# Attachment 1: Policy and Literature Review

## Senior Secondary Languages Education Research Project

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# Contents

# The current state of language policies in states and territories

Table 1 provides an overview of the current situation of state and territory policies related to languages education in Australian government schools. The table is followed by discussion of the key features of the policies and some of the implications of these for languages education and the issue of retention.

Table 1: Current policies related to language learning in government schools according to each state and territory: Entry to Year 10

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Australian Capital Territory (ACT)**<br>(As advised and/or verified by the ACT Education and Training Directorate) | ACT Government Community Services policy for Languages<br>*Many Voices 2012–2016 Languages Policy* | **Aim:** to encourage Canberrans to learn and treasure languages other than English.<br>**Specific aims**: access to high quality language learning opportunities; enhance access, choice and continuity of language programmes in both the ACT public and community sectors; work with the ACT community languages sector to deliver sustainable language programmes and develop community understanding of languages education. | Support strategies include:<br>• language assistants programme<br>• professional learning for Community Language School teachers | |
| | Education Act 2004 | The Education Act 2004 provides the legislative requirements for the provision of education within the ACT. | | |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Curriculum Requirements in ACT Public Schools, Preschool to Year 10* (2009) | | The *Curriculum Requirements in ACT Schools, Preschool to Year 10* Policy 2009 states the minimum requirements for language programmes in ACT public schools as: *Schools have flexibility in how they implement their curriculum plans and deliver their teaching and learning programmes, provided that:* <br><br>• *each year, from Years 3–6, schools provide a minimum of 60 minutes per week of language education in one of the eight priority languages* <br><br>• *in Years 7–8, schools provide a minimum of 150 minutes (or online) per week of languages education in one of the eight priority languages.* <br><br>The eight priority languages are French, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Italian Indonesian, Japanese, Korean and Spanish. <br><br>Schools and school networks are encouraged to provide a languages pathway that provides same language availability from primary to high school to senior secondary college. <br><br>Principals are required to comply with ACT Education and Training Directorate policies and procedures. | All public schools are required to offer languages in Years 3–8. |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
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| | Australian Curriculum (implementation) | The Australian Curriculum priority of *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* further supports the learning of Asian languages while the general capability, *Intercultural understanding,* is supported through the teaching and learning of languages. | The ACT is phasing implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* (these subjects are published on the *Australian Curriculum* website as 'available for use: awaiting final endorsement'): Timeframes for phasing in *Languages* are as follows: 2015: Familiarisation and engagement 2016: Consolidation and planning 2017: Teaching and assessing 2017: Reporting using the Achievement Standards | |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **New South Wales (NSW)** <br><br> (As advised and/or verified by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) updated August 2014.) | At the request of the Minister for Education, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) has completed a three-year review of languages education in NSW. The main themes emerging from the review's research and consultation feedback were developed into proposals incorporating short, medium and long-term goals to address demand and supply issues for languages education. These proposals were endorsed by the BOSTES and the NSW Schools Advisory Council and were announced by the Minister for Education. <br> The proposed actions will be progressed through a *NSW Languages Education Action Plan*. | The *NSW Languages Education Action Plan* sets out an integrated and sustainable approach to languages education with the aim of fostering growth in student participation in languages K-12. | A NSW Languages Advisory Panel with high level representation from the education sectors, community organisations, business and industry has been established. <br> The Panel will oversee the development of a new languages education policy statement for NSW and the strategic coordination of the proposed actions. <br> The draft policy is due for release at the end of 2015 and will be subject to extensive consultation in the first half of 2016. | |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Northern Territory (NT)** (As verified by NT Department of Education) | A Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) Languages Policy has been written and is awaiting approval and implementation. Current NT Curriculum Framework phased out as Australian Curriculum becomes available. | Will be provided on approval of Languages Policy. | Australian Curriculum timeline: no set timeline for languages, instead: 'Language subjects are being developed in stages. A NT implementation plan will be developed to manage the implementation complexities of the learning area.' Awaiting final endorsement of Languages in Australian Curriculum. Noted in April 2014 and agreed that the curriculum could be made available for state and territory use. Decisions about the use of these curricula are to be taken by relevant authorities in each state and territory. Indicative hours are provided as a guide to assist in managing implementation of Languages: T (Transition) – Year 6 equivalent of 50 hours per year; Years 7 – 10 - 80 hours per year (Years 9 & 10 Languages is optional). | Waiting on endorsement |
| **Queensland (Qld)** (As advised and/or verified by Qld Department of Education and Training ) | Specific policy for Languages *Mandatory Languages Policy* continues until the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Languages in 2016 | **Aim:** 'increase the percentage of Year 12 students who complete language studies.' Students will be 'encouraged to continue their language studies to Year 12' (Mandatory Languages– Information brochure for Parents) | Languages are mandatory in Years 6–8 in all state schools. Support is provided for 6 'commonly taught' languages: Japanese, German, French, Italian, Indonesian and Chinese (Mandarin). Schools can choose to provide Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages to fulfil the requirement. | Reflects impact of Commonwealth Government policy and national curriculum. Priority given to first four learning areas, local decisions about time for languages. |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Global schools – Creating successful global citizens* consultation draft released; consultation underway<br><br>*Languages in Queensland state schools policy* (from 2015) | Proposal envisages a system in which all state schools will offer languages from Prep through to Year 12 and that all students will have the opportunity to engage with other cultures.<br><br>**Aim:** all Qld state schools will be required to provide a language in Years 5–8. | Schools are encouraged to offer a language programme from Prep to Year 12 'where appropriate'. Schools, in consultation with their school community, have autonomy to make decisions about the year levels of provision.<br><br>The P–12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework recommends time allocations for English, Mathematics, Science, History and Health & Physical Education based on the Australian Curriculum (AC), school year and core system priorities (including additional hours for English and Mathematics). Schools decide time for remaining learning areas (referred to ACARA's indicative times for writers). In 2015, state schools familiarise with the AC and from 2016 commence implementation.<br><br>Support for languages also includes the After-Hours Ethnic Schooling Program. | |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **South Australia (SA)**<br>(As advised and/or verified by SA Department of Education and Childhood Development) | No policy specifically for Languages<br>Umbrella policy for all learning areas: *DECD Australian Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment and Reporting Policy R–10, which is currently being reviewed* | To provide direction to schools, support centres and units about expectations of **what** will be taught and **how** it will be taught, assessed and reported. It is expected that by the beginning of 2017 all Australian Curriculum learning areas/subjects, including languages, will be fully implemented (i.e used to plan, teach, assess and report) in all DECD schools. | For languages in government schools, the recommended time allocations for Reception to Year 6 are 80 minutes per week and 128 minutes per week for Years 7–10. These recommendations are based on the Australian Curriculum Indicative Hours for Writing. Schools can claim exceptional circumstances where principals negotiate the above timeline and declare the strategies they will put in place for future implementation.<br><br>DECD recommends that one of the following priority languages be offered as a *whole-school language programme: Aboriginal Languages (most appropriate one for location), Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese.<br><br>*A whole-school language programme is one in which all students are learning the same second language as part of the whole-school curriculum offerings. In addition, there are a range of other language learning opportunities available to individual students through Ethnic Schools, the School of Languages (offered out of school hours) and First Language Maintenance and Development Programs (targeting students' mother tongue).<br><br>DECD supports government schools through research to rethink ways of working within local school partnerships towards improving engagement and achievement of all students in quality, sustainable and continuous language programmes that maximise the use of the latest technologies. | Associated implementation guidelines for the Australian Curriculum requires all students in Years F–8 to be taught a language, with the aim of students continuing languages learning to Year 12. However there is no compulsion for languages learning beyond beyond Year 8.<br><br>Accountability is required through school plans. Principals of schools not able to meet this requirement by 2017 may negotiate a one-year extension with their Education Director.<br><br>The associated implementation guidelines for the Australian Curriculum are also under review. |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tasmania (Tas)** (As advised and/or verified by Tas Department of Education) | Languages are included within *Tasmanian Curriculum* and other Departmental policies and strategies such as *Engaging with Asia Strategy 2013–15, eStrategy* and *Curriculum Policy*<br><br>Planning is underway for language education as part of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Languages.  All Department of Education schools are encouraged to begin exploring and implementing the Australian Curriculum: Languages but no date has been set for formal implementation.<br><br>Work has begun on the development of a Senior Secondary Curriculum Framework for all Tasmanian senior secondary schools. The framework will include Languages. | **Aim**: Learning a language is recommended. Students may begin their study [of a language] in [Years] K–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8 or 9–10 or 11-12.<br><br>*Engaging with Asia Strategy*<br><br>**Aim**: 'enable awareness and understanding of the importance of Asia to our future and the value of engaging with Asian literacy'. | K–12 syllabus and support materials for six languages (three Asian, three European). Senior secondary courses are accredited and assessed by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards & Certification (TASC): (Chinese, French, German, Italian and Japanese + Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages [CCAFL] for background speakers).<br><br>One action area of the *Engaging with Asia Strategy* policy relates to languages: *Stimulating student engagement with Asian culture and languages* but not clear how this is achieved. The focus is on embedding Asia literacy through all learning areas 'particularly' languages (p. 5).<br><br>Languages are also a focus of the Department of Education's eStrategy, with online course development and curriculum support being supported F-12.<br><br>Existing support strategies include:<br>• schools are actively supported in establishing sister school relationships to support language learning<br>• University of Tasmania's (UTAS) High Achiever Program (subsidised course costs, credit towards UTAS Degree)<br>• UTAS College Program, Year 11 and 12 students eligible to enrol in UTAS units<br>• specialist Asian Studies Pathway for senior secondary students, providing a focus on Asian languages and cultures, including an ATAR-attracting 150 hour *Asian Studies* course.<br>• ongoing development of Languages support strategies with the University of | No specific requirements at any level. |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Victoria (Vic)**<br>(As advised and/or verified by the Department of Education and Training | All Victorian schools are required by legislation, (*Education and Training Reform Act 2006*) and as a condition of their registration with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to provide the eight learning areas, including Languages. | **Aim**:<br>The Victorian Government is committed to providing high quality languages education to all students. | Support strategies are numerous and include:<br>• a Languages Workforce Planning Group, including tertiary sector<br>• Language Teaching Scholarships for undergraduates and teachers who have advanced proficiency in a language<br>• Languages advisers who provide linguistic and curriculum support to schools and teachers<br>• four Regional Language Project Officers who provide strategic support to schools<br>• Language maintenance courses for currently employed language teachers<br>• 23 language-specific teacher associations funded annually to provide  professional learning programs for teachers and activities for students<br><br>• Language Passports in 8 languages provided to all Prep to Year 4 students (expectation that all young learners will be learning a language from their first year of schooling).<br>• Language Assistant Programs<br>• In-country programs for students (including $13 million over 4 years for Year 9 students to travel to China)<br>• 14 designated Bilingual programs<br>• Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses for teachers<br>• Languages and School Experience Program with tertiary sector<br>• Certificate IV in Community Language Teaching<br>• an online/on demand language | Comprehensive policy and plan for action to support language learning.<br><br>Clear requirements and targets, short and long-term.<br><br>Monitoring and evaluation of strategies about the actual impact will be important.<br><br>DEECD is working with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to develop an online language proficiency tool. |

| State or territory | Title of policy | Stated purpose | Implementation | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Western Australia (WA)** (As advised and/or verified by WA Department of Education) | School Curriculum and Standards Authority's *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting* policy Effective 1 January 2015 | The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is responsible for setting the curriculum, standards of student achievement in languages and for the assessment and certification of students' achievement according to those standards. In accordance with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act, 1997, the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline sets out the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that students are expected to acquire and guidelines for the assessment of student achievement. The Outline includes curriculum, policy advice and guidelines for all Western Australian schools- government and non-government schools and home education providers. The Department of Education *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy* ensures compliance. | Languages is one of the eight learning areas identified in the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. The *Outline* sets out the curriculum, guiding principles for teaching, learning and assessment and support for teachers in assessing and reporting student achievement for students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Schools are required to report student achievement for languages taught in their school. The Department of Education supports the teaching and learning of seven mainstream language areas, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian and Aboriginal languages. The Statewide Services Learning Area Support branch is responsible for support for the teaching and learning of languages in public schools throughout Western Australia. Support for the teaching of languages includes: <br>• four Teacher Development Schools which focus on provision of professional learning for language teachers; <br>• an officer who provides support for the implementation of the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; <br>• online Connect Community forums for languages and the cross-curriculum priorities; <br>• ten full time language assistants from China, France, Germany and Indonesia who support primary and secondary language programs; and <br>• the Western Australian Secondary School Executives Association and Hyogo Administrators' exchange for secondary school educators to support the sister-state | The School Curriculum and Standards Authority will adopt and adapt the Australian Curriculum: Languages (Pre-primary to Year 10) as developed by ACARA to suit the context of public schools. The Department of Education has been involved in consultations. |

The data reveal a number of key findings as discussed below.

