Japanese I was learning at school wasn’t useful, because I couldn’t string together a proper sentence with Japanese people, so there was no point in learning it. You just learn these basic things, but they’re no use in the real world, I felt.

For Ben, the breakdown of his parents’ marriage led to his mother discouraging him from studying Japanese, although he chose not to take his mother’s advice, continuing to study Japanese as an elective with his father’s support.

Ben: Personally my mum doesn’t like it, but my step-mum does, ‘cause she’s Japanese. My mum doesn’t like it, ‘cause my step-mum broke up the marriage, so...(laughs).

The students’ comments concerning their parents’ attitudes towards LOTE study support the findings of earlier studies, which revealed that although a majority of students consult their parents when choosing their subjects, the value placed on this advice varies from person to person, as does the extent to which the students’ choices are influenced by the advice given (see, for example, Lynch & Ramsay, 1985, Ainley et al., 1990 and Ainley et al., 1994; Warton & Cooney, 1997; Johnson & Selepeng, 2001, and Blenkinsop, McCrone, Wade & Morris, 2006). However, a 2005 study by Hajdu revealed that when asked to rank their “motivating forces to learn languages”, both boys and girls named their parents as the second most important motivating factor after themselves (p. 23). This claim does not appear to be supported by the data presented above. Nevertheless, all studies reviewed (as well as the current study), show that students do consult their parents when making subject choices.
3.3 Friends

Many of the interviewees had discussed the selection of their subjects with their friends, although in general, the students claimed that the opinions of their friends had not mattered to them when they were choosing their subjects. Some students claimed that their friends tried to discourage them from taking a language, while others reported that their friends had told them that they should study a language. Several students whose friends had not supported their decision to study LOTE as an elective indicated that their friends said that they were “stupid for doing languages”. According to Sarah, “my friends thought that I was crazy”, while for Tom and Susan’s friends, “studying Japanese is a waste of time”. Phillip reported that in terms of his friends, it was more his decision to study Italian instead of Japanese than his decision to study a LOTE in general that they disagreed with:

My friends thought I was stupid because I chose Italian. They chose Japanese. They think I should’ve done Japanese and now most of them have quit Japanese. They just thought Italian was a stupider language than Japanese.

Sometimes, making the decision to continue to study a LOTE is quite courageous. For example, Hayley reported being the subject of derogatory remarks because of her decision to study German when no one else in her cohort had persevered with their study of the language:

They sort of pay me out a bit because I’m doing German, like they walk around a bit saying “Heil Hitler!” and things like that. They pay me out because I’m the only Year 10 in the class and stuff.

When his friends told him that they didn’t think he should do a LOTE after Year 8, Alex claimed that he replied, “You guys are ignorant, you just don’t know anything”, and then, commenting on his friends, said, “They just bludge in class.”

Students whose friends were unsupportive of their decision to study a LOTE argued that they did not tend to allow this to affect them, making statements such as, “It doesn’t matter to me what my friends say”; “I don’t worry about what they say”; “I just ignore them!”, and “It’s my choice”. Many of the students had friends who were very supportive of their choices and at some schools, quite a number of students reported that their friends were also studying a LOTE. Other students said that their friends did not really have an opinion on languages, or that they had not discussed their choices with their friends.
Some of the interviewees who had decided not to study a LOTE claimed that their friends tried to encourage them to take a language, although none of the students had taken this advice. Marie claimed that “It didn’t make any difference to me what they said”, whereas Beau, in spite of his friends trying to persuade him that studying a LOTE would be beneficial to him in the future, did not take their advice, because he “wanted to do other things instead”. Jane related a story about how one of her friends wanted her to study Italian with her, whereas all of her other friends were against it and tried to dissuade her.

Jane: My friends…because one of them was doing Italian, she was in a class by herself and she was saying “Oh you’ve gotta do it, you’ve gotta do it!”, but because most of my friends don’t do it, again, because of the teachers, they were all saying “No, don’t do it.” [Interviewer: How did this make you feel?] Well I sort of felt bad for my friend, because she really wanted me to do Italian with her, but I just couldn’t. You’ve gotta do what’s best for you, not what other people want you to do.

Overall, it seems that when choosing their subjects, the interviewees perceive that they did not take into consideration the advice offered to them by their friends, even though in most cases, the advice was actually sought by them. When questioned further about whether their friends’ advice was important to them, most students felt that they had to make decisions that were based on what was best for them, and not what their friends thought. The following comments from Lucy and Mitchell exemplify this attitude:

Lucy: Well you know what you have to do to get where you want to go, and you can’t really rely on your friends to tell you that you should or shouldn’t do something. You know what you need to do and you just do it.

Mitchell: It’s really none of their business, is it? It’s your life. They’re probably just trying to get you to do subjects that they’re doing so that they’ll have more friends in their class.

This individualistic stance may have been influenced by advice from teachers who argued that students should not make subject selections based on friendship groups.

Karen: We were told by our Form teacher not to let our friends tell us what to do and not to do a subject we didn’t like just because our friends were in it.
Curtis: The teachers said, “Don’t choose a subject because your friends are doing it, do the ones you want to do.”

However, a small number of students claimed that they had decided to study a LOTE partly because one of their friends was taking the subject, too. For example, in response to a question on this topic, Sara and Cindy indicated that they had chosen to study LOTE because of their friendship:

Sara: Like I did Japanese because I liked it and because Cindy was doing it and that.

Cindy: I liked Japanese, but part of the reason why I did it was because Sara was doing it, too.

Some of the students claimed that they tried to influence their friends to take a LOTE after Year 8. For example, Chantel and David both wanted their friends to study with them:

Chantel: I try and influence other people to do a language so it can help them when they’re older. It’s helping me, so it should help other people. They don’t tend to listen, though!

David: I tried to talk my friends into doing a language, but they said “no” because they can’t speak it and they get bad marks.

Since most of the students claimed not to be influenced by their friends when choosing their subjects, Chantel and David’s failure to talk their friends into studying a LOTE is not surprising. Interestingly, Hajdu’s research (2005) showed that both boys and girls rated friends amongst their top six motivating forces to learn languages (boys sixth and girls fourth), which is a finding that does not appear to be supported by the data in this study. Most of the students seem to have taken the advice of their teachers and not let their friends influence their choice of subjects. In general, as indicated above, the students felt that it did not really matter what their friends thought, because “it’s not up to them what I study”. This concurs with Whitely and Porter’s research (2004), which also suggests that students do not consider their friends’ opinions to be overly important when choosing their subjects.
4. **Students’ Perceived Behavioural Control**

In the following sections, issues raised by the students relating to Perceived Behavioural Control are discussed. To recap, in this chapter, I have analysed the themes that emerged from the data and grouped them into the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. In the previous two sections of this chapter, I have analysed the themes that are grouped under the first two components of this theory, namely Students’ Attitudes towards the Behaviour (LOTE study) and Students’ Subjective Norms. The third component, Students’ Perceived Behavioural Control, concerns the extent to which students believe that they are able or unable to choose to study LOTE (i.e., the degree of control that they have over their own choices). Thus, the two themes which emerged from the data and have been grouped in this component include the school administrative arrangements, and opportunities to choose LOTE.

4.1 **School Administration Arrangements**

A number of students indicated that they while they were interested in studying languages and had enjoyed doing so, they were prevented from choosing them as electives due to constraints placed upon the students by the school. These constraints included limits on the number of electives students could choose. When LOTE was put into competition with other subjects, students often discontinued their language studies, as there were other subjects that they were more interested in studying or that they thought were more important for them to study. Rebecca, for example, did not have enough electives to include LOTE in her subject choices. Similarly, when Greg and Alexander reduced the number of subjects that they were studying in their senior years, it was the LOTE that was discontinued.

Rebecca: Yeah I did Italian and I always loved it, because I thought it was so fascinating, the country and the language and everything. The only reason I dropped it was because I didn’t have enough electives to choose in Year 9. I would have loved to have kept doing it.

Greg: I just had too many subjects that I had to do for my other courses. Otherwise I probably would have taken Japanese.

Alexander: Basically the fact that I was only doing five subjects. For sure if I was doing six subjects I would have definitely put Italian in as my sixth. But I’m doing five Board subjects at the moment and they’re basically all subjects I need to have for the course I want to do at uni.
Subject selection at the senior level means that students have to weigh up which subjects will be most relevant to both gaining a high Overall Position (OP) score\(^2\) in the secondary school performance rankings and being relevant to the future plans. These were the reasons that several students gave for discontinuing their LOTE studies. Andrea identifies her OP as an important consideration in her choice:

Andrea: I was still getting good marks, but the whole reason why I gave it away was because I wanted to do other subjects that were related to my OP score and things like that. I did think about continuing, and I did want to do Italian, but there were just other things that I wanted to do.

The issue of choice of language was also a feature of the initial years of LOTE study. Some students were not pleased they had been required to study a particular language in Years 6-8. They suggested that if they had had the choice of which language to study at that stage, they would not have made the decision to stop studying LOTE.

Carley: It also came down to the fact that we weren’t given the chance to do the subjects we wanted anyway. If I had been given the chance to do Italian, then I would still have been doing it today, but I didn’t continue with Japanese because it wasn’t getting me anywhere. If I’d had a choice of languages, I’d still be doing one now, whether it was French or German or Italian. The school’s limits have basically stopped me from doing a language.

As can be seen from the comments above, the limits placed on the number of electives that students are able to choose influenced a number of students to discontinue to study LOTE, as did the range of languages offered by the schools in the study. Both issues have been identified in previous studies as being reasons why students have discontinued studying a LOTE (see, for example, Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1992; Djite, 1994; Carr, 2002, and Hajdu, 2005).

4.2 Opportunities to Choose LOTE

In the previous section, the issue of choice of language in the primary years was raised. It is standard practice in many schools for students not to be given a choice of which language they study in the compulsory programs in Years 6-8. At the three research sites, students were assigned a language at primary school and were required to

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\(^2\) The Overall Position (or OP, as it is conventionally known) is a grade issued to Year 12 students in Queensland, and is based on an aggregate of the student’s performance in their five best subjects. The OP is the score used in Queensland to rank order students for admission to tertiary institutions.
study this for three years. If students had attended primary schools from outside the
feeder school areas and had studied a LOTE other than the ones offered at the secondary
school, they were assigned to LOTE classes by the school. If they had studied an Asian
language at primary school, they were assigned to an Asian LOTE class, and if they had
previously studied a European language, they were assigned to a European LOTE class.
A number of students indicated that had they been given the opportunity to study a
language other than the one that they had been assigned (either at primary school if they
had attended one of their school’s feeder primary schools, or at secondary school if they
had transferred from another area), they would have enjoyed LOTE study more and
would have continued to study languages beyond Year 8. From the students’ comments
below, it is clear that students perceive that they were constrained in their choice of
language study, with the implication that if they could have chosen, they would be more
likely to have continued with their studies. Although they are still able to take up a
language at Year 9, as Alison commented, “It's too late then”, suggesting that this really
was not a viable choice at this juncture.

Alexandra: I just really wish that we could choose which language we wanted to
study in Year 8. After Year 8, they let you choose what you want to do, but
that’s too late, because you’ve already missed three years. I really wanted to do
Italian, but I just felt that that was too late, because everyone else was three
years ahead of me.

Alison: If I’d been given the chance to do Italian in Year 8, I would have
considered changing then, but not after that – it’s too late, then.

David: Everyone’s used to doing Japanese all the time, so once you get to Year
8, you should be able to do something different, like maybe French or Italian.

Troy: I wouldn’t mind Italian. The way it is now, we get no choice.

Andrew: I think we should do Italian, too. I have no use for Japanese and I’ve
never wanted to do it.

This is an interesting issue, as it highlights the fact that different languages
appeal to different students and that decisions made by schools may serve to discourage
students from engaging in LOTE studies. This is not an easy issue to resolve, however,
as schools are restricted in the number and type of LOTE subjects that they can offer to
their students by staffing and resource issues, a situation which was recognised by the
students. Kelly acknowledges these constraints, but still considers that there should be some way of improving the range of languages available.

I think if they had a variety of different languages…I know they can’t do that, because you can’t have all those different teachers, but I think if they had more of a variety of different language subjects, people might want to do a different language instead of just having to do a set one that they might not be interested in.

Previous studies indicate that the particular language or languages offered to students by schools can have a significant impact on students’ decisions to study or not to study languages in general. Zammit’s (1992) study indicated that almost one third of students stated that they did not study a LOTE because the language that they wished to study was not offered by their school. The previous study by Fairbairn and Pegolo in 1983 also highlighted this factor as a reason why some students did not study LOTE subjects after the compulsory years of study. This highlights the important point that although Languages Other Than English are generally grouped together as one subject, each individual language appeals to different students in different ways, just as the various subjects that fall under the areas of Science or Humanities have different levels of appeal to students.

Another factor in considering the language offered is the degree of resistance toward the study of some languages. This is evident at both personal and political levels. Recall Ben’s comment; he was influenced in his choices to study Japanese due to his mother’s dislike of his Japanese speaking step-mother. Certainly there are languages which are more politically highly charged than others and attract more comments than others. For example, there are those who have an antipathy towards Japan stemming from World War II, and are resistant to their children learning Japanese. MacKerras (1995), commenting on the LOTE initiative (Braddy, 1991) and the imperative to promote Asian languages to enhance Australia’s trading opportunities and interests in the Asia-Pacific region, argues that this initiative not only sought to facilitate this growth, but also to address “the importance of minimising resistance to export growth due to linguistic, cultural and attitudinal resistance to Asia” (MacKerras, 1995, p. 5).

In summary, students’ choice to continue, take up or discontinue a language relies on a number of factors that students have little or no control over. These include the availability of particular languages, the impact of choice between subject and the
role of tertiary entrance scores in the selection process. In addition, the standing of the language in the community, both at a domestic and political level, has an impact on choice.

