Factors influencing the uptake of Modern Standard Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek and German at primary and secondary level in Australian schools.

Foreword
The incorporation of languages other than English in schools’ curricula across Australia is a feature of education in this final decade of the century. In every state, LOTE teachers, school administrators and curriculum leaders are defining best practice as they respond to community need and encourage more students to learn languages other than English. Significant cooperation in planning and support at both National and State levels has contributed to the success of strategies to provide our students with opportunities to learn LOTE. This research is a prime example.

The Education Department of Western Australia initiated a project to investigate reasons for the slow uptake of programs in Chinese and German in the state. Discussions with other state jurisdictions revealed similar issues, although different combinations of languages were the focus of concern. The research project was subsequently expanded to serve the needs of several systems and was further funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) as part of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy.

This research presents us with very clear findings about the factors that influence the sustainability of LOTE programs in schools. The researchers sought the perceptions and experiences of students, their parents and teachers from schools across languages, jurisdictions and states to determine common factors in successful programs and compare them with programs that had been or were foundering. The results offer schools and LOTE teachers an impetus for reflection and strong indicators to inform diagnostic procedures.

We are indebted to all the students, teachers, and school and system level administrators who assisted the researchers, Simpson Norris International, to complete this research. We recommend its findings to all who are involved in establishing and maintaining viable, dynamic LOTE programs in our schools.

CHERYL VARDON
DIRECTOR GENERAL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COLIN MACKERRAS
CHAIR
NATIONAL ASIAN LANGUAGES
AND STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS TASKFORCE
# CONTENTS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
1

**PART 1**

**INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW**  
5

**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, DESIRED OUTCOMES AND METHODOLOGY**  
6
- INTRODUCTION  
- SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES  
- BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH  
- DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH  
- METHODOLOGY

**CHAPTER 2**

**THE STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT**  
15

**CHAPTER 3**

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW**  
16
- PERCEPTIONS OF A LACK OF GROWTH  
- THE LITERATURE REVIEW
  - Introduction  
  - Languages Other Than English  
  - German in Australia  
  - Chinese in Australia  
  - Korean in Australia  
  - Modern Greek in Australia  
  - Conclusion

**PART 2**

**REPORTS ON THE INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGES**  
40
- Introduction (which includes background information on the schools)  
- Primary Schools  
- Secondary Schools

**CHAPTER 4**

**THE UPTAKE OF GERMAN**  
41
- INTRODUCTION  
- PRIMARY SCHOOLS
  - Why Did the Primary Schools Initially Choose to Teach German?  
  - Perceptions of German in Primary Schools  
  - Factors Operating Against Sustainable German Programs in Primary Schools  
  - Factors Promoting Sustainable German Programs in Primary Schools  
  - Other Issues  
- SECONDARY SCHOOLS
TABLES

TABLE 1: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Chinese Focus 15
TABLE 2: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Chinese/Korean Focus 16
TABLE 3: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Greek Focus 17
TABLE 4: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – German Focus 18
TABLE 5: LOTE Enrolments by Year 12 Tertiary Examination Enrolments 18
The evidence for this report suggests that the sustainability of LOTE programs, and ultimately the success of these, is dependent on a number of interrelated factors. A significant finding from the research is that schools are generally unclear how to support LOTE programs after putting them in place. Even in schools where there is a high degree of satisfaction, questions emerge about long-term program sustainability and about the quality of the LOTE learning outcomes for students. The research, however, says a great deal about factors that enhance, and factors that work against, program sustainability. Although the findings reported here pertain to German, Modern Greek, Modern Standard Chinese and Korean, the validity of the findings may well extend beyond these languages to programs for other languages other than English.

The following factors have been identified.

- The most sustainable programs in LOTE are those with a clear rationale, purpose and clearly defined outcomes. The latter are necessary for various stages or years. The rationale, purpose and outcomes must be communicated equally and forcefully by both the school administration and LOTE teachers in a school. Care must be taken that the articulation of the rationale, purpose, and the anticipated outcomes is clear to all stakeholders, including students and their parents.

- There must be sufficient resources to ensure that the program has every chance of being sustainable. This means commitment from State and national departments in terms of providing quality teachers, teaching resources, and professional development for teachers. The school undertaking a LOTE must also commit to an adequate and equitable distribution of its resources to the LOTE. The sustainability of programs currently operating on the basis of majority funding from external agencies such as foreign governments, State government technology programs and local secondary schools is problematic in the extreme.
Sustainability is enhanced by continuity. This includes LOTE continuity from primary school to secondary school in a specific language. It also includes pedagogical clarity and the articulation of teaching methods and strategies suitable for primary school, lower secondary school and upper secondary school. The use of tasks which are not appropriate for various levels diminishes the enthusiasm and interest of students. It is recommended that further research into the appropriate tasks, in line with appropriate outcomes, be further investigated.

The adoption of, or change in, a particular LOTE by a school should be undertaken with strong community consultation. Long-term program sustainability is supported by the incorporation and acceptance of LOTE within the life of a school and its community. Incorporation is seen as far more powerful than integration. The evidence shows that where the LOTE permeates the life of a school and its community, there is a communal pride and ownership of the program and LOTE is strong.

The most powerful factor in sustainable programs is an on-going client base. For students generally, the relevance of the language, the ability to use the language, and evidence of progress in the language, are the key elements in continuing the LOTE. LOTE uptake by students in the secondary context is significantly influenced by primary LOTE learning experiences. The decision to either change or maintain the language of study is dependent upon factors which reflect previous experience and also project into the conditions of high school learning and beyond. In making choices about LOTE, students ask themselves many questions. These include:

- Do I like the teacher?
- Do I like the classroom tasks?
- Is the study of this particular LOTE interesting?
- Is it easy or hard?
- Am I making progress?
- Do I have to compete against background speakers?
- Will this LOTE be useful?
• LOTE programs have far more chance of sustainability when the LOTE teacher feels integrated with the staff of a school, and the LOTE program has the same status and profile with other subject areas. The sense of 'marginalisation' that is otherwise caused is facilitated, for example, when primary school LOTE teachers are 'extra' to staffing allocations and feel their major function is to provide non-contact time in classes for other teachers or when secondary school LOTE teachers provide programs in contributory primary schools and are 'divorced' from normal school activities.

• Quality teaching is crucial to sustainable programs. Quality appears to include being committed, speaking the language confidently and fluently, being comfortable with students and giving them a sense of comfort, and appearing to always give more than 100 per cent. There is also a very significant public relations dimension to the role of the successful LOTE teacher.

• LOTE teachers are being faced with the complication of multi-level and mixed ability classes. This area must be addressed in order to ensure sustainable LOTE programs.

• Public relations exercises, in which the importance and benefits of LOTE as a learning area are constantly promoted to the public, are essential.

The depth, breadth and variety of these issues indicate that the future of LOTE will be at risk unless efforts are made to have concerted, cohesive, inclusive reviews and planning at both the system level and the individual school levels, and then, hopefully, together. In other words, there is a need for many schools to revisit their LOTE plans, gather fresh information, assess their rationales, clarify their purposes and desired outcomes, and then begin to plan strategies to achieve the desired results. It may be that some schools will ultimately continue as they have done in the past. From the available evidence, however, it seems that many schools will move forward in a different way. This does not necessarily suggest that a different language program will emerge, as much as a different process to achieve the desired outcomes. To this end, a strategy or instrument is presented in the final chapter as a tool to achieve the desired result.
PART 1

INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, DESIRED OUTCOMES AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This research was initiated, and is managed, by the Education Department of Western Australia. The Victorian Education Department, The South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment, and the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs have all contributed to funding it.

It was initially motivated by a perception that some languages have stopped expanding or were declining in the current climate. Four languages were ultimately seen as part of this group – Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek and German. This research project set out to answer the following two questions in relation to these languages.

• What factors promote successful programs in the above languages?
• What factors mitigate against further implementation of the above languages?

While the term 'successful' was the focus of the research, and formed part of the framework of thinking for the entire research process, a finding of this research is that at the most basic level, the definition of 'successful' is so varied as to make an accurate assessment problematic. For example, is success the longevity of the language within the school? Is it the number of students undertaking the language? Is it about proficiency outcomes? Is it the level of satisfaction of parents and students with the language being taught? Is it the extent to which a school is able to boast prizes in various competitions in that language? Is it the extent to which the structures of various schools enables students to undertake the language from kindergarten through to year 12? Are there other factors? Is it all of these, and if so, which are more important than others?
Given the possibility that all of the above and more were factors, the researchers were not convinced that any of the programs encountered truly represented 'success'. What was represented in many schools which were classified as 'growing' or 'static' was 'sustainability'. In other words, these programs had not only survived historically, but gave every indication of surviving into the future. In other words, they were doing 'something right' without necessarily being 'successful' LOTE programs.

It was the element of sustainability which seemed to give LOTE a presence and status in a school. Because it was sustainable, it appeared to gain acceptance within the curriculum in the same way as English, mathematics or one of the so-called 'core' subjects. It is the sustainability of the LOTE rather than any measure of 'success' which appeared to be of more importance. For that reason, this report uses the term 'sustainable' or 'sustainability' rather than success throughout its duration.

The project is designed to provide details of a process by which the sustainability of programs in these languages might occur, or, in the case of declining programs, be reversed. The researchers have been required to involve relevant school and community members in the process of gathering data and to present a report that pays attention to the concept of sustainability.

Languages included in the project are defined below by the language itself, and by the level of interest or support of States and Territories in terms of sustainability.

- Modern Standard Chinese
- Korean

National basis in all States and Territories, and Catholic and Independent schools

- Modern Greek

Education Departments of:
- Western Australia
- South Australia
- Victoria

- German

Education Department of
- Western Australia
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were to be addressed through the research:

- describe factors which promote successful programs in the above languages;
- describe factors which mitigate against further implementation of the above languages;
- provide details of a process by which trends in languages which are declining in schools might be arrested or reversed;
- involve relevant community members in the process;
- present a report incorporating the above.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Languages Other Than English in Australia have had a chequered career over many years. Originally, apart from Latin, the teaching of languages was centred on modern European languages – specifically French and German. In the early and even postwar years of this century, these were the two main languages. Since postwar immigration, particularly with the arrival of people of southern European descent, there has been an increasing interest in other languages. Driven in part by the theme of Australia as a multicultural nation, which emerged during the Whitlam years of Government and which has had sustained prominence in succeeding decades, languages other than French, German and English started to gain recognition, particularly Italian and Modern Greek. Since the 1980s, in part because of the ideology of Australia’s need to recognise economic ties with Asian countries, and in part because of the influx of Asian migrants, Asian languages have begun to gain in popularity.

Through both the cultural and the economic imperatives, strong attention has been paid to LOTEs at both the national and State and Territory levels. During the 1990s, considerable funding to, and research about, the implementation and teaching of LOTE have occurred. With the spread of 'new' languages in the curriculum, concerns have been expressed about both the quantity and quality of languages being taught. Various jurisdictions have implemented policies which, at once, are designed to
promote and to limit LOTE. Jurisdictions understand that not every cultural dream of having its language taught can be met, and at the same time, they are concerned to promote the teaching of languages other than English to the extent that all students in Australia will have some degree of competence in a second or subsequent language.

These two themes clash with the traditional nature of schools and their management. In the past, schools have provided a curriculum that was set centrally and deviations from that were rare. Community expectations were that schools would manage and control the curriculum, according to the wishes and expectations of tertiary institutions that used school results as a measure of ability to enter university. In the past few decades, variations from the 'set' curriculum have become more common, with schools not only providing, but being asked to provide, quite different courses. Usually, the impetus for this has been centrally driven, in response to various imperatives in the general context. Both vocational education and training as a response to 'Australia’s international economic competitiveness' and the pressure for LOTEs as a response to multiculturalism and economic competitiveness are examples of this.

The extent of implementation of these imperatives has often rested with the initiative, interest and desire of the school principal. School leaders had, and still have, the ability to strongly influence any change and the implementation of ideas like vocational education and LOTEs depend to a large extent on such people.

It is against this background that this research is taking place. While it is concerned with only four languages, it is possible that findings for these four languages are generalisable across many other, if not all, languages.
DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH

The outcomes of the research were intended to be:

- a report detailing factors which contributed to, or mitigated against, successful programs in LOTE;
- provide details of a process by which trends in languages which are declining in schools might be arrested or reversed;

If, as those who commissioned the research perceived, the four languages which are the focus of this research are static or declining in popularity, the major question to be addressed is how to arrest such trends.

Thinking about reversing the trends in the languages comes from management theory, parts of which are currently being trialled in other areas of the curriculum in various Australian schools. The process is:

Step 1: Raise the level of awareness of stakeholders through the provision of factual information – for example, about the ease or difficulty of learning the language, its relevance to the cultural identity of groups in the community, and Australia's economic future.

Step 2: Raise the level of awareness of success factors involved in language programs, using information provided by the instrument developed through research.

Step 3: Facilitate relevant stakeholders to look at futures for the children in the school community, and plan what they need to do to increase the likelihood of the most desirable futures eventuating.

Step 4: Provide principals with the training necessary to use the instrument with their staff to continuously focus on success factors, and reduce negative factors.

Given that the research finds a decline in interest in these languages, and that there is a need to build and promote languages other than English that were far more
sustainable, the above process will serve as a useful basis for delivering such a process.
METHODOLOGY

To undertake the research, four steps were identified as essential. These were to:

- gather data to assist in defining the extent to which these programs are being 'taken up';
- review current literature in the area which may be pertinent to the questions of sustainability or the lack of it;
- carry out interviews with students, teachers, principals and community members associated with programs to assess factors that promote and mitigate against success in the four languages;
- develop a process which may assist in reversing the trend of a lack of success.