## 1. The variation and fragility of language policy and policy positions

Firstly, the current policy environment for Languages is a fragmented one. The existence of policies specific to languages education varies, with some states and territories having a specific policy (e.g. Queensland [Qld]) or overarching policies (e.g. the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 in Vic), and yet others have no dedicated languages education policy (e.g. Northern Territory [NT]). A number of states and territories address languages education through curriculum policy, and in particular the implementation plans for the Australian Curriculum (e.g. South Australia [SA], Western Australia [WA]).

The aims of policies and policy positions related to Languages are typically focused on participation and access or exposure to language learning. They vary in how the aims are framed, ranging from those that 'encourage' schools to offer language programmes (e.g. Tas), to those that have 'requirements' that schools offer language programmes at particular year levels (e.g. 100 hours between Year 7–8 in New South Wales [NSW]). The stated aim of the Review of Languages Education in NSW, for example, is to 'broaden' and make 'more inclusive' accessibility to a languages programme. Typically, the policies focus on the primary and junior secondary years, primarily between mid-primary to the first year or two of junior secondary (Year 7/8 depending on the state/territory). In all cases, language learning is not mandated for all learners beyond junior secondary level.

## 2. A period of transition

Many of the policies reflect a period of transition in relation to languages education. In fact, there have been significant changes in many states in the first half of 2015 alone. In recent decades, state and territory initiatives have tended to accord with national initiatives such as the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSAS) 1996–2004 (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 1994), the National Asian Languages and Studies Programs (NALSSP) 2007–2012 (MCEETYA, 2007), the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools and the National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools (MCEETYA, 2005). The Languages Education Working Party, state and territory languages education representatives, under the leadership of Vic, attempted to develop a new nationally agreed plan, however the draft (MCEETYA, 2011, unpublished draft) was never released and in the meantime, developments such as the Australian Curriculum and the Coalition Government's education policy have moved to the fore.

Indeed, the introduction of the Australian Curriculum has become a primary vehicle through which languages education is being framed. That is, it is through *curriculum* policy that several of the states and territories are addressing the provision of languages education. This could be interpreted as indicating that the learning area is embedded within the mainstream curriculum and therefore does not require a specific language policy. However, a number of caveats in the documents indicate that this may not be the case. For example, statements such as the following indicate that programme provision remains a challenge: 'where a language has not previously been taught, where teacher expertise is not currently available, and if the recommended timeline poses significant challenges to individual schools, schools may negotiate with and seek approval from the principal's line manager for an extension to this timeline. In these exceptional circumstances, principals will indicate on Attachment 5 the strategies they will put in place to enable full implementation of the R–10 Australian Curriculum by the end of 2017' (Department for Education and Child Development SA [DECD], 2013, p.11). In some cases schools will have the autonomy to determine how language programmes are offered— even though arrangements could differ within sectors – and in other cases (e.g. SA) school principals may seek exemption or negotiate implementation according to their situation and needs. In using the Australian Curriculum's indicative times for writing as the policy framing for languages, the time allocated to language programmes may either increase or decrease depending on the existing programme conditions in particular states and territories, education sectors or schools. This

may impact on achievement and potentially retention into the senior years. Hence, while there are national targets and local requirements, programme provision is ultimately determined at the local school level, where 'flexibility' is a key factor in how, and whether, programmes are offered.

There is some evidence that state and territory languages education policies are also being influenced by the Government's education policy, *Students First* (Australian Government Department of Education). The policy identified languages education as an area for improved provision nationally with the aim, amongst others, to 'revise the teaching of foreign languages in Australian schools with the goal of ensuring that at least 40 per cent of Year 12 students are studying a language other than English within a decade'.

## 3. The need for targeted support and impact evaluation

Each of the state and territory policies that exist includes a range of strategies that are provided to support the implementation of the languages policy. The nature and extent of support varies according to the aims of the policies. However, the support strategies typically relate to areas such as teacher and/or principal professional learning (both locally and through in-country study), programme development (such as Content and Language Integrated Learning, or bilingual immersion programmes) at times involving collaboration between jurisdictions and universities, curriculum materials including online delivery, language assistant programmes, and in some cases, recruitment and workforce planning. Some strategies are particularly targeted at senior secondary students such as programmes to fast-track students to university study (e.g. Tas).

While there are numerous support strategies in place, little is known about the nature and extent of their impact on retention. Under the NALSAS and NALSSP initiatives, states and territories were required to report annually on how targeted federal funding for Asian languages (Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean) was used. The annual reports provide comprehensive descriptions of the range of programmes and initiatives offered by the states and territories in a given year. Towards the end of the NALSAS, a review was undertaken (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2002). The report indicated that, in general, much had been achieved, but Asian languages education remained a fragile area and much effort was required to continue to sustain and improve it. The report focused on participation increases achieved under the NALSAS but did not focus on retention rates or identify how particular strategies enhanced retention at any level. Many of the projects reported in the NALSSP annual reports were small-scale, and their effect cannot be tracked using jurisdiction-wide or state-wide data.

Under the School Languages Programme, states and territories have been required to provide annual reports to the Commonwealth Government that include statistical data on student enrolments at each year level in at least the targeted Asian languages. However, there are two issues. While such data could be highly valuable in terms of participation rates (but see next paragraph), the reports do not indicate the nature and extent to which particular programmes and initiatives at the state and territory level have directly impacted on student retention, including in the senior secondary years. There is currently no process for tracking student enrolments and participation patterns in any language, at any level, hence no data that may indicate how retention is affected at any given point and by what.

In fact, very poor data is available in terms of student participation in languages education in Australia. This has been reported over many years – some of the more recent reiterations are in Liddicoat et al. (2007, pp. 5–9), Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013, p. 42), Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009, p. 38) and Slaughter (2009, p. 5). Some jurisdictions, and sectors within jurisdictions, collect more data than others (with Vic having collected data and published comprehensive annual reports on languages taught in government schools for over two decades); but even where data is collected, it may not be comparable nationally. In relation to specific languages, the most comprehensive data is available in the four priority Asian languages during the NALSAS and NALSSP periods, when reporting student participation data was mandatory for those languages, but was not carried out in a nationally consistent way and hence has not generated comparable data across states and territories. The four language-specific reports that were commissioned by the federal government to examine the current state of those languages,

published in 2010, comment on the general unavailability and non-comparability of the data (de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 19; Kohler, & Mahnken, 2010, p. 12; Orton, 2010, p. 16; Shin, 2010, p. 19).

## Concluding comments

It is close to three decades since the first national languages policy in Australia (Lo Bianco, 1987), yet the state of languages education policy remains fractured. During the 1990s and 2000s state and territory policies tended to wane and policy actions focused on implementation of national initiatives. In the policy hiatus over recent years, some states and territories have developed their own language policies while others are using other policies and curriculum policy to support languages education. The focus of all policies is primarily at the primary and junior secondary level, with no mandated language study beyond Year 8. Various support strategies are included as part of the policy implementation; however, little is known about their impact on retention, particularly at the senior secondary level. Recent policy developments in some states explicitly aim to increase student participation in language learning. These include efforts to increase public awareness and accountability for the quality of language learning. It remains to be seen how some state and territory plans will interface with national initiatives.

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# The current state of language policies internationally

Table 2 provides an overview of the current situation of policies related to languages education in a range of other countries with the aim of considering both similarities and differences to the Australian languages education context.

Table 2: Summary of key aspects of language policies internationally

| Countries | Requirements for language/s study | Hours per week | Other comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Compulsory at least two years at secondary level (in 40 states) | - | State-based decision making, varied policy and implementation |
| Canada | Ontario: minimum 600 hours between grades 4 and 8<br>British Columbia: compulsory in grades 5 to 8<br>Quebec: compulsory from grades 1 or 3 (depending on language) | - | Focus on increasing the proportion of 15–19 year-olds who speak both official languages to 50% by 2013 (twice the previous level) |
| New Zealand | Expectation that all schools will offer language programmes from Years 7 to 10 | - | |
| England | Current policy requires compulsory study from age seven to 14 | - | |
| Scotland | Compulsory in last two years of primary and first four of secondary (ages ten to 16) | - | Expectation of six years of study of the same language |
| France | Compulsory study of at least one foreign language at secondary | 3 hours/week | 3 hours/week for each foreign language studied |
| Austria | Compulsory for four years in primary schools, compulsory at least two foreign languages between ages 14–18 in technical and commercial schools, three required in academic schools | Primary (from Year 1) 60 mins/ week | Normally taught in primary schools by regular class teachers with language education qualifications (i.e. mainstreamed) |
| Netherlands | Compulsory all students study two languages for the entire duration of secondary schooling and three languages in final year | - | |
| Japan | Compulsory at both junior high school and senior high school levels. Optional in primary (but 88% teach English) | Junior secondary 150 mins/week | |
| China | Compulsory (English) language study in primary school introduced in 2001, compulsory at secondary level | Primary (from Grade 3), 80 mins/ week<br>Secondary, 5–6 lessons of 45 mins/ week, total of 3.75 to 4.5 hours/ week | |
| Republic of Korea | Since 2000, compulsory in primary grades 3–6. Compulsory at secondary level | Grades 3–4, 90 mins/week<br>Grades 5–6, 80 mins/week<br>Junior secondary, 2–4 hours/ week<br>Senior secondary (Grades 10–12) 4 hours/week | |

Table 2 indicates a number of common aspects of the language policies of the majority of examined countries as follows:

In the majority of countries shown in Table 2 (exceptions are New Zealand and some states in North America), the study of a foreign language is compulsory for at least junior and senior secondary school. It also shows an increasing compulsory requirement in primary school where traditionally foreign language study has been weaker.

The majority of countries shown in Table 2, with the exception of the United States where requirements and implementation are determined at the local level, have a centrally mandated number of hours of language study per week (for example, between two and four hours per week in secondary).

In general, the time allocated to language learning is substantial. In Austria, a similar time to that in Australian primary schools is allocated; however, the language programme is taught by the mainstream class teacher, making all primary teachers also teachers of a foreign language. China and the Republic of Korea have similar time allocations to Australia for primary and junior secondary. However, these increase in senior secondary to approximately four hours per week. Hence, the time allocated to learning foreign languages in the countries in Table 2 is similar to or substantially above that allocated in Australia.

These findings are supported by a recent report into language learning in countries that rank highly in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Fernandez and Gearon (2011) found that in Finland, China, the Republic of Korea and Japan, language learning is compulsory and it starts at an early age. Language learning is viewed as a valued and regular part of the curriculum. For example, in Finland substantial curriculum time is allocated to language learning with 228 hours per year in primary and 398 hours per year in secondary (compared to 60 hours per year in primary, and 100 per year in secondary in Australia) (Fernandez, & Gearon, 2011, p. 21).

The recent report by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (hereafter EACEA) (2012), funded by the European Commission, states similar findings. The report is based on data across 32 European countries and provides a comprehensive picture of the current state of foreign language study in Europe with the following findings:

## Language learning is compulsory and in demand

The study of at least one foreign language is mandatory in the majority of European countries. Over the past two decades, the main reforms in relation to language study have been to increase the duration of compulsory language study (except in the United Kingdom). This has been achieved in the main by commencing study at an earlier age. In 2010, for example, Italy set about making the study of a foreign language compulsory for all students until the end of secondary school. In France, reforms have introduced a second foreign language as a compulsory subject for all students in general upper secondary education. In some countries where there are specific pathways, students are required to study one or more languages (for example, two in Germany, three in Netherlands, four in Luxembourg), depending on which pathway is followed. In the case of vocational pathways, students often study fewer languages than those in academic pathways; however, they are still normally required to study one or two languages, depending on the country.