5. **The role of gender**

Without exception, language classes in Years 9-12 at the three research sites comprised larger numbers of females than males. In some interviews, this issue was raised by the students themselves, while in others, they were asked questions in an effort to gain an understanding of the reasons for this situation from their perspective. While most students did not believe that LOTE subjects were aimed at girls, or that they should only be studied by girls, the students’ comments indicated that such a perception still exists amongst at least a proportion of young people. Kristie and James, for example, noted that more girls than boys chose to study languages. James elaborated by claiming that “boys mainly go for sports and that sort of stuff”, hypothesising that the reason for this is “probably because they care more about what their friends think than what they think. They don’t want to be seen doing what they think is a wussy subject”, a comment with which Kristie agreed. Jack revealed that some of his male friends joked about German being “a girls’ subject”, although he believed that his friends were “just carrying on”. Like James, Jack felt that “most guys would rather do something like sport”, although he also felt that the teacher played a role in his male friends’ decision not to continue to study a LOTE: “because some of them didn’t like the teacher last year. Some guys are like that – they’ll drop a subject if they don’t like the teacher”. Troy attributed boys’ lack of interest in learning a LOTE to the perceived difficulty of LOTE subjects, claiming that “it’s too hard and boys don’t like it because of that.” Felicity and Michelle felt that languages had acquired a reputation as being a girls’ subject, as opposed to subjects such as Manual Arts, which were perceived as being boys’ subjects, although they were not sure why this was the case. They also claimed that girls “think [language study] is more important”.

Even after more than a decade of increased promotion of LOTE in both primary and secondary schools, and the expansion of LOTE programs into the primary sector, it is clear that much work still needs to be done if the perception amongst students that languages are ‘feminine’ subjects is to be changed. While it is encouraging to note that many of the interviewees claimed that they did not consider languages in that way, it is evident that many students still hold this belief, or believe that others do. This
viewpoint is consistent both in older research (see, for example, Baldauf and Lawrence, 1990) and more recent studies (Carr, 2002; Davies, 2004; Hajdu, 2005; Pavy, 2006).

In order to further explore this issue, the interviewees were asked whether they felt that boys were encouraged to participate in LOTE classes and while most felt that there was no difference between the way that boys and girls were treated in class, a number of students did feel that some of their teachers tried to actively encourage the boys in their classes to become more involved. According to Felicity, the impact of this encouragement on the male students varies according to how those students view the teacher involved. “Some of [the attempts by the teacher to encourage the boys to get involved] does [work], and some of it doesn’t. It depends on the teacher and what the guys think of them”. The students were also asked if they felt that the gender of the LOTE teacher affected boys’ perception of the subject. While most of the students felt that it didn’t matter what gender the LOTE teacher was, some of the female students suggested that having a male LOTE teacher could “probably” (Michelle) motivate more boys to continue with their language studies. For example, Felicity responded, “Yeah, probably the boys might think then that it’s OK for males to do languages.” These students also indicated that having a male LOTE teacher would not “put off” the girls from choosing to study a LOTE:

Michelle: Mmmm….nup, it wouldn’t matter.

Juliette: No, the girls wouldn’t worry about that.

It is interesting to note that the girls interviewed did not believe that the gender of the LOTE teacher would matter to girls, whereas it could make a difference to boys. According to Nate, however, while having a male LOTE teacher may motivate more boys to study languages, it is important that the boys actually like the male teacher:

Nate: Hmmmm…we have a male Italian teacher here and that doesn’t make a difference at all to the way the guys see Italian. That could be because of him, though. Um…when [previous teacher] was here in Year 8, it was different. He got along well with everyone and heaps of guys kept going with Italian the year after that. But then he left and we got a female teacher and lots of guys dropped the subject during Year 9.

Interviewer: Do you think they dropped it because they had a female teacher?
Nate: Oh…it’s hard to say. I think for some guys, it’d make a difference though. At least with a male teacher that you like, you have someone you can look up to and you know that languages are something that guys can do, too. I don’t know. The guys need to like the teacher, too, ‘cause otherwise, they’re not gonna care who they’ve got. I mean, let’s say you’re a guy who is a bit worried that doing languages is a bit feminine. If you’ve got a male teacher, but you don’t like him, you’re not really going to look up to him as someone who proves that it’s OK for guys to do languages, are you? Does that make sense?

It would seem from these data that the influence of the teacher may be greater on male students and their choice to continue to study LOTE than it is on female students. This assumption is supported by Pavy, in her analysis of the choices that boys make. From her findings, she argues, “more than in any other subject, language teachers are the key to a boy’s learning, motivation and success. In other subjects, boys feel that they can get by – they can get help at home, use the Internet, or do some reading” (2006, p. 7).

6. **Summary**

In this chapter, the qualitative data collected for this study have been presented and discussed, in an effort to understand the students’ experiences in relation to choosing their subjects, including an understanding of how they, as a group, construct their social reality. It will be recalled that the aim of this thesis is to explore and understand factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE subjects as electives. An analysis of the data presented in this chapter has identified that when choosing their subjects, students appear to be influenced to varying degrees by advice received from parents, teachers and friends, their performance in prior LOTE studies, future career aspirations, like or dislike for the subject and like or dislike of the teacher. Students who study languages tend to do so because they enjoy them and they perceive them to be relevant and/or beneficial to their future career plans. Students who decide not to study languages do so for a variety of reasons, ranging from lack of interest in languages, to not considering them to be of relevance to their future careers. Both students who choose to study a LOTE and those who choose not to study a LOTE are influenced by their previous performance in LOTE studies. The language teacher also appeared to play an extremely important role in students’ decisions, more so than has been indicated in previous studies; dislike of the teacher tended to discourage students from pursuing further language studies and like for the teacher helped to encourage students to continue to study a language. Liking or not liking the language teacher
appeared to be more significant for boys in their decision to continue or discontinue with LOTE study. This may be related to an issue which was not raised in previous studies, but which emerged as highly important in this study, which is the high attrition rates of LOTE teachers and the effect that this has on student choice. Students at one school where a LOTE teacher had left attributed the drop in enrolments in that subject to the new LOTE teachers. Not surprisingly, justification for decision inevitably leads to either positive attributes ascribed to the choice made (in this case, the subject chosen or not chosen) or negative attributes to the alternative choice.

Although previous studies have identified parental influence as being an important factor in shaping students’ subject choice, the data collected for this study suggest that the role of parents in subject choice is quite ambiguous. In most cases, parents are supportive of the choices that have already been made by their children. Only a small number of the students interviewed indicated that their choices had been influenced by their parents, with most reporting that their parents had primarily left the decision “up to them”. Similarly, the role of friends in students’ decision making process appears to be ambiguous, with some students claiming to have been influenced by their friends’ choices, although most claimed to have made their choices with no consideration of their friends’ opinions.

The qualitative data collected for this study were used to inform the construction of a quantitative survey, the purpose of which is to identify and explain the factors shaping students’ decision to study or not to study a LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so. To facilitate this, the students’ responses were analysed and grouped according to the component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to which they related. Questions were then formulated, with each question relating to one of the three components of the theory. The results of the quantitative phase of the study will be presented and discussed in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven will then compare the analysis of the quantitative data to the analyses presented in this chapter, to determine whether the findings are similar or different. The mixed-method approach to data collection adopted in this study has facilitated this comparison and, therefore, has served to provide a more comprehensive examination of the factors shaping students’ subject choices than would be possible using only one method of data collection.
CHAPTER SIX

Results of the Quantitative Phase

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative phase of the study are reported. As outlined earlier, the qualitative data collected for the study were analysed and used to inform the construction of a second survey, which was then administered to a sample of students from three secondary schools within Queensland\(^1\). All of the sites in which the surveys were administered were described in Chapter Four and figures displaying the proportion of students in each year level surveyed were provided. This chapter reports on the overall findings of the survey instrument and presents the data descriptively and inferentially. Initially, general data concerning the overall composition of the group are provided. Next, the results of two factor analyses are reported. This is followed by a descriptive analysis of the students’ responses to the survey on a question-by-question basis and the results are compared for students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not studying a LOTE. Following this, a series of post-hoc comparisons examining the influence of gender, the school attended by the students, their background of LOTE study and their linguistic background are presented. All data are examined and discussed in relation to the identified components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (i.e., Attitude Towards the Behaviour, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioural Control).

1. Survey

1.1 Characteristics of the Respondents to the Survey

Of the 1259 students who participated in the survey, 49.5% were male. The breakdown of participants across year levels was:

- Year 9 – 30.1%
- Year 10 – 27.2%
- Year 11 – 21.8%
- Year 12 – 20.9%

\(^1\) The qualitative data discussed in Chapter Five and the quantitative data discussed in this chapter were collected from different schools – no overlap exists between the two data samples.
Approximately one third (32.8%) of the students surveyed indicated that they had chosen to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8, although at the time of the survey, only 22.9% of students were actively involved in LOTE study. This indicates that 10% of the students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey had previously studied it as an elective, but had chosen to discontinue to study the subject. Of the students who had studied a LOTE at some stage after Year 8, over half (51.1%) had chosen to study Japanese and 44.1% had chosen to study French. Given that these were the only two languages offered at the schools surveyed, it can be assumed that students citing other languages had studied these languages at other schools.

A total of 16.3% of respondents indicated that they used a LOTE at home with their family, with Chinese (26.3%), Greek (11.7%) and Indian (5.9%) being the most commonly cited languages. Over 95% of respondents had participated in LOTE study in Year 8, with French (55.4%) and Japanese (40.4%) accounting for a majority of these students. A small proportion of students (2.4%) indicated that they had studied two languages as electives after Year 8, although only 1.4% of respondents were studying two languages at the time of the survey. The majority of respondents (93%) had been engaged in LOTE study at primary school, with French (46.3%) and Japanese (32.4%) being the most widely studied languages. German (6.1%) and Italian (5.7%) were the only other two languages studied at primary school by more than 5% of respondents. Neither language was offered at any of the three secondary schools that participated in the survey. Just over one tenth (11.2%) of respondents had studied more than one LOTE at primary school.

As well as being asked to give details about their general experiences with LOTE study, the students were asked several questions concerning their attitudes towards and achievements in language study. All students were asked whether they enjoyed studying languages. Almost one quarter (24.8%) of respondents said that they enjoyed LOTE study, 35.2% said that they did not enjoy it, while 40% indicated that they enjoyed LOTE study “sometimes”. Students were asked to indicate the academic grade that they had been awarded the last time they had studied a language. Over half of the respondents (55.2%) indicated that they had been awarded the top two grade levels (A - 27.7% and B – 27.5%), while a further third (32.4%) indicated that they had been awarded a passing grade of ‘C’. Only 12.5% of students indicated that they had not been awarded a passing grade (Chapter Five has a more detailed discussion of what students consider to be a passing grade). That the majority of students achieved what may be described as ‘good’ grades in LOTE subjects suggests that in spite of the
findings of the qualitative phase of this study, students do not necessarily choose not to study a LOTE because they receive ‘poor’ grades. This concept will be explored further in this chapter in conjunction with an analysis of relevant questions from the survey.

When asked to rank their own ability in the language that they had most recently studied on a Likert scale of 1-5 (with “1 = Very Poor; 5 = Very Good” indicated on the survey), 59.7% ranked themselves at either “three” (33.1%) or “four” (26.6%). Over a quarter (28.1%) of respondents ranked themselves at only “two” (16.2%) or “one” (11.9%), while only 12.1% gave themselves the top ranking of “five” for their ability in the language that they had most recently studied.

1.2 Survey Instrument

In the survey instrument developed for Survey Two, students were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements concerning the study of LOTE and the process they followed when choosing their subjects. Each of the questions was related to one of the three main aspects of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Attitude Towards the Behaviour, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioural Control), and the presentation of results is structured around these three theoretical elements. For each element, the students’ responses are categorised into those given by students who are currently studying a LOTE, and those who are not. Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements presented in a number of Likert-scale categories (Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The categories “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, and “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” have been combined in this presentation of data, as a useful way to categorise the data around agreement/disagreement.

2. Statistical Analyses of the Data

The data from Survey Two were subjected to some statistical analyses using the SPSS package. This included descriptive analyses, factor analyses and some inferential, comparative analyses. The descriptive analyses included distributions of response frequency for the questionnaire items (Appendix 5) and the means and standard deviations of responses to the Likert-scale items used in the study. In addition, a statistical comparison was conducted in relation to the major focus of the study, in which responses given by students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey were compared with the responses of students who were not currently studying a LOTE. Next, a small number of other variables that were identified in the literature as being
relevant to the study, or identified in the examination of the qualitative data, were compared in some post-hoc analyses. These included the possible influence of students’ gender, non-English speaking background, school location and experience with LOTE at the secondary school level.

### 2.1 The Factor Analysis

The factor analysis was conducted to identify the major groupings of variance across item responses, how these could be best explained and to what extent they matched the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. In the first factor analysis, five factors or components were found to account for almost half of the observed variance (45%). These are shown in Table 6.1, which also shows the associated components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. It can be noted that Component One (described as ‘Positive attitude towards LOTE study and Awareness of its benefits’) accounted for almost 24 percent of the variance in the factor analysis. Other items from the survey only accounted for a small part of the variance and did not cluster in a manner that allowed their identification as specific factors. Consequently, they were uninterpretable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Related Component of Theory of Planned Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards LOTE study and awareness of its benefits</td>
<td>Attitude towards the Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Importance of perceived benefits to be gained from studying a LOTE</td>
<td>Attitude towards the Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Subjective Norms – Relative importance</td>
<td>Subjective Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Disagreement with negative statements concerning LOTE</td>
<td>Attitude towards the Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Positive statements made about teachers and LOTE</td>
<td>Attitude towards the Behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those elements that comprised the five factors are shown in Table A.1 (Appendix 4), as a Principal Component matrix of correlations between the factor components and particular questionnaire items. It can be noted that there are significant
correlation coefficients among many items for Component One (24% of the overall variance) and a small number of items significantly correlated with the other factors. The five components identified in the first order factor analysis are described as follows:

2.1.1 Component 1

This component relates most closely to the theoretical domain, Attitude Towards the Behaviour. Consistently high positive item ratings were given about learning a LOTE as being useful for career purposes, getting a good OP, a good job and as being fun and interesting. More specifically, significant positive correlations among items within this component show associations between LOTE study and:

- “Getting a good OP” and “getting a good job”;  
- the influences on the students’ decisions to study a LOTE provided by “parents”, “friends”, “language teachers”, and “family members”;  
- LOTE study being seen as being “fun” and “interesting” and that they had “good (LOTE) teachers”, who were viewed as “working hard” to achieve these outcomes, and  
- “appreciating and understanding other cultures”, “overseas travel” and “communicating with people who may not speak English”.

Significant negative correlations found among responses in this component related to:

- LOTE being a waste of time;  
- wanting to spend more time studying English instead of a LOTE, and  
- that because “Most people in Australia speak English, we don’t need to study a LOTE”.