The first step was to undertake an analysis of figures supplied by various States and Territories on the enrolment in the languages in focus. The next was an extensive literature search designed to define and illuminate factors that may impact on the uptake of these languages.

Thirdly, twenty four schools were targeted for interviews – six schools that taught German in Western Australia, six that taught Modern Greek in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, and six each that taught Chinese and Korean selected from around the nation. Schools were selected from lists provided by each State jurisdiction. Jurisdictions were asked to provide lists of schools that the principal officer in each State defined as growing, static, or declining in terms of the respective language being taught. As stated below, protocols were observed in approaching the schools, and each school and individual interviewed was guaranteed confidentiality.

The definition of which category the schools were in was made, first, according to the opinion of the State Officer providing the list, and, secondly, in discussion with the principal to confirm this definition. Of twenty four schools, only two, in the reseachers’ opinion, were not in the category that the State Officer and school personnel placed them.
Schools, by State or Territory, geographic location, classification and LOTE status were:

### Chinese:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Geog. Location</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary (private)</td>
<td>static (strong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary (Catholic)</td>
<td>static/declining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>declined (closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>claimed to be strong, appeared declining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Modern Greek:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Geog. Location</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>area</td>
<td>static (strong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>static/declining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>declining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### German:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Geog. Location</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>declining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Outer Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>static/growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>static (solid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Outer Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Korean:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Geog. Location</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aust. Cap. Territory</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>growing (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary (private)</td>
<td>strong growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>declining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>static/growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>declined (closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>secondary (private)</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost all schools teaching Korean are in the Eastern States of Australia. It was not possible to include a school from Queensland in this section of the research. Permission was requested from State jurisdictions to undertake the research. This included sending copies of the interview instrument and the 'school profile' instrument (see appendices A and B).

Schools were approached to see if they were willing to participate in the research. There were occasional difficulties with schools agreeing, and representation in two States occurred because of the insistence and perseverance of the researchers.

Schools were asked to complete a 'school profile' and to either submit or forward it when completed. This material was analysed in depth to assist in ascertaining the sort of profile that existed in schools with sustainable programs.

Interviews, with two exceptions, were all conducted on one day. Access to students, teachers and administrative staff was generally good. Schools were requested to arrange student groups at what were termed 'critical selection points' – points where students had to make an assessment of whether to continue with the language. This varied from state to state and school to school, according to when that 'critical point' occurred. In most primary schools, it was the final year of primary school. In most secondary schools, it was at the end of the first year of secondary schooling (usually year 8), and at the end of the compulsory schooling years (mainly year 10).

Access to parents was more difficult to arrange. It appeared that the willingness of the LOTE teacher to make personal contact with parents was the major factor in how many were accessible in any school. Nevertheless, in all but one school, parent groups were ultimately arranged.
CHAPTER 2

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The structure of this report has the stages described below.

The introduction, rationale and methodology.

What the statistics say about 'uptake'.
What the literature says.

What can be said about
A. Chinese?
B. Korean?
C. Modern Greek?
D. German?

What are the similarities and what is unique to each language?.

What are the common issues/elements impacting on uptake – starting? maintaining?

What model will be most useful in attending to the issues/elements?
CHAPTER 3

STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has two strands. The first deals with the perception of people closely involved in languages other than English of the lack of growth in the four languages selected for this research. The second strand is the literature review.

PERCEPTIONS OF A LACK OF GROWTH

The tables below deal with statistical data collected by State jurisdictions on the numbers of the students involved in the selected languages. These tables show the combined numbers of primary and secondary students. In Table 1, data on States and Territories with a major interest in Chinese are presented.

Table 1: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Chinese Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Territory</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Capital Territory (Chinese)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3954</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4546</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4227</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3485</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory (Chinese)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasmania (Chinese)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3636</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3733</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3404</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3414</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3132</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of Chinese in each Territory and State, it can clearly be seen that by enrolments, there is a declining interest in Chinese as a Language Other Than English. Even in the Australian Capital Territory, the strongest numerically, there is little if any growth between 1993 and 1996. While an increased interest in learning Chinese is apparent in the growth from 1990 to 1993, there is no apparent growth from 1993 to 1996. In the Northern Territory and Tasmania, there is an obvious decline, even allowing for the small numbers to begin with.

Table 2 shows enrolments in States with an interest in Chinese and Korean.

Table 2: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Chinese/Korean Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Capital Territory (Chinese/Korean)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td>3954</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>4546</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>4227</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>3485</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New South Wales (Chinese/Korean)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>2392</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>7142</td>
<td>968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>9829</td>
<td>1444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>12418</td>
<td>1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland (Chinese/Korean)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>17547</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>28202</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8964</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>30909</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10758</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>30224</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12545</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>30837</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12717</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria (VCE enrolments – Chinese/Greek/Korean)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td>473</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>478</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>624</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, the only figures presented for Victoria were those of enrolments in the Victorian Certificate of Education (year 12 VCE). The figures for Chinese in New

---

1 Total enrolments given in Victoria in 1996 were: German, 40060; Modern Greek, 5694; Chinese: 11315; and Korean, 659.
South Wales are the only figures to show continuous and considerable growth. Queensland’s growth slowed to almost static in 1995 and 1996, Victoria’s enrolments in the VCE show a slight increase, and those for the Australian Capital Territory were static. In Korean, there is considerable growth in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and a start has been made in the Australian Capital Territory. The newness of the language in the curriculum makes it difficult to estimate what caused it and whether it is sustainable. There is some evidence that the growth in New South Wales is tied to grants for technology and computers in rural schools, and the question of whether these languages will continue if funding for the technology programs ceases is a moot point.

Table 3 shows the enrolments in States with an interest in Greek.

Table 3: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – Greek Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State or Territory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia (Chinese/Greek)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>21824</td>
<td>6574</td>
<td>5498</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 (primary only)</td>
<td>18330</td>
<td>6321</td>
<td>5975</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>22150</td>
<td>6996</td>
<td>7771</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>21624</td>
<td>5801</td>
<td>7528</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria (VCE enrolments – Chinese/Greek)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 (total enrolments)</td>
<td>40060</td>
<td>5694</td>
<td>11315</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia (German/Chinese/Greek)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3109</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3372</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3193</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Again, the Victorian figures are limited to VCE enrolments, and these show a static language. In South Australia, there has been some increase over the period from 1993 to 1996, although there is a slight decline in 1996 figures over those from 1995. In Western Australia, there is a doubling of figures from 1993 to 1996, but given the low starting base, this does not demonstrate any remarkable growth.

Table 4: LOTE Enrolments by State and Territory – German Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia (German/Chinese/Greek)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3109</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3372</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3193</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Western Australia, despite the lack of figures for 1995, it is clear that the German language is static. The figures show a limited increase between 1993 and 1994, and then a slight decrease to 1996.

Table 5 shows the total Australian enrolments for the four languages in State and Territory tertiary examinations. Again, it can be seen that in the main, these enrolments are relatively static, peaking in 1995 and declining in 1996.

Table 5: LOTE Enrolments by Year 12 Tertiary Examination Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEETYA (Yr 12 tertiary entrance numbers)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2956</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2581</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>2198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2768</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>2921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2657</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>2469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, then, the data appear to sustain the views of those in positions of authority in various State and Territory jurisdictions. Apart from the Chinese language in New South Wales, and the growth of Korean in the least few years as a new language, all other languages in almost every State and Territory are static or in a state of decline.
THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The teaching of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) has been an integral part of the Australian education system for many years, particularly at the secondary level. Within this history, and the development of national and state policies on language teaching in the 1980s and 1990s, the evidence in the review suggests that LOTE programs in Australia are still characterised by a disparate range of objectives, quality of delivery, methodologies and retention rates. There are great differences both within and between states, schools and communities and the languages being taught.

This literature review is a selective analysis of the current debate, represented primarily in education and linguistic literature. In searching a wide range of published sources, it becomes evident that relatively little research has been conducted on the uptake of LOTE programs in Australia, and that much of the published discussion occurs between a small group of people. While this may be based on reliable and valid research, and on valid experience, it is critical that more structured research be conducted to identify the factors which make up successful LOTE programs. This review will look at the uptake of LOTE programs across Australia, followed by a review of German, Modern Greek and Modern Standard Chinese, with some reference to Korean.

Languages Other Than English

The introduction of national policies such as the National Policy on Languages (1987) and the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991), and state policies such as Western Australia’s LOTE Strategic Plan (1991) and LOTE 2000: New Horizons (1995) indicates that language programs now have substantial recognition at the national and State education system level. In addition, it implies substantial support. The effectiveness of that support, however, may be moderated by the differing objectives of LOTE programs in Australia.

Objectives

Crawford (1995:20) sees the objectives of language programs as being language maintenance (for background speakers); educational and cognitive benefits; and
communicative proficiency and vocational benefits. The idea of vocational relevancy is taken up by Ingram (1993a:7; 1993b:8), who stresses the ability of language skills to contribute to Australia’s economic development and asserts that *it is only economic necessity that has recently convinced policy-makers that language learning is valuable and that its place in the primary school should be re-examined.* Peddie (1992:34) writes that despite pressure from governments for secondary schools to be more ‘relevant’, primary schools have not faced the same economic pressure. It may be, however, that the economic imperative is not far from the primary school playground.

As well as the economic imperative, which includes career opportunities, there are cultural objectives underpinning the learning of languages. A major factor influencing the development of both language policies and programs, and the objectives that underpin them, is that of community and parent attitudes. A number of studies have sought to identify these attitudes. In a recent survey of the parents of students at a New South Wales independent school, Gibbons (1994:11) found that 68 per cent of parents believed it was more important for their children to learn a language at school for career/economic reasons rather than cultural reasons. This was particularly so amongst parents who wanted the school to introduce Chinese and Japanese to the school. In a study of Languages Other Than English in New Zealand, Peddie (1992:43) attributed a considerable rise in the taking of te reo Maori and Japanese, and a drop in French and Latin to a popular view of parents that traditional languages are a waste of time. He believes that the public pressure to introduce languages such as Japanese is strongly linked to perceptions of job opportunities.

This view, however, does not appear to be consistent. Mackerras (1996:11) believes that community support for Asian language learning is ambivalent. He quotes a Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) survey as finding that while 80 per cent of the population believed language learning should be compulsory, only 40 per cent believed that this should be the case for learning Asian languages. Mackerras states that support for European languages is much stronger, though support for Asian languages is growing.

The perceptions and expectations which parents have of LOTEs vary considerably. In a 1985 survey of primary LOTE programs in the Metropolitan North Region of Sydney, Langdon (1986:6) found that *the most popular reasons for the introduction of programs were parental demand, the desire to give a multicultural perspective to the curriculum and staff interest.* He also found that this trend, however, did not appear
to extend into the secondary school and surmised that parents saw languages as an enrichment activity rather than a serious commitment at the primary level. Other research, though, found that parents had a high expectation of the level of proficiency to be reached in LOTE programs. In a survey of parents of children studying Italian at a Victorian primary school, Fraser (1994:10) found that a majority of them expected mastery and fluency in their children by year 12 if they continued that far. Gibbons (1994:16) recommended the introduction of Indonesian, rather than Chinese or Japanese, to the school which he surveyed because he believed that there was a greater likelihood of the students reaching a high level of proficiency and fulfilling the communicative proficiency criterion set by their parents.

Not all parents see the teaching of their background language as a priority. In a study of six schools in Sydney and Melbourne, Kalantzis et al (1990:229) found that immigrant parents often don’t expect their home languages to be taught in schools as of a right. Parents repeatedly stressed the primary importance of English and academically prestigious subjects. LOTEs were fine, but only insofar as they were subjects where their children could get high marks.

Retention in LOTE

While community expectations of Language Other Than English programs may be generally high, they are not being matched by retention rates, particularly at secondary school. Peddie (1992:48) found that while 77 per cent of all Victorian students in year 7 were learning a language other than English, this decreased to 3.7 per cent in year 12. In Queensland, less than a quarter of students continued their language into year 9 (Lait quoted in Crawford, 1995:22) and Zammit (1993:1) quotes a figure of 12 per cent of Australian students continuing their specific LOTE to year 12. Students are also changing their languages other than English – 50 per cent of year 7 students in Queensland intended choosing a different language in year 8 (Crawford, 1995:22). While the statistics will vary across states and types of schools, the concern about retention rates has grown to more than what Crawford (1995:22) has described as room for concern.

In 1992, Zammit undertook an Australia-wide study for the then Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) among students aged 14-18. The aim of the study was to investigate beginning students’ attitude and achievement in seven languages. A number of Zammit’s findings are relevant to the issue of retention rates
Students' Attitudes and LOTE Teaching

Zammit found that overall, male students have a less positive attitude to learning a LOTE than females and that this translates into having more males among the discontinuing students. She also found that 80 per cent of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that 'LOTE is only for clever students' (Zammit, 1992:9). A significant finding was that *Students did not consider that their teachers were meeting their preferences for speaking and writing activities in the classroom* (Zammit, 1992:11). For example, even though two-thirds of the students preferred speaking activities in the LOTE class, conversation practice did not rate among the top three (of twelve) activities in any of the language classes. There was a strong positive correlation between liking the LOTE class and finding it interesting (across all languages and both genders). Further, the intention to continue studying a LOTE until year 12 had a moderate positive correlation with ‘I like the LOTE class' (Zammit, 1992:9). Zammit’s conclusions would seem to support her suggestion that *While it is crucial to have a good policy document, it is likewise essential that the subject the policy is promoting to be judged important and worthwhile* and that the implementation in the classroom by qualified teachers is crucial (Zammit, 1992:12).