In the majority of these countries, there is also widespread school autonomy to decide which languages are offered at the local level and how to implement the languages curriculum. In fact, autonomy is seen as enabling schools to 'enrich' their curriculum offerings through providing locally or regionally relevant language study (typically in addition to English). Hence, while language learning is compulsory, even where it is not mandated, it is often in demand by school communities and they are driving an expansion of existing programmes. There are a number of projects designed to increase the range of languages or the time studying a language. Approximately ten projects are underway across Europe including those designed to introduce language programmes where it is not yet provided, including pre-primary programmes, and to expand the languages offered. In Ireland, for example, the Modern Languages in Primary School Initiative will include 500 primary schools (approximately one-sixth of all schools) offering a range of languages, even though it is not compulsory. In Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Norway, the aim is to offer

alternative languages (usually French and German but in the Netherlands also Chinese) or to study them earlier than required by the curriculum framework (EACEA, 2012:, p. 37).

In general, language learning is considered to be a normal part of the school curriculum in the majority of European countries. Even in countries where schools are streamed, all students are expected to study at least one or two languages. For the majority of countries in Europe, English is the main foreign language studied at all levels of schooling and it is typically mandated. For example, in 2009/10, on average, 73 per cent of primary, 90 per cent of junior secondary and 74.9 per cent of senior secondary students in the European Union were learning English (EACEA, 2012, p. 11).

## Language teachers are highly qualified

The EACEA report also indicates that there is a high standard of qualifications among language teachers in the majority of European countries. On average, 89.6 per cent of language teachers state that they are fully qualified to teach foreign languages (EACEA, 2012, p. 90). This is particularly high in secondary schools and less so in primary schools, possibly due to the rapid recent expansion of programmes in many countries in the primary school sector. Where this is the case, targeted programmes have been offered, such as upgrading courses and altering the content of initial teacher education courses, to meet the needs of primary school teachers. Typically, secondary school language teachers are required to undertake a four- or five-year course to become fully qualified. In the United Kingdom, language teachers complete a four-year Bachelor's degree plus a one-year teaching qualification.

There are varied requirements for language teachers to undertake intensive in-country study programmes as part of their initial teacher training. Only a few countries require such programmes. More than half of the language teachers claim that they have already voluntarily spent time in-country. In the United Kingdom, as part of their degree, language teacher trainees are expected to undertake one-year of their Bachelor degree in-country. In Ireland, in order to qualify for teacher registration, language teachers must have spent at least three months in the target language country. Two to four weeks of in-country study is recommended in Germany (EACEA, 2012, p. 96). Hence, in-country study for language teachers is valued, but it often does not need to be mandated due to the mobility and ease of access to other countries in Europe. This is not the case for language teachers in Australia, where distance and costs may inhibit widespread in-country study.

## Language learning is substantive and sustained

Another key feature of language study in countries across Europe is the programme orientation. Content-integrated language learning (known as CLIL) is found in almost all countries (except Denmark, Greece, Iceland and Turkey) (EACEA, 2012, p. 10). While it is widespread, it is not the typical approach in the majority of programmes. However, approaches such as CLIL and immersion that teach other subjects through the medium of instruction of the foreign language, are increasingly popular with recent pilot projects (e.g. Belgium, Cyprus and Portugal). Since 2010, all students in Italy in their final year of secondary school are required to study one non-language subject through a foreign language. Austria has a similar requirement and also requires the first foreign language studied in primary to be taught using a content integrated approach. Similarly, Liechtenstein is conducting a four-year project requiring upper secondary students to take a subject taught through a foreign language.

The European experience is also supported by the situation in Canada where concerns about the low levels of proficiency in French among Anglophone Canadians have resulted in the introduction of Intensive French programmes. As part of the Canadian government's aim to double the number of English-speaking students who become fluent in French and French-speaking students who become fluent in English by 2013, Intensive French programmes were introduced in a number of provinces. The initiative has been highly successful with students learning substantive content and achieving results comparable to those of students in immersion programmes (Fernandez, & Gearon, 2011, p. iv).

These experiences indicate the importance of not trivialising language learning and instead focusing on substantive content that leads to significant gains in learning over time. The teaching of another subject through the target language requires sufficient teacher knowledge, time and resources to do so to a high standard. Furthermore, students require recognition of their learning and most countries across Europe issue a certificate at the end of compulsory education that refers to students' language learning.

Some countries have attempted to increase the recognition and value of language learning through their formal accreditation processes. The most recent report on the state of language learning in the United Kingdom (Tinsley, 2013) echoes many of the challenges faced in Australia. The report explains that most initiatives have focused on primary and junior secondary levels, with the assumption that students would automatically continue with their language study. The figures suggest otherwise; in England, Ireland and Wales when the mandatory period of language learning from age 11–16 was reduced to age 14 (in 2004), a substantial decline in enrolments followed. The reduced requirement was intended to increase subject choice; however, there is now concern that language learning is falling behind other countries to such a degree that action must be taken to rectify the situation (Richardson, 2014). The recent reforms of A-level (senior secondary) subjects, including languages, are currently under community consultation. The stated aim for languages is to improve student engagement by increasing learning demands through introducing aspects such as critical engagement with literary works and independent research (Department for Education UK, 2014). This initiative works on the assumption that curriculum reform will positively impact on learner engagement and that this in turn will improve retention in language programmes.

Both Scotland and England have introduced a Baccalaureate certificate that includes language study at senior secondary. The Scottish Baccalaureate requires students to study a language to 16 years of age. The British Baccalaureate, which is an 'embedded' qualification within the existing GSCE (see the section on Certification at Senior Secondary level in this report for specific details), shows signs of improved participation rates. The United Kingdom's Department for Education claims that almost half of state-school students undertook languages at GCSE in 2013, the highest level for seven years (Richardson, 2014). However, criticism remains, as few students continue with their language learning to A-level (senior secondary) and this remains a challenge.

The Tinsley report (2013) argues that across the United Kingdom there is no single measure that will improve the situation and that a range of mechanisms and conditions need to be in place. These include compulsory language learning within a mandated core curriculum (similar to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM] subjects), formal recognition of language achievement (such as through a certificate), diversification of language pathways (including targeted vocationally oriented language subjects), and an increased range of languages.

## Concluding comments

Overall, the review of language policy and initiatives across a range of countries indicates some commonalities and differences compared with Australia. In particular, apart from the United Kingdom and some states in the United States, there is a marked difference in the required age, time and number of languages to be studied. On the whole, language learning is integral to the school curriculum and culture, with it being a requirement for all students, regardless of pathways, and with formal recognition and portability of language study through mechanisms such as certificates. In their vision for reforming languages education in Australia, Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009) argue that a major challenge is the value a nation places on bilingualism. They describe a contrast between bilingualism in non-native English speaking countries and native English speaking countries. For the former, bilingualism is associated with high levels of education, social mobility, professional advancement and cultural interests (Lo Bianco, & Slaughter 2009:11). In predominantly English-speaking countries, bilingualism is associated with minority communities for whom English is not a first language, who are viewed by the mainstream as 'isolated' or 'privileged' individuals. Australia faces a major challenge, as Europe did previously, in shifting the community from a monolingual to a bilingual capability for all.

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# Languages in senior secondary certification in Australia

Table 3 provides an overview of languages as a subject within the current certification requirements at senior secondary level in the various states and territories.

Table 3: Languages within current senior secondary certification requirements in each state and territory

| State/territory | Authority and certificate | Required for certification (YES/NO) | Required for University Entry (YES/NO) | Incentives (Bonus Points for Languages) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Australian Capital Territory** | ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies<br><br>**ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and ACT Record of Achievement** for students completing a minimum of 17 standard units forming at least 3 A, T, H, C or M courses<br><br>**ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement** for students completing a minimum of:<br><br>20 standard units which must include at least 18 standard A, C, E, T, M, H units. 12.5 of these standard units must be T or H.<br><br>The accredited units must be arranged into courses to form at least the following patterns:<br><br>• five majors or<br>• four majors and one minor or<br>• three majors and three minors<br><br>Of these major and minor courses:<br><br>• at least three major courses and one minor course must have been classified T or H<br><br>The student must also sit for the ACT Scaling Test (AST). | NO | NO | The Australian National University (ANU) offers bonus points for nationally strategic senior secondary subjects, and in recognition of difficult circumstances that students face in their studies.<br><br>Bonus points are applied to all applicants with an ATAR at or above 70. Points are awarded in accordance with the approved schedule, and no more than 10 points (maximum 5 academic points and maximum 5 equity points) will be awarded.<br><br>Language Studies (Other than English) is awarded 5 points. |
| **New South Wales** | Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW<br><br>High School Certificate (HSC)<br><br>Minimum 22 units: 12 Preliminary (Year 11) and 10 HSC (Year 12) units required (2 units of English in each) | NO | NO | Dependent on application to individual institutions and specific courses, e.g. University of New South Wales offers up to 4 bonus points for languages, depending on HSC results |
| **Northern** | NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) | NO | NO | The Universities' Language, Literacy and Mathematics |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Territory** | (Administered by SACE Board of SA)<br><br>90 credits required (one year of study is equal to 20 credits) | | | Bonus Scheme (recognised by all three universities in SA) awards students up to two points for successfully completing a subject in:<br><br>20 credits of a LOTE in the Languages Learning Area. |
| **Queensland** | Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority<br><br>Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)<br><br>20 credits required with at least 12 from Core courses | NO | NO | QTAC converts Year 12 results to entry rank and applies 2 bonus points for languages |
| **South Australia** | SACE Board of SA<br><br>South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)<br><br>Minimum 60 Stage 2 credits, plus ten Stage 2 credits for mandatory Research project subject | NO | NO | Between 2-4 points for languages, recognised by three universities in SA |
| **Tasmania** | Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC)<br><br>Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)<br><br>Must meet five required standards | NO | NO | Two bonus points for languages, recognised by the University of Tasmania only, for UTAS entrance purposes |
| **Victoria** | Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority<br><br>Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)<br><br>Minimum 16 units required (3 units of English) | NO | NO | Language is adjusted up by adding five to the initial VTAC Scaled Study Score average. All students of a Language receive an adjustment, but it is not a uniform adjustment.<br><br>ATAR calculation includes 10 per cent of the fifth and sixth permissible scores (subjects) available for a student. |
| **Western Australia** | School Curriculum and Standards Authority<br><br>Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)<br><br>Four subjects required | NO | NO | LOTE Bonus – 10% of the best language subject scaled score added to the student's best four scaled scores (the language subject does not need to be one of the best four) for determining ATAR.  Curtin University Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University and University of WA |

Table 3 indicates that each state and territory has its own senior secondary certification authority with specific requirements for successful completion of the respective certificate. In all cases, the study of a language is optional and there are no requirements to study a language at any year level or to complete a language to Year 12 in order to complete the certificate.

Furthermore, there are no requirements to study a language at any level in order to gain entrance into any particular university or any particular courses. Some tertiary institutions offer subject bonus points for students who have successfully completed Year 12 level language studies. The number of points can vary between two and five depending on the awarding institution and the level of Year 12 results in the language course. The points are typically allocated over and above a student's Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), that is, they are in addition to ATAR points but rather increase a student's selection ranking for particular institutions and courses. The addition of the 'bonus points' may be carried out automatically by the state/territory tertiary admissions authority or may be applied automatically (e.g. University of Adelaide) or at the discretion of individual universities (e.g. University of Melbourne). The number of points and whether or not they apply to particular courses depends on the institution concerned.