2.1.2 Component 2

The items within this component may be best described as relating to the perceived importance of benefits gained from LOTE study. These items are also reflective of the theoretical dimension, Attitude Towards the Behaviour. The items within this component also correlated significantly in a second order factor analysis with items in Component 1, as they examined the rated importance of the similar items in that component. Significant positive correlations show that LOTE study was consistently seen as being highly important, as it was:
• “not a waste of time”, “not boring”, “fun” and “interesting”;
• “relevant for future career”, “getting a good job”, useful”, and
• related to “work in the tourism industry”.

2.1.3 Component 3

This component reflects respondents’ views on the relative importance of Subjective Norms, another theoretical dimension, in their decision to study a LOTE. They show consistently positive correlations among item responses that, for subject choice, reflect the importance of:
• “family members”;
• “parents”;
• “friends”, and
• “teachers”.

A significant negative correlation was observed for the influence of other family members on their choice to study a LOTE, indicating that the students surveyed did not associate the opinions of other family members with making their subject choices.

2.1.4 Component 4

This component contains items that relate to respondents’ degree of disagreement with those items that contained a negative statement about LOTE study. This grouping of items can be seen to relate to the theoretical domain, Attitude Towards the Behaviour. LOTE study was consistently seen in this grouping as NOT:
• being “too difficult”;
• being “boring;
• “a waste of time”; and also
• that if they did not like their LOTE teacher, they would not drop out of LOTE study.

2.1.5 Component 5

This component also relates to the theoretical dimension, Attitude Towards the Behaviour. The component comprises those items that reflect a positive statement about LOTE study and significant positive item correlations about:
• teachers working hard to promote LOTE study;
• having good LOTE teachers at their school;
• being encouraged by teachers to consider studying LOTE subjects, and also
that teachers’ advice is more important than parents’ advice about LOTE study. As indicated, these five components accounted for almost half of the observed variance among response patterns (45%) and they all related to two of the three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (the third, Perceived Behavioural Control, did not feature significantly amongst the students’ responses).

As described, a second order factor analysis was computed between the components of the five initially identified factors. This second factor analysis assists in identifying the structure among these factors. It shows that the major associative links are between Factor 1 and Factor 2, and between Factors 4 and 5. There is also a strong link between Factors 1 and 5. This confirms that most of the variance among item scores will be accounted for in Attitude Towards the Behaviour and Subjective Norms, with no pattern of variance within the third component, Perceived Behavioural Control (Table A.2 in Appendix 4). As such, the two factor analyses show that the items in Survey Two are consistent with the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and identify groups of items that may be associated with each component, and how these components relate to each other. Of the three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Attitude Towards the Behaviour and Subjective Norms were represented most strongly in the students’ responses.

2.2 Comparative Statistical Analyses

A major focus of the study was to identify the factors that shape students’ decisions to study a LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12. The first statistical analysis involved a planned comparison of the responses (specifically the percentage of combined “strongly agree” and “agree” rankings) of those students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not studying a LOTE. The comparison was conducted across the three components identified within the data in the context of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

2.2.1 Attitude Towards the Behaviour

Table A.3 in Appendix 5 shows responses to questions examining Attitude Towards the Behaviour by the 22.9% of students who were studying LOTE at the time of the survey. A majority of students (>80%) agreed with the statements made in most of the items presented to them. Students studying a LOTE at the time of the survey believed that doing so enabled them to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20 – 88.9%); would help them to travel overseas (Q26 – 84.3%), and helped them to
appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18 – 83.6%). Other items with which a majority of respondents agreed included “People who want to work in the tourism industry should study a LOTE” (Q59 - 87.5%); “I am interested in learning languages” (Q62 - 83.7%); “Studying LOTE is interesting” (Q14 - 79.5%); “My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision to continue to study a LOTE” (Q65 - 75.1%); “Studying a LOTE is fun” (Q22 - 62%), and “I study LOTE because I am good at languages” (Q70 - 57.7%). Generally, those studying LOTE had favourable views of the LOTE teachers at their school, as indicated by the responses to the following items: “In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school” (Q58 - 74.6%), “The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting” (Q57 - 71.2%) and “The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE” (Q56 - 70.1%). A majority of respondents felt that studying a LOTE would help them to both obtain a good OP (Q24 - 53.6%) and find a good job (Q16 - 51.1%). Relatively few students (<30%) chose to study LOTE because they had a good LOTE teacher (Q63 - 23%), felt that they would discontinue to study a LOTE if they did not like their teacher (Q54 - 20.1%) or believed that studying languages was too difficult (Q32 - 11.1%) or a waste of time (Q34 - 9.7%).

Table A.4 in Appendix 5 displays responses to questions examining Attitude Towards the Behaviour by the 71% of students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. While those students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey agreed with many of the items relating to the benefits to be gained from studying a LOTE (e.g., that it enables them to communicate with speakers of other languages – Q20 - 61.5%), in general, they believed that studying a LOTE was not relevant to their future career (Q36 - 60.7%) and that it was boring (Q30 - 52.7%) or was not fun (Q22 - 52%). Almost half of the respondents (Q61 - 47.8%) felt that more time should be devoted to studying English instead of studying LOTE, while 44.1% did not feel that studying a LOTE would help them to find a good job (Q16). As mentioned, students who studied a LOTE generally held positive views about the LOTE teachers at their schools, but this was not true for students who did not study a LOTE. Only one third of respondents felt that they did not have good LOTE teachers at their school (Q58 - 33.4%), that the teachers did not work hard to promote LOTE (Q57 - 35.4%) and that they did not work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q56 - 34.1%). The data presented in the table clearly indicate that LOTE teachers were not viewed favourably by a majority of students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. Figure 6.1 below compares the responses given to items examining Attitude
Towards the Behaviour by respondents who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not.

![Chart](image)

Figure 6.1 LOTE Study - Attitude toward the Behaviour

As shown in Figure 6.1, the patterns of responses to questions examining Attitude Towards the Behaviour varied, although a pattern of difference between the two groups is evident. Greater proportions of students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey agreed with positive statements concerning LOTE study than students who were not studying a LOTE (Items 14-28). Similarly, greater proportions of students who were not studying a LOTE agreed with negative statements concerning LOTE study (Items 30-54) than did students who were studying a LOTE. Items 56-58, relating to students’ perceptions of the efforts and quality of their LOTE teachers, revealed marked differences between the responses of the two groups. Students studying a LOTE had high opinions of their teachers and their efforts, whereas those not studying a LOTE did not indicate that they had positive attitudes towards their former LOTE teachers.

A statistical comparison was conducted of the data reported for these two groups. Specifically, the responses (percentage of combined “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings) for those studying a LOTE were compared to those not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. A ‘t-test’ for comparison of independent samples was conducted on these data. This showed that there was no significant difference between
Chapter 6: Results of the Quantitative Phase

the rankings of the students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not, to the survey items examining Attitudes Towards the Behaviour ($t = 0.94; \text{df} = 40; p. = 0.35$). However, there was also no significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation between the responses of these two groups ($rs = 0.33; \text{df} = 19; p. = 0.14$), with less than 15% of common variance between the item scores of these two groups. In fact, several items in this component were ranked very differently by students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not. For example, “Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career” (Q36) was ranked 3rd highest by students not studying a LOTE and 18th by those studying a LOTE. Similarly, “Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP” (Q24) was ranked 14th highest by students studying a LOTE and 28th highest by those not studying a LOTE. Other items that were ranked very differently by students in the two different groups included Q30 - “Studying LOTE is boring” (ranked 7th by students not studying a LOTE and 19th by those who were), and Q58 - “In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school” (ranked 8th by students studying a LOTE and 20th by those who were not). In summary, although the degree of difference on item scores between the two groups did not reach statistically significant difference in this study, the patterns of mean scores showed no degree of correlation that would suggest that they were similar in any way. The different patterns of item rankings reflect some of the qualitative differences identified in Chapter Five between the two groups of students in terms of their Attitudes Towards the Behaviour of choosing to study or not to study LOTE.

2.2.2 Subjective Norms

In the theoretical context of this study, Subjective Norms are concerned with those people whom students believe influence them when they are making decisions. Table A.5 in Appendix 5 displays responses to questions examining Subjective Norms by the 22.9% of students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. The majority of students seek the advice of their parents (80.2%) and other family members (51.7%) when choosing their subjects. Most students reported that their language teachers encouraged them to study a LOTE (68.4%) and that their parents also felt that they should study a LOTE (61.8%). In contrast, however, 63.2% of respondents indicated that they were not studying a LOTE because their parents wanted them to do so (i.e., their parents had not forced them to study LOTE). A majority of students did not consult their teachers when choosing their subjects (55.4%), and it is notable that
44.5% of respondents consulted their friends for advice. However, few students indicated that they studied a LOTE because their friends were studying it (9.4%).

Table A6 in Appendix 5 displays responses to questions examining Subjective Norms by students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. As with students who study a LOTE, the majority of those who do not study a LOTE consult their parents when choosing their subjects (73.1%). While just under half of the respondents indicated that their teachers encouraged them to continue with their language studies, (46.2%), approximately two thirds felt that neither their parents (65.1%) nor other family members (65.3%) thought that they should be studying a LOTE. Only 10.2% of students indicated that they were not studying a LOTE because their parents did not want them to do so.

Figure 6.2 below compares the responses to items examining Subjective Norms by respondents who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not.

![Figure 6.2 LOTE Study - Subjective Norms](image)

Figure 6.2 demonstrates that similar proportions of students studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not, consulted their teachers, parents, other family members and friends (i.e., their Subjective Norms) when choosing their subjects (Items 40, 43, 47 and 50 respectively). However, the responses given by students to questions relating to whether their Subjective Norms felt that they should study a LOTE or not, differed between the two groups, particularly regarding parents, other family members and friends (for example, over 60% of students studying a LOTE indicated
that their parents wanted them to do so, while less than 15% of students not studying a LOTE indicated that their parents wanted them to do so. Close to half (46.2%) of the students not studying a LOTE indicated that their teachers had wanted them to do so.

A ‘t-test’ for comparison of independent samples conducted on these data, showed no significant difference between the mean scores of the students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not for survey items examining Subjective Norms (t = 1.68; df = 14; p. = 0.11). There was a significant positive Spearman Rank Order Correlation between the item scores of these two groups (rs > 0.99; df = 7; p. <0.05). This indicates strong similarities between their patterns of response.

2.2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control

For this study, Perceived Behavioural Control refers to the extent to which students believe they have control over their choice to study or not to study a LOTE. Table A.7 in Appendix 5 displays responses to questions examining Perceived Behavioural Control by students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. As shown in Table A7, almost 70% of students felt that it was easy for them to choose to study a LOTE at their school, and just over one third of respondents would like to have studied a different LOTE than the one that they studied. This would seem to reflect subject availability at the schools attended by the students.

Table A.8 in Appendix 5 displays responses to questions examining Perceived Behavioural Control by students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey. Approximately one quarter (22.3%) of respondents indicated that their perceived inability to do well in a LOTE in earlier years had prevented them from choosing to study a LOTE. A majority (60%) reported that timetable clashes had not prevented them from choosing to study a LOTE subject.

As few items relating to Perceived Behavioural Control were identified in the qualitative stage of this study or in the Factor analyses, inferential statistical analysis of this component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is not feasible.

2.3 Post-hoc statistical comparisons

As indicated, a number of post-hoc comparisons of data were conducted relating to gender, non-English speaking backgrounds, school location and experience with LOTE study at the secondary school level. The results of these comparisons are presented below.
2.3.1 Gender Differences

An analysis was conducted to examine the responses given by males and females to determine if differences existed between the two groups. Tables A.9 and A.10 in Appendix 5 display responses to questions relating to Attitude Towards the Behaviour by females and males, while Figure 6.3 depicts the responses given by males and females to these questions.

![Figure 6.3 Gender - Attitude Toward the Behaviour](image)

As shown in Figure 6.3 above, male and female students gave similar patterns of response for items examining Attitude Towards the Behaviour, although a greater proportion of females agreed with positive statements regarding LOTE study than did males (Items 14-28). A greater proportion of males than females agreed with Items 30-38, which featured negative statements regarding LOTE study such as “Studying LOTE is boring” (Q30) and “Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career” (Q36). Items 56-58 concerned students’ opinions regarding the quality and efforts of the LOTE teachers at their school and it is evident from the data that female students held their LOTE teachers in higher regard than did male students.

A ‘t-test’ for comparison of independent samples conducted on the data in Figure 6.3 showed that there was no significant difference between the female and male respondents to survey items reflecting Attitude Towards the Behaviour ($t = 0.86; df = 34; p = 0.39$). Reflecting the item-specific differences described above, there was also
no significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation for the responses of these two groups (rs = 0.38; df = 16; p. = 0.11), with less than 15% of common variance between the item scores of these gender groups. Several items on this variable were ranked very differently by females and males; for example, “Studying LOTE is interesting” (Q14) was ranked 5th highest by females and 15th by males. Similarly, “Studying LOTE is boring” (Q30) was ranked 14th highest by females and 2nd highest by male respondents. Although no overall significant differences were found between males and females, the different patterns of individual item rankings reflect some of the differences between male and female respondents in terms of their Attitudes Towards the Behaviour of choosing to study or not to study LOTE.

Tables A.11 and A.12 in Appendix 5, and Figure 6.4 display responses to questions relating to Subjective Norms by females and males.

![Figure 6.4 Gender - Subjective Norms](image-url)

As shown in Figure 6.4, male and female students gave similar patterns of responses for items examining Subjective Norms. A ‘t-test’ comparison for this component showed that there was also no significant difference between the mean scores of the female and male respondents for survey items reflecting Subjective Norms (t = 1.12; df = 14; p. = 0.28). Furthermore, there was a significant Spearman Rank
Order Correlation between the item scores of these two groups (rs > 0.99; df = 7; p. <0.05). In contrast to items reflecting Attitude Towards the Behaviour, items associated with Subjective Norms showed great commonality between female and male respondents, with a high degree of consistency among the sources of influence on their decision making.

Tables A.13 and A.14 in Appendix 5 display responses to the only question addressing the component of Perceived Behaviour Control relating to gender. As discussed earlier, since few items relating to Perceived Behavioural Control were identified in the qualitative stage or in the Factor analyses in this study, inferential statistical analysis of this component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is not feasible.