On the basis of research in eleven Melbourne primary schools teaching Chinese, Modern Greek, Italian and German, Clyne et al (1995:178) came to a similar conclusion. *Throughout the study, we have found that one variable dominates all others in mediating the success of the program. That is the teacher.* The influence of teachers on the success of LOTE programs begins with their own preconceptions about why students choose to begin to study a LOTE, preconceptions which Hajek and Warren (1996:13) believe are often mistaken. Teachers’ attitudes to the role of LOTE programs may also influence their success. For example, Kalantzis et al (1990:142) found that in one Melbourne school where maintenance classes were held
in Vietnamese, Turkish and Greek, one teacher argued that languages such as Turkish were not internationally useful, and that cultural maintenance was not the role of the school. Other influential factors identified by other authors (including Clyne:1992,95; Summo-O’Connell:1997; Mackerras:1996) are teacher education and supply, lack of teacher language proficiency, poor delivery and the ethnic background of teachers.

Summo-O’Connell (1997:4) believes that *The field of LOTE teacher education is more ignored than acknowledged by applied linguistics*, which might explain why much of the discussion of LOTE issues is found in education rather than linguistics literature. As a LOTE methodology tutor, she finds a discrepancy between what lecturers believe are the factors involved in effective teaching, and what their students find is practised at schools, especially in regard to the use of the target language. Ingram (1993a:15) suggests that *there is a need for radical change to occur in the way that language teachers are trained and the level of skills they have; there should be minimum training requirements and proficiency levels, an understanding of language teaching methods and the ability to apply those principles to teaching in different situations with different clients. The current situation of teachers learning on the job is an ad hoc way of schools facing the challenge of cultural and linguistic diversity* (Kalantzis et al, 1990:243).

The issue of teacher proficiency is of major concern in the literature and is linked with teachers’ perceptions of their students and their own ability. Crawford (1995:22) believes that some teachers have pessimistic expectations of what their students could achieve and this was often reflected in their hesitancy to use the target language. There may be a vicious circle when the teachers think that the children cannot understand the LOTE and speak to them in English, thus reducing the children’s exposure to the second language and their ability to comprehend and use it. The children then think that there is little purpose in learning a LOTE and may 'switch off' after a certain time (Clyne, 1992:73-4). Alternatively, teachers may have over-optimistic expectations and believe that language learning will occur regardless, almost by a process of osmosis (Clyne et al, 1995:131).

The over-use of the target language is particularly strong amongst background speaker teachers and raises the question of the ethnic background of teachers. This issue will be explored further under the individual languages, but it is worth noting here that many LOTE teachers come from ethnic backgrounds that may influence their teaching methods and relationships with their students. For example, the research of Clyne et al (1995:132) found that *the more 'ethnic' the teachers, the more likely they are to*
speak English to children without a home background in the language on the assumption that they could not learn their language. This was particularly so with Greek teachers, and Clyne et al believe this may account for the fact that of the 70 per cent of non-Greek students who take Greek in government primary schools, only 38.6 per cent take it at secondary level.

LOTE and the School Environment

While the issue of LOTE teachers is a major factor in the discussion of LOTE programs, the place of the programs within the wider school environment is also influential. The research of Clyne et al (1995:177) found that school support was important in the success of a LOTE program. They believe that LOTE programs should be an integral part of a school and should have the cooperation of school administrators, the entire staff, parents and students.

The proliferation of programs has also resulted in an unevenness in the provision of LOTE instruction, and this in turn has had implications for continuity of learning and transition of learning from primary to secondary levels. As an example, Rado (1988:6) refers to the fact that over thirty LOTE courses were offered at year 12 as part of the Victorian Certificate of Education. She suggests that the diversity of curriculum practices and the unevenness of the pedagogy associated with many of these courses has acted as a disadvantage to the students undertaking them, a frustration to the teachers teaching them and effectively therefore as a disincentive to their study.

Kalantzis et at (1990:234) have also discussed the issue of pedagogy. In their study of six schools, they found it ironic that while languages were being introduced into the education system in a spirit of progressivism and pluralism, [the LOTE teachers] were often the strongest advocates of traditional pedagogy. They taught formally, used traditional testing and regarded themselves as the presenters of knowledge rather than the managers of student-centred inquiry. At one inner-city high school where LOTE programs employed more traditional pedagogy than subjects such as English and social science, the researchers attributed this in part to the teachers’ educational and cultural backgrounds. While it was said, however, that the parents often appreciate the traditional style and it is probably good for the kids, such as the Arabic and Turkish kids, one teacher commented that some children found the traditional teaching style difficult to handle (Kalantzis et al, 1990:84). The authors’
comment that *The match or mismatch of learning and teaching styles was seen to be an important challenge for teachers* would appear to be a major point in the LOTE debate (Kalantzis et al, 1990:235).

A review of the literature reveals that a number of researchers believe many problems experienced by LOTE programs are not related to specific languages (for example, Smith et al, 1993:50). The following overviews, however, will illustrate the range of problems experienced by LOTE programs as a whole, as well as those factors influencing the success of particular programs.

**German in Australia**

The teaching of German has a long history in Australia and it is in the states with strong historical ties that the German language has retained a high profile, particularly South Australia, Queensland and Victoria. During the 1970s and 1980s German was in a strong position in schools, though this changed in the late 80s with the push for Asian languages. The development, however, of the new language policies and the increased importance of Germany in Europe may be having a positive influence in the development of the language in Australia (Fernandez et al, 1993:3).

In Western Australia, the number of German programs is increasing at primary level but has declined at secondary level at government schools (as of 1993). Over the three years prior to 1993, there was an increase of 13 per cent at secondary level in independent schools which appear to be strongly supporting German (Fernandez et al, 15). A similar situation of decline has been found in government secondary schools in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, contradicted by a 44 per cent increase in New South Wales independent secondary schools. Fernandez et al (1993:18) suggest that this may be the result of German being replaced by other languages in government schools, while independent schools are more likely to add extra languages required while retaining existing languages. The existence of German-speaking communities in South Australia, Queensland and Victoria seems to be important in supporting German in those states, as is the existence of strong, active German teacher associations and lobby groups. Fernandez et al (1993:112) conclude that while the teaching of German has *experienced many ups and downs*, its current
status is *healthy* and numbers in most states are increasing. Data in this report for the period 1993 to 1996 tend to contradict that view.

Despite its ‘healthy’ status, there are problems with German programs at primary and secondary levels. At primary levels, these include:

- a shortage of primary school German teachers;
- lack of appropriate preservice training for teachers of German;
- lack of guidelines regarding hours of tuition, levels of proficiency and methodology;
- transition to secondary study; and a shortage of adequate resources at primary level (Fernandez et al, 1993:113).

At secondary level, a substantial group of teachers of German have had problems with their proficiency levels and experienced a personal lack of confidence in their German teaching. This was compounded by what they felt was a lack of support from school authorities and non-LOTE teachers, and the low priority and status given to languages as shown in processes such as time-tabling and the combining of classes at year 11 and 12. They also felt a constant need to justify the teaching of German, especially when Asian languages were seen as more relevant or important (Fernandez et al, 1993:113).

Fernandez et al (1993:26) point out that *most issues of concern to German language teachers are not unique to ... German* but are shared by teachers of other languages. A major problem is that of transition from primary to secondary school German programs. Because of the long history of primary German programs and 'increases in numbers', there are more students with primary school German reaching secondary school. Some teachers lack strategies and abilities to deal with classes made up of beginners and students with differing amounts of exposure to German at primary school. In discussions with teachers, the researchers found that *the practice of simply ignoring or even belittling students’ prior language experience was not uncommon* and not surprisingly that this is *an extremely negative and destructive experience for students* (Fernandez et al, 1993:29).
The inability of teachers to deal with mixed ability groups was then compounded by students’ confusion with a change of methodology from primary to secondary school. At primary school, there seems to be an emphasis on oral and aural skills, while at the secondary level there is greater focus on grammar and the written language. Fernandez et al (1993:31) suggest that departments of education must prioritise the issue of transition, and immediately take steps to ensure that such measures are implemented. Clyne et al (1992:71) also found that The lack of transition programs ultimately affects the level of attainment that one achieves in the second language.

At secondary level, many teachers felt that languages were placed against more ‘attractive’ subjects from which students could choose electives, and that this adversely affects student numbers. In a survey of secondary school students, Fernandez et al (1993:74) found that there was a considerable decrease in the number of students studying German after year 10, and that 60 per cent of those surveyed had dropped German. The main reasons were that they considered other subjects more important (50 per cent), they found the language too difficult (35 per cent) and they did not like the teacher (30 per cent). The researchers concluded that while languages are seen as a valuable asset, they do not have the same status as other subjects, or are not considered crucial for tertiary entrance or careers.

In a study of primary-secondary transition in German programs, Clyne et al (1992:70) found that the issue of mixed ability classes in secondary school was a problem. Teachers felt that having to cater to bilingual students and beginners was difficult and of limited value to both groups. Students resented the mixing, believing that the classes were either too difficult or too easy. It was felt that this lead to resentment and a lack of enthusiasm to continue with German.

While research has identified problems with German language programs, there have also been successful programs implemented. In a survey of year 11 students, the major reasons given for continuing with German were wanting to travel, liking the study of languages, possible career enhancement and good marks (Fernandez et al, 1993:76). The choice to continue was generally not motivated by third parties or disinterest in other subjects, and cultural or religious links with the German-speaking community had little relevance. Of those taking German as their first LOTE, 16.2 per
cent intended continuing German at tertiary level, while 39.1 per cent of those taking
German as their second LOTE intended continuing it at tertiary level. In a study of
primary school students, Clyne et al (1992:70) found that:

- *A positive attitude to German seemed to encourage high scores and fluency*;
- the use of German was a positive factor;
- students from 5 hour/week bilingual programs continued the language for
  longer than those from 3 hour programs.

While the status of German in Australia may be seen as 'healthy' at the time these
reports were undertaken, attrition rates were relatively high. The literature cited
above indicates relevant factors to be considered by those implementing policies and
developing programs.

**Chinese in Australia**

It was estimated in 1992 (quoted in Smith et al, 1993:vii) that there were 220,000
Chinese language speakers in Australia, most of them speaking Cantonese and other
Chinese languages rather than Modern Standard Chinese (MSC/Chinese) as their first
language. Demographic changes since then, however, have seen an increase in the
number of MSC speakers and changes in settlement patterns across the states.

The number of children studying Chinese at primary and secondary schools and the
number of schools offering Chinese has increased in the 1990s. Numbers in
government primary schools have increased by 350 per cent and by 14 per cent in
secondary schools. There were similar increases in independent schools, but a
decrease in primary numbers in Catholic schools, where Chinese is poorly represented
(Smith et al, 1993:viii). The study of Chinese is not strong in Western Australia and it
is felt that the majority of students taking the language since 1988 are visa students,
while the numbers of non-ethnic-Chinese studying Chinese as a LOTE is small (Smith
et al, 1993:44). Again, the statistics for the period under discussion are contradicted
by earlier data in this report.
Cultural and demographic factors are significant influences on the development of Chinese LOTE programs in Australia. The background of Chinese-speakers is diverse, including those from multilingual countries such as Singapore whose culture has been 'filtered', and immigrants from Indo-China. In a study of university students of Chinese origin living in South Australia, Smolicz (1992:293) found that there was a belief that the Chinese language was central to Chinese culture and essential for its survival. His respondents held this attitude even if they did not speak Chinese and did not want to learn it. Because of the Chinese community’s linguistic pluralism, MSC was seen as a unifying cultural force for all Chinese people and thus an integral part of Chinese identity. Despite this belief, however, Smolicz’s respondents believed that there was a lack of community reinforcement for learning MSC in Australia and that they regretted their own lack of confidence in Chinese. Smolicz believes that while MSC has been fragile in Australia, *Loss of language does not invariably mean loss of Chinese identity*, which may explain why only some people of Chinese origin feel the necessity of learning the language.

With the high number of MSC students being of Chinese origin, the issue of background speakers in classes is debated extensively in the literature (Clyne:1992,94; Zammit, 1993; Smith et al, 1993; Louie and Edwards:1996; Kirkpatrick:1995). There are those who see the presence of background speakers as an incentive, those who see it is a disincentive, and those who believe there is a need for specialist curricula for different groups.

In a study of three primary schools teaching MSC, Clyne (1994:8) found that the best results in listening comprehension tests were in *schools with large numbers of children from a Chinese-speaking background and especially in the one with 'mixed' classes*. Those children whose best friends were Chinese-speakers were also advantaged. In a study of year 11 students of Chinese, Smith et al (1993:77) found that only 7.8 per cent of students discontinued Chinese because there were too many background speakers in the class. They conclude that *the relationship between the presence of native speakers and the discontinuation of studying Chinese cannot be convincingly established* and point out that most of the evidence given to the contrary is *based on qualitative reports from the non-student sector*. 
A report to which Smith et al refer is that of Tuffin and Wilson (1990) who found that a high proportion of background speakers in secondary LOTE classes discouraged and disadvantaged non-background speakers, who then achieved poorer results and felt they faced unfair competition (Smith et al, 1993:69). Kirkpatrick (1995:8) describes the mixing of the two groups in the same class as 'silly' and a disincentive to non-background speakers when they are assessed in the same way. He also sees it as a disincentive to the background learner when teachers aim at the level of non-background students. Kirkpatrick suggests the implementation of separate streams for background and non-background speakers, a suggestion supported by Louie and Edwards. They believe that the development of specialist background speaker LOTE programs would encourage children to be proud of their bilingualism, instead of being seen as a problem that teachers of Chinese have had to grapple with (Louie and Edwards, 1996:8; Zhong 1993:28). Despite some positive findings, Clyne et al (1992:67) also suggested that separate classes would be more appropriate because students from a Chinese speaking background are distracted if the level of instruction does not challenge them. Perhaps the most balanced comment on this issue is that of Clyne (1994:9) who said:

whether 'mother tongue' speakers are a resource or not depends on their level of proficiency, the extent to which the teacher gives them self-confidence in the language, the type of program and its time allocation, and especially the teacher's attitude towards them.