One aspect that is worth noting is the opportunity for students to be accelerated and/or extended in their language learning at secondary school level. There are three main mechanisms within the senior courses that enable acceleration and/or extension. First, advanced level courses, for example, the 'Extension' courses in NSW, enables students who wish to extend their learning beyond the standard course alone to gain further units in languages. Second, Beginners courses in some jurisdictions are a form of accelerated language learning, similar to the *Ab Initio* model within the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Third, some certificates are structured in such a way that units may be taken at earlier years than the final two years that has traditionally been the case (i.e. Year 11 and 12). Thus, students in Year 10 and even as early as Year 9 are able to enrol in language units that count towards certification (e.g. Stage 1 or 2 in SA, Stage 6 in NSW, units 3 and 4 in Vic). This early uptake of language units is viewed by some as having a positive benefit on student retention and completion in senior secondary languages study; in Vic, students can gain an extra 10 per cent for a sixth subject that counts towards their ATAR, thus potentially providing a competitive advantage in being accepted into a preferred tertiary course (de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 27). The practice of middle years students undertaking senior year subjects is evident in other subject areas also and can result in the 'freeing up' of subject spaces for those students wishing to take senior language courses but who would otherwise feel they did not have sufficient space. While anecdotal evidence suggests that acceleration of this kind is quite common, there is no publically available data on the numbers of students who undertake other subject units earlier in order to allow room to undertake languages in the final years. Such data would be valuable in determining the effect of certificate flexibility on retention in language study.

## Concluding comments

Across all of the senior school certificates in Australia, there are a limited number of mandatory/required subjects or areas of study at the senior secondary level (e.g. English in Vic and NSW, and the Research Project in SA). There is no requirement in any state or territory to study a language at the most senior level of schooling. Subject bonus points apply in various states and territories to varying degrees and are largely dependent on individual tertiary institutions. It is unclear as to whether the scheme acts as an incentive or reward for students, encouraging students who would not otherwise study a language or rewarding those who would have studied a language regardless. Furthermore, the information available about ATAR bonus points and scaling, and how these are carried out, is complex and not well understood by students and their families. Clear and timely communication about these schemes and processes is particularly crucial at the point in students' education when language learning becomes optional. The flexibility provided by a number of certificates enables some students to continue to study a language to senior secondary level, where if the structures were more rigid they may not have done so.

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# Eligibility criteria and retention

The issue of who studies which languages in Australian schools, particularly at the senior secondary level, dates back to the 1990s with the development of the first national framework for languages, the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLaSSL). The issue has been an area of research and debate for some time in Australia (Clyne et al., 1997, 2004; Elder, 1996, 2009a, 2009b; Orton, 2008; Scarino et al., 2010) and internationally, particularly in the United States (e.g. Kondo-Brown 2005; Valdes, 2005). Discussions are often framed in terms of enabling equitable access and fairness for all language learners, including those with or without background in the specific language, and have led to the development of eligibility criteria for students being permitted to enrol in particular language courses for some languages in some states and territories.

During the 1990s, under the NAFLaSSL, syllabuses for different levels were developed and implemented in NSW, Vic, and SA, to cater for languages with a small number of candidates. The stated aims of the differentiated syllabi were to provide educationally appropriate and engaging courses that develop students' proficiency and knowledge of language and culture in the particular language being studied. Following the NAFLaSSL, the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL) was developed for a range of languages and implemented across a number of states and territories (NSW, Vic, SA). Under this framework, three course levels were developed: Beginners, Continuers (known in Vic as Second Language), and Background Speakers (known in Vic as First Language). In the past decade, the three levels have been increasingly viewed as no longer adequate to address the emergent student cohort in some languages. The changing profile of some cohorts, through migration and increasing international student enrolments, raised the standards of some courses (e.g. Vic, Chinese First Language) reducing their appeal to students who had previously taken them (Orton, 2008). Furthermore, the growing numbers of students with some background, but not necessarily first language speakers or recent arrivals, was not sufficiently catered for in the Continuers' level courses. Hence, a further (fourth) level of courses was developed to cater for this 'in-between' group; 'Second Language Advanced' in Vic in 2004, 'Heritage' developed for the CCAFL (in Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean) by NSW in 2009.

Thus, while there are four levels of senior secondary syllabi, across the broader F–10 spectrum there is a general understanding nationally that there are three broad groups of language learners: learners with little or no prior knowledge of the language; learners with some background or home use of and limited schooling in the language (or dialects), born or long-term resident in Australia; and, learners who have recently arrived in Australia with extensive education through the language in their home country. There have been attempts in state and territory curriculum frameworks from primary to middle secondary school (e.g. VELS, SACSA) to recognise students' differentiated learning needs and outcomes through the notion of 'pathways' and learner groups. In the current Australian Curriculum for Languages, three groupings are used: Second Language Learners, Background Language Learners and First Language Learners. Depending on the specific language, the curriculum has been written with these groups in mind, for example, second language learners (e.g. Indonesian, French), background learners (e.g. Vietnamese) or all three groups (i.e. Chinese).

Table 4 provides an overview of the current courses and eligibility criteria at senior secondary in each state and territory.

Table 4: Current policies related to eligibility to study language courses at senior secondary

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Australian Capital Territory** ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies | Continuers | Not specified | Study of the language at school in Australia; native speakers or parents are native speakers but no formal education in the language | Overseas schooling and language spoken at home. |
| **New South Wales** Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW | Beginners | Applies to all Beginners Languages courses | Second language, no prior knowledge or experience (except minimal school study) | Students have had no more than 100 hours study of the language at the secondary level (or the equivalent), little or no prior knowledge or experience of the language. For exchange students, a significant in-country experience (involving experiences such as homestay and attendance at school) of more than three months renders a student ineligible. |
| | Continuers (Note: A Year 12 Extension course is available in 9 languages to be studied in conjunction with the Year 12 Continuers course) | Chinese Indonesian Japanese Korean | Second (or subsequent) language, students typically have studied the language for 200–400 hours study at the commencement of Stage 6 | Students have had no more than one year's formal education from the first year of primary education (Year 1) where the language is the medium of instruction, no more than three years' residency in the past ten years in a country where the language is the medium of communication, language is not used for sustained communication outside the classroom with background language users. |
| | Heritage | Applies to all Heritage courses | Students typically have been brought up in a home where language is used, and they have a connection to that culture. These students have some degree of understanding and knowledge of the language.  They have received all or most of their formal education in schools where English (or another language different from the language of the co is the medium of instruction. Students may have | Students have had no formal education where the language is the medium of instruction beyond the year in which the student turns ten years of age (typically Year 4 or 5 of primary education). |

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | undertaken some study of the language in a community, primary and/or secondary school in Australia. , Students may have undertaken had formal education in a school where the language is the medium of instruction up to the age of ten. | |
| | Background Speakers | Applies to all Background Speaker courses | Students have a cultural and linguistic background in the language | No criteria |
| **Northern Territory** <br><br> Northern Territory Board of Studies | Refer to SACE Board requirements. | | | |
| **Queensland** <br><br> Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority | Continuers | Chinese <br> French <br> Italian <br> German <br> Indonesian <br> Japanese <br> Spanish <br> Modern-Greek <br> Arabic <br> Vietnamese <br> Korean <br> Polish <br> Punjabi <br> Russian <br> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages | Students who wish to study an additional language and who studied the language at junior secondary in Australia or in a similar environment. | Study throughout Years 8, 9 and 10, other students with less formal language learning experience may meet the requirements of the syllabus successfully |
| | Beginners/current users of a language in a community <br> • Maintaining language <br> • Revitalising language | | The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages syllabus has been designed for all Queensland students — Indigenous and non-Indigenous — in the senior phase of learning who wish to gain knowledge and skill in Indigenous languages. Prior knowledge of any aspect of the language targeted for study is welcomed but not expected. <br><br> Indigenous students include all Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students. <br><br> Non-Indigenous students include all students who do not identify as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander | |

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Trial (currently not offered by any school in Queensland) | person from Australia. Note that throughout this document: <br>• the term — Indigenous is intended to include Australian Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people <br>• the term — Australian languages refers to Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages. | |
| **South Australia** <br> SACE Board SA | Beginners | French <br> Italian <br> Chinese <br> German <br> Indonesian <br> Japanese <br> Spanish <br> Modern-Greek <br> Arabic | Second language, no prior knowledge or experience (except minimal school study) | No prior knowledge or experience. <br> Taken into consideration are: prior formal learning, in-country experience and family or community linguistic experience <br> *The Board recognises that some prior knowledge or experience of the language would not necessarily place a student at an advantage over a student with no prior knowledge or experience of the language. Such knowledge or experience may be very limited and/or very distant in time.* |
| | Continuers | Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese | Second language, study for 300 to 400 hours by end Stage 1, and 400 to 500 hours by end Stage 2 | Student's country of birth, country of residence, linguistic and cultural background, no more than one year of education from the age of five years (pre-school, primary, secondary) in a country where the language is a major language of communication or a medium of instruction. For Chinese special circumstances may apply for the one year of education in China, Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan; students who have had more than one year's education in Brunei, Malaysia, or Singapore will be considered on a case-by-case basis |
| **Tasmania** <br> Tasmanian | Level 3 | Chinese, , French, German, Italian, | Language study at school to Level 2 is usually expected | Completion of Level 2 is usually expected <br> Not eligible if: there is evidence that the student's first |

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qualifications Authority Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification (TASC) | | Japanese | | language is Chinese; there is evidence that the student has been resident in China and/or Hong Kong for no more than five calendar years immediately prior to January 1 of the year in which the course is to be taken; there is evidence that Chinese has been the major language of communication and/or instruction for a total period of not more than 5 years prior to January 1 of the year in which the subject is to be taken |
| | Level 2 | Chinese - Foundation, French - Foundation, German - Foundation, Italian - Foundation, Japanese - Foundation | Designed for beginners with no experience of the language and is also suitable for learners who have had some prior exposure | No criteria |
| **Victoria** Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority | Chinese Second Language | | | Not eligible if one year or more education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction, or three years or more residence in any of the VCAA nominated countries or regions (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau) |
| | Chinese Second Language Advanced | | | Eligible if no more than seven years in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction or highest level of education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction is no greater than Year 7 in a Victorian school |
| | Indonesian/Japanese /Korean Second Language | | | No more than seven years of instruction in a school where [the language: Indonesian or Malay/Japanese/Korean] is the medium of instruction |
| **Western Australia** School Curriculum and Standards Authority | Year 12 2015 Second Language | Chinese Indonesian Japanese | Second (or subsequent) language | No formal criteria – however second language learner is described as having no exposure or interaction in the language outside the language classroom, knowledge gained through classroom teaching in an Australian school or similar |

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | environment, where English is the language of school instruction, not born/lived in a country where Chinese is spoken (although some stays of up to 12 months). The determination for eligibility is made on the basis of:<br>• the principal's recommendation<br>• country or place of residence from birth<br>• language of formal schooling<br>• attendance at community language schools<br>• the student's linguistic background<br>• consideration of other relevant documentation.<br>An on-balance judgement is made on the basis of all information provided. |
| | **Year 11 (from 2015)** Background Language ATAR | Chinese, French, German, Indonesian Italian, Japanese | Learners who:<br>• use the language outside classroom<br>• have had time in-country<br>have been in a school where the language is a means of instruction | For background language defined as:<br>1. less than five (5) years in total of formal education (from pre-primary) in schools where the language is the language of instruction, including education in community and ethnic schools.<br>2. less than five (5) years in total of residency and time spent in a country where the language is a medium of communication<br>3. use of the language for sustained communication outside the classroom with a person or persons who have a background in the language is permitted. |
| | **Year 11 (from 2015)** Background Language ATAR | Chinese, French, German, Indonesian Italian, Japanese | Learners who:<br>• use the language outside classroom<br>• have had time in-country<br>have been in a school where the language is a means of instruction | For background language defined as:<br>1. less than five (5) years in total of formal education (from pre-primary) in schools where the language is the language of instruction, including education in community and ethnic schools.<br>2. less than five (5) years in total of residency and time spent in a country where the language is a medium of communication<br>3. use of the language for sustained communication outside |

| State/territory and Authority | Course | Language/s | Cohort | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | the classroom with a person or persons who have a background in the language is permitted. |
| | **Year 11 (from 2015)** First Language ATAR | Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese | First or bilingual language learners | For first language defined as: 1. may be more than five (5) years in total of formal education (from pre-primary) in schools where the language is the language of instruction, including education in community and ethnic schools 2. may be more than five (5) years in total of residency and time spent in a country where the language is a medium of communication 3. use of the language for sustained communication outside the classroom with a person or persons who have a background in the language is permitted. |

Table 4 shows that while different states and territories offer different courses and have different criteria, the courses fall into four categories:

- Beginners: designed for students with little or no prior knowledge of the target language.