2.3.2 Possible School Factors

Inferential statistical analyses were also conducted on the responses of students at the three different research sites. Tables A.15, A.16 and A.17 in Appendix 5 show responses to questions relating to Attitude Towards the Behaviour by students at City SHS, Coastal SHS and Western SHS respectively. Figure 6.5 on the following page displays these data.
Figure 6.5 School Comparisons – Attitude Towards the Behaviour
For the majority of the items, similar patterns of responses were given by students at the three different schools, although there were some differences for certain groups of items. In general, greater proportions of students attending City State High School agreed with positive statements concerning LOTE than students attending Western State High School and, in particular, Coastal State High School (Items 14-28). For example, while 51.6% of respondents at City SHS indicated that studying LOTE was interesting (Q14), only 37.4% of respondents at Coastal SHS felt the same way (the corresponding figure for Western SHS was 49.3%). Coastal SHS consistently had the lowest proportion of students agreeing with positive statements concerning LOTE study and the highest proportion agreeing with negative statements concerning LOTE study (Items 30-54). For example, 56.5% of respondents at Coastal SHS indicated that studying LOTE was boring (Q30) compared to 40.8% at City SHS and 42.7% at Western SHS.

The most marked differences in the patterns of responses given by students at the three schools occurred for questions relating to the quality and efforts of their school’s LOTE teachers (Items 56-58). At City SHS, approximately 50% of students felt that the LOTE teachers at their school were good (49.9%), worked hard to promote LOTE at the school (51.2%) and worked hard to make LOTE interesting (49.9%). In contrast, at Coastal SHS, only 10.1% of students felt that their LOTE teachers were good and approximately 18% felt that they worked hard to promote LOTE and make it interesting. More favourable attitudes were held towards LOTE teachers at Western SHS, where 55% of respondents felt that they worked hard to promote LOTE in their school, although fewer students felt that the LOTE teachers were good (37.3%) or worked hard to make LOTE interesting (37.3%).

An analysis of variance of the data showed that the three schools presented essentially the same patterns of responses. Even though the mean scores at Coastal SHS (35.89) were, on average, lower than the mean scores at City SHS (41.04) and Western SHS (41.29), they were not significantly different (F = 0.63; df = 2; P = 0.54). There were, however, some items which showed variation in their ranking at the different schools. For example, the responses to Question 56 (“The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE”) and Question 58 (“In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school”) showed that students at Coastal SHS were very critical of their LOTE teachers, while students at City SHS and Western SHS had more favourable attitudes towards their teachers and their efforts at promoting LOTE subjects at their schools.
The responses given to Question 24 (“Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP”) indicated that students at Coastal SHS believed more strongly that LOTE study was not beneficial to their OP than did the students at City SHS and Western SHS.

Tables A.18, A.19 and A.20 in Appendix 5 show responses to questions relating to Subjective Norms by students at the three different schools, and Figure 6.6 depicts the data for all three schools. Again, no significant differences are observed.

Figure 6.6 Schools – Subjective Norms

2.3.3 Prior Experience with Studying a LOTE at the Secondary Level

Statistical comparisons were also conducted on the responses of students who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8 and those who had not studied a LOTE at any stage after Year 8. It is important to note that while the analysis conducted earlier focused on students who were actually studying a LOTE at the time of the survey and those who were not, this current analysis includes students who had studied LOTE as an elective at some stage after Year 8, but were not necessarily studying it at the time of the survey (i.e., they had chosen to discontinue to study a LOTE after having initially made the decision to study it).
2.3.4 LOTE Studied After Year 8

Tables A.21 and A.22 in Appendix 5, and Figure 6.7 show responses to questions relating to Attitude Towards the Behaviour by the 32.8% of students who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8 and the 67.2% who had not.

Students who had chosen to study a LOTE after Year 8 agreed with many of the statements that highlighted the positive aspects of learning a LOTE. More than 70% of respondents indicated that studying a LOTE helped them to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20 - 84.3%), helped them to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18 - 79.2%), would help them to travel overseas (Q26 - 76.5%) and that it was interesting (Q14 - 72.8%). Over half (Q22 - 52.6%) of the respondents indicated that studying LOTE was fun. Relatively few respondents (>30%) considered LOTE to be boring (Q30 - 27.6%), or believed that students should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61 - 20.8%). Only 12.6% of respondents considered studying LOTE to be a waste of time (Q34).

The data presented above are very similar to those given by students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey (discussed earlier in this chapter). This suggests that regardless of how long they study a LOTE for as an elective, all students who make the decision to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8 have similar
attitudes towards LOTE study and that these attitudes are generally positive. Small differences occurred in the proportions of students responding positively to questions regarding LOTE study, but these differences were all less than 10% (for example, 72.8% of students who had chosen to study LOTE as an elective at some stage after Year 8 indicated that studying a LOTE was interesting [Q14], compared to 79.5% of those students who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey).

A majority of students (60.5%) who had chosen not to study a LOTE after Year 8 indicated that studying LOTE had nothing to do with their career (Q36), while 59.4% believed that choosing to study a LOTE would have prevented them from choosing other electives that they wanted to study (Q74). While most respondents acknowledged that studying LOTE helps them to communicate with speakers of other languages and to appreciate other cultures (Q20 - 59.4% and Q18 - 55% respectively), a similar proportion of respondents (54.5%) considered LOTE to be boring (Q30). Almost half (49.6%) believed that students should spend more time studying English instead of studying a LOTE (Q61). Only 35.8% of respondents felt that studying LOTE was interesting (Q14), while approximately one fifth (21.6%) considered it to be fun (Q22). The assertion that studying LOTE is of benefit for future career prospects (Q16), or to an OP score (Q24), was supported by very few respondents (22.1% and 15% respectively). Again, these data are very similar to those given by students who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey (discussed earlier in this chapter).

A ‘t-test’ comparison conducted on these data showed that there was no significant difference between the responses given by students who had chosen to study a LOTE after Year 8 and those who had not, to survey items reflecting Attitude Towards the Behaviour (t = 0.89; df = 40; p = 0.37). There was also no significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation between the responses of these two groups (rs = 0.33; df = 19; p = 0.14), with less than 10% of common variance between the item scores of the two groups. This reflects the considerable variability among the responses to survey items by the two groups. Several items on this variable were ranked differently by students who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage beyond Year 8 and those who had not. For example, “Studying LOTE is fun” (Q22) was ranked 9th highest by students who had chosen to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8, and 24th by those who had not. Indicating that teachers may play a significant role in students’ decision to study or not to study a LOTE, items portraying teachers in a positive light were ranked much more highly by those who had chosen to study a LOTE.
at some stage after Year 8 than by those who had not. For example, Question 56 (“The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE”), Question 57 (“The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting”) and Question 58 (“In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school”) were ranked 8th, 7th and 6th by students who had chosen to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8, but those who had not chosen to study a LOTE ranked them 17th, 20th and 22nd respectively. Over half (51.8%) of the students who had not elected to study a LOTE indicated that if they had liked their LOTE teacher, they would have continued to study LOTE (Q78), although only 30.4% indicated that they were not studying a LOTE because they had not had good LOTE teachers in the past (Q76). Approximately one quarter (25.9%) of students who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8 indicated that if they did not like their LOTE teacher, they would drop the subject (Q54).

Tables A.23 and A.24 in Appendix 5, and Figure 6.8 display responses to questions relating to Subjective Norms by students who had chosen to study a LOTE at some stage beyond Year 8 and those who had not.

![Figure 6.8 LOTE Studied After Year 8 – Subjective Norms](image)

Reflecting the variability among the data, a ‘t-test’ comparison of data on Subjective Norms did not show a significant difference between the mean scores of the students who had chosen to study a LOTE after Yr 8 and those who had not (t = 1.4; df = 14; p. = 0.18), nor was there a significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation between

Chapter 6: Results of the Quantitative Phase
the item scores of these two groups (rs = 0.64; p >0.05). However, while over 50% of students who had chosen to study a LOTE indicated that both their parents and their teachers had encouraged them to study a LOTE, less than a quarter of students who had not chosen to study a LOTE indicated that their parents or teachers had encouraged them to continue with their LOTE studies (Q41 and Q44).

2.3.5 Students of Non-English Speaking Background

Comparative statistical analyses were conducted on the responses of students of non-English speaking background (NESB) and students who spoke only English at home (ESB). Tables A.25 and A.26 in Appendix 5, and Figure 6.9 display responses to questions relating to Attitude Towards the Behaviour by the 16.3% of NESB students and the 83.7% who were of ESB.

![Figure 6.9 Linguistic Background – Attitude Towards the Behaviour](image)

In general, students of NESB were more likely to agree with statements focusing on the positive aspects of LOTE study than were students of ESB. For example, while 84.9% of NESB students indicated that studying a LOTE enabled them to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20), only 64.5% of ESB students felt the same way. Similarly, 80.5% of NESB students indicated that studying a LOTE helped them to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18), while 59.5% of ESB students indicated that they agreed with this statement.

However, a ‘t-test’ comparison of the data from the two groups showed no significant difference between the mean scores of NESB students and ESB students for survey items reflecting Attitude Towards the Behaviour (t = 0.43; df = 40; p = 0.66).
The high variance among the responses of the NESB group (SD = 23) is possibly reflected in the non-significant finding on this comparison. There was a significant positive Spearman Rank Order Correlation between the item scores of the two groups (rs = 0.62; df = 19; p <0.01), further revealing an overall similarity in the pattern of results.

Tables A.27 and A.28 in Appendix 5, and Figure 6.10 show responses to questions relating to Subjective Norms by students of non-English speaking background and those of English speaking background.

![Figure 6.10 Linguistic Background – Subjective Norms](image)

A ‘t-test’ comparison between the mean scores of the two groups for Subjective Norms showed no significant difference (t = 0.9; df = 14; p. = 0.38), and there was a significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation between the item scores of these two groups (rs = 0.83; p. <0.05), further confirming a similar response pattern.

3. **Summary**

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative phase of the study have been reported descriptively and inferentially. The quantitative data analysed were collected using a survey instrument, which was administered to 1259 students attending three different high schools across the state of Queensland. Two related factor analyses were
conducted on the data, which initially identified five components that accounted for 45% of the variance observed across response patterns to items in the survey. It was found that Component One (described as Positive Attitudes Towards LOTE Study and Awareness of its Benefits) accounted for almost 24 percent of the variance in the factor analysis. This indicates that students who chose to study LOTE were most likely to be those who held positive attitudes towards LOTE study and who were aware of its benefits, and that responses relating to these concepts correlated significantly with students’ choices regarding LOTE study. The other components identified as contributing most to the variance were Importance of Perceived Benefits to be Gained from Studying a LOTE; Subjective Norms – Relative Importance (i.e., the influence on students’ subject choices of people perceived to be important to them); Disagreement With Negative Statements Concerning LOTE; and Positive Statements Made About Teachers and LOTE. In general, students who were not studying LOTE did not hold positive attitudes towards LOTE study, nor did they hold favourable attitudes towards the LOTE teachers at their school in terms of the quality of instruction, their efforts to make LOTE interesting or their efforts to promote the study of LOTE within the school.

Comparative statistical analyses were also conducted on the data sets to identify and examine differences and similarities between the responses given by students who had chosen to study a LOTE as an elective at the time of the survey and those who had not. The first construct of the Theory of Planned Behaviour that was examined was Attitude Towards the Behaviour. While the responses to many items in the survey differed between the two groups, the overall analysis of the data indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups, nor was there a significant Spearman Rank Order correlation for the responses given. The latter finding reflects the dissimilarity between the patterns of responses of the two groups and the great variability within items. For items examining Subjective Norms, there was no significant difference between the two groups and a significant positive Spearman Rank Order correlation between the responses given by the two groups, indicating a similar pattern of responses.

A number of post-hoc analyses were conducted on the data relating to gender, students of non-English speaking background, school location and experience with LOTE study at the secondary school level. In none of these comparisons was a statistically significant difference observed between the groups compared. To a large degree, this reflected the extent of the variability among the responses to individual
items. In some cases, there were significant rank order correlations, evidencing a similar pattern of responses by the groups compared (e.g., there was frequently a significant Spearman Rank Order correlation between the groups in terms of Subjective Norms). In other cases, there was no significant rank order correlation, as there were strong differences among the patterns of responses by the groups compared (e.g., there was no correlation when items relating to Attitude Towards the Behaviour were examined). These item-specific differences are important, as they relate to the findings of the qualitative phase of the study as described in Chapter Five.

The third element of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Perceived Behavioural Control, did not figure significantly in the students’ responses to the survey and, consequently, inferential statistical analysis of this component was not feasible. Survey items examining this component sought to determine the extent to which students felt that they had control over their subject choices, and dealt with issues such as timetabling constraints and the students’ own perceived ability to cope successfully with LOTE studies. In the analyses that could be conducted, a majority of students felt that it was not difficult for them to be able to choose to study a LOTE at their school, nor did they feel that their results had led them to choose not to study LOTE subjects and thus felt that they had control over their choices in this respect. This suggests that the Perceived Behavioural Control component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour did not have a major influence on these students’ decisions to study or not to study a LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so.

Chapters Five and Six have presented, analysed and summarised the data collected for the qualitative and quantitative phases of this research study. Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter of this thesis, integrates the findings of both of the major phases of the study, and interprets these in the contexts of the theory adopted and the literature reviewed.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to analyse factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12 in Queensland State secondary schools. The Theory of Planned Behaviour has guided this research study. In the previous two chapters, I presented the findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study. This chapter integrates the qualitative and quantitative findings, and discusses them in the context of both the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the relevant literature. I also assess the utility of a mixed-method approach to the study in light of the similarities and differences between the findings of the two different forms of data. In addition, I reflect on the affordances offered by deploying the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This chapter then reflects on the implications of the findings of the study for policy and practice concerning Languages Other Than English, with consideration given to current developments in LOTE teaching. The limitations of the study are also outlined, and suggestions for the direction of future research are given.

1. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The collection of two different forms of data for this study has allowed for a comprehensive discussion of the factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so. The benefits of using a mixed-methods approach were evident in that the findings of the qualitative phase of the study were able to be related to the findings of the quantitative phase. While the qualitative findings provided a rich description and understanding of the factors shaping students’ decisions in the students’ own words, the quantitative findings served to identify which of the factors identified in the qualitative phase were also evident in a larger population of students. The findings of both phases can be viewed in isolation, but combined they provide an interesting and detailed picture of the factors shaping students’ subject choices.