The issue of background speakers is also discussed extensively in the literature in terms of background Chinese-speaking teachers, who make up 60-65 per cent of Chinese teachers in primary and secondary school. Most speak Cantonese as their first language and have either undergone retraining to become language teachers or have changed areas without formal training (Smith et al, 1993:51). Some of the problems that these teachers experience are culturally based due to the cultural differences between them and Australian students. They come from an educational environment which is teacher-led rather than student-centred and which supports conformity rather than individuality (Zhang, 1992:24). Teachers may misinterpret student behaviour, and there may be tension between teachers and students. Eckermann (1994:54) who looks at teachers’ class values and their perspectives on
cultural difference, explores these issues further. She refers to the cultural baggage carried by some teachers not necessarily of an ethnic background and the effect it may have on their stereotyping of children’s cultural background.

Kirkpatrick (1995:9) describes language learning in China as serious business with the heavy concentration on accuracy and memorisation being at odds with current teaching philosophy in our society. The influence of culture and pedagogical style, however, is not confined to MSC or LOTEs. Kalantzis et al (1990:232) describe Vietnamese parents being concerned because the Victorian mathematics syllabus was moving away from what could be defined and memorised towards a problem-solving approach where formulae, etc were less important.

The other teacher-related issue frequently discussed is that of background-speaker proficiency. Zhang (1992:26) points out that most background speaking Chinese teachers speak a form of Mandarin deviant from the Beijing variety and that they need to familiarise themselves with standard Mandarin. They should also have an understanding of applied linguistic theories to assist them in classroom teaching. Most of those interviewed by Smith et al (1993:51) believed that language proficiency was the most pressing problem facing teachers in the classroom, and that they were unhappy with their pre-service training, which did not deal specifically with Chinese.

Also debated frequently in the language education literature is the issue of degree of difficulty of learning Chinese and the time taken to reach proficiency. In a recent article, Kirkpatrick (1995:6) argues that the so-called ‘difficult’ Asian languages – MSC, Japanese and Korean – should not be taught in primary schools or even at lower secondary school level to non-background speakers of these languages. He believes that Indonesian/Malay should be the first Asian language taught to young non-background learners. Kirkpatrick believes that MSC, Japanese and Korean are difficult for first language English-speakers because they have scripts that are radically different from English and require the learning of many characters, they are not cognate with English and MSC also causes difficulties because of its tonal nature. Because of these features, Kirkpatrick (1995:8) argues that it would take learners of these languages around four times as long to attain basic proficiency as learners of easier languages such as French. Basic proficiency would not be reached even if a
child studied MSC from years 3 to 12, so Kirkpatrick questions whether it is worth spending that amount of time on instruction. As well as being a waste of resources, he believes that failure to progress in MSC, Japanese or Korean may make students feel inadequate or inferior, and encourage division and insularity (Kirkpatrick, 1995:11).

Both Williss (1995) and Gao (1996) have rebutted Kirkpatrick’s arguments. Williss (1995:28) believes that it is misleading to say that MSC is more difficult than other (mainly European) languages and that Kirkpatrick has no evidence on which to base his assertions. He agrees that it does take longer to reach a basic level of proficiency in MSC than many other languages, but believes that this does not mean that MSC is more difficult to learn. Gao (1996:17) believes that degree of difficulty is irrelevant and that every language has areas of difficulty for some learners. He makes the point that one doesn’t have to get every tone right to communicate and that he has found that many English-speakers do not find character-learning too difficult – some even find it fun. Rather than dropping MSC, Japanese and Korean from the curriculum, Gao suggests developing better teaching strategies. He concludes by saying that Children may learn a lot or they may learn little, but surely to know something is better than to know nothing (Gao, 1996:17).

There are many factors that influence the success of Chinese LOTE programs and there have undoubtedly been problems with the teaching of the language in Australia. Retention rates from primary to secondary school and from year 10 to year 11 are low and only a small number of students matriculate with a high standard of Chinese (Smith et al, 1993:x). Smith also identified (1993:25) that:

- the Chinese language may only seem important where there is a large local Chinese community;
- it may be seen as a low priority by principals;
- some teachers might feel insecure about teaching students who are more proficient than themselves;
- a lack of local resources and a perception that Chinese is not valuable may be present, especially if Chinese is not a pre-requisite for tertiary entrance.
Where students did continue with their Chinese studies, those who evaluated their Chinese-language skills more highly were less likely to discontinue, and Smith et al (1993:83) suggest that a positive self-image may be an important factor for students. Their research also found that while pressure by peers or teachers did not influence students’ desire to continue, parental pressure did. Students who continued their studies seemed to be increasingly aware of the potential career gains of learning Chinese. Smith et al (1993:84) suggest, however, *that the high attrition rate in Chinese may well bear the implication that this particular message is not getting through to all students.*

**Korean in Australia**

There was very little in the literature about the teaching of Korean in Australian primary and secondary schools. A number of the issues concerning the teaching of Korean as a LOTE, however, are similar to those of MSC. The fact that 80% of Australia's Korean-speaking population resides in Sydney would be an influential factor as well.

**Modern Greek in Australia**

Modern Greek is the most widely used community language in Australia after Italian and Greek born Australians show the strongest language maintenance (Tamis, 1991:249). Language is an integral part of the Greek cultural and ethos and is widely used at home and work. The teaching of Modern Greek as a LOTE varies across Australia. Tamis (1993:2) found that Victoria and South Australia seem to be the states most favourably disposed to Modern Greek, with the most systematic programs of implementation. Victoria designates Modern Greek as a priority language and is committed to extending it to upper secondary school. In other states, there is either a discrepancy between a supportive policy and limited provision for implementation (New South Wales and Western Australia), or it is not a priority language.
In Western Australia, Modern Greek was granted priority status in 1993. There are, however, a very limited number of programs in government primary schools and it is taught at only one high school. Most of the primary school programs are insertion classes run by teachers from the local Greek community. There is no coherent curriculum and no provision for continuity post-primary, something which Tamis (1993:99) sees as a major disincentive. For this reason many children replace Modern Greek with a language such as Italian after one or two years. Modern Greek is not taught at any Independent or Catholic schools, but is taught as a community language in three ethnic schools run by the Greek community.

The teaching of Modern Greek as a LOTE is strongly influenced by cultural factors. Tamis (1993:3) suggests that a major disincentive to the study of Modern Greek is a perception by the wider community that the serious study of the language is really for Greek-Australians, amongst whom it is seen as the domain of an elite. Tamis (1991:261) also reports that Modern Greek is now being seen for its educational value rather than just ethnic or cultural reasons, and that this is borne out by the growing number of students of non-Greek background who are studying the language at tertiary level. Since 1990 the number of non-Greek background students has surpassed background students at primary schools in New South Wales and Western Australia. Tamis also believes that the sense of ‘inferiority’ once felt by immigrant speakers of Modern Greek has now faded.

As with other languages other than English, Modern Greek programs have experienced problems with teacher supply and proficiency. Tamis (1993:44) reports that Most teachers teaching Modern Greek at primary schools are Australian-born with limited proficiency in Modern Greek. In Western Australia, principals have complained that in Modern Greek insertion classes, the Greek community has appointed community teachers who are not properly trained or qualified, who have problems with class discipline and poor rapport with students (Tamis, 1993:46). In addition, the Greek spoken by many immigrants is the acquired communicative variety rather than standard Modern Greek (Tamis, 1991:260). This influences both the teaching by community members and the learning processes of second-generation bilingual students. Tamis (1993:3) describes the latter as speaking an impoverished,
unelaborated code of Modern Greek that makes the maintenance and development needs of those students different to those of non-Greek background beginners.

As mentioned previously, it has been found that the more 'ethnic' the teachers, the more likely they are to speak English to non-Greek background students. This can have major effects on the outcome of their teaching. In a study of Modern Greek classes in three primary schools, Clyne et al (1992:68) found that the children’s progress is influenced by the choice of language code used by the teacher as the medium of instruction, and this is linked with the teacher’s background and set of expectations. Children in a class where the teacher speaks Greek for 40 per cent of the lesson performed better at oral, listening and writing skills than those in classes where the teachers spoke Greek for 10 to 20 per cent of the time. Students in the first class were able to produce sentences in Greek, while the other students could only write single Greek words in English sentences.

Tamis (1993:3) believes that the quality of linguistic skills of Modern Greek teachers is a key issue at all levels of schooling. With little provision for professional development or language enrichment, they lose credibility with some parents, colleagues and students. There is a divergence in teaching methods, materials and course design according to the teachers’ backgrounds and there is only a small amount of locally produced teaching material. In government secondary schools, the teaching of Modern Greek is also affected by under-resourcing, poor time-tabling, poor linkage with primary schools and few opportunities for running low-enrolment senior classes (Tamis, 1993:4). Although Victoria has the highest number of matriculation candidates in Modern Greek, it also has one of the highest attrition rates. This is due to the limited hours of teaching, an inflexible syllabus and inadequate provisions for ex-beginners and intermediates. Tamis (1993:4) believes that this has the detrimental effect of entrenching the perception among students of all backgrounds that Modern Greek is a 'community language' in the narrowest sense of that infelicitous term.

Teachers surveyed by Tamis (1993:97) suggested a number of other factors discouraging the study of Modern Greek. These included the 'elective' status of Modern Greek in many schools, which brings it into competition with subjects seen as easier options and which reduces the language’s status. The most decisive
disincentive was seen to be the lack of support from schools, employers and the broader community. In some cases this was compounded by intra-community and inter-generational conflicts, factors also mentioned by Kalantzis (1990:226). Despite these difficulties, there do seem to be competent, innovative teachers who run successful Modern Greek programs. Tamis (1993:50) mentions a teacher of Modern Greek in a South Australian high school who *publishes a magazine in Modern Greek with his students, has his own radio program and keeps parents closely involved with the school.*

The conclusion of Tamis (1993:6) was that Modern Greek suffers from an image problem as a community language. The other problems it faces, however, are those faced by most LOTE programs – lack of resourcing, problems of transition and continuity, inflexible curricula and an inability on the part of the teacher to cope with mixed groups.

**Conclusion**

The literature review, while highlighting a number of issues and concerns for the individual languages in this research, more precisely highlights a range of common issues. These issues, in general, are:

- a confusion of objectives and purposes, including the economic imperative, cultural maintenance, multicultural exposure and development, proficiency as a speaker, university entrance;
- a concern with retention rates in LOTE, both to give it status and viability within schools. This area highlighted the attitudes of students to the language and how these could affect retention;
- Students’ attitudes and LOTE teaching, and the effect of how the language is taught in relation to those attitudes. These included teacher expectations of students, teacher education and supply, lack of teacher language proficiency, poor delivery and the ethnic background of teachers.
- LOTE and the school environment.
The fact that so many problems are common to different LOTEs points to a major breakdown in the implementation of the policies that have been made at national and state level. Perhaps Clyne et al (1995:179) expressed it best when they wrote that *As LOTE programs proliferate in the primary schools, there is a danger that the mere existence of the program rather than providing the conditions required for its success will be the measure of the implementation of the policy.*
PART 2

REPORTS ON THE INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGES

The individual languages presented in this section are, in sequence, German, Chinese, Korean and Modern Greek. This follows the pattern of presentation of information in the literature review in the previous chapter.

Data from each language are presented under the following headings:

Introduction (which includes background information on the schools).

Primary Schools
- Why Did the Primary Schools Initially Choose To Teach the Language?
- Perceptions Of the Language In Primary Schools.
- Factors Operating Against Sustainable Language Programs in Primary Schools.
- Factors Promoting Sustainable Language Programs in the Primary Schools.
- Other Issues

Secondary Schools
- Why Did Secondary Schools Initially Choose To Teach the Language?
- Perceptions of the Language in Secondary Schools.
- Factors Operating Against Sustainable Language Programs In Secondary Schools.
- Factors Promoting Sustainable Language Programs in the Secondary Schools.
- Other Issues.

Summary
CHAPTER 4

THE UPTAKE OF GERMAN

INTRODUCTION

The sample of schools teaching German consisted of three government primary schools and three government senior high schools. All were co-educational.

One primary school is in the metropolitan area. The student population is predominantly Australian/European. Seven per cent of the student population were born in countries where English is not the first language. One per cent of students are from families where English is not spoken at home. Income levels of the community range from middle to upper middle levels, paralleling the general socio-economic status of the community. German has been the traditional LOTE at the school for year 7 students through a Contributory Primary School program. It was introduced in 1996 to year 6 students and in 1997 to year 3 students. In 1998 the school has introduced German to year 4, Greek to year 5 and Japanese to year 6 while maintaining the year 3 and year 7 German program. A primary LOTE teacher teaches the German to years 3 and 4.

Another primary school is also in the metropolitan area. The student population comprises a wide variety of backgrounds including students from English, Indian, Polish, South African, American, Singaporean, Canadian, Italian and Chinese extraction. The community is classified as middle to upper class. German was introduced to years 3 - 5 in 1993, to years 1 and 2 in 1994, year 6 in 1996 and year 7 in 1997. The school intends to continue the existing program into the future.

---

2 In Western Australia in regard to LOTE, a Contributory Primary School program refers to a program where a secondary school LOTE teacher teaches a language in one or more primary schools for an hour to two hours per week. This is usually only with year 7 or upper primary school classes as a lead into the high school language classes.