- Continuers/Second Language Learners: designed for students with some prior knowledge of the target language, particularly through school language programmes.

- Heritage: designed for students with some prior knowledge of the target language, gained outside school language programmes.

- Background Speakers/First Language Learners: designed for students with substantial background in the target language and more than one year's schooling where the target language is the medium of instruction.

While this appears quite uniform at one level, the criteria for eligibility in these course levels do vary. In SA, students may enrol in Continuers' level if they have had no more than one year of formal schooling in the target language (from the age of five). However, it is important to note that in Languages with no Background or Heritage syllabuses, all students except Beginners take the Continuers course (e.g. in French, Italian, German, Modern Greek, Spanish and Arabic). In NSW, to enrol in Continuers courses students must also show that they do not use the target language at home or in the community with the aim of reducing unfair competition. In Vic, students may enrol in the same level (Chinese Second Language) if they have had no more than one year of schooling in the target language or have resided in a Chinese speaking country for less than three years. However, courses and eligibility criteria vary across the country, and even where states are operating within a nationally agreed framework there are differences of nomenclature and eligibility criteria that apply. However, the criteria across the board are primarily based on the following: country of birth, years of residence, formal education in the language, years of study of the language in Australia, and to varying degrees, exposure to and use of the language outside of schooling, in exchanges, the home and community.

A further feature across the states and territories is the range of languages to which eligibility requirements apply. Chinese is undoubtedly the primary language, followed by other Asian languages, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, with Indonesian being included but far less significant in terms of numbers of background or first language students (Kohler, & Mahnken, 2010).

While much headway has been made in refining eligibility criteria and developing new courses to suit emergent student cohorts, there continue to be areas of concern and suggestions for ways to improve the current situation.

Despite work on eligibility criteria over the years, there continues to be debate about where eligibility lines are drawn and how they are applied. Some researchers suggest that they are too stringent and, in more extreme cases, 'even affect non-background students who have been exchange students to Japan for one year and are forced to return before the full year is up so that they are not excluded from taking Japanese on their return' (de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 44).

In their study of student achievement, Scarino et al. (2010) argued that the then current groupings were not sufficiently nuanced and this was due to limited information about students' profiles. In order to develop descriptions of achievement, Scarino et al. (2010) identified further factors that could be taken into account, i.e. parent background (country of birth and year of arrival); known languages and contexts of use; home language varieties (including frequency and contexts of use); nature and extent of community language schooling (including language of instruction); and other home languages and community schooling (including in related languages). The researchers acknowledge the sensitivities of acquiring such data, but argue that such information is crucial to understanding students' language ability and therefore placing them in an educationally appropriate course. Scarino et al. (2010) included these categories in their detailed sociolinguistic profile questionnaire that was used to gather achievement data and develop nuanced descriptions of student achievement at Year 6, 10 and 12 in the NALSSP languages. Some of these

factors have since been considered in eligibility processes and have been partly addressed through the development of the fourth level of Heritage Language Courses.

An issue related to eligibility is that of achievement and scores in final year subjects. There are often perceptions that the top scores in some languages subjects are awarded to students with background in the language. Orton (2008) has argued that this is the case in Vic, where almost every year, the majority of the top-50 students who receive an A+ in Chinese are students of Chinese background. She suggested that while this occurs in other languages also, the smaller number of students in these languages means that non-background students may also enter this top grouping (Orton, 2008, p. 19). The development in some states of the Heritage level courses for some languages and the use of eligibility criteria that include home or community use of the language, aim to address such issues and related perceptions of fairness.

Eligibility criteria often exist for those senior secondary language subjects that have more than one level offered. The question of suitability of learning for particular learner groups is also a significant one in the F–10 curriculum, especially in the case of some Asian languages. For example, with Chinese, Orton (2008) argues that classes with multiple groupings, of second language learners and background learners, act as a disincentive to students even in the earlier years where the stakes are lower. Shin (2010) has also argued that in the case of Korean, second language learners are not well catered for in the junior years due to the prevalence of background learners, and then background learners are not well catered for in the upper secondary years due to the presence of first language learners. Hence, first language learners make up the majority of senior secondary students of Korean. While attempts have been made in curriculum frameworks, including the current Australian Curriculum: Languages, to acknowledge the learning needs and trajectories of different groups of learners, the implementation of such frameworks is another matter. School operational matters such as timetabling, staffing, class sizes and ability to offer a quality programme, often mean that students are grouped within the same class, regardless of background and learning needs. As such, students' level of satisfaction in their language learning is diminished and they cease studying the language even before they reach the senior secondary years.

## Concluding comments

While there has been significant attention and efforts focused on eligibility for language courses at the senior secondary level in Australia, it remains a challenging area. At one level, it is generally agreed that it is necessary to differentiate courses for different groups and broad agreement about which groups should have differentiated courses, although eligibility criteria vary somewhat. Recently developed courses for heritage learners in some language subjects have been welcomed as a means of improving retention of such students at the senior secondary level. However, the issue of retention runs deeper and many students have already discontinued their language learning during the junior secondary years where curricula may be differentiated but programme implementation is not. It remains to be seen what, if any, impact the Australian Curriculum may have in this regard.

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# Scaling and moderation across Australia for the ATAR

Each state and territory across Australia is independently responsible for developing a means of generating students' Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score based on the results that students receive for various components of study. While each process is separate, all jurisdictions use one or more processes of moderation and scaling in developing the ATAR score.

The details of each independent system of scaling or moderation are complex. Terminology varies, but the intent of moderation processes (as the term is used here) is to ensure that students of a similar level of ability who study the 'same' subject in different classes, potentially at different schools, receive similar grades. Scaling (as used here) is intended to ensure comparability across subjects, so that students who have completed different courses can be compared to allow for admission to university. Scaling and moderation can be carried out as separate processes, or jointly, in the process of generating an ATAR score from students' grades on assessment items; and the responsibility for parts of this process is divided among different official bodies.

Fundamentally, there are several different processes in operation and the exact details vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A student's results in a particular course in a particular school will depend on his or her on-going coursework or school-based assessment, but in most jurisdictions also depends on an external examination. In the process leading from school-based assessment through to assigning a final ATAR score, students' results in a particular subject are compared across classes within a school and across schools within a subject (moderation), and across subjects (scaling). In some states and territories, there is a formal process of moderation for comparing school-based assessment across schools (within each subject). In comparing across schools and across subjects, jurisdictions either rely on comparing student groups on the basis of the group results on an independent 'generic skills' test, or else compare student groups fundamentally on the basis of how the group went on all their subjects compared with how other students went on all their subjects. Each process is different, but is intended to 'level out' the effects of either the assessment in different courses and subjects being more or less difficult, or the effects of having a particular group of students in a particular year who are better or worse at a particular subject. In most cases students received unscaled grades on their Year 12 certificate, although in some cases they may also receive a scaled score on this certificate as well. In many states and territories, students do not receive (fully) scaled scores for individual units or even for individual subjects, but only a single ATAR result.

What is relevant when it comes to retention in languages programmes is whether the system of scaling as applied in Australia is perceived by students as a relevant factor in continuing or ceasing to study a language. No research specifically on this topic has been published; but scaling is sometimes explicitly mentioned in research on retention. However, the influence, if any, is unclear. Some studies which have asked students about their reasons for ceasing or continuing languages study have found that scaling is simply not mentioned by students at all (e.g. Curnow, Liddicoat, & Scarino, 2007); others suggest that it is a relevant factor motivating students to continue (e.g. de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 34), while still other studies suggest that scaling is a disincentive for continuing (e.g. Tuffin, & Wilson, 1989, p. 46; Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 88). It is unclear whether this relates to the research studies being carried out in different states, or at different times, or for other reasons.

It is important to note that it is issues of perception that matter here, rather than any actual reality. Some jurisdictions explicitly report (some) pre-scaled and post-scaled results; others do not. Anecdotally, it seems that students do not refer to official jurisdiction reports on scaling, but rather rely on a combination of hearsay, social media and 'calculators' such as on the ATAR Notes website (http://atarcalc.com). What individual students then do with their 'knowledge' of the way language courses are scaled is unclear.

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# Certification and retention in senior secondary languages education

One potential lever for improving participation and possibly retention in languages education is through certification requirements. A number of countries have a baccalaureate qualification that requires the study of a language, in addition to one's first language. It is worth considering some examples to examine how they operate and any relevance for adopting this approach in Australia.

## The International Baccalaureate

In recent years, the International Baccalaureate (IB) has experienced significant expansion worldwide. In 2013, approximately 100,000 students continued on to further study. The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) states that in the past decade, students completing the IB have sent transcripts to more than 5,000 higher education providers across 100 countries, and it claims that research shows that IB students are 'more likely than their peers to go on to higher education and perform better once there' (IBO, 2013). It is features such as these that appear to contribute to the increase in IB programmes, although some students may find the programme 'difficult, expensive and too academic'. IB programmes are also viewed by students as being rigorous and having international credibility, thus providing a 'better chance' to access tertiary institutions locally and internationally (Paris, 2003; Buchanan et al., 2005).

While there are now also primary and middle years programmes, the majority of programmes are at the senior secondary level (the Diploma Programme), where students can choose a university or career focus (the IB Career-related Certificate). Students are required to choose one subject from each of five groups, including additional languages (Group 2). In choosing a subject from Group 2, students may study a modern language, at an *ab initio* (beginners) level or as a Language B course, which assumes some experience of learning the language and can be taken at standard or high level. Students can also study Latin or Classical Greek. Thus, language study is a requirement for all students enrolled in the IB and is considered core to the IB programme overall. The idea that language learning is for an academic elite resonates with studies that have found this to be a dominant view (Lo Bianco, & Aliani, 2013; Curnow et al., 2014).

## The French Baccalaureate

The majority of students in France in their final year of secondary school take the French *baccalauréat,* as it is the legally required examination for students to qualify for entrance into university. Students choose one of three streams: Sciences, Economics and Social Sciences, or Literature. All three streams require French language (first language), a 'terminal' subject that consists of a first foreign language, second foreign language or regional language, and also has optional subjects that include a foreign language, regional language, Latin, or Ancient Greek. The weightings of the subjects depend on the stream, with the most important subjects in the literary stream being Philosophy, French language and literature, and other languages, usually English, German and Spanish. The *baccalauréat* permits students to choose to sit for exams in over forty world languages or French regional languages. Thus, language learning is required as part of the successful completion of any one of the three streams within the French end of school qualification.

## The English Baccalaureate Certificate

The British government aimed to introduce an English Baccalaureate Certificate (EBacc) arguing that the existing General Certificate of Secondary Education was outdated, unclear and lacking in rigour. Originally it was intended that the new system would be in place from 2015 with students taking the examinations in

2017. The certificate was to commence in three subject areas, English, Mathematics and Sciences with the other *core* subjects – History, Geography and Languages – appearing later. After criticism from a number of quarters, the full version of the EBacc was abandoned in early 2013 and the GCSE was retained. However, the EBacc was revised and implemented instead as a 'performance measure' (Department of Education UK, 2014). It is therefore not a qualification, nor is it compulsory but rather it recognises students (and schools which are ranked on the basis of the number of students who are eligible for the EBacc) who have studied the required subjects. These are English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences, and a foreign language. Plans remain, however, to introduce a broader scale qualification that would include students 'best eight' subjects comprised of English and Mathematics, three Baccalaureate subjects and three other GCSE subjects (Harrison, 2013).

## The Baccalaureate in Australia

Alongside the frenetic (Whitehead, 2005, p. 2) uptake of International Baccalaureate programmes at various levels in Australian schools in recent times, there is emerging interest in other forms of a baccalaureate, particularly at the senior secondary level. For example, in Vic from 2014, students who are enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and undertake 'higher level' Mathematics and a language will receive additional recognition through the awarding of a VCE (Baccalaureate). To be eligible, students essentially need to study the equivalent of five subjects in Year 12 (i.e. English, Mathematics, a language and two others). Students have two choice subjects and therefore can study more than one language. The VCE (Baccalaureate) is not a stand-alone certificate but rather it is an additional form of recognition within the existing VCE. In terms of language learning at the senior years, it may hold appeal for some who value a baccalaureate qualification and perceive it to be more advantageous in terms of university entrance than the regular VCE. It is not clear from the documentation how the baccalaureate dimension will be recognised beyond Vic and what its international currency might be, which appears to be a major draw card of the International Baccalaureate.