Significant issues were identified in the qualitative data that were also raised in the relative proportions and rankings among the quantitative data. On the other hand, some issues that appeared to be salient in the qualitative data were not able to achieve...
significant statistical representation in the quantitative analysis. Each of these issues is discussed below.

In Chapter Three, it was argued that students’ subject choices are shaped by the influence of structural and individual factors and the interplay between the two. Individual factors were identified as those which affect students on a personal level and over which they have a certain degree of control, in that they can determine the degree to which they are influenced by such factors. These factors include the influence of parents, teachers and friends on students’ attitude towards LOTE study, and the role played by the students’ interests and their school results in previous LOTE studies in informing their subject choices. Structural factors, on the other hand, were identified as those over which the student has little or no control, and include school factors and issues relating to gender. Individual factors relate primarily to two of the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, namely Attitude Towards the Behaviour and Subjective Norms, while structural factors related to Perceived Behavioural Control. The issues raised in the qualitative and quantitative data will be discussed with respect to these components.

1.1 Attitude towards LOTE study

Students’ attitudes towards LOTE study are influenced by a variety of factors. Whether students enjoy LOTE study or not became an important issue in this research study. The qualitative data collected for the study revealed that students who choose to study LOTE subjects generally make favourable comments about LOTE study and appear to enjoy it, describing it as “interesting”, “fun” and “enjoyable”. Conversely, students who chose not to study a LOTE used adjectives such as “difficult”, “too hard” and “boring” to describe LOTE study. From the students’ comments, it was clear that the degree of enjoyment a student experienced when studying a LOTE, and the extent of their interest in LOTE study were major factors shaping their decision to study or not to study a LOTE after Year 8. None of the students interviewed indicated that they chose to study a LOTE even though they did not like it (i.e., liking the subject was universal, and students did not appear to be prepared to choose LOTE subjects for utilitarian reasons if they did not like the subject). However, while many students who had not chosen to study a LOTE indicated that they had not been interested in LOTE study, not all students in this group indicated that they did not enjoy learning languages. In fact, several stated that they had enjoyed their time studying LOTE, but that they had found other subjects more interesting or relevant to their future plans. These qualitative
findings were strongly supported by the results of the quantitative phase. Students who studied LOTE subjects responded positively to survey items measuring their like for, and interest in, LOTE study. While still registering a majority of respondents answering positively, “Studying LOTE is fun” was the lowest ranked ‘positive’ statement concerning LOTE study. This is an area worthy of further exploration, since 88% of students indicated that it was important to them that the subjects that they studied were fun, yet only 62% of students studying LOTE considered it as such. More significantly, only 23% of students who had chosen not to study a LOTE considered it to be a fun subject, with over half describing it as “boring”. While the qualitative data suggested that for students to choose to study a LOTE, they must find it both interesting and enjoyable, the quantitative data indicate that the ‘interest’ factor plays a stronger role in shaping students’ decision regarding LOTE study than the ‘enjoyment’ factor, although both play an important role in students’ decision making processes. These findings are consistent with the findings of a number of previous quantitative surveys conducted (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Ministry of Education, Schools Division, Victoria 1987 cited in Nicholas et al., 1993; Zammit, 1992). It is interesting to note that liking or not liking a subject would seem not to be such an important factor when choosing other subjects. For example, many students do not express a liking for mathematics but nevertheless choose it because it is considered to be a ‘core’ subject (Hipkins & Vaughan, 2002). LOTE, by contrast is not generally granted this status.

In addition to positive attitudes towards LOTE study, most students showed an awareness of the benefits to be gained through engaging in LOTE study. When asked why they study a LOTE, many students discussed issues such as the relevance of languages to their future study and career plans. Enhanced opportunities for future travel were also mentioned by students, as were the advantages of having a knowledge of different cultures and being able to communicate with speakers of other languages. In the quantitative data analysis, Component One, which contained items relating to students’ attitudes towards LOTE study and its perceived benefits, was identified as accounting for the highest proportion of variance evident in the quantitative data. Survey items relating to these issues correlated significantly with students’ decision to study a LOTE, with items relating to communicating with speakers of other languages and LOTE study facilitating overseas travel scoring very highly amongst LOTE students. While students who did not study LOTE indicated in their survey responses that they were aware of the benefits of LOTE study, items relating to these issues were
rated significantly lower by these students than they were by the students who had chosen to study a LOTE. This indicates that these issues were not considered as important to students not studying a LOTE when making their subject choices. Many of the studies conducted over the past 20 years support the finding that students often cite the enhanced opportunities for travel afforded by LOTE study and the benefits involved in having an understanding of other cultures (e.g., Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Djite, 1994; Hajdu, 2005; ACSSO & APC, 2007).

The issue of the relationship between a student’s future career plans and LOTE study is of great relevance to this study. An important point to consider is the fact that while both the qualitative and quantitative data indicated that students believed that studying a LOTE would help them to find a good job, only 30% of the students who were studying a LOTE indicated that LOTE study was useful for their future career. This is in some contrast to previous studies, which indicate that most students choose to study LOTE subjects for career reasons (e.g., Zammit, 1992; Djite, 1994; Carr, 2002; Hajdu, 2005; ACSSO & APC, 2007), and suggests that students in the current study chose to study a LOTE more out of interest than out of a perceived relevance to their future career. Not surprisingly, close to 90% of students who had chosen not to study a LOTE indicated that LOTE study was not useful for their future career, a finding that is consistent with the findings of the studies cited above. Of the studies reviewed, only the findings of Fairbairn and Pegolo’s 1982 study were consistent with the findings of the present study, where students who chose to study a LOTE did not indicate that they had done so because they considered languages to be relevant or beneficial to their career plans.

While the issue of the perceived benefits of studying a LOTE was shown to be important in this study, so too was the value placed by the students on these perceived benefits. In the quantitative data analysis, Component Two contained items relating to this issue. The second-order factor analysis showed that there was significant correlation between the items identified in Component One and those identified in Component Two. While Component One consisted of items designed to explore students’ attitudes towards LOTE study (e.g., Q16 – “Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job”), Component Two involved questions designed to measure the level of importance placed by the students on their attitudes (e.g., Q17 – “How important is it to you that you study subjects that will help you to get a good job?”). As discussed earlier, students who had chosen to study a LOTE had positive attitudes towards LOTE study.
and an awareness of the benefits involved in studying LOTE. The quantitative data revealed that these students also considered the perceived benefits to be gained from studying a LOTE to be important to them. Similarly, students who indicated that LOTE study was “not boring”, “not a waste of time” and “interesting” also indicated that these characteristics were important to them when considering which subjects to study. Students who had not chosen to study LOTE subjects also considered these issues to be important, but their beliefs that such subjects were “boring”, “would not help them to find a good job” and were “not interesting” were more influential in shaping their decisions. Specific questions assessing how relevant students considered their attitudes to be were not asked in the interviews. Such questions were, however, included in the survey as an aspect of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, to measure the relative importance of respondents’ attitudes towards their behaviour. The quantitative data demonstrate that there is an association between students’ attitudes towards LOTE study and the importance they place on these attitudes and their decision to study or not to study a LOTE.

Once again, it is interesting here to compare LOTE choices to other subject choices. The benefits from studying science, mathematics, history or English subjects are less often conceived as having direct relevance to a particular job. Utilitarian discourses are more often drawn on to support the decision to study LOTE. This inevitably leads to a more precarious status for LOTE as the ‘relevance’ of certain languages waxes and wanes in particular global and economic contexts (Slaughter, 2007).

A student’s perceived success or failure in prior LOTE studies emerged as an important factor in this study. The qualitative phase of data collection revealed that for many students, past performance in LOTE studies shaped their decision to study or not to study LOTE as an elective subject. Not surprisingly, students who had chosen to study a LOTE often cited past success in their language studies as a reason for their decision to continue with their LOTE studies, and this was supported by the quantitative data, which found that 75% of students indicated that their results in the past had influenced their decision. Many of the students interviewed also indicated that their belief that they were “good” at languages encouraged them to continue with their LOTE study, a finding which was also supported by almost 58% of the students in the survey. However, the qualitative data further indicated that receiving good results in the past did not always encourage students to continue to study LOTE subjects. This outcome was
also supported by the quantitative data, indicating that 85% of the students who had chosen not to study a LOTE reported that they had received a grade of ‘C’ or better, with 21% reporting that they had received an ‘A’ and 27% a ‘B’.

For students who had decided not to study a LOTE, the qualitative data suggested that their school results had played a significant role in their decisions, with students frequently mentioning that their results had “put them off” continuing with their LOTE study, and that LOTE was “too difficult” for them to do well in. These findings, however, were not strongly supported by the quantitative data, as only 26% of respondents indicated that their results in the past had discouraged them from studying a LOTE, and only 32% of respondents indicated that it was “too difficult” for them. Similarly, only 21% of respondents indicated that they did not study LOTE because they were not good at languages. These findings are also inconsistent with the findings of most previous research cited in this study, in which “past achievements” and “the difficulty of language study” were identified as major factors influencing students’ decisions regarding LOTE study (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1992; Djite, 1994; Carr, 2002). The reasons for the differences between the qualitative and quantitative findings are unclear at this stage. The difference could be related to the wording of the questions in the survey instrument. For instance, while students may have found LOTE to be difficult, the phrase, “too difficult”, may have been interpreted by the students as being overly negative, thus having an influence on their responses.

1.1.1 The Role of Teachers

The issue of teachers and their effects on students’ attitudes towards LOTE study generated much discussion in the qualitative phase of this study. Students’ opinions about their teachers and their efforts in teaching and promoting LOTE differed from school to school. In schools where high proportions of students chose to study LOTE, the LOTE teachers were generally viewed favourably by their students, who also praised their efforts to promote LOTE subjects and make them appealing to students. In general, more negative attitudes towards teachers and their efforts were held by students at schools where lower proportions of students elected to study LOTE. For some students, the methods used to teach LOTE at their schools seemed to discourage the students from studying a language, while for others, the methods chosen by their teachers served to motivate them and foster positive attitudes towards LOTE studies. Teachers’ personal and professional characteristics featured prominently in the students’
interviews and appeared to have a significant impact on their decisions to study or not to study a LOTE.

One of the key issues identified by students regarding LOTE teachers was the important role that they play in promoting their subject. At schools where high proportions of students elected to study LOTE subjects, students made frequent mention of how well-promoted the subject area was and the healthy status of LOTE within the school. Students made links between the popularity of the subjects and the efforts of the teachers to promote them to the student body as being worthwhile choices. At one school, students felt that while one language was well-promoted, the other received little promotion and they argued that this was reflected in the different levels of enrolment across the two languages. While some students made direct reference to the teacher’s failure to promote the subject (compared to his/her colleagues teaching the other language), others referred to the school’s lack of commitment to the subject. For these students, the teacher’s lack of effort in promoting the subject was representative of the school’s attitude towards that particular language, even though they indicated strong support from the school for the other language.

The findings of the quantitative data concur with the qualitative findings. Over 70% of students who had chosen to study a LOTE indicated that their teachers worked hard to promote LOTE and to make it interesting, compared with totals of 34% and 32% respectively amongst students who had chosen not to study a LOTE. Clearly, students who chose to study a LOTE had more positive attitudes about the efforts of their school’s LOTE teachers than did students who had chosen not to study LOTE and this was evident in both the qualitative and the quantitative data. Furthermore, the analysis of responses to the survey by students at the three different schools revealed marked differences. At a school where very few students elected to study LOTE subjects, approximately 18% of students indicated that the LOTE teachers worked hard to promote their subjects and make them interesting, whereas at a school where a greater proportion of students elected to study LOTE, approximately 50% of the student population praised the efforts of the school’s LOTE teachers. These proportions highlight the vital role that LOTE teachers play in the promotion of their subjects.

Previous research conducted in this area supports the finding that students who choose to study LOTE generally have positive attitudes towards their LOTE teachers, while students who do not choose to study LOTE tend to have less favourable attitudes towards LOTE teachers at their school (Carr, 2002; Hajdu, 2005; Pavy, 2006). The
2007 study conducted by the ACSSO & APC (in which 97% of respondents were LOTE students), found that almost 64% of students felt that languages were well taught at their school, although almost half indicated that “students ‘muck up’ more in Language classes than in other classes”, indicating that discipline is seen by many students as an issue of importance regarding LOTE study (p. 106).

A great number of students made reference to their LOTE teachers’ personal and professional characteristics and skills as an educator when discussing their attitude towards the subject. In general, teachers who were described by their students as being “good” tended to be in schools where the proportion of students studying LOTE subjects was high, whereas teachers who were described as being “bad” were more frequently in schools where enrolments in LOTE subjects were low. Interestingly, while students often referred to the types of activities planned by teachers when describing them positively, “bad” teachers were frequently linked to comments such as “I didn’t like the teacher”, suggesting the possibility of a relationship between students’ dislike for the teacher and their dislike for the subject. “Good” LOTE teachers were often said to be very helpful and to demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for their subjects, which, the students felt, helped to motivate them to continue to study the language. Issues involving attrition rates amongst LOTE teachers also became apparent in the analysis of the qualitative data, particularly at one school where a teacher considered by students to be “good” was replaced by others who, in the students’ opinions, were not as effective at promoting the subject or making it an appealing choice for the students (thus resulting in high student attrition rates in that subject). These findings are supported by the quantitative data, with almost 75% of students studying LOTE indicating that the LOTE teachers at their school were, in general, “good”, as compared to 28% of students who had chosen not to study a LOTE. Individual school data are even more revealing, with just 10% of students at one school describing their LOTE teachers as “good”, compared to almost 50% at another school. Such data suggest that the effect of students’ attitudes towards their LOTE teachers on their decision to study or not to study a LOTE cannot be undervalued.

Previous research has raised the issue of students’ like or dislike for their LOTE teachers and the effect that this has on their attitude towards LOTE subjects (including whether they choose to study them or not). In some studies, between one fifth and one quarter of students indicated that they chose not to continue to study a language because they “did not like the teacher” (e.g., Ministry of Education, Schools Division, Victoria
1987 cited in Nicholas et al., 1993; Djite, 1994). However, in none of the previous studies reviewed did students indicate that they had chosen to study a LOTE because they had liked their LOTE teacher. An exception was Pavy (2006), who indicated that for boys in particular, liking the teacher had an important influence on their attitude towards LOTE study.