3 Throughout this report, students are referred to by school years. There are inconsistencies between States and Territories in the transition of students from primary to secondary school, and variations in schooling structures now with the introduction of ‘middle schools’. Students referred to as
The third primary school is in a rural area. There are twelve staff. Thirty-seven per cent of students are from Aboriginal backgrounds. There are also students of Slavic, Polish, Italian and Asian extraction. The school classifies its community as being of a low socio-economic background, predominantly in a public housing area with high unemployment and many single and blended parent families. German began with a year 3 program and has since expanded to include kindergarten to year 7.

One high school caters for 1071 students from years 8 to 12. The student population was described as mixed, though with a low socio-economic bias – many students are from single-parent families. A significant group comes from an armed services facility nearby and hence are transitory. The major ethnic group is English migrants. There are six students from an Aboriginal background and a few students from Asia. German was introduced in 1988. LOTE became compulsory for year 8 students in 1995. Students were given a choice of Indonesian and German. In 1998, three out of the eight year 8 LOTE classes are German. From 1999, the year 8 cohort will be informed that they must continue with LOTE to the end of year 10.

The second high school has 1162 students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, the major ones being Vietnamese, Italian, Chinese, Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian. The full range of socio-economic backgrounds are represented within the school community. The school is classified as having a special LOTE program. French and German are the traditional languages in the school. Currently, students can choose from a wide range of LOTEs including French, German, Italian, Indonesian, Chinese and Greek. The LOTE special placement program students undertake two languages for three years, with one language at least to be taken to year 12. By 1999 LOTE will be compulsory for all students in years 8-10.

The third high school caters for 1030 students from years 8 to 12. There are many cross-boundary students who attend the school to participate in a number of special programs. Special programs are offered for Performing Arts, Dance, Music and Drama as well as Soccer and Sailing. The main ethnic groups represented in the population are Portuguese, Italian and Australian. There are some students from year 6 are regarded as eleven years old, students in year 7 are twelve years old, students in year 10 are regarded as being fifteen years old, and students in year 12 are regarded as being 17 years old.
Aboriginal and Japanese backgrounds. Students have a choice of studying French, Italian or Japanese in year 8. German is offered in year 11 and 12, with a German for Beginners class in year 11. German was previously offered to year 8 students along with Italian and French. With the introduction of Japanese, German became the least popular selection by year 8 students and has not been taught to them since the beginning of 1997. All academic extension classes from years 8 to 10 will now do a compulsory LOTE. In 1999, LOTE will be compulsory for the whole year for all year 8 students. There were no plans, at the time of writing, to extend this to other years.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Why Did the Primary Schools Initially Choose to Teach German?

Teacher Availability

Two of the primary schools had teachers on staff with backgrounds in the German language operating within the mainstream program. These teachers were willing to teach German, had a strong sense of school commitment, and were interested in becoming the LOTE teacher for the whole school.

Historical Reasons

The other primary school began by having German taught to year 7 students through a high school 'outreach' program. This provided students, intending to continue their education in that high school, with an opportunity to continue their German study. For this reason, the school did not have to 'find' a LOTE teacher. Younger students were offered German as LOTE began to spread through the school. Given that German was already being taught in the school, it was logical that it would be the language taught to younger students. A part-time German LOTE teacher was found for the purpose of teaching younger students.
Perceptions of German in Primary Schools

Perceptions of Students

The students expressed the full range of emotions when describing their feelings about learning German. Some loved it, others hated it; some found it interesting, some boring, while some were ambivalent; some found it easy, others hard and some found it useful while others thought it a waste of time.

There were discernible problems with the year 7 group in each school. They used very strong language when describing the subject and their feelings towards doing it. The boys in each group seemed more likely to express these views. They used words like *depressing, disturbing, annoying, boring, crap, rubbish* and *stupid*. Their main concerns were with how they felt they were being treated. Many expressed the view that there were too many activities which *treated them like babies* and this embarrassed them. They did not like the way they thought they were treated. For example, one said that when they could not do something, *we get yelled at for not knowing something*.

Students gave a number of suggestions which they felt would improve the teaching and learning program within the German classroom. They felt that the teacher needed to *stop picking on some of the students*. They also commented on some classroom activities. They wanted to *get rid of silly actions* and silly action songs. In addition, they wanted to have more exposure to the German language through the teacher always using the target language and through having German pen pals.

The feedback from year 7 students in all three schools suggests that teachers need to take more account of who these students are and who they are becoming. The research suggests that the pedagogy used with older primary school classes may be inappropriate and perceived by some as demeaning. It also suggests that the students themselves are astute in their observations. They are not anti-LOTE. They are ‘anti’ the approach to LOTE. They want LOTE to be meaningful and real, and they want to be able to have a sense of improvement and development in their language skills.
It cannot be said definitively from this research that boys are feeling excluded from LOTE learning as they enter year 7, but it does seem that further research into this and the wider issue of pedagogy for young adolescents could be undertaken.

**Perceptions of Teachers**

There was a mixed reaction to LOTE by the other staff. While being very supportive of the German teachers' abilities and their own school program, many were not convinced of LOTE in general. Differences of opinion were expressed about when the LOTE program should start in terms of students’ ages, how much time it should take, and the rationale for doing German or some other LOTE.

There was also some comment from classroom teachers that maybe LOTE was not for everyone and some students should be allowed to choose something else to do. The underlying assumption here may be that LOTE is for the 'better' students. This perception needs to be addressed.

Teachers from one school saw LOTE as essential because of Australia’s increasing multicultural nature. They felt that it enhanced our understanding of our own language and would be increasingly useful for the future. On the other hand, one teacher said he was not so sure of the importance of LOTE to Australians and was not quite sure why German was being taught. Another was not at all supportive of LOTE being taught to year 1 and 2 students, preferring a concentration on English. Some felt that students should have a choice of LOTE (preferably Japanese) but recognised the limitations of resourcing.

At one school, non-LOTE teachers thought the German program was ‘terrific’ and complemented other subjects. In their view, LOTE had helped their students improve their listening skills because it was so oral. They also thought that the students who had performed well in German at primary school would be advantaged when learning a language in high school. Finally, they preferred the students doing a European language as they believed it assisted students in learning English.
Perceptions of Parents

Some parents, while supportive of LOTE, were not particularly concerned whether their children learned German or another language, especially in those primary schools where German was not offered by the local high school. These parents expressed a desire, however, for their children to be able to continue with their primary school LOTE (whatever that may be) into high school.

There was a sense that many parents in these schools would prefer an Asian language. They see Asian languages as more relevant to travel (they are more likely to travel to Indonesia with their children for a holiday than to Germany), and more relevant for the future because they see Australia's economic future bound up in the Asian region.

There was also some concern from parents about the age of starting a LOTE. Some parents wanted their children to have a ‘good grasp’ of English before starting a LOTE despite expressing awareness that the earlier the start in LOTE, the better the learning.

Overall, parents supported their children learning a LOTE. They liked them learning another language and about other cultures. Parents from one school were appreciative of the effort put into things like the parent nights, newsletters, special German days and 'coffee and cake' when parents come to lessons. At another school parents thought that the German teacher was magnificent and were also impressed by the variety of extra curricula activities. Some parents felt that it would help the children for the rest of their lives, as they would be able to pick up other languages much more easily for work and for travel.

Factors Operating Against Sustainable German Programs in Primary Schools

Resource Issues

The issue of resources is a constant theme mitigating against the sustainability of programs. One primary school was receiving assistance from the local high school.
The high school German teacher came to the primary school to give regular German lessons to year 7 students. These students appeared to have strong negative feelings about doing German, and this was explained by some staff in the school as a result of the LOTE teacher adopting a 'high school' approach as opposed to a 'primary school' approach. While this explanation may be too simplistic an interpretation, most staff held the belief that it would be better if the current primary German teacher took the students all the way through the primary school years. The school administration, however, was unlikely to refuse the additional assistance from the high school.

Lack of Incorporation Into the Life of the School

The fact that the German teacher generally provides the staff with their non-teaching time limits the interaction between the classroom teacher and the German teacher. It means that the German teacher cannot have more than the moral support of the class teacher. In addition, the class teacher is not able to develop any skills in the language which limits the opportunity for any follow up work in the rest of the week and any cross-curricular work between the class teacher and the German teacher. While the staff, the principal and the German teacher often regret this state of affairs, no alternative structures were suggested.

The Issue of Relevance

Relevance, too, is a constant theme. It refers basically to the ability to use the language in real situations in the community. A number of parents also expressed the view that they would prefer their children to be learning an Asian language. They see Asian languages as more relevant to travel and more useful in an economic sense. Teachers, as well, questioned the schools' rationale for teaching German.
Factors Promoting Sustainable German Programs in Primary Schools

The Commitment of the LOTE Teachers

In all three of the primary schools studied, the skills of the German primary teacher were seen by parents, teachers and school administrations as the key factor in the success of the German programs. They were all highly regarded as classroom practitioners and admired for their teaching of German. They all took their own professional development very seriously.

Parents at one school talked about how much their children enjoyed the German teacher’s classes and her ‘hands on’ approach. When interviewed, the teacher said her goals were to keep the students interested in learning German and developing her teaching skills so that they could continue their learning. She is passionate about German and is keen to continue her own learning regarding pedagogy and German itself. She monitors the children's and teachers' reactions and tries to adapt her work as a result.

At a rural primary school, the German teacher was the key figure in the introduction of German to the school. The teacher has had a long-term commitment to the school and to teaching German. As the program has expanded to encompass the whole school, so has his role in the area. His willingness to start the program and to take responsibility for it as it grew has been partly responsible for its continuing sustainability.

School and Community Support for LOTE

Parents were very happy for their children to undertake a LOTE. They like their children learning a language and learning about other cultures. They appreciated the extra effort of the German teachers and the school in extra curricula activities like assemblies and special days.
The German teacher at one school said she felt supported by the staff and principal at the school. *The program has been implemented, there is a cost centre, and there is a commitment to continue into the future.* At another school, the principal, other staff and parents were all fulsome in their praise of the German teacher as the key to the successful program. She is seen as well prepared and well organised. The school has supported her by giving her a LOTE room, more preparation and marking time than other teachers, and her own budget within the school finance committee. They have also included LOTE in the curriculum for all students. At a third school, the principal, teachers and parents were all very supportive of the work being done by the teacher. The parents were particularly appreciative of all the extra curricula activities like the assemblies, the ‘Oktoberfest’ and the German skits. He is described as a very talented person and the German program is seen to be taught in a fun and active way.

It was important to all the German teachers to feel that the staff, principal and community supported LOTE learning in general and German in particular. They said they used a variety of indicators to gauge that support - positive feedback from teachers about their students liking German, having their own room, having a cost-centre in the budget, and having support from the school for the continuation of the program. At the same time, strategies for obtaining feedback from parents and the community by the LOTE teachers were not mentioned. Given the positive nature of responses from parents, direct communication with the community about expectations and outcomes may further enhance the process of sustainability.

**Good Classroom Practice**

The feedback suggested that the majority of the students in year 6 or below enjoyed language classes. They were provided with, and enjoyed, doing a wide range of activities seen as appropriate to the age and cognitive maturity of the students.

In all three of the schools, however, an element of the year 7 cohort appeared to have strong negative feelings about doing German. In one school, this was explained as a result of a ‘secondary school teaching style’. Similar dissatisfaction and dissension in other schools suggests that the situation is more complex.
Incorporation Into the Life of the School

The LOTE teacher at one school, who is also a music specialist, is sensitive to cross-curricular possibilities and tries to make links to other learning areas within the German class. She particularly enjoyed teaching German songs. This process of ‘public relations’ and ‘marketing’ – giving a high profile to German – appears to assist in sustainability both with the school staff and the community.

Other Issues

Time for LOTE

There were a number of suggestions that the time allocation to LOTE should be extended. One teacher noted that this might overburden the students and that they would reach saturation point. The German teacher at one school wanted to do more than two 30 minute lessons of LOTE per week with the junior students. Another teacher thought it was a waste of time doing it given the number of students in the class.

The extent to which extra time facilitates better learning outcomes, however, is a moot point. It begs questions of the optimum time for various levels and a need for further resources. Concomitantly, the question of time allocation can become ‘a red herring’. It diverts attention to ‘needing more’ and away from ‘doing the best possible in the available time’.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Why Did Secondary Schools Initially Choose German?

Historical Reasons

All secondary schools included in the study have a reasonably long history of teaching German. One government secondary school had a strong tradition of language in the
In the early years, only French and German were taught. Italian was introduced in the late 60s, Indonesian in the 70s and Chinese and Greek in the 80s. The school has also recently introduced Spanish. Traditional European languages were historically fairly strong. ‘Good’ students learnt a language and they would generally choose French or German. German was very strong in the 70s and early 80s.

Another high school had traditionally offered Italian, French and German from year 8 onwards. With the introduction of Japanese, German had become the least popular subject among students. As a consequence, it is being phased out due to the school's perceived need to balance the LOTE program between European and Asian languages. German is now only offered to students in years 11 and 12.

**Perceptions of German in Secondary Schools**

**Perceptions of Principals**

The principal at one of the high schools is very supportive of LOTE. German has a high profile at the school and the teacher is valued in the decision-making process. Classes are retained even when numbers are quite low. The principal at another high school is also supportive.

At the third high school, the principal has seen the need to dispense with the German program, preferring to offer French and Italian, together with Japanese. According to some evidence, this is despite the preference of the LOTE teacher for teaching German and with little to differentiate between the languages in terms of uptake numbers.