## A 'Language Passport'

Another mechanism that provides a means of communicating language learning to others is a languages 'passport'. The notion of a passport was adopted in Europe as part of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in order to assist in the comparability and transferability of language learning across European countries. The passport provides evidence of students' prior language learning including their level on the CEFR proficiency scale. A 'passport' that follows the student provides the potential to support continuity in language learning particularly at key transition points across their schooling, showing evidence of learning including where students may change languages, of transferable language learning knowledge, skills and understandings. The passport could also be of symbolic value, indicating to the community the value placed on language learning, particularly if there were some formal recognition or award presented at a particular point, such as the completion of Year 10.  In Victoria Language Passports in eight languages are provided to all Foundation to Year 4 students in the expectation that all young learners will be learning a language from their first year of schooling.

## Concluding comments

In relation to retention of senior secondary students in language learning, certification plays a significant role. Where students are required to study a language in order to complete the end of school qualification (the International Baccalaureate) or to gain entrance into university (e.g. France), then retention is not of concern. For academically interested students, a baccalaureate qualification appears to hold greater prestige than a senior secondary Australian qualification (e.g. VCE, SACE) and therefore is viewed as an advantage for entrance into university, particularly having international currency. In Australia, such qualifications may reinforce the view that languages are a subject for an academic elite and may in the long

run negatively impact on the process to mainstream or normalize language learning such as in France. On the other hand, qualifications that are vocationally oriented such as the International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate (IBCC), in which students must study a 'foreign' language, may broaden the range of students studying a language and improve retention at the senior secondary level. What is clear is that certification requirements can be a powerful lever in enabling or inhibiting retention in language learning at the senior secondary level.

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# Enablers and barriers to the retention of students in languages – literature review

This literature review examines issues around participation of students in languages education. It focuses in particular on the literature around what drives Australian students to continue to study a language or to cease to study a language after the point at which a language ceases to be compulsory in their education.

The primary focus is on literature from the past decade researching Australian contexts, and particularly senior secondary students; however, some literature is discussed which raise relevant issues but has a focus outside this range. It is important to remember that issues of retention and participation can vary in different contexts, even within Australia, depending on factors such as whether there is a period of compulsory language study or not, the educational system, or the level.

This literature review discusses student participation and retention in languages education in general. It is clear that there are potential differences between languages in terms of participation and retention. In Vic, for example, where records are most comprehensive and easily available, it has been noted that retention of students through to Year 12 from Year 7 varies for different languages. In 2012 in Vic, a much higher percentage of language students at Year 12 level were learners of Chinese than at Year 7, while a much lower percentage of languages students at Year 12 level were learners of Italian and Indonesian, which were very high at Year 7 level (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD], 2013). At this stage, no one has investigated retention differences between languages in a systematic fashion; where individual studies have noted differences, this will be mentioned in this literature review.

A further potential confounding factor for retention in languages programmes could be the difference between different 'types' of students, in terms of their own linguistic background and that of their parents and grandparents. The majority of studies discussed here have reported on students as though there were no such differences, and that all students were learning a 'foreign' language at school (which is the case for the vast majority of students, whether their background is English-speaking or not). However, the distinction has been considered relevant in some studies of structural factors and also in affecting students' reasons for studying a language (see discussion in corresponding sections below).

There are many factors that potentially affect student participation rates in languages education, and these different factors are interdependent. However, to enable discussion, the literature examined in this review is divided into five topics, recognising that there is overlap and interaction between these areas:

- structural factors
- issues of teachers and teaching
- reasons for studying a language
- attitudes towards languages and language learning
- business perspectives on participation in languages study

## 1. Structural factors

The literature identifies a number of structural factors that influence students' continued study of a language at school. Structural factors are outside students' control and rather relate to the possibilities afforded to students to continue language study at higher levels of schooling.

One obvious structural factor that impedes students continuing language study is that the language they are studying ceases to be taught. Students report discontinuing because classes cease after a certain year level rather than as the result of personal choice (Pauwels, 2007). The reasons for the closing of language programmes in schools are varied. In some cases, it can be connected with issues of teacher supply and retention (Australian Secondary Principals Association [ASPA], 2006; Liddicoat et al., 2007, ch. 7). Schools may have difficulties replacing a teacher of a particular language and may either discontinue the language

as a subject in the school or replace the language with another because it is possible to find a teacher for that language. Issues of teacher supply relate primarily to the presence of the language in the school. In other cases, languages may not be offered at some (higher) levels in the school, and this results from small numbers in language classes (e.g. de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 34). The discontinuation of classes at upper levels is doubly problematic as it not only prevents students continuing their language study but also creates uncertainty in students' minds about whether they will be able to continue on in a language to the end of schooling or not. It is known that students need a clear course of action (Asia Education Foundation [AEF], 2012), and this is often lacking in a languages programme because of the uncertainty about whether languages will be offered.

Issues of timetabling are also commonly reported by students and by teachers as a reason for students discontinuing language study (Absalom, 2011; Hunter, 2013; Majeed, 2013; Pauwels, 2007). This was given as the second most common reason for stopping in a study of New Zealand high school students (McLauchlan, 2006). The problem of timetabling relates either to clashes between languages and other subjects that students are interested in or to clashes with other subjects that students feel they need to take, and where such classes occur it is often the language that is discontinued in favour of the other subject. Timetabling may also affect languages because of the ways elective language study is positioned in the curriculum, often being grouped with less academically demanding subjects.

The structural issues of school offerings and timetables are significant for shaping patterns of participation in languages. Of students who took up a language (French, German, Italian) at university after dropping language study at the end of compulsory language study at school, 80 per cent said the language hadn't been available at school, or there had been a timetable clash with a 'more important' subject (Pauwels, 2007).

Connected with timetabling and issues of choice is the fact that in Australia students normally take a rather small number of subjects at Year 12 level. There is a general belief that this discourages students from studying a language (e.g. de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010). There is some evidence that a reduction in the number of subjects at Year 12 level disproportionately affects certain subjects, including languages (SACE Board, 2012).

Another factor that appears to influence students' participation in senior secondary language programmes are students' perceptions of the way scaling influences Year 12 results. However, the actual impact of perceptions of scaling on language study is not entirely clear. Students (and teachers) may believe that languages come off well (de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 34) or badly (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 88). It is important to note that issues of perception do matter here, rather than any actual reality.

Another structural factor that seems to influence participation in language study is the perception among students of certain languages in some states and territories in Australia that an undifferentiated curriculum for language study for different types of learners – native speakers, background speakers, heritage speakers, second language (L2) learners – leads to inequities for some groups of learners (Slaughter, 2005). The relevance of this factor varies from language to language; however, for example, Orton (2010) reports that general (Anglo) learners of Chinese feel they are pushed out by home speakers of Chinese (see also Butt, & Marshall, 2013, who discuss the possibility that background speakers may be banned from VCE Chinese). Shin (2010) notes that heritage learners of Korean feel disadvantaged by being in competition with students who grew up in Korea. In some cases this issue of competition is explicitly connected to scaling, in that students believe that the presence of native speakers in a cohort causes the language subject overall to be scaled down (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 88).

## 2. Issues of teachers and teaching

Studies of students' participation in languages frequently find that issues reacting to teaching and teachers can have a significant influence on students' willingness to continue non-compulsory language study and the relationship between teachers and students is often considered the most important factor in whether students continue to study a language or not (Absalom, 2011; Hunter, 2013).

One aspect of teaching that seems to have a significant impact on students' continuation of a language is programme quality. Two particular issues reported in the literature relate to the time dedicated to teaching a language (Australian Council of State School Organisations [ACSSO], & Australian Parents Council [APC], 2007; Liddicoat et al., 2007; Scarino et al., 2011); and transition between primary school and high school language programmes (Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 90; Purvis, & Ranaldo, 2003; Tolbert, 2003). The time allocated to languages in some school programmes is minimal – even as little as 30 or 45 minutes per week in some schools. Students in such programmes learn little in the class and do not have a sense of achievement or progression in the language and may perceive language learning as having little to offer. Students transitioning from primary to secondary schools may not be able to continue the language they have previously studied, or where they do so are placed in programmes with students who have not learned the language previously and thus restart their learning from the beginning.

In a review of studies of attrition from language courses, Wesely (2010) suggests that, when it comes to language instruction, the issues which lead to students discontinuing are not necessarily 'bad' teaching as such. It is rather a mismatch between student understandings of and beliefs about language learning and the way they were instructed, and that educators should explicitly address this with students. Similarly, she suggests that high levels of student anxiety around language classes lead to students discontinuing, and that this should be dealt with through examining instructional style and assessment procedures.

There is relatively little focus explicitly on pedagogy per se in discussions of retention; therefore, little is known about what sorts of pedagogies may encourage students to continue their study. However, there is some evidence about pedagogical issues that students find off-putting. In particular, students often explicitly mention certain features of teaching practice as having led to them discontinuing, particularly the constant workload (Zammit, 1992), and the rote learning, particularly of vocabulary (McLauchlan, 2006; McPake, Johnstone, Low, & Lyall, 1999).

It is often claimed that improvements in pedagogy and curriculum development will lead to better retention of students. This is one of the assumptions behind strategies, such as the Building Asia Literacy grants. It is clear that as a result of these grants, there are greatly improved classroom practices in many schools that received such grants, and '95% of project leaders indicated that there has been an increase in students' knowledge, skills and understanding about Asia' (AEF, 2013b, p. 17). At this stage, however, there is only a hypothesised link between this and students continuing to participate in languages education in future years. At least in the published materials, there is no indication that more students have studied languages in later years than normal as a result of these improvements, though one might expect this to be the case.

Two specific areas of focus in language pedagogy that have been investigated in some studies are the use of technology and language immersion. Once again, these are usually discussed in terms of student outcomes and student attitudes; any link with retention must be hypothesised. Some studies suggest that use of communicative technologies in language classrooms can affect engagement and perhaps outcomes (Salt Group, 2011, 2012), but only when well developed and fully resourced. Several successful implementations of ICT in Asia-focused programmes are discussed in *What Works 4*, and as Jennifer Jurman, a teacher at Illawarra Sports High School notes, 'Indonesian and Asian Studies are our most popular subjects as students are engaged in the use of ICT in lessons' (AEF, 2013a, p. 5). However, it is not yet clear whether this popularity converts to student retention in Indonesian beyond Year 8. Similarly, many studies focus on more intensive, immersion-like programmes, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning, suggesting they have a strong effect on student engagement (Boudreaux, 2010; Cross, & Gearon, 2013). It is sometimes suggested that language programmes involving the teaching of content from other areas are the only sorts of language programmes that can truly attract the interest of students (Lo Bianco, & Aliani, 2013, p. 128).

The work focused on pedagogy has primarily related to students' engagement in their current learning and there has been little attention paid to how pedagogy affects retention in language programmes. There is a need to better understand how pedagogy can contribute to retention and this needs to go beyond identifying issues that students dislike in order to understand what can attract students and engage them in learning.

## 3. Reasons for studying a language

Many studies have involved quantitative surveys or qualitative interviews with students to find out their reasons for studying a language, either in general or focusing on one particular language. In some cases these studies also look at students who are not studying a language to discover their reasons for not continuing. One of the most comprehensive in Australia was Zammit (1992); more recent Australian studies include Absalom (2011), Curnow and Kohler (2007), Hadju (2005) and Ren (2009).

There are many studies of student motivation within particular theoretical frameworks, but most motivation research is about understanding students' behaviours rather than changing them. The study of motivation explains what factors influence students in studying a language, but the factors identified are difficult to address in either policy or pedagogical practice because they refer to traits of learners as individuals, such as stable personality traits (Dörnyei, & Csizér, 1998), which cannot easily be adjusted. A particularly strong theoretical framework comes from social psychology, usually based on the theory of researchers such as Gardner (e.g. Gardner, 1985), with a distinction between integrative orientation versus instrumental orientation. In general, much of this work shows that integrative motivation (e.g. personal interest, connection with the culture) is usually stronger in students who continue with languages, while instrumental motivation (e.g. language useful for a career) is weaker.