The findings of the present study indicate that students’ attitude towards their LOTE teacher plays a greater role in their decision making than previous studies might suggest, particularly where the students do not like the teacher. Almost 57% of respondents indicated that it was “important” or “very important” to them that they had a good LOTE teacher, emphasising the relationship between good LOTE teachers and student motivation to choose to study LOTE subjects. Further, a fifth of students currently studying a LOTE indicated that if they did not like their LOTE teacher, they would stop studying the language. For students who had chosen not to study a LOTE, 30% indicated that they had done so because they had not had good LOTE teachers in the past, with 17% indicating that if they had liked their LOTE teacher, they would have continued to study LOTE. While this figure may not seem to be very high, it is a factor that may help to explain why almost a fifth of non-LOTE students have abandoned their LOTE studies and should be considered as relevant. The finding that a significant majority of students in the study who had chosen not to study a LOTE indicated that it was “important” or “very important” to them that they had good LOTE teachers, further highlights the impact that the teacher can have on student subject choices.

However, it would be naïve simply to blame the LOTE teacher for poor enrolments in LOTE subjects. The issue of students’ attitudes towards their teachers and the impact that this has on subject choice cannot be considered without reference to the broader social and economic context or the “cultural envelope” (Lo Bianco, 1998). As Miller (1997) argues, LOTE pedagogy and LOTE teachers’ practices cannot be considered in isolation from the working relations and conditions that LOTE teachers experience. For example, the working conditions of LOTE teachers will inevitably impact on their ability to be enthusiastic and prepared to promote LOTE in their school. Factors which can constrain LOTE teachers’ participation include the often itinerant nature of their work, involving travelling between schools and not ‘belonging’ to any one school, and the high attrition rate among LOTE teachers. Additionally, community attitudes towards the LOTE and also the backgrounds of the LOTE teachers – whether they are native speakers of the LOTE and their familiarity with the ways Australian
classrooms operate (Kamler, Santoro & Reid, 1998; Hirst, 2003) – will have an impact on teachers’ profiles and teaching practices. These institutional conditions, which are established wittingly or unwittingly, act to convey to students and teachers alike the ‘worth’ given to LOTE, and inevitably impact on the students’ attitudes and choices.

1.2 Subjective norms

An important element of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is Subjective Norms, concerning those people whom students believe influence them when they are making decisions. In the qualitative phase of this study, students discussed the attitude of their parents, teachers, other family members and friends towards LOTE study. The findings of this phase of the study indicated that the roles of parents in students’ decisions to study or not to study a LOTE were ambiguous. When interviewed, many students said that they had discussed their subject choices with their parents, but most indicated that their parents had had no influence over their choices. However, the quantitative data show that the majority of students who had not chosen to study a LOTE indicated that their parents supported this decision. Similarly, the majority of students who had chosen to study a LOTE indicated that their parents thought that they should be studying a LOTE. This suggests that influence from parents to study or not to study a LOTE may play a greater part in students’ decision making than the qualitative data suggest, especially given that 66% of respondents indicated that they “cared quite a bit” or “cared a lot” about their parents’ opinions. Although some students who had not chosen to study a LOTE indicated that their parents had encouraged them to continue with their LOTE study, most stated that their parents had been supportive of their choice. This finding is supported by the quantitative data, as there was a significant positive correlation between students who had chosen to study a LOTE and the attitude of their parents towards LOTE study.

Not all of the previous studies reviewed have dealt with the issue of parental influence over students’ subject choices. However, those that did found that parents influenced individual students in different ways and to different extents (e.g., Lynch & Ramsay, 1985; Ainley et al., 1990; Ainley et al., 1994; Warton & Cooney, 1997; Johnson & Selepeng, 2001; Hajdu, 2005, and Blenkinsop, McCrone, Wade & Morris, 2006). The finding of the present study that the influence of parents over their children’s subject choices is somewhat ambiguous is, therefore, generally consistent with the findings of other studies.
While the qualitative data suggested that the role of friends in shaping students’ decisions also was ambiguous (some students claimed to have been influenced by their friends’ attitudes, while others claimed that they had made their choices without consideration of their friends’ opinions and advice), the quantitative data indicate that friends did not play a significant role in shaping students’ subject choices, with 46% of respondents indicating that they “didn’t care much” or “didn’t care at all” about what their friends thought that they should do. Some previous studies indicated that there is a link between students choosing to study languages and the influence of their friends (e.g., Djite, 1994; Pavy, 2006) but other studies (e.g., Whitely & Porter, 2000; Hajdu, 2005; Ainley et al, 1994; Ainley et al, 1990) did not identify this as being an important factor. Nevertheless, in the present study, the influence of friends is an issue that was raised and identified as being relevant by many of the students interviewed and, therefore, it must be considered as one of the factors that may influence students’ decision to study or not to study LOTE.

The quantitative analysis of the data revealed that the relative importance placed by students on their Subjective Norms correlated significantly with their decision to study LOTE subjects. As previously indicated, the analysis of the qualitative data collected for this study indicated that the roles of parents and friends in students’ decision making was not completely clear, with some students indicating that their choices had been influenced by these groups of people and others indicating that they had made their choices independently. It would appear, then, that issues relating to Subjective Norms were viewed differently by the group participating in the qualitative phase of this study and the larger group participating in the quantitative phase, as the findings for the two groups are different. The quantitative data indicate clearly that students considered the opinions of their Subjective Norms to be important when making their decisions, but this was not a finding in the qualitative phase. This must be considered when evaluating the results of other research studies, as the findings of this study suggest that the method of data collection used and the sample size involved can have a significant impact on the findings of the study.

1.3 Perceived behavioural control

Perceived Behavioural Control is the component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour that relates to the extent to which students perceive that they have control over their own choices. Issues such as the number of subjects that students are permitted to study, and the range of language choices provided for students proved to be
relevant in this study. The qualitative data indicated that for some students, limits placed by their school on the number of subjects that they could study resulted in their not being able to study LOTE, as they often felt that other subjects were more important or relevant to their future study and career plans (i.e., they indicated that if they had been allowed to study more subjects, they would have chosen to study a LOTE). For other students, it was their dislike of the language that they were required to study that influenced them to choose not to continue with their LOTE studies. This is an important point, as it highlights the fact that while LOTE subjects are often considered as one subject group, they are, in fact, individual subjects, which appeal to different students in different ways and to different degrees. The quantitative data support the notion that the range of languages offered to students is a very important issue, as half of the students who had chosen not to study a LOTE indicated that they would like to have studied a different LOTE from the one that they had studied earlier. Tellingly, 37% of students who had chosen to study a LOTE indicated that they would like to have studied a different LOTE. Previous studies also found that the unavailability of a student’s preferred LOTE was a factor in students’ decisions not to study a language once it was no longer compulsory for them to do so (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1994).

Restrictions placed on students concerning the number of subjects that they could study impacted on some of the choices made regarding LOTE study. Some students indicated that if they been able to study more subjects, they would have continued to study a LOTE, while others indicated that although they wanted to study LOTE, they felt that other subjects were more important for their tertiary entrance ranking or their future career plans. Both of these issues reveal the perceived peripheral nature of LOTE in the school curriculum and relate to Perceived Behavioural Control, since while the students could choose to study LOTE, they felt that other factors were preventing them from doing so. In general, these findings were supported by the quantitative data. Approximately 70% of students who had chosen to study a LOTE indicated that at their school, it was “easy to choose to study a LOTE” (i.e., there were no timetable clashes and LOTE was offered at all year levels), while 12% of students who had decided not to study a LOTE indicated that this was due to timetable clashes. Over 60% of students who were not studying a LOTE indicated that doing so would have prevented them from studying other electives that they wanted to study. Similar
findings were also evident in other studies (Fairbairn & Pegolo, 1983; Zammit, 1992; Djite, 1994; Carr, 2002; Hajdu, 2005).

The issues outlined above are significant in that they demonstrate that for some students, the decision not to study a LOTE is shaped directly by structural factors (i.e., factors over which the students have little control). As argued previously, it is the interplay between structural and individual factors that shapes students’ subject choices. Since students have limited (if any) control over structural factors, it is important that schools ensure that they minimise the potential for such factors to have a negative impact on students’ opportunities to study LOTE subjects, by giving students every opportunity to study languages.

1.4 Gender issues

Gender has the potential to impact significantly on students’ subject choices. While it can be considered an individual factor in that students may control the degree to which they are influenced by their gender, it does not relate directly to any one of the components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. It is, however, considered to be one of the external variables that have an indirect influence over all of the components of the theory. In spite of the concerted efforts of LOTE teachers to change the perception of LOTE as a ‘feminine’ subject, during the qualitative phase of data collection, students indicated that for some boys, it was still considered as such. In all of the research sites in the study, girls outnumbered boys in LOTE classes by a significant margin. Students also indicated that the gender of the LOTE teacher could have an impact on students’ attitude towards LOTE study, particularly for boys. Some students asserted that a male LOTE teacher could have a positive effect on boys’ attitude towards LOTE study in that it would help students to see LOTE as a worthwhile subject for them to study. Alarmingly, almost 24% of males surveyed indicated that in their opinion, LOTE was “a girls’ subject”, while 16% of the males who had chosen not to study a LOTE indicated that they had not done so for this reason. Conversely, only 3% of girls indicated that they considered LOTE to be a girls’ subject. While a majority of boys did not consider LOTE to be a girls’ subject, the fact that almost a quarter of the male respondents did indicates that much work still needs to be done in order to break down the stereotypical view of LOTE study being a feminine pursuit. These findings are consistent with studies conducted over the past sixteen years (Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990; Carr, 2002; Davies, 2004; Hajdu, 2005; Pavy, 2006).
2. **The use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour**

As outlined earlier in this chapter, the adoption of a mixed-methods approach for this study allowed for a comprehensive examination of the factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE once it is no longer compulsory to do so. Previous sections highlighted the pertinent issues emerging from the data and outlined the differences and similarities that exist between the two different forms of data collected in the study. The Theory of Planned Behaviour was chosen as the framework to be used in the study and for the discussion of these data as it provided a means for understanding the factors that shape students’ subject choices. As outlined in Chapter Three, this theory has been used extensively in a broad range of fields, including health, economics and education. A 1993 investigation by Myeong and Crawley used the Theory of Reasoned Action (the antecedent of the Theory of Planned Behaviour) to understand students’ science study choice in Korean secondary schools, while Randall (1994) used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to examine the reasons why students choose business elective courses. Another more recent study used elements of the theory to explain students’ attitudes towards studying less widely taught languages in the UK (King, 2005). Its use in these and other fields suggested that the theory could be applied successfully to language study in this thesis.

During the analysis of the data collected for this study, it became evident that the Theory of Planned Behaviour in its present form did not allow me to engage with some of the complexities involved in student subject selection that were apparent in the data. For example, the issue of gender proved to be a more significant factor in this study than the theory allowed for, even though initially, it was considered that this issue could be observable under the theory. Similarly, the substantial role played by the teacher in shaping students’ subject choices and the various facets of this factor (e.g., the impact of high attrition rates amongst LOTE teachers) required some analysis beyond the scope of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Further, given the complexity of the data, the statistical analyses conducted on the quantitative data differed to some extent from those outlined by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980; Ajzen, 1988 and 2005), as additional issues such as those identified above needed to be examined. However, this theory did provide a useful framework for conceptualising the majority of issues, and the relationships among them, in this research project. The three components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Attitude Toward the Behaviour, Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavioural Control) served to
identify and explain the factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study a LOTE and in the quantitative analysis, Attitude Toward the Behaviour was shown to have a very strong correlation with students’ subject choices regarding LOTE. Subjective Norms also correlated strongly with students’ choice to study LOTE (although not as strongly as Attitude Toward the Behaviour). While Perceived Behavioural Control did not prove to have a significant impact on students’ subject choice in the quantitative analysis in this study, it did appear to be significant in the qualitative phase.

3. Implications for policy and practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for LOTE policy and practice in education. In spite of the increased funding for LOTE programs provided by various State and Federal governments over the past 15 years, it is clear that the stated goals of increasing enrolments in LOTE subjects at Year 12 level to at least 20% have not been met. As evidenced in this study, students’ decisions to study or not to study a LOTE are shaped by a number of factors, and it is essential that schools, teachers and those responsible for policy development and its implementation have a comprehensive understanding of these factors if LOTE programs are to be successful. The implications of the findings of this study are outlined below.

The students who participated in this study appeared to display a relative maturity in terms of their decision making. They discussed their experiences with LOTE study in great detail, highlighting both positive and negative aspects of their experiences and giving considered responses to the questions posed. In particular, they were quite clear in terms of the reasons why they had chosen to study or not to study a LOTE. As outlined above, students who choose to study LOTE consider it to be “fun”, “interesting” and “enjoyable”, whereas students who choose not to study a LOTE often consider it to be “difficult”, “too hard” and “boring”. Clearly, schools and teachers (not just LOTE teachers) need to foster positive attitudes amongst their students towards LOTE study in general and towards the particular languages that are taught at their school if their students are to consider LOTE as an attractive and relevant option for further study. Ensuring that students consider LOTE study to be interesting and enjoyable is a vital component of this, given that the majority of students who choose not to study languages indicate that they find them to be “boring” and “not fun”. Closely related to this issue are the teaching methods used in LOTE classes, as these
can impact greatly on the way students perceive their studies. Teachers must ensure that they use pedagogy that is appropriate for language learning and that stimulates student engagement with learning through enjoyable forms of communication and interaction. Success and enjoyment are often linked, and if the teaching methods used by teachers lead to successful outcomes, the students are then more likely to see LOTE subjects as “enjoyable” rather than “boring”. Of course, LOTE teaching does not occur in a vacuum, and the level of support provided by the school administration (in terms of timetabling arrangements and provision of resources), as well as policies developed by educational authorities have a significant impact on how teachers fulfil their roles.

Closely related to the enjoyment factor involved in learning languages is an informed awareness of the benefits to be gained by engaging in LOTE study. Many of the students in the study appeared to be well aware of the possible benefits that may be associated with LOTE study, while others, however, appeared less informed on this issue.