**Perceptions of Students**

The reasons students gave for selecting German seemed to be repeated in each school. They included:
• finding the subject easy and wanting a good TEE mark;
• having lived in Germany and already knowing the language;
• a desire to be able to speak with relatives;
• being forced to do it because of a time table issue;
• having been bored with a LOTE learned at primary school and wanting a change;
• having taken German in primary school and wanting to continue;
• having started in year 8 and continued because I was good at it;
• the teacher is nice;
• it looks good on the resume and may help obtain work in general, or more specifically in tourism;
• I think learning a language unites the world;
• German being an aid to travel;
• parental pressure.

The students interviewed at all secondary schools appeared to enjoy learning German and spoke eloquently about why it is a good language to learn. They found the programs interesting and believed studying German would have positive long-term outcomes for them. They all appeared to like and respect their teachers. Students at one school in particular, which offered a Special Language Program, were excellent ambassadors for their teacher and for the German program as a whole. Year 11 students at another school, which is currently phasing out the German program, were quite passionate in their feelings that German should be made available to incoming year 8 students.

Nevertheless, students from all schools offered suggestions for program improvement. Within the lower secondary school context, suggestions related to additional time in class, an increased focus on grammar, more information about Germany and the inclusion of viewing text such as German movies and videos. Students didn't want to be rushed, nor to be yelled at for ‘not understanding’. Younger students were particularly scathing of activities which made them feel they were being treated like little kids - for example, singing degrading tunes.
Within the upper secondary school context, students also raise the issue of more contact time in lower school. In addition, suggestions were made about target language usage, such as:

- teachers should only ever speak German in class;
- the language of teachers’ should be comprehensible to all students and not just some;
- teachers should be able to speak ‘good’ German;
- students should have more opportunities to communicate in German.

There were also comments on exchanges. Students felt there should be increased opportunities for student exchanges and German teachers on exchange needed to be made more aware of the Australian way as it relates to the context and culture of schools.

Students also made reference to the transition from lower school to year 11. They felt ill-prepared for this transition and for the extra demands of the upper school program. The issue of boys and LOTE was also raised with students suggesting that boys be encouraged to study German.

Perceptions of Parents

Parents were generally unaware of what happened in the classrooms other than the extra curricular activities, but they did not seem bothered by this. Some parents, however, requested that the teachers only speak German inside the classroom. Some also requested more German speaking cultural experiences, like German camps.

Parents of students learning German felt that the program should not be phased out and incoming year 8 students should have the opportunity to learn German. Older students and parents of older students were likely to be much more committed to German itself.
In another school, there was a sense that the school community did not see LOTE as a crucial aspect of children's education. Parents who were interviewed liked their children doing a language, but were not particularly committed to German and were a little vague on the benefits of studying the language with some preference for an Asian language. Information given to parents about the reasons for studying German appeared limited.

Some of the information gives an impression that parents are uncertain about the purpose of possible outcomes of studying a LOTE. This is a recurring theme in all languages for this research, and across all groups of participants.

Perceptions of Teachers

All German LOTE teachers were viewed positively by other staff. Teachers from one school were impressed with the personality, enthusiasm and vitality of the LOTE teacher. A LOTE teacher from another school was seen to be able to view the classroom through the eyes of the students.

Many staff comments demonstrate confusion about the purpose of LOTE. They were unclear whether LOTE was for the development of linguistic proficiency, or simply for exposure to another culture. They were also unsure about whether students would benefit more from studying an Asian language or a European language. Some were uncertain about why Australians needed to learn another language at all when English is becoming the universal language.

Factors Operating Against Sustainable German Programs in Secondary Schools

Resourcing

One school, in the process of phasing out its German program, was doing so on the basis that the school could only support three languages.
LOTE teachers commented on the need for better learning resources. Other teachers were concerned about where the staff would come from when LOTE was made a part of the curriculum for all students.

The overall impression is that resources include appropriate staff, appropriate learning resources and adequate financial support. What is appropriate and adequate tended to vary, but the major theme was about quality teachers, proficient in the language, with enough resources of all descriptions to make the language relevant and useful for students. In most schools, the former was seen as present. The question of resources, therefore, looms large.

Inappropriate Pedagogy

Students interviewed have provided feedback on their German teacher's pedagogy and they shared their perceptions about how German programs could be improved. Their comments suggest a need for teachers to be more reflective about their practice and more ‘in tune’ with issues of relevance and achievement. One German teacher had become a student himself by studying Indonesian in his own time. He said the experience of being a student had helped him as a teacher. *It has helped me adjust my expectations of the students. I didn't go home and work and study. I just turned up to the next lesson - just like them.*

Lack of Integration into the Wider School Curriculum

There was little if any evidence in these schools of any coordinated approach to cross curriculum possibilities for LOTE. It seems, however, that some integration, or even better, some incorporation, of LOTE in the wider curriculum would enhance its status, and therefore its sustainability.
Competition Between Languages

The issue of competing LOTE priorities was a major reason for the phasing out of German in one secondary school. As stated, the school traditionally offered Italian, French and German. Japanese was then introduced, as part of the ‘Asian push’ and German emerged as the least popular of the four languages for year 8 students. It was, therefore, decided to remove the German program from the school curriculum. German, however, was only slightly less popular than other language programs. It appears that the decision to discontinue German was made by the school administration, with the principal expressing the view that Japanese was more relevant to the students than German.

Decisions made on this basis will create competition between LOTE teachers, and while some competition may be healthy, the process and consequences need to be carefully monitored. Put another way, German teachers, as with most teachers, seek some sense of security in their chosen profession. While no school or system can ever guarantee total security in all things, the sustainability of any LOTE will be dependent to some extent on how LOTE teachers view their security and their chances of ‘seeing things through’. If languages remain, or even become, transient, the supply of quality teachers may disappear.

Factors Promoting Sustainable German Programs in Secondary Schools

The Role of the German Teacher/Coordinator

It seems crucial that the teacher/coordinator takes a significant role to ensure that German is taught at the school and the staff and community support it. The teacher/coordinator is also important in ensuring that the necessary resources for teaching the subject are developed and that German maintains a high profile in the school community.

At one school the German teacher has played a significant role in ensuring that German is taught at this school. She is supported by the staff and the community and has access to the necessary resources for teaching the subject, has ensured that
German maintains a high profile through activities like exchange programs, and has been able to be proactive in school decision-making groups. Members of staff were impressed with her personality, enthusiasm and vitality. A German teacher at another school, who also exhibited many of these qualities, but was not involved in the school's decision making process, had not been able to maintain such a high profile for German, and the program was in the process of being phased out. It seems being part of the decision-making process is important.

Evidence suggests that a successful German teacher also has the capacity to reflect on the outcomes of her or his work with students and to view what happens in class from the students’ points of view. Student feedback was certainly welcomed by teachers who are perceived as successful.

**Exchanges and Other Incentives**

The exchange of teachers and students with German speaking countries appears to attract the students and also keeps a high profile for German in the school. The German teachers' personal visits on scholarships and exchanges to Germany and Switzerland have been important in maintaining their enthusiasm and language skills.

All students seemed very interested in more opportunities for exchanges and cultural activities that enable language and cultural immersion. The students at one school regarded it as a lack of school support for German when they saw extensive Japanese exchanges occurring even when the school did not teach Japanese. At another school, which also offered Japanese, students wanted regular exchange programs and appeared jealous of the many activities that the Japanese program appeared to have in place.
Supportive School Administration

A supportive school administration appears crucial to the appropriate promotion of the program to parents, students, teachers and the community. An administration that is supportive of teachers, of LOTE issues about timetabling, and the need for continuity in LOTE learning, all emerge as vital for program sustainability. The notion, however, of what ‘support' actually means varies. One school administration group felt it was very supportive because all year 9 students would be required to learn a LOTE. The same administrators did not consider that its commitment to only one semester of LOTE study in the students’ previous year was contradictory.

Special Academic Courses

Two schools included in this study insisted that students in their special academic courses do at least one LOTE for all of years 8-10. These schools perceived this to be significant because the structure provided a critical mass of students for sustainability of upper school programs.

The Student Population Base

At one school, three factors relating to the student population seemed to support the LOTE program. The multicultural nature of the community was one, with Bosnian students keen to study another European language. Another was ‘cross-boundary’ access for students wishing to enter the program and study German.4 A third was a primary school in the school intake area offering German and students were keen to continue with the language. For the other schools included in the study German could be seen as a fresh start for students who wished to study a language different from that studied in primary school.

4 For decades, students in Western Australia, as in most States and Territories, were compelled to attend a specific Government secondary school from specific primary schools. In the last ten or so years, there has been a ‘freeing-up’ of this policy, and students can officially ‘cross boundaries’ to a high school other than their specified or local school for a range of reasons. Unofficially, it appears that a number do so anyway.
Parental Support

Many parents wanted their children to learn a LOTE. Only a few, however, were particularly passionate advocates of German as the language of study. The others, relatively content with German but not passionate, were still strongly of the view that German must be supported and sustained. The more supportive the parents are, the more it appears that the German program will continue and develop.

Other Issues

Purpose

There was some sense in which people (particularly staff) were not clear as to the purpose of LOTE. Is it to learn a language? Is it to learn about another culture? Is it both of these? It also seemed that all interested parties needed to have a better rationale for the learning of German as most did not have any strong reasons to support the teaching, or studying, of the subject.

Technology

Only one of the three secondary schools offering German had attempted to integrate technology into their LOTE programs, and it would appear that this was only to a minimal degree. As will be seen, this theme arises again in later data. The use of information technology to support LOTE learning and to enhance student outcomes is an area that needs to be addressed by systems and schools.
Continuity
Evidence was strong that LOTE teachers believed, and the general context made clear, that there will be consequences for German programs if German teachers do not take:

- a leading role in working with the year 7 students of contributory primary schools prior to them making language choices;
- a role in school decision-making, particularly about curriculum issues.

Many ‘feeder’ primary schools to the secondary schools included in this research undertake languages other than English other than German. It will be important to monitor the pattern of choice of these students as they come into high school having done at least 3 years of another language already. This bears on the sustainability of German in both the primary and secondary areas.

SUMMARY

Relevance emerges as a significant issue for German. For some schools, a teacher able to teach German just happened to be available, while in others, the presence of German is historical. In all schools, however, the relevance of German is questioned. There appears to be general acceptance of LOTE but German is not privileged - in fact, it is under threat from Asian languages (Japanese and Indonesian).

The German programs in this study that are perceived as sustainable have their ‘success’ vested to a large extent in the personality and work of the German teacher. How much the teacher does, how the teacher does it, and the extent to which she or he ensures that significant others are aware of what is being done, appear to be the key elements.

Pedagogy also emerges as an issue. Useful feedback about teaching programs is provided by the students, together with insightful and concrete suggestions for how the German teaching and learning environment could be improved. This was particularly so for boys and students in the middle years of schooling.
In order to sustain their programs, schools need to plan by taking account of the curriculum, the pedagogy and the supporting structures and seeing the links between them. Sustainability of German would seem to hinge on the development and communication of a rationale, purpose, and perhaps an explicit set of clearly understood outcomes for the learning of German, together with the provision of appropriate resources and pedagogy.
CHAPTER 5

UPTAKE OF CHINESE

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese sample consists of one Catholic primary school, one rural government school with students from preparatory to year 12 (only the primary school came under review), three government high schools, one government senior college with students from year 11 and year 12 and one independent high school.5

One of the non-government primary schools is Catholic and co-educational. There are 320 students from prep to year 6 (224 males and 96 females). The local community is of mixed socio-economic status. There are both single parent and professional families and where dual parenting applies, both parents in many families work. Many parents were born overseas, mainly in Asian countries. The major ethnic groups in the school are Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese and Korean, which together make up 38 per cent of the school population. A total of 17 per cent of the school population is of Greek, Dutch or Polish descent, and Australians and other ethnic groups, including students from English and New Zealand backgrounds, make up the remaining 45 per cent. The school offers two LOTE programs - Italian and Chinese.

The second school in the sample is situated in a remote farming community. There are 360 students at the school, ranging from preparatory to year 12. Only the primary school LOTE program was reviewed. The school community is regarded as middle class and totally Anglo-Saxon. In line with system requirements, the school introduced Chinese five years ago. The program has been discontinued and French and Indonesian are now offered in its place.

One government high school in this study is regarded, or perhaps promotes itself, as the language school in its state. By the mid-1980s the school was offering Indonesian,

5 The term preparatory has been chosen to refer to students who are in classes prior to primary school. In South Australia, these classes are called Reception, and in Western Australia, they are known as ‘pre-primary’ or Kindergarten.
French, Chinese and Greek. Japanese replaced French in 1985. The school has taken international students since 1987. A number of the students studying Chinese are Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong. Students come to the school from outside its feeder areas to study the languages and to undertake music. The school is hugely multicultural. Ten per cent of the school population is of Greek descent, while approximately 15 per cent is of Chinese extraction. It also has a high Aboriginal population.

The second high school is a government school located in the metropolitan area. The school caters for approximately 1350 students of mixed ethnicity with approximately 30 per cent of the students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The major ethnic groups in the school are Australian and Chinese. Students come from other South East Asian countries and the Middle East. Students' academic ability ranges from very high to very weak and 50 per cent of students sit tertiary entrance examinations. The majority of the student population comes from middle and working class families, while one third of the families are on welfare or student assistance. The school offers French, Chinese and Japanese. There is an Educational Support Transition program for year 11 students and an English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

The third high school has 300 students and is a small, less traditional, co-educational, government high school located in an inner urban area. The school population is very multicultural, with a high proportion of students from Aboriginal backgrounds. The school has a reputation for ‘being accepting’ and is open to all. Many students who experience difficulties in other schools come to this high school. Students come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Single parent families of low socio-economic status predominate in the local area. Some students live in refuges in the area and others travel considerable distances to attend the school. The school has a number of special support programs and links to a university that supplies tutors for younger students. The Chinese LOTE program was introduced in 1985.