Moving beyond the instrumental versus integrative idea of motivation, more recent frameworks may include this distinction, but also include other features, such as issues of the quality of the language classroom and the language teacher (Dörnyei, 1994). Some material develops motivational strategies for teachers and students (Dörnyei, 2001); however, these are very much dependent for their implementation on individual teachers. Dörnyei proposes strategies that include:

- creating an appropriate learning environment: developing a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, establishing a cohesive learner group
- developing appropriate conditions for positive motivations to occur: enhancing language related value and attitudes, developing a sense of the possibility of success in learning, developing a goal-oriented approach to language learning, providing relevant materials, establishing realistic beliefs about language learning
- engaging students in learning: making learning stimulating and enjoyable, setting specific learning goals, protecting self-esteem and increasing self-confidence, creating autonomy
- encouraging positive self-evaluation of learning.

More recent still is the development of the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) as a way of looking at language learning motivations. It involves consideration of the ideal L2 self (internal desire to become an effective L2 user), the ought-to L2 self (social pressure to master the L2), and the L2 learning experience (experience of being engaged in the process). Following this work, motivational material for teachers to implement in classes has been developed around the idea of 'vision' that teachers can get students and themselves to use, to relate their current selves to their future (Dörnyei, & Kubanyiova, 2014).

A great deal of research has been done based on all these frameworks, with particular sets of questionnaires, arising from particular theoretical constructs, designed to examine different aspects of student motivation towards languages, language learning, and the cultures associated with languages. These are sometimes studied as objects in themselves in this research, or else correlated with students' achievements in language study. A note of caution around motivation studies of this type comes from Norton's (2013) work and her idea of investment, which relates to the fact that a learner might be motivated to learn the language, but have little investment in the language practices in a class or a society, as it may not fit with their complex identity. She goes beyond simple ideas of integrative or instrumental motivation to connect language study with issues of power, identity and learning (Norton, 2013).

Also, in considering the relationship of studies of motivation to the Australian context, it should be noted that Dörnyei's work, like much research on motivation, focuses on motivation in compulsory language programmes and so examines how motivation can lead to greater student effort in learning, not to

retention in programmes, as retention is not an issue for compulsory language learning. There is some evidence that the strength of students' motivation influences their decisions to continue language study, with students who maintain or increase their level of motivation continuing language study, while those with decreasing motivation may discontinue (Matsumoto, 2010). Matsumoto's work, however, focuses on tertiary students who have opted to take Japanese and so may not be relevant for understanding the behaviours of school students.

Although studies of motivation have tended to focus on students' traits that are hard to modify, there is evidence that student motivations for studying languages can alter over time, particularly with different motivations being relevant at different ages (Holt, 2006). In general, it seems that the older high school students are when they make choices around courses, the more likely they are to continue with languages (Hunter, 2013). Potentially associated with this change in student motivation over time is the conflict in studies over the influence that parents may have over their child's decision to continue with a language or not. Some studies (e.g. Hunter, 2013) suggest that parents wield significant influence, while in other studies on high school students, students do not consider that parental influence was an important factor (Curnow, & Kohler, 2007; Holt, 2006). Students' reasons for selection of any subject at school is a complex issue to untangle, and is affected not only by a student's interests, but also by their social and economic background (see, e.g. Fullarton, & Ainley, 2000).

The issue of motivation is related to the particular reasons that students express for continuing studies in the language or not. Where studies have looked at particular individual reasons for why students might continue to study a language, whether via questionnaires or interviews, they tend to find that the more important reasons for languages study relate to personal interest, enjoyment, and good grades, rather than career or future-oriented reasons (Hunter, 2013; McLauchlan, 2006). The major response to reasons for continuing language study in all studies of students in high school and university, in Australia and elsewhere, relates to getting good grades in the language, or sometimes more broadly a phrase of the type 'I enjoy the language' (Absalom, 2011; DECD, 2013; Harnisch, Sargeant, & Winter, 2011; Pauwels, 2007; Pratt, 2010; Pratt, Agnello, & Santos, 2009). Other reasons are connected with ideas such as personal interest for culture and travel (Absalom, 2011; Meyer, 2013; Ryu Yang, 2003). While often discussed anecdotally, relatively few studies explicitly rate in-country visits or exchanges as a high-rating factor for continuing with languages study (Aplin, 1991), although in a recent South Australian study of Year 8–10 students, such exchanges were very often suggested by students themselves as something which would encourage themselves or other students to continue with language study (Curnow, Kohler, Liddicoat, & Loechel, 2014). It is also clear that, where students have a home background in the language, this constitutes a very strong personal reason for studying a language. Slaughter's (2007) study, for example, found that many students studied their home language where this was available in the school curriculum. The exact 'strength' of the different factors can depend on the language; for example, McLauchlan (2006) found that more Chinese students in New Zealand were studying for a career than intrinsic reasons, but there were also substantially fewer students in Chinese than other languages.

While some early studies undertaken during the 1990s, the period when languages were promoted widely in the community as having economic value, found that students studied a language because they thought it would be good for their future career (e.g. McGannon, & Medeiros, 1995), most recent studies have found that relatively few students have continued a language for career-related reasons, or it is only a secondary reason behind personal interest. This is found in many Australian studies (DECD, 2013; Hajdu, 2005; Holt, 2006; Hunter, 2013; Ren, 2009), but also in comparable countries such as New Zealand (Holt, 2006). A comprehensive Australian example is Slaughter (2007), who found that, when asked about the most important reason for studying an Asian language, 24.3 per cent of Victorian students studying a language in senior secondary liked studying about the culture and society of the country where the language is spoken, 13.5 per cent really liked languages and studying languages, and only 13.8 per cent gave career prospects as their reason for study; in her NSW data, even fewer students (8.4 per cent) said that career prospects was the most important reason for them studying an Asian language. In the United Kingdom, a recent questionnaire with students studying a language in AS and A2 (the equivalent of senior secondary) similarly found that the students enjoying the language at school (relevant for 75 per cent of

the students at AS, and 96 per cent at A2) was more relevant than career prospects, which were only relevant for 44 per cent of the students at AS and 54 per cent at A2 (Harnisch et al., 2011).

In choosing courses, students are focussed very much on immediate goals, so even if they believe that a language could be useful for their future career, they only study a language to the extent that is required to get into university or if it is a requirement for a job (rather than being merely useful for that job) (Low, 1999; Watzke, & Grundstad, 1996). Even when students indicate that they have studied a language for career reasons, or that they discontinued language study because they did not need it for their career, studies show that there is no logical connection between the two ideas (Curnow, & Kohler, 2007).

The relationship between languages and careers is complex. Students who have studied a language, at least to university level, often adjust their career focus to ensure that their career takes account of their language study, rather than the other way around – for example, the learners of Japanese discussed by Kennett (2003) were not initially inspired by career-related reasons to study Japanese, but rather for reasons of travel or personal interest. However, as they invested more time and effort in their study, they wished to 'capitalise' on this 'investment', and consequently sought occupations that would 'justify and satisfy their continued pursuit of opportunities for language use and learning' (Kennett, 2003, p. 369). This is similar to a reason for continuing in a language that arises in other studies – students want to keep going because they have invested time and effort in it. For example, in a questionnaire given to high school students in the United States, one of the very common reasons to continue to study Spanish after the first year of study was that the student 'wanted to continue what I started' (this was relevant for 65 per cent of continuing students) (Pratt et al., 2009).

Engagement in language study itself can affect students' motivation. There is a distinction in some studies between reasons for starting to study a language (where this is non-compulsory), and reasons for continuing to study it, with different sorts of motivation being required. Initial reasons are often more instrumental in tone, while reasons for continuing are more likely to be integrative. Thus the questionnaire among high school students in the United States mentioned above (Pratt et al., 2009) showed that career-related reasons were the strongest of the reasons to *begin* to study Spanish (with college entry requirements and family background also relevant), but the strongest reason to *continue* after the first year was good grades, with career benefits less important. Even initially, though, there is often a 'spark' (Shedivy, 2004) or some personal element (AEF, 2012) that attracts students to a language where it is not compulsory.

The different ways that personal interest and careers influence language study could suggest that interventions that seek to increase motivation of language learners may need to develop personal connections with the language and culture rather than promoting the instrumental benefits of language learning. In a review of studies of attrition from language courses (Wesely, 2010), it was suggested that educators need to promote both instrumental and integrative reasons for language study, because where only instrumental motivations are present, there is often attrition of students when something changes in a context so language is no longer 'useful', whether the change is a change in the external world or a change in students' ideas about their future.

## 4. Attitudes towards languages and language learning

It is generally believed that students' choices around languages reflect the attitudes of the students, their parents and the broader community with respect to languages and languages education (Byrnes et al., 2002; Curnow, Liddicoat, & Scarino, 2007). Community attitudes may lead students to consider in the abstract that languages in themselves are important (Curnow, & Kohler, 2007), but there is a clear general belief in the community that Australians are 'generally apathetic' about languages education (ACSSO, & APC, 2007, p. 6). Thus surveys often find that there is theoretically strong support for languages education, such as the study by the AEF for ACSSO and APC, which found that 60 per cent of the parents surveyed would like their child to learn an Asian language (AEF, ACSSO, & APC, 2006, p. 5); but nonetheless language study is usually not continued through to Year 12. In general terms, but especially in the case of particular

languages, there is no 'clearly articulated educational rationale [for studying the language] that resonates with students, families and school communities' (Kohler, & Mahnken, 2010, p. 5), and thus students cease studying a language once it is no longer compulsory. It would appear that community views that favour language learning do not focus particularly on the level of attainment in a language so much as on the experience of having participated in some form of language learning, and thus continued learning at higher levels is not strongly supported by prevailing views.

It is known that beliefs about languages and language learning have a big effect on the learning process and success, but it has been argued that the research is mainly about what the factors are, not what shapes these beliefs, which is what could be changed (Bernat, & Gvozdenko, 2005). Commonly, there are calls for languages and languages education to be promoted within the community to combat the belief that languages education is for others (ACSSO, & APC, 2007; Curnow et al., 2007). Any such promotion must understand not only the existing beliefs but also how existing beliefs are created and maintained within the community.

The beliefs of the general community represent only one element of the ways that beliefs impact on languages education. In addition, the attitudes of the school community are generally considered important for successful languages programmes. The support of the school principal and other leaders is considered to be vital (Fernandez, & Gearon, 2011), and a general school culture that is supportive of languages is often thought to be necessary before students will choose to study a language (Hunter, 2013). Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013) consider that a general 'half-heartedness' on the part of teachers and students towards languages education is devastating for the possibility of students taking up the study of languages. They believe it is at the level of students, in particular, that policy is enacted, and without the whole-hearted backing of students and teachers, top-down policy around languages education will not be implemented in a local context.

Within the research that has been undertaken on attitudes towards languages, there are certain factors that tend to be stressed in the findings from student surveys and interviews. The first of these is that there is a perceived hierarchy of value in thinking about school curricula. There is a belief among students that certain subjects such as English, Maths and Science are 'core' subjects, while all others are optional or elective (Curnow et al., 2014). Languages definitely fall in the elective category in students' thinking. A related theme, which is brought up by students in many studies, is the idea that other subjects are more important than studying a language (Majeed, 2013; Ramage, 1990). This is particularly common in cases where there are a reduced number of options for students at senior secondary, when the language 'loses out' (Curnow et al., 2014; de Kretser, & Spence-Brown, 2010). This is also sometimes discussed together with the issue of languages 'losing out' through timetabling clashes (Pauwels, 2007).