The majority of students choosing to study a LOTE indicate that they consider that studying a LOTE will help them to find a good job in the future. However, most of these students did not state that LOTE was useful to their future career. This finding has significant implications for policy and practice, as traditionally, the link between language study and future employment has been expounded as one of the main reasons why students should engage in LOTE study at school. As indicated, the use of utilitarian discourses is dominant in the promotion of LOTE. However, the link between employment prospects and LOTE study is not resonating with the majority of students or, if it is, it is not considered to be important enough to influence their subject choices. Indeed, it would appear that the utilitarian perception of the ‘relevance’ of LOTE underpinned by neo-liberal discourses has not served LOTE studies well. In continental Europe and throughout Asia, second language learning is highly valued and expected of all students, yet this does not appear to be the case in many English-speaking countries. The need to develop intercultural identities in order to understand and engage in a complex and fragile globalised world is more important than ever. Additionally, Australia has developed strong commercial relationships with many Asian countries and if these relationships are to realise their potential, the ability to communicate in the native languages of these countries is essential. These imperatives do not seem to be reaching the majority of Australian students, nor are they taken seriously by the Australian public in general, as suggested by the ACSSO and APC’s recent study.
(2007). As long as there is a widespread belief that ‘English is spoken everywhere, so learning another language isn’t important’, LOTE programs will continue to struggle to attract large numbers of students.

This study has found that the role of teachers in shaping students’ decisions regarding LOTE study is more significant than previous studies may indicate. While teachers often offer advice to students concerning continued language study, based on the findings of the present study, students generally do not take this advice into consideration when choosing their subjects. Rather, students are more influenced by the perceived personal and professional characteristics of their language teacher and their ability to promote their subject when deciding whether or not to continue to study LOTE. This highlights the importance of having teachers who are able to connect with their students and instil in them a genuine interest in language learning. While it is clear that there are many LOTE teachers who do this very successfully, the findings of this study strongly suggest that this is an area that must be addressed if enrolments in LOTE subjects are to improve. The students have made it clear that for them to choose to study a LOTE, they need to have confidence in their teacher to teach them effectively. In addition, this confidence needs to be accompanied by a liking for the teacher. Unlike some subjects that are considered ‘core’ subjects, where students appear to be more willing to tolerate a teacher that they do not like, teachers of LOTE need to be seen as likeable by their students if they are to consider LOTE a worthwhile elective subject to study.

Future policies guiding the teaching of LOTE in Queensland schools must address the issue of low enrolments. Although at the time of this particular study, there seemed to be a general decline in government interest in LOTE programs, in recent years, the issue has been the focus of renewed attention. Education Queensland is in the process of reviewing its policy governing the teaching of LOTE in State schools, in an attempt to both improve retention rates in languages to Year 12 and allow schools more flexibility in the delivery of their LOTE programs. Having been trialled successfully in one region in 2007, the new LOTE initiative will be trialled in five regions of Queensland in 2008, with a view to implementing the policy state-wide by the end of 2009, if these trials are successful. One of the major features of the new initiative is the abolition of the current mandated period of LOTE study from Years 6 to 8, with secondary schools now only required to offer their Year 8 students the opportunity to study a LOTE. While Education Queensland asserts that the new policy will help to
improve retention rates in LOTE subjects, it remains to be seen whether allowing students to opt out of LOTE study earlier will have the desired effect of encouraging larger numbers of students to choose LOTE as an elective in Years 9 to 12. This situation appears to be somewhat paradoxical. Indeed, Education Queensland, rather than increasing the potential, and even necessity, for students to study a LOTE, could be seen to be reducing their already limited commitment to the study area. If so, this is a concerning development that would seem contrary to the multilingual impetus and related challenges presented by globalisation.

At the federal level, the recent election of a new Prime Minister who has been heavily involved in the formation of LOTE policy in the past and who is himself fluent in Mandarin, has led to speculation that LOTE teaching will receive additional funding in the near future, especially given the election promises made by Kevin Rudd during his time as Leader of the Opposition (Clyne, 2007; Shanahan, 2007; Slattery, 2007). As mentioned previously, there is renewed interest in the economic advantages to be gained by engaging in LOTE study due to increased trade relationships within the Asia-Pacific region, and future policy must take this interest into consideration. The issues of teacher satisfaction and the high attrition rates of LOTE teachers must also be addressed, as teachers who are not happy in their position are less likely to be able to engage successfully with their students and instil a love of languages in them than are teachers who have high levels of job satisfaction and feel valued in the workplace. The profile of LOTE study in the general community must also be raised, as support in this sector will help to raise the profile of LOTE within schools.

Although this study deals specifically with the situation in State schools, it is important to acknowledge the marked difference that exists between enrolment levels in LOTE subjects in State schools and those in many private or independent schools. In general, more private and independent school students choose to study LOTE than State school students, and this has been the case for several decades (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley & Hillman, 2003; Fullarton & Ainley, 2000; Ainley et al., 1994; Ainley et al., 1990). There is some concern that the levels of LOTE enrolments in State schools indicate that those students are not being adequately prepared regarding LOTE study. This, in turn, can have a significant impact on their future career prospects, particularly in today’s economic and political climate where the ability to communicate in a LOTE is becoming increasingly more valuable. This reinforces the importance of students making informed decisions. The onus now is on public sector schools to provide
quality LOTE programs for their students, including appropriate numbers of well-
prepared, well-resourced and highly motivated teachers who are committed to their
subject and seen as an integral part of the secondary school curriculum process and the
inherent subject choices for students.

The success of policies inevitably involves a complex of ideological, funding,
planning, administrative and interest-based factors. Additionally, it “depends upon
something particular to language and its intersection with the wider society’s culture”
(Lo Bianco, 1998, p. 12). This factor is more amorphous, and has to do with past
practices and attitudes to languages. Education Queensland’s new LOTE policy is
designed to allow schools and regions more flexibility over the nature and
implementation of LOTE programs, and thus appears to be more able to respond to the
local context. Teacher education programs also need to be reconsidered in this
important area, in order to ensure that new LOTE teachers are adequately prepared to
deliver quality LOTE programs.

4. Limitations of the study

There were several times in the conduct of this research study during which
access to data was both limited and delayed by official education departmental sources,
for reasons that were not made clear to me and despite official approval having been
granted for the research. Consequently, progress was significantly hindered during the
data collection phases of the research and as a result, the scope of the study had to be
narrowed in order for it to continue. Initially, it was my intention to collect qualitative
data from schools across the State, so that students from a variety of different
geographical locations were represented in the study. Due to the problems outlined
above, it was necessary to restrict data collection to the Gold Coast region, thus limiting
the range of qualitative data able to be collected. However, this does not diminish the
validity of the data collected. It was also my aim to collect quantitative data from
twelve schools rather than three, but ultimately it was possible to obtain the
involvement of only three schools. However, as 1259 surveys were conducted and 94
students were interviewed, the results of both phases of the study were statistically
valid. While most of the data for this study were collected between seven and eight
years ago, the fact that enrolments in LOTE subjects have continued to fall since then
indicates that the major findings of this study remain highly relevant (Queensland
Studies Authority, 2007; Victoria, Department of Education and Training, 2007).
As outlined, the decision to use the Theory of Planned Behaviour was based on its use in previous studies of a similar nature. However, in its present form, it did not allow me to fully engage with some of the complexities involved in student subject selection that were apparent in the data. Although this issue was largely overcome by the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the research and did not significantly impact on the findings of the study, the use of another theoretical model representing ‘choice’ behaviour may not have presented this limitation. Future studies might, therefore, examine a range of decision-making models in order to overcome this issue. Nevertheless, the Theory of Planned Behaviour was highly useful in that it allowed for the identification and analysis of many of the factors shaping students’ subject choice in this study.

5. **Recommendations for future research**

Although this study has identified and analysed factors shaping students’ decisions to study or not to study LOTE, more research needs to be conducted in this area in order to better understand how students make their decisions. The replication of this study, particularly the survey procedure, on a larger scale and in other states could lead to an even broader understanding of the factors shaping students’ decisions. Further research should also be conducted within private schools, to determine whether the factors influencing students’ choices are the same or different from those apparent in the present study. This is especially important given the disparity between enrolment levels in LOTE subjects between the State and private sectors.

The link between the high attrition rates of LOTE teachers and students’ attitudes toward LOTE study identified in this study indicates a need for further research to be conducted regarding LOTE teachers’ working conditions. Another issue of importance is the impact of increased exposure to LOTE study at the primary level on retention rates at the secondary level. This is particularly pertinent given the recent decision to abolish the mandatory study of LOTE in Year 8 in Queensland State schools.

Over the past five years, the number of schools offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program in Australian schools has increased significantly. All students undertaking the Diploma in Years 11 and 12 are required to study a LOTE, and three different levels are provided to cater for the differing prior experience that students have with LOTE study – Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. The
existence of a Beginners’ LOTE course for Year 11 students has had a significant impact on enrolment levels in LOTE subjects at my own school, to the extent that approximately 50% of the Year 11 and 12 cohorts each year study the LOTE that I teach. This approach may have implications for the status of LOTE teaching in Australia and I believe that further research could be conducted on the viability of offering Beginners’ LOTE programs for students in Year 11. The success of this program at my school suggests that when students are given the opportunity to begin a new LOTE after the compulsory years of LOTE study have ended, many of them take it. The factors shaping their decision to take up LOTE study at this later stage may be different to the factors identified in this study, and this is an issue worthy of exploration.

6. Concluding comments

Recent interest in LOTE study has highlighted the need to understand students’ decisions regarding LOTE study and how to encourage students to be more actively involved. The challenge for teachers today is to enhance the position of LOTE study in the minds of students and the community in general, so that it is seen as a worthwhile and useful activity. It is troubling to note the possibility that Queensland is re-entering an elitist period of language study, where it is valued in the private and independent sectors, but marginalised in some areas of the public sector – notably in more socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of the state, thus amplifying the disadvantage. While federal initiatives appear to be underpinned by the globalisation agenda, there is now a dissonance between the national policy and the new LOTE initiative for Queensland, where the retreat from compulsory LOTE study in Years 6-8 appears to be counterintuitive.

The aim of this thesis was to analyse factors shaping students’ decisions to study LOTE, rather than another subject, in Years 9-12 in Queensland State secondary schools. This research study is considered to be important because it provides a framework to better understand how students make subject choices. It has been determined that student choice is shaped by a variety of factors, including enjoyment of LOTE study, previous experience with LOTE study, the perceived relevance of languages to future career and study plans, and the influence of parents and teachers, with the students’ like or dislike of their LOTE teacher being of particular importance. The findings of this study have the capacity to inform LOTE policy and the implementation of quality programs in secondary schools, which will serve to both
enhance the status of LOTE within the school system and motivate significantly greater numbers of students to choose to study LOTE.


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APPENDIX 1

Language Survey
Dear student,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information you provide will be used in a study of the teaching of LOTE in Queensland High Schools. However, your responses will remain anonymous. If you indicate at the bottom of this survey that you are willing to be interviewed, you may be contacted in the next few weeks.

1. Name:……………………………………………………..  Class:………………  Gender:……………..

2. Languages Other Than English spoken at home (if any):…………………………………………………………………………………

3. Languages studied in Year 8: (Please Tick)
   Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐
   Other ☐  Please Indicate:……………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Languages studied after Year 8: (Please write the year level you studied the language to e.g. Year 10)
   Japanese :……….  Italian:……….  French:……….  German:……….  Spanish:………
   Other:  Language…………………………………..  Year:………………………

5. Languages currently being studied (if any): (Please Tick)
   Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐
   Other ☐  Please indicate:……………………………………………………………………

6. Languages studied at primary school: (Please Tick)
   Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐
   Other ☐  Please indicate:……………………………………………………………………

7. Did you enjoy studying languages at primary school? (Please Tick)  Yes ☐  No ☐  Sometimes ☐

8. Total number of years that each language was studied (primary and high school):
   Japanese :……….  Italian:……….  French:……….  German:……….  Spanish:………
   Other:  Language…………………………………..  Years: …………………..

9. What academic grade did you receive when you last studied a language? (Please Tick)
   Japanese VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐
   Italian VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐
   French VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐
   German VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐
   Spanish VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐
   Other VHA ☐ HA ☐ SA ☐ LA ☐ VLA ☐

10. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your own ability in the language that you most recently studied?  5 = Very Good   1 = Very Poor
    Language:………………………………………………………………….  Ability:…………………………

Would you be willing to be interviewed about your experiences with learning languages at school?  Yes ☐  No ☐
APPENDIX 2

Language Survey 2
Dear student,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information you provide will be used in a study of the teaching of LOTE in Queensland High Schools. However, your responses will remain completely anonymous.

For most questions, you will be required to choose the response you most agree with from a list of five choices. Please circle only ONE response for each question.

**SECTIONS A AND B** are for **ALL** students to complete.
**SECTION C** is only for students who **CURRENTLY** study a LOTE.
**SECTION D** is only for students who **DO NOT** currently study a LOTE.

Thank you!

**SECTION A – ALL STUDENTS TO COMPLETE**

1. School: ..........................................................  
   2. Class: .........................  
   3. Gender: .......................  
   4. Home Postcode - ....................  
   5. Languages Other Than English spoken at home (if any): .........................................................  
   6. Languages studied in Year 8: (Please Tick)  
      Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐  
      Other: ☐ Please Indicate: .................................................................  
   7. Languages studied **after** Year 8: (Please write the year level you studied the language to e.g. Year 10)  
      Japanese: ............  Italian: ............  French: ............  German: ............  Spanish: ............  
      Other: Language: .......................  Year: .......................  
   8. Languages **currently** being studied (if any): (Please Tick)  
      Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐  
      Other: ☐ Please indicate: .................................................................  
   9. Languages studied at primary school: (Please Tick)  
      Japanese ☐  Italian ☐  French ☐  German ☐  Spanish ☐  
      Other: ☐ Please indicate: .................................................................  
   10. Did you/do you enjoy studying languages at school? (Please Tick)  
        Yes ☐  No ☐  Sometimes ☐  
   11. Total number of years that each language was studied (primary **and** high school):  
        Japanese: ............  Italian: ............  French: ............  German: ............  Spanish: ............  
        Other: Language: .......................  Years: .......................
12. What academic grade did you receive when you last studied a language? (Please Tick)

Japanese

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

Italian

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

French

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

German

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

Spanish

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

Other

VHA  [ ]  HA  [ ]  SA  [ ]  LA  [ ]  VLA  [ ]

13. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your own ability in the language that you most recently studied?  5 = Very Good   1 = Very Poor

Language:.......................................................... Ability:.........................