The government secondary college is also co-educational, with students enrolled in years 11 and 12 only. There are approximately 900 students in the school. The student

---

6 This is called various names in various States and Territories, for example, in Victoria, it is called the VCE, and in South Australia, the SACE. It is the examination held at the end of year 12 to
population comes from modest to very affluent backgrounds. Approximately 65 countries and 50 languages are represented in the student population. Non-English speaking background students are of migrant, refugee, academic, business and diplomatic families. The college also enrolls international private students. The school offers both Chinese and Korean. Approximately 45 students have a home background in Chinese.

The fifth high school is a male, independent school located in a metropolitan area. Its population is around 850 and students, in the main, come from affluent backgrounds. The catchment area for the school is very broad. Those who enter in year 8 must undertake two languages other than English. They have three groups to choose from - Asian languages (Japanese and Chinese), modern European languages (French and German) and Latin. They cannot select two languages from the same group. On entry into year 9, students must undertake one language from the same three groups. They must, however, have done the language in year 8 to undertake it in year 9. They may also elect to study a second language, as long as they have studied it in year 8 as well. Students with a background in any of the languages offered are not permitted to undertake that language. The reason given was that this was unfair to non-background speakers in terms of results and prizes.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Why Did the Primary Schools Initially Choose to Teach Chinese?

Funding

A major reason to commence a program appears to be the availability of staff and the willingness of someone - the department or some benefactor – to assist.

The Chinese program was introduced at one school approximately seven years ago as a result of sponsorship from the Catholic Education Office (CEO). The CEO was
using the school as a pilot and at first the program was trialled with year 6 students only. The program has since been extended from prep to year 6. The Federal Government provides funding for the program. The school wants to continue to offer Chinese, but it sees the program as being dependent on funds available from the government.

The other school, a rural school with both primary and secondary students, introduced Chinese in the primary school at the direction of the Education Department as part of the compulsory LOTE policy introduced in that state. When this language 'folded' after four years, Indonesian was selected, in part because there was funding to train local teachers to become qualified.

Background Speakers in the Community

One of the schools had a number of background speakers in the community. For this reason the Catholic Education Office decided that it would be appropriate to sponsor a Chinese language program in the school. The program has two components: Community Language and Mother Tongue Maintenance. Chinese Community Language classes are offered for students from years 4 to 6 who generally are not from Chinese speaking backgrounds. The Mother Tongue Maintenance groups cater for the needs of students from Preparatory to year 6 who are from Chinese speaking backgrounds.

System Requirements

The second primary school introduced Chinese in response to State Education Department policy. At that time, all the schools in the state were given a language to teach. Schools were clustered. The primary school was allocated Chinese along with two other area schools and two primary schools. The efficacy of the decision is perhaps summed up in the principal’s statement that: *I don’t know why it was Chinese.*

_The first Chinaman to set foot in this town was the Chinese teacher._
Perceptions of Chinese in Primary Schools

Chinese as a Difficult Language

One school decided not to continue its Chinese program because it lost its teacher, who could not be replaced. The school introduced Indonesian in its place. Students and parents perceive Indonesian as far easier to work with and to learn than Chinese. The major reason for this is that Indonesian is not a scripted language, and Indonesian words which have Anglicised roots are easily recognisable. Only one student from the other primary school commented that Chinese was a difficult language to learn because it was too different from English.

Perceptions of Students

Generally, students felt that having another language is an advantage, particularly for future job prospects and for travel.

You can go to different places.

It will be beneficial for job interviews in the future.

At the primary school still undertaking Chinese, students had a choice of which language to study. The reasons for selecting Chinese varied. One student chose it because he had relatives in Chinese-speaking countries. Other students wanted to work in China in the future, or to be involved in business related to China. Another student was learning Chinese because it was the only Asian language offered and her mother was studying Japanese. Most students, however, had selected Chinese because they preferred the Chinese teacher to the other LOTE teacher.
Students felt that learning a language was fun. They noted, however, that this depended on the teacher.

*Learning a language can be fun, but that will depend on the teacher. If the teacher is boring then it’s not good.*

*It would be worthwhile learning a language if it was a different teacher.*

Students described a past *cool* Italian teacher as one who played the guitar, greased his hair and sang Italian songs, but was *also serious about his work.*

At the school where Chinese has been sustained, there were two streams of Chinese language: Community Language for non-background speakers and Mother Tongue Maintenance for background speakers. The Community Language classes had a cultural focus, while the Mother Tongue classes emphasised linguistic skill development. While students in the Community Language classes enjoyed the cultural activities (playing games, doing art and learning about different countries), they commented that they would like to do more language in class, *perhaps 50 per cent language and 50 per cent culture.* They wanted to *do a bit of everything so it doesn’t get boring.* The students felt that when the teacher spoke Chinese in class, it was hard to understand. There was a strong sense, however, that they did not want the teacher to only speak English, but rather that they wanted to develop their language skills so that they could understand the teacher better.

All students interviewed gave suggestions about ways to improve the program. They wanted more class time (currently Chinese is offered for 1 hour per week). They argued for more lessons (about twice a week) and longer class periods for LOTE lessons. Overall, students appreciated the variety of activities in the class. They felt, however, that there was a trade-off between learning and having fun.

*Not being very strict, we can have more fun, but we do not learn as much.*

*Not being very strict gets in the way of learning.*
The students in the Mother Tongue Maintenance classes also wanted more revision in the classes, particularly of the Chinese characters.

She does the word. We revise a few times, and then she goes on to the next word. In five weeks time, she comes back to the first word, and we have already forgotten.

Only one student from this school will be continuing with Chinese after primary school through a Saturday school program. This is not because the students did not like Chinese, but because the language is not offered at local high schools. Only one student from the school did not like Chinese. He felt that it was too hard to learn and too different from English. In addition, his parents had been to China and did not like it.

Perceptions of Teachers

Competition, resourcing, time allocation, confusion of purpose and continuance seem to highlight the perceptions of teachers.

There was certainly comment about the competitive aspect of LOTE programs. Because other schools offer languages, teachers felt they had to compete to attract a certain clientele. Teachers felt that parents, particularly professional parents, now recognise the importance of learning another language and that once a person had a second language, it was easier to learn a third language and a fourth.

The teachers identified funding as a key factor influencing the sustainability of the LOTE programs. Their main concern was for funding of teachers, although time allocation was also an issue. They felt one hour per week was not enough to implement a strong program, but because of all that was included in the curriculum, the school was not able to increase this allocation. It was not acceptable, in their view, for Chinese to integrate through the whole school curriculum - for example teaching mathematics in Chinese. Furthermore, they noted that this would require additional
resources and teachers who could speak Chinese and were also competent in mathematics.

Even so, because of the time allocation, language teachers have found it difficult to link their programs with any other aspects of the curriculum. One teacher argued that because the students do not start learning Chinese until year 4 *kids would be lucky to get out of year 6 with level 1 Chinese.*

The school's LOTE policy manual sets out a number of views or purposes for undertaking LOTE that were expressed by staff. Staff at the other school articulated similar views. These were:

- getting a range of job options with LOTE (tourism, hospitality, travelling);
- learning skills in other areas, for example, history and geography;
- learning tolerance;
- increasing students’ conceptual development by introducing them to other ways of thinking;
- developing divergent thinking;
- developing language skills, listening, speaking, writing and reading;
- the potential of funds available to support LOTE programs, both from the Education Department as well as outside organisations and other governments.

They felt that parents consider the language programs offered in high schools when they make a decision about which LOTE their child should study at primary school. It is now difficult to coordinate the language programs in primary and high school because students are no longer restricted to their local schools. They can attend any school.

The teachers felt that at primary school level, LOTE activities needed to be hands on, that LOTE should focus on oral and survival language (*hello, how are you, thank you*) and cultural background information. One suggestion to improve the program was to expose students to prominent professionals in the community who are from Chinese speaking backgrounds.

**Perceptions of Principals**
For the principals and senior staff interviewed, the issues appeared to revolve around developing a suitable rationale, resourcing, and, for one school not to finish up with egg on our face when programs fails.\textsuperscript{7} The principal at one school felt that Chinese was more relevant to some students than the other LOTE offered. This was primarily because of a large number of students from a Chinese background, and the notion that China is also becoming more influential in the international context.

The principal of the school still undertaking Chinese identified funding from the Federal government as the primary factor influencing the decision to offer Chinese. Limited funding, however, was seen to restrict the school's ability to commit itself to a continuous program. Because of funding restrictions, teachers are part-time and employed on a contract basis. This creates difficulties for the school in securing good teachers.

The principal believed that increased funding would strengthen the program. The school would then be able to employ a full-time Chinese teacher and enable the teacher to become involved with other non-teaching activities. It would also enable other teachers to become more involved with the activities in the Chinese program. The principal felt that with increased funding the Chinese teacher could act as a liaison between the school and the Chinese parents, especially those parents who do not speak English. The teacher would then be able to play a greater role in involving the Chinese community in the school.

The senior staff from the other school spoke with some vehemence about the cost of LOTE resources, and the difficulties in accessing quality teaching resources in LOTE. For them, funding for staff, funding to keep staff, and funding to access resources were all major issues.

Finally, there was a sense that the programs would be stronger if staff and students were more aware of what was happening in LOTE. Another suggestion was to further incorporate the program into the broader school curriculum. The example given was

\textsuperscript{7} This comment refers to the collapse of the Chinese program. A fuller, and more optimistic, story of that collapse is told shortly.
that the school could provide more excursions with students to show them the Chinese culture around the city.

Perceptions of Parents

Given the different status of Chinese in the two schools under review, the response of parents is predictable. Nevertheless, there was some commonality. The issue of communication from the school was one, a sense from many that LOTE was seen as acceptable and necessary, and, in one case, real frustration at feeling ‘let down’. Parents from the school still involved in Chinese were excited about their children learning a language and pleased the opportunity was presented at such a young age. Those interviewed felt that one hour per week was not enough for their children to learn a language, but they did not know how the school would be able to incorporate more lessons in the curriculum.

*English and mathematics are very important at this stage. What should go, so that there is more time for Chinese? How can we fit it all in?*

Because of the limited time allocated to Chinese, they believed that LOTE had to be more about culture than about language. At the same time, one parent felt that it was opportune to teach them the language when they were young.

Apart from a real frustration at what they felt amounted to a broken promise, responses from parents at the other school varied. Evidence suggested that some felt their children only needed to learn English and it was therefore a waste of time to teach them another language. Others, particularly those involved in the school in some way, wanted their children to be bilingual and were prepared to take any opportunity to see it occur.

Parents from the first school commented on a lack of information provided by the school to help the parents and students make a decision about the different language programs. The decision to choose between languages was often made on partial information and what they had heard from Chinese friends of the family. Parents
seemed to have little knowledge about what happened in class and never participated in the class activities.

Parents, however, did have a number of suggestions for improvement. They wanted their children to be more exposed to the language. They wanted the language to become part of the daily routine for the children. Suggestions for this included placing signs around the school in different languages and having the school celebrate Chinese festivals. Parents also wanted Chinese spoken more frequently in class - *Please talk more in Chinese in class.* In addition, they felt that the program would be strengthened by greater involvement of parents in the school's activities, particularly Chinese parents, who have a lot to offer in terms of strengthening the Chinese program. Another suggestion was the introduction of Chinese classes at night, so parents could learn and later help their children in the same way that they assist their children in other subjects like mathematics and English. Parents of Chinese origin were also interested in the introduction of Chinese exposition.

These parents felt that LOTE needed to be fun and interesting for the students. This was strongly related to the quality of the teacher. Parents described a good language teacher as one who interacts with the kids, makes the language fun and entertaining, tells funny stories about China and speaks the language in the class.

A number of factors were said to influence the students' decision to learn a language. These were:

- family background - students who come from a Chinese speaking background are more likely to want to learn Chinese;
- the compulsory LOTE policy in the school;
- friends;
- continuity of the program, particularly pathways into secondary schools;

---

*Suggestions like the latter are conceptually elegant, and practically, riddled with the potential for monumental failure. Most people in a room would agree with a concept like ‘parents learning with their kids’. When it came to the practice and reality however, it may be very difficult to get the commitment and the interest. The point here is not to discredit the notion. It is to argue that if such an idea has merit, it would be worth researching its potential after the decision by people that it is a good idea.*
• the teacher;
• perceived benefits of the language. Asian languages were perceived by parents to be more beneficial to students, not only from a tourism point of view, but also from a business perspective because of the proximity of Australia to Asia.

Perception of the LOTE Teacher

Only one Chinese teacher could be interviewed from the primary schools. She felt that the program in the school was well maintained and unique because it offered both LOTE and Mother Tongue Chinese to its students. She also felt that LOTE was taken seriously at the school, and that she was supported by the staff and the community. The staff were interested in the Chinese program and attempted to incorporate some of the activities in the classroom.

She felt, too, that the main challenges are time allocation for LOTE classes, and the difficulty of teaching mixed ability classes. One hour per week is not regarded as enough to learn a language. According to her, students are learning very slowly and they are forgetting very quickly.

*If the school wants children to really learn the language, then students must have at least 2 hours per week.*

She feels that primary students can easily learn a new language, but that more time would lead to considerable improvements.

According to her, children are influenced to take a LOTE by feedback from older students and their image of the teacher. She described a good LOTE teacher as one who is keen and interested in teaching and in being with the children, who is experienced in handling different types of situations, including discipline issues, and who can organise all sorts of activities to promote interest and learning in class.