There is also a clearly expressed idea among students that languages are difficult; they are often believed to be more difficult even than sciences or maths. This perception of difficulty is compounded by the idea that languages are non-core – that is, they require more effort than other subjects but they are less important. The precise ideas about why languages are more difficult vary in studies. In some studies it is framed in a very general way: languages are 'difficult'. In a few studies the idea of difficulty is framed in terms of it being more difficult to do well in languages, that is, it is difficult to get a high grade. Where this is the case, it may be considered that it is inherently difficult to get a high grade in language study, perhaps because of the perceived difficulty of languages as a learning area, but occasionally it is reported that high grades are unachievable because of some process of scaling (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2003; Carr, 2002; DECD, 2013; McGannon, & Medeiros, 1995; McLauchlan, 2006; Pratt, 2010; Speiller, 1988; Zammit, 1992). These perceptions of difficulty have an impact on retention and students' decisions about language study. For example, a New Zealand study of 765 students who voluntarily studied a language at Year 11, many of them high achieving students, found that 56.8 per cent of them said that language study was 'difficult' or 'very difficult' at the end of Year 11, with vocabulary being especially difficult (McLauchlan, 2006). Many of the surveyed students had said at the beginning of Year 11 that they intended to study a language in Year 12, but they discontinued, with the main reason for ceasing being that the language study was 'too hard'. Australian studies find the same, with the difficulty of studying the language being the major reason that students

studying an Asian language at senior secondary level in Vic had considered giving up (Slaughter, 2007, p. 158).

A final, very common attitude that students have towards language study in school is that 'you don't really learn anything' by studying a language in school, and it is better to learn a language in-country if you really want to know it. In school language classes, there is a constant workload, but despite this students do not feel that they learn enough to access the language outside the classroom, through films, websites, etc. (Kirkpatrick, 2001; McPake et al., 1999; Zammit, 1992). This is reinforced by issues of lack of progress in the language; students easily come to an understanding that it is not possible to learn anything useful in school based on their experiences of primary school languages programmes (Hill, 2012), and then they often essentially 'begin again' when they transition to high school (Lo Bianco, & Aliani, 2013, p. 128; Purvis, & Ranaldo, 2003). When schools become perceived as poor places for language learning, students may decide to stop learning at school with a view of picking the language up later; or they may simply feel that they will never acquire a language because they do not have access to the right sorts of abilities or learning opportunities.

An additional, more specific attitude toward languages, which may have some effect upon retention of students in language programmes, is that 'languages are for girls'. It is certainly the case that fewer males are normally enrolled in post-compulsory languages than females. For example, figures from the SACE Board Annual Reports show that for each of the years from 2007 to 2012, 60–65 per cent of the students enrolled in a language at Stage 2 ('Year 12 level') were female. However, this is a complex area, and little research has been done specifically on the impact of gender on retention in languages programmes in Australia, except in purely numerical terms (e.g. Baldauf, & Lawrence, 1990), although of course a great deal of research has been done on gender and education more generally. A comprehensive study focusing specifically on gendered attitudes around languages education in Australia is that of Carr (2002), who examined the beliefs of 100 boys in secondary school in Australia, showing that they felt Languages was a 'feminine' subject.

## 5.  Business perspectives on participation in languages study

Much policy discussion in Australia has connected the study of languages, especially Asian languages, with business and economic needs. Australian businesses and business groups accept that they need employees who have better understandings of Asia and Asian languages specifically (Zhou, 2013). An Australian Industry Group and Asialink (2011) survey found that opportunities in Asia are strong for Australian businesses, but there are large gaps in the skills and abilities within Australian companies when it comes to Asia.

Although business does recognise the need for languages, this recognition is not consistent in discussions around business needs and practices. While businesses accept there is a need in some documents (primarily those with a specific Asia focus), other similar documents which might be expected to mention languages make no mention of them. For example, the Business Council of Australia's recent Action Plan for Enduring Prosperity makes absolutely no mention of languages at all in its recommendations, Asian languages or other language, except for English literacy skills (Business Council of Australia, 2013). This is despite having 17 recommendations for actions relating to 'Realising the potential of people and workplaces', which begins with a focus on education: 'Unless we equip all Australians with the skills and education to participate fully in society'.

This seems to suggest that the need for languages is not well entrenched in business thinking and that it may not be a core focus of the ways Australian business leaders think about their work. Similar evidence of the place that languages play in Australian business concerns emerges in market research, carried out for Asialink Business (Forethought Research, 2014). Of the 419 business executives surveyed in that research, 31.5 per cent felt that 'Insufficient skills in an Asian language' had been a challenge for their organisation in the past 12 months for conducting business in Asia. However, when it came to the main challenge in conducting business in Asia, only six per cent felt that 'Insufficient skills in an Asian language and/or

dependence on interpreters' was the main challenge, with seven other challenges rating more highly. That is, while language is an issue, it is by no means regarded as a particularly pressing issue.

Stories in the media about the ways language relates to business are often framed in terms of individual one-off instances where knowledge of a language helped, such as the story of a jeweller who only made sales because some staff spoke Mandarin (Chettle, 2012). What seems to be lacking in the way that the role of languages is understood in business is a general understanding of what linguistic and cultural knowledge add to businesses in general terms and what opportunities may be opened up because companies have access to staff with specific language abilities. Understandings of the usefulness of languages for business seem often to be of the type where a business has come to focus on a particular market and needs language abilities to access this rather than where business sees its own staff as a language resource that can open up new possibilities.

The relationship between business needs and language has been recognised in Australian government policy for languages education from the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987). Most recently, the White Paper (*Asia in the Australian Century*) and associated materials (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) made many claims that businesses need staff that are able to speak Asian languages.

Business seems to believe that the development of linguistic resources is the responsibility of education – that is, they expect workforce ready language abilities to be developed by schools and universities. The Australian Industry Group and Asialink (2011) called on the government to increase funding for Asian languages and studies in schools and universities. The Business Council of Australia submission to the Review of Export Policies and Programs (Business Council of Australia, 2008, p. 9) stated that there is a need to improve the level of knowledge and understanding of Asian languages and culture by Australian students through Australia's education system. They also see education as providing person-to-person links between Australia and Asia through education through international education:

> *Improving Australia's global engagement capabilities depends, among other things, on the people to people links that organisations can draw on. One area where Australia should be improving these links is through our role as one of the world's leading providers of international education. (Business Council of Australia, 2008, p. 8)*

Business has therefore become a powerful voice in supporting policy development around the teaching and learning of Asian languages. In May 2009, the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy, which included Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group, Business Council of Australia and many companies, was launched (Business Alliance for Asia Literacy, n.d.). It strongly emphasised the role of education in developing the language capabilities of Australian students:

> *The alliance is calling on schools, school communities, education providers and governments to put in place the programs and policies necessary so that Asia skills and Asian languages are a core part of Australian curriculum and that delivery of this is adequately funded. It is also calling for senior students to be given incentives to take up Asia studies and Asian languages, and for teachers to be equipped and available to teach Asia skills. (Business Council of Australia, 2009)*

In 2011, many top industry groups including the Australian Industry Group, the Business Council of Australia, the Australia China Business Council, the Australia Korea Business Council, J.P. Morgan, and Asialink signed a letter to all members of parliament in Australia expressing 'strong support for the teaching

of Asian studies and languages in our schools' and calling for 'significant government investment in building capacity and, importantly, demand for Asian studies and languages' (Business Council of Australia, 2011).

The focus on languages for business purposes is found in other English-speaking countries, with similar concerns. In the United Kingdom, there are similar issues around languages, and businesses say that local students do not have the language requirements they need. The Nuffield report on languages reported language abilities as a key problem for businesses in the United Kingdom:

> *There is a mismatch between business 'demand' and education 'supply': There is frustration in the business world with the inadequate levels of language skills emerging from education, the narrow range of languages taught, the lack of transparency in qualifications and the general absence of coherence in the system. Employers see the lack of grammatical understanding and transferable language learning skills as serious weaknesses. There is also a widespread view that public examinations at age 16, the terminal point for formal language training for most pupils, do not reflect the level of practical competence which employers expect. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that so few students study a language after the age of 16. (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000, p. 20)*

The Nuffield report particularly emphasised the lack of retention in languages as a key problem – that is, few students develop high levels of ability in the languages they study, and in this way the situation in the United Kingdom closely resembles that in Australia.

In the United Kingdom, businesses do not see the solution as coming from local school education; instead, they opt to employ people from other parts of Europe in order to develop their linguistic resources (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000). At the moment, this does not seem to be an option that Australian companies are considering as a solution to their language needs, perhaps because there is a perception that international students, who could be expected to have the business related knowledge that companies need, are perceived as being too deficient in English in be a viable alternative to Australian students (Birrell, 2006).

The language problem has also been recognised as a key concern by the government in the United Kingdom. The 2002 Government response to the Nuffield enquiry (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2002) talked about how: 'Likewise in the global economy too few employees have the necessary language skills to be able to engage fully in international business, and too few employers support their employees in gaining additional language skills as part of their job' (p. 5). This response recognised that there was a problem not only in education but also in business practices relating to language learning, reflecting the complexity of the language question for business where at least some employees need very high levels of language ability. The government indicated that the lack of employees with linguistic and cultural abilities posed a frequent and serious problem for business:

> *Businesses need people with language skills. Language skills audits commissioned by a number of Regional Development Agencies over 2000–2001 have indicated that 45% of international businesses surveyed experience language and cultural issues as barriers to international business. (DfES, 2002, p. 13)*

The Dearing report (Dearing, & King, 2006, 2007), written for the British government, recognised that the issue was more complex than simply encouraging schools to offer languages to more students and that the value of language abilities needed to be recognised and promoted more by businesses themselves in their

regular work practices. The report indicated that the government needed to 'encourage' businesses to think about and plan for languages as they businesses were not necessarily conscious of the need to do it themselves; for example, they had recommendations such as: 'In employment – to encourage employers to value and support language skills in their own workforce and to engage with schools in making the case for language competence' (2006, p. 6). The report also proposed establishing things like 'Business Language Champions' programme (p. 7). The report also noted:

> *To any company with large scale overseas business, and particularly export business, applicants for a job who have a capability in a language should be at a long-term advantage. As the number of overseas owned companies and major multinationals increases, an ability to speak another language must become ever more important in the jobs market. (Dearing, & King, 2006, p. 20)*

The Dearing report emphasises the idea that business is heavily dependent on language abilities for its future success and notes that businesses themselves may not always be aware of this. Moreover, even those businesses that do recognise the need for language may not place value on language abilities in their work and recruitment practices. A similar feature can be seen in a more recent report on languages in the United Kingdom (Tinsley, 2013). There it is noted that a 2012 survey of employers found that nearly three-quarters of businesses in the private sector in the United Kingdom believe that languages are necessary or useful for employees; but that only five per cent considered that it was an 'essential core competence'. Once again, it is evident that languages are considered useful by businesses, but are not treated as of primary importance.

While less substantial research has been done in the United States, the results appear similar. A recent international forum (*Languages for All? The Anglophone Challenge*) was held in 2013 to look at the issue of languages education in the United States (and to compare it with other Anglophone countries, the United Kingdom and Australia in particular). The findings in terms of United States businesses were very similar to those of the United Kingdom and Australia – while the white paper considered that 'the demand for languages other than English has dramatically increased over the past decade' (Brecht et al., 2013), the final report concluded that 'the demand side is not playing its appropriate role in sending demand signals and supporting the supply side' (Abbott et al., 2014, p. 3).

The situation in the United Kingdom and the United States therefore remains ambiguous, as the emphasis placed on languages by business is not consistent and may not send a strong message about the advantages that learning a language would have in gaining employment. This situation seems to be similar to the situation in Australia, where the focus of business around language is largely one of educational provision of language programmes rather than on the ways that businesses themselves can value and work with the language abilities of employees. This lack of a consistent and strong message about the role of languages in business may be one reason why employment based arguments about language learning do not resonate with students.

The situation with businesses whose base of operation is in a non-English-speaking country, particularly Europe, seems very different. As Hagen (2008, p. 28) notes, 'there is widespread recognition of the value of language strategies across most countries [of the European Union], except the United Kingdom where there is apparent evidence of complacency'. It is important to note that in European companies at least, this is not a discussion around English, but rather language needs more broadly. In Hagen's data, for example, while approximately 29 per cent of multinational companies and 26 per cent of small to medium sized enterprises (SME) believe they have future English language needs, Spanish needs are 20 per cent of multinationals and seven per cent of SMEs, Chinese needs are 17 per cent of multinationals and four per cent of SMEs, and so on. This shows an awareness of the realities of Europe, where studies have shown the increasing importance of the use of languages other than English in improving exports for many businesses (e.g. Bel Habib, 2011).

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