SECTION B: ALL STUDENTS TO COMPLETE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE RESPONSE YOU AGREE WITH MOST FOR EACH QUESTION.

14. Studying LOTE is interesting.

Strongly Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree

15. How important is it to you that the subjects you study are interesting?

Not at all Not very Unsure Quite Very

important important important

16. Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job.

Strongly Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree

17. How important is it to you that you study subjects that will help you to get a good job?

Not at all Not very Unsure Quite Very

important important important

18. Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures.

Strongly Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree

19. How important is it to you that you appreciate and understand other cultures?

Not at all Not very Unsure Quite Very

important important important

20. Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with other people who may not speak English.

Strongly Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree
21. How important is it to you that you are able to communicate with people who may not speak English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22. Studying LOTE is fun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

23. How important is it to you that you study subjects that are fun?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24. Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25. How important is it to you that you get a good OP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

26. Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

27. How important is it to you that you travel overseas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

28. Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

29. How important is it to you that the subjects you study are useful for your future career?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

30. Studying LOTE is boring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

31. How important is it to you that the subjects you study are NOT boring?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

32. Studying LOTE is too difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

33. How important is it to you that the subjects you study aren’t too difficult?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

34. Studying a LOTE is a waste of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

35. How important is it to you that the subjects that you study are NOT a waste of time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

36. Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

37. How important is it to you that the subjects that you study are relevant to your future career?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

38. Studying a LOTE will NOT help me to get a good job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

39. How important is it to you that the subjects that you study will help you to get a good job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

40. I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not usually</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

41. My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

42. In general, how much do you care about what your teachers think you should do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>I don’t care at all</th>
<th>I don’t care much</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>I care quite a bit</th>
<th>I care a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

43. I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not usually</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

44. My parents think that I should study LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

45. In general, how much do you care about what your parents think you should do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>I don’t care at all</th>
<th>I don’t care much</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>I care quite a bit</th>
<th>I care a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
46. I think that my teachers’ advice is more important than my parents’ advice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No – they are equal</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

47. I seek the advice of other family members when choosing subjects (e.g. brothers and sisters, cousins, grandparents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not usually</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

48. Other family members think that I should study LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

49. In general, how much do you care about what other family members think you should do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I don’t care at all</th>
<th>I don’t care much</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>I care quite a bit</th>
<th>I care a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

50. I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not usually</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

51. My friends think that I should study LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

52. In general, how much do you care about what your friends think you should do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I don’t care at all</th>
<th>I don’t care much</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>I care quite a bit</th>
<th>I care a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

53. I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

54. If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

55. I would like to have been able to study a different LOTE than the one I studied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

56. The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE as a worthwhile subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

57. The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE an interesting subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
58. In general, we have good LOTE teachers at my school.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
59. People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
60. Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
61. We should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |

SECTION C

ONLY STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING LOTE ARE TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION.

ALL OTHER STUDENTS PROCEED TO SECTION D ON PAGE 7 OF THE SURVEY.

62. I am interested in learning languages.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
63. I study LOTE because I have a good LOTE teacher.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
64. How important is it to you that you have a good LOTE teacher?

   | Not at all important | Not very important | Unsure | Quite important | Very important |
---|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|
 |
65. My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision to continue to study a LOTE.

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
 |
66. How important is it to you that you do well in your subjects?

   | Not at all important | Not very important | Unsure | Quite important | Very important |
---|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|
 |
67. At this school, it is easy for me to choose to study a LOTE (i.e. there are no timetable clashes and LOTE is offered at all year levels).

   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
---|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
68. I study LOTE because my friends study it, too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

69. I study LOTE because my parents want me to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

70. I study LOTE because I’m good at languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

71. How important is it to you that you are good at your subjects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

72. I continue to study LOTE because I don’t want to waste the years of study that I have already done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION!

SECTION D

THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED ONLY BY STUDENTS WHO DO NOT CURRENTLY STUDY LOTE.

73. I am not interested in learning languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

74. Studying a LOTE would prevent me from choosing other electives that I want to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

75. How important is it to you that you are able to choose electives that you want to do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

76. I do not study a LOTE because I have not had good LOTE teachers in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
77. How important is it to you that you have a good LOTE teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

78. If I had liked my LOTE teacher, I would have continued to study it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>No – I liked my LOTE teacher</th>
<th>No – the teacher didn’t matter to me</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Probably</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

79. My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision not to continue to study LOTE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

80. How important is it to you that you do well in your subjects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

81. I would like to be studying a LOTE, but I think that languages are too hard for me to do well in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

82. Timetable clashes prevented me from studying LOTE this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

83. I don’t study LOTE because I am a boy and I think that it’s a girls’ subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

84. I don’t study LOTE because my parents don’t want me to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

85. I don’t study LOTE because I’m not good at languages.

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86. How important is it to you that you are good at your subjects?

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87. I don’t study LOTE because I believe that I’ve studied it for long enough.

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YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION
APPENDIX 3

Interview Question Schedules

1. General Questions:
   • Tell me about (Japanese/German/French/Italian etc.).
   • What do you think about them?
   • What do your friends/parents/teachers say about these subjects?
   • Do you think languages are worth learning? Why? Which ones? Why those ones in particular? (Separate questions specifically concerning Asian/European languages also asked as appropriate).
   • Of all the subjects in this school, how do you think [Japanese/Italian] rate for kids in Years 9-12? Why do you think this?
   • Why do you think so many/so few kids study LOTE in Year 9/10/11/12? What do the other kids think about this?
   • Do you think that learning languages is hard/easy? Why? How do you know this?

2. Specific Questions:

2.1 Students currently studying a LOTE:
   • Why did you decide to study a language this year? (Major question – all other questions were designed to elicit further information)
   • Do you like learning a language?
   • What did you like about learning a language last year/in previous years?
   • Was there anything that you didn’t like about learning a language last year/in previous years?
   • What would you like to do when you leave school?
   • Do you think that knowing another language would be useful for this?
   • Who did you ask for advice when choosing your subjects for this year?
   • Were you influenced at all by your teachers when you were choosing your subjects?
   • Were you influenced by your parents?
   • How do your parents feel about you studying a language?
   • Did you have trouble choosing which subjects to study because of the school’s timetable?
• Did your results in your language subjects last year help you to decide to study a language this year?
• Do you think that you’ll keep studying a language next year?

2.2 Students not currently studying a LOTE:
• What made you decide not to study a language this year? (Major question – all other questions were designed to elicit further information)
• Did you enjoy learning another language?
• Was there anything that you liked about learning a language last year/in previous years?
• What didn’t you like about learning a language last year?
• What would you like to do when you leave school?
• Do you think that knowing another language would be useful for this?
• Who did you ask for advice when choosing your subjects for this year?
• Were you influenced at all by your teachers when you were choosing your subjects?
• Were you influenced by your parents?
• How do your parents feel about you choosing not to study a language?
• Did you have trouble choosing which subjects to study because of the school’s timetable?
• Did your results in language courses in the past influence your decision not to study a language this year?

3. Other Questions Asked At Conclusion of Interview:
• What happened at the information session that they gave you on all of the subjects last year?
• Were all of the subjects given an equal amount of time?
• Do you think that the school encourages you to take certain subjects?
• How did you decide to come to this school?
• Did your parents ever try to discourage you from taking a language? How?
• Did your friends have anything to say about whether you should do a language or not?
• What do your parents do? Did they learn languages at school?
## Appendix 4

**Correlation Matrices**

### Table A.1 Correlation Matrix of Components and Questions

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization
## Appendix 5

### Inferential statistical analyses

1. **Attitude towards the Behaviour**

Table A.3 Responses to questions examining ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by the 22.9% of students studying LOTE at the time of the survey* (N=288)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in learning languages (Q62)</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision to continue to study a LOTE (Q65)</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I study LOTE because I’m good at languages (Q70)</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I continue to study LOTE because I don’t want to waste the years of study that I have already done (Q72)</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I study LOTE because I have a good LOTE teacher (Q63)</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.4 Responses to questions examining ‘Attitude Towards the Behaviour’ by the 77.1% of students who were not studying LOTE at the time of the survey* (N=971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards The Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other Languages (Q20)</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying a LOTE would prevent me from choosing other electives that I want to do (Q74)</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in learning languages (Q73)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because I believe that I have studied it for long enough (Q87)</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not study a LOTE because I have not had good LOTE teachers in the past (Q76)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision not to continue to study LOTE (Q79)</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because I’m not good at languages (Q85)</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because I’m a boy and I think that it’s a girls’ subject (Q83)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had liked my LOTE teacher, I would have continued to study it (Q78)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
2. **Subjective Norms**

Table A.5 *Responses to questions examining ‘Subjective Norms’ by the 22.9% of students studying a LOTE at the time of the survey*  
(N=288).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I study LOTE because my parents want me to (Q69)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I study LOTE because my friends study it, too (Q68)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.6 *Responses to questions examining Subjective Norms by students not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey*  
(N=971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because my parents don’t want me to (Q84)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
3. **Perceived Behavioural Control**

Table A.7 Responses to questions examining ‘Perceived Behavioural Control’ by the 22.9% of students surveyed who were studying a LOTE at the time of the survey* (N=288)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Behavioural Control</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At this school, it is easy for me to choose to study a LOTE (there are no timetable clashes and LOTE is offered at all year levels) (Q67)</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to have been able to study a different LOTE than the one I studied (Q55)</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.8 Responses to questions examining ‘Perceived Behavioural Control’ by the 77.1% of students surveyed who were not studying a LOTE at the time of the survey* (N=971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Behavioural Control</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At this school, it is easy for me to choose to study a LOTE (there are no timetable clashes and LOTE is offered at all year levels) (Q67)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to be studying a LOTE, but I think that languages are too hard for me to do well in (Q81)</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable clashes prevented me from studying LOTE this year (Q82)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
# 4. Attitude toward behaviour: Gender

Table A.9 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude Towards the Behaviour’ by females* (N=636)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in learning languages (Q62)</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision to continue to study a LOTE (Q65)</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.10 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by males* \((N=623)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
5. **Subjective Norm: Gender**

Table A.11 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by females* (N=636)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.12 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by males* (N=623)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
6. **Perceived Behavioural Control: Gender**

Table A.13 *Response to the only question addressing the component of ‘Perceived Behaviour Control’ relating to gender by females* (N=636)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Behavioural Control</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to have been able to study a different LOTE than the one I studied (Q55)</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.14 *Response to the only question addressing the component of ‘Perceived Behaviour Control’ relating to gender by males* (N=623)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Behavioural Control</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to have been able to study a different LOTE than the one I studied (Q55)</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
7. **Attitude towards the Behaviour: Schools**

Table A.15 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by students at City SHS*\(^*\) (\(N=828\))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.16 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by students at Coastal SHS* (N=356)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.17 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by students at Western SHS* \((N=75)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
8. **Subjective Norms: Schools**

Table A.18 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by students at City SHS*\(^*\) \((N=828)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.19 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by students at Coastal SHS*\(^*\) \((N=356)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.20 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by students at Western SHS*\(^*\) \((N=75)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. **Attitude towards the Behaviour: Students Yrs 9-12 (LOTE as an elective)**

Table A.21 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by the 32.8% of students who had elected to study a LOTE at some stage after Year 8* *(N=413)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.22 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by the 67.2% of students who had elected not to study a LOTE after Year 8* (N=846)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying a LOTE would prevent me from choosing other electives that I want to do (Q74)</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had liked my LOTE teacher, I would have continued to study it (Q78)</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in learning languages (Q73)</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because I believe that I’ve studied it for long enough (Q87)</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not study a LOTE because I have not had good LOTE teachers in the past (Q76)</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My LOTE results in the past influenced my decision not to study a LOTE (Q79)</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because my parents don’t want me to (Q84)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t study LOTE because I’m a boy and I think that it’s a girls’ subject (Q83)</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
10  Subjective Norms: Students Yrs 9-12 (LOTE as an elective)

Table A.23 Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norm’s by the 32.8% students who have chosen to study a LOTE at some stage beyond Year 8*  (N=413)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects  (Q43)</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.24 Responses to questions relating to Subjective Norms by the 67.2% of students who had elected not to study a LOTE after Year 8.*  (N=846)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects  (Q43)</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
### 12 Attitude towards the Behaviour NESB & ESB students

Table A.25 *Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by the 16.3% of students of non-English speaking background* (N=205)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Table A.26 Responses to questions relating to ‘Attitude towards the Behaviour’ by the 83.7% of students English speaking background* (N=1054)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Towards the Behaviour</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who want to work in the tourism industry should study LOTE (Q59)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE enables me to communicate with speakers of other languages (Q20)</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE helps me to appreciate and understand other cultures (Q18)</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to travel overseas (Q26)</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE has nothing to do with my future career (Q36)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is boring (Q30)</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is interesting (Q14)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we should spend more time studying English instead of studying LOTE (Q61)</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to promote LOTE (Q56)</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did not like my LOTE teacher, I would drop LOTE (Q54)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers at my school work hard to make LOTE interesting (Q57)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will not help me to get a good job (Q38)</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, we have good LOTE teachers at our school (Q58)</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is a waste of time (Q34)</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia speak English, so we don’t need to study LOTE (Q60)</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is too difficult (Q32)</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is fun (Q22)</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good job (Q16)</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE will help me to get a good OP (Q24)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying LOTE is useful for the career I want to enter (Q28)</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that LOTE is a girls’ subject (Q53)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Subjective Norms: NESB & ESB students

Table A.27 Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by the 16.3% of students of non-English speaking background* (N=205)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.

Table A.28 Responses to questions relating to ‘Subjective Norms’ by the 83.7% of students English speaking background* (N=1054)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norms</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my parents when choosing my subjects (Q43)</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of other family members when choosing my subjects (Q47)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my teachers when choosing my subjects (Q40)</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the advice of my friends when choosing my subjects (Q50)</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My language teachers encouraged me to continue with LOTE (Q41)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think that I should study LOTE (Q44)</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members think that I should study LOTE (Q48)</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends think that I should study LOTE (Q51)</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sum of Agree and Disagree <100%, as the category “Unsure” is not included in this table.
Appendix 6

Acronyms used in this Thesis

LOTE   Languages Other Than English
LBOTE  Language Background Other Than English
MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs
NALSAS  National Asian Language Studies in Australian Schools
ACSSO & APC  Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council
LACU   Languages and Cultures Unit
OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QSA    Queensland Studies Authority