Factors Operating Against Sustainable Chinese Programs in Primary Schools
Funding

Funding remains a strong element in the sustainability of Chinese. The school still undertaking Chinese claimed to be keen to continue to offer it, but perceived the program as being contingent upon external funding. In the view of the staff, funding limits the school's ability to keep good teachers and to guarantee the continuity of the language programs. Because of the perceived funding restrictions, the school felt it necessary to employ LOTE teachers on a casual basis. Staff also felt that additional funding for extra curricular activities, such as cultural days, was required. There was a sense that although teachers attempted to incorporate Chinese in their classrooms, LOTE was seen as something of an 'add-on', not part of the core curriculum and having to be funded by other bodies.

Teacher Availability

The school where Chinese is defunct felt that when they had a Chinese teacher, the full-time nature of the teacher was a bonus. In the dying days of the program, their teacher had to be shared with other schools, and this created enormous problems, not the least of which was distance between schools.

The second school bore this out, its staff stating that the part-time status of the Chinese LOTE teacher detracted from the profile and stability of the Chinese program at the school. It was difficult for part-time LOTE teachers to become involved with non-teaching activities at the school. For example, the school introduced a Chinese newsletter, with the LOTE teacher as translator. With funding cuts, she does not have time to put the newsletter together. Furthermore, LOTE teachers often work in more than one school, creating timetabling complications. Currently, the Chinese teacher at the school with the existing program is employed part-time and as such, claims to have very little time to organise school-wide activities to promote the language programs.9

9 The school with the defunct language program initially experienced difficulties in securing a Chinese teacher for the school. The Education Department had provided a background Mandarin speaker to the school. He functioned first as a classroom teacher, and secondly as a LOTE teacher,
There was a strong sense at this primary school that specialist LOTE teachers provide other teachers with time for preparation and marking. While this continues, it is unlikely that LOTE will be seen as equal with other subjects.

Lack of Support Networks

The sense of isolation occurs for Chinese teachers both within the school, and in terms of collegiate support outside the school. In the remote school for this study, the only access to external collegiate support seemed to be visits to the city or to China, both of which meant the program was ‘put on hold’ because replacement staff was unavailable. Clustering schools in remote areas has the advantage of collegiate support. In the case of the schools for this study, however, the notion of collegiate support disappeared rapidly as schools changed from Chinese to other languages. As another larger school in the remote area was offering Indonesian, the remote school followed because there was a basis for a support network for teachers within the area.

Competing Priorities

Students at one school are faced with a choice between Italian and Chinese. This is not only a competing priority for students, it creates competition between teachers for students. An additional issue is that although parents want more time to be allocated to LOTE, they do not want LOTE to take away from other ‘core’ subjects.

The Issue of Relevance

which meant students and parents saw him as an experienced and capable teacher. He left the school after one year and was replaced by another teacher who worked part-time at the school and at a nearby school. There was a problem of continuity of the program with the teacher often being absent to undertake courses, including one in China that lasted a year.
The more positive side to this story is that the school has now chosen another language. Two teachers who are seen as long-term residents in the town are being trained in the language and the Department is supporting their training.
Relevance as a theme permeates all the case studies. As stated, one primary school was instructed to teach Chinese. Although the program was ultimately 'sold' to the community, there were mixed and, to some extent, negative reactions to Chinese despite the rationale of economic logic. Part of the negative reaction was the community's ignorance of China as a country. The Bamboo Curtain still seemed to be in place and people in the community knew little, and saw little point in knowing more, about China. Parental reaction was then transferred to some students.

Relevance is at its most positive, it would seem, when there is a community of Chinese people or speakers in the vicinity. In such a case, the language become more real and usable.

Lack of Continuity

Although the students at one school enjoyed learning Chinese, they could not continue with it on leaving primary school because it is not offered at the high school. Only one student continued, and that was in her own time at Saturday School.

After losing their Chinese teacher, staff at the other school chose Indonesian, in part because secondary school Indonesian was available through the distance learning program. This meant that children who studied Indonesian at primary school were able to continue with it at secondary school even if no teacher was available to teach the subject. In addition, Indonesian is more readily available throughout the state, and Australia generally.
Factors Promoting Sustainable Chinese Programs in Primary Schools

Incorporation in the Life of the School

The issue of incorporation goes beyond integration in the sense that the language is part of the total school fabric, with the same status and integrity as other subjects. The Chinese LOTE teacher does not have to fight for recognition or perform to attract attention. The subject is allocated a budget, the teacher is part of the school decision-making process and Chinese is as accepted as mathematics or science.

Incorporation also suggests elements of acceptance within the curriculum. The LOTE teacher at one school was impressed by other teachers' attempts to incorporate some of the activities from the LOTE program into their classrooms.

*Often staff ask what is happening in the Chinese class so that they can integrate some activities in the classrooms. This promotes the program within the school.*

Supportive School Administration

A supportive school administration is probably the first and most essential element in a sustainable program. The LOTE teacher at the school continuing Chinese felt supported by the staff and the community. She is well liked and respected by the staff, but cannot always attend staff meetings because of her tight schedule and part-time employment. She takes part in a lot of informal conversations with other staff about the LOTE program. The school supports the program by being involved in the *Access Asia Network* and allocating resources for the LOTE program, for example, CD Roms about Asia. Cultural days are also organised to promote the two LOTE programs.
Timetabling is undertaken in ways to assist the LOTE teachers – for example, scheduling classes for the two teachers of LOTE at the same time to allow them to share ideas and support each other.\textsuperscript{10}

**Special Language Programs**

Special programs have the ability to sustain Chinese. In a secondary school, bringing in overseas, fee-paying students gives the program a solidity it would otherwise not have. In the primary area, the staff and community of one school saw the Mother Tongue program to be unique and to give Chinese a high profile. It was seen to attract background speaker students to the program.

**Other Issues**

**A Question of Purpose**

There was confusion about whether the purpose of learning LOTE was to develop students' language skills or simply to expose them to a different culture. Further, a question emerged about proficiency and how fluent children should be by the time they have finished their primary schooling. In other words, what would the outcomes be of a language proficiency program? Indeed, what precisely are the outcomes of a ‘cultural’ program? No one seemed to know.

The purpose of the program at one school is determined in part by the time allocated to LOTE by the school. Neither parents nor staff felt that the time allocated to LOTE

\textsuperscript{10} One of the researchers in this project recently presented to a group of principals and LOTE teachers on the findings of this research. At one point, there was some discussion about the difficulties of implementing LOTES and sustaining them. The researcher’s response was to say this: If, as a principal, you are faced with what you see as impenetrable barriers or insurmountable obstructions to the implementation or sustainability of a LOTE, then you are faced with a difficult and very ethical decision. If, in your own heart, you feel that for whatever reason, you cannot support or sustain a LOTE then you need to say so. Even if it is Departmental policy that a LOTE be introduced, you need to say what is in your heart, and then back it up with facts. Why? Because if you don’t, and you are half-hearted in your support of LOTE, there is little doubt the program will fail. When it fails, you have failed the children and parents to whom you were saying implicitly or explicitly by undertaking a LOTE, that LOTE is a good thing.
at one school was sufficient for the children to learn a new language. This is one explanation of why the program at the school still teaching Chinese focussed predominantly on cultural activities, rather than language learning.

LOTE for All

This issue revolves around how to present LOTE in ways that are meaningful to all students, not only those with a desire to undertake a LOTE. One school had two Chinese programs – a Mother Tongue program for background speakers and a Community Language program mainly for non-background speakers. The LOTE teacher found difficulties with background speakers in the Community Language program because she had to cater for the different levels in the class. This issue of pedagogy is one which must be addressed.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Why Did the Secondary Schools Initially Choose to Teach Chinese?

Funding

As for primary schools, the issue of funding is crucial in the minds of teachers and principals. This relates to sustainability, and examples of how three schools have approached the issue are given below.

Two schools saw the potential of the Chinese language programs to attract international fee-paying students. A number of the students studying Chinese at the schools are from Hong Kong. One school has taken international students since 1987. In one of these schools, Chinese was seen as a subject that would not disadvantage these international students. The school offers an International Baccalaureate
program. Students enrolled in this program are required to study at least one LOTE subject.

Another school introduced Chinese after it received funding from the Commonwealth Government for a Chinese teacher. The funding was a result of pressure put on the Commonwealth Government from the Australian Chinese Community Association. After several years of casual employment, the position was made permanent in 1988.

**Background Speakers in the Community**

All four high schools included in this study claimed to have made the decision to offer a Chinese LOTE program, in part, because of the number of background Chinese speakers in the school. One introduced Chinese as a 'community language' in the mid-1980s and has approximately 15 per cent of the school student population of Chinese origin. Another with 900 students has 45 students of Chinese extraction. A third introduced Chinese because of the large number of Asian families living in the region, the majority being of Chinese extraction. A fourth school is situated in close proximity to a major Chinese community.

**Proximity to Asia**

One school has a deliberate policy of focus on Asian languages because of its proximity to South East Asia. It offers three Asian languages and only one European language. Part of its rationale, too, is that by offering Asian languages, including Chinese, it will be able to attract fee-paying students and enhance sustainability.

**Continuity**

Although it was not cited as a major reason for introducing Chinese, one school had two out of the three feeder schools in the area with Chinese LOTE programs. This is possibly as a result of the school's proximity to a major Chinese community. At the
same time, there is clear evidence that often, secondary schools undertake LOTE, and primary schools are left to follow in the wake.

**Perceptions of Chinese in Secondary Schools**

**Chinese as a Difficult Language**

Numbers of people had the perception that Chinese was a hard language to learn because of the use of an ideographic script. This, in their view, affected the 'uptake'. They also believed students felt that it was difficult to become fluent in the language in a short time, and that they could learn more in the same amount of time if they were studying a language with a Roman alphabet. This was common to teachers, parents and administrators, but less so for students. One of the LOTE teachers, with a background in Chinese, felt that Chinese was a hard language for non-background speakers to learn because of its different tones and characters. At the same time, one LOTE teacher noted that students appear to regard the Chinese characters as difficult, but it is interesting to note that the students were not discouraged from choosing Japanese.

**Perceptions of Principals**

Principals were generally supportive of Chinese as a language, although their reasons were varied and often not directly connected to learning Chinese.

For one, the focus was on the organisation of, and participation in, exchange visits with Chinese schools. For another, it was, in part, a commercial decision to attract international fee-paying students. There are a large number of students from Hong Kong enrolled in the program. The program is seen to assist these students to improve their English while maintaining their own language skills. Chinese was one subject where these students were not disadvantaged. A third saw LOTE, as distinct from Chinese, as important to the community, arguing that Australians need to learn a second language otherwise the country will be at a disadvantage especially if others
speak our language and we do not speak theirs. The principal favours LOTE being made a part of the curriculum for all students, provided it is resourced properly.

**LOTE will not be taken up properly as long as it remains voluntary. In most of the rest of the world, LOTE is something that is automatically part of the school program. This is true in Europe. In Asia, most of the countries are doing a LOTE [sic], in particular English.**

Complications were identified with the introduction of LOTE for all students. One principal felt that teaching styles would need to change to make LOTE more interesting and appealing to students. Teachers will now have to deal with students of varying abilities and interests. There will also be students who are philosophically opposed to LOTE and parents who feel that their children should not be forced to do another language.

A major factor influencing the uptake of LOTE is the timetable. Principals spoke of difficulties in scheduling classes around the other subjects, especially when there are limited LOTE resources in terms of staffing, part-time LOTE teachers and 'dual' school LOTE teachers. At present the school provides two hours a week for languages. The principal believes that this is not ideal, but feels that this is all the school can accommodate in its timetable. Mention was also made of the need for competent LOTE teachers in the primary area.

**Perceptions of Students**

Year 9 and 11 students interviewed at one independent school gave the impression that they enjoyed learning Chinese as much as you can enjoy anything at school. Background and non-background speakers appeared to appreciate the rote methodologies employed at the school. It gave them a sense of really learning something. This was not evident from their experiences in primary school. These students appeared, in the main, to undertake the LOTE with the idea of achieving good academic results.
Students from years 8 and 11 at another school, however, gave their feelings about learning Chinese with words like *Shit; Hard; Exchange; Bonus marks; Time and effort; Business opportunities; and Learning about cultures*. General themes that emerged were:

*Why does it have to be compulsory? It should be optional.*

*These are real good for jobs. They help you communicate with other cultures so you have more chance of a job.*

The main reasons for continuing to learn Chinese were to do with future employment, better marks at tertiary entrance level, and cultural affiliations.

Students from other schools had similar reasons for studying Chinese. These were:

- being of Chinese background and wanting to learn about the culture and place of origin;
- job opportunities in the future;
- parents wanting them to study Chinese;
- friends and family of Chinese background;
- interested in the history of China;
- the potential of China in the workplace.

Some students had studied Chinese previously and wanted to continue. Many had known very little about China before they started classes, but had chosen the subject anyway. They cited a number of reasons for continuing with Chinese.

- Continuity - *I have done it for three years. It is a waste of time to drop it now.*
- They want to become fluent in the language.
- It is necessary for their chosen profession, for example, air hostess.
- It is useful for future employment in more general terms.
Some students who decided not to continue with Chinese did so mainly because they wanted to focus on other subjects which they considered to be more beneficial for their futures - for example, Maths, Science and English.

*Chinese is important, but sometimes it interferes with other studies.*

Other students did not see the benefit of learning Chinese, aside from future employment, and even there:

*Chinese is not important if the job does not require you to speak another language.*

Students from one school felt that the mixed classes (advanced and beginners in the same class) interfered with their learning. They felt mixed level classes discouraged beginners.

*They [advanced students] think that they know it all. You think that you are stupid because you don't know it.*

Mixed level classes left advanced students bored and disinterested.

*It is boring in class. It is too easy. We are learning the same staff again. I have learnt it for seven years.*

*Sometimes I get bored. I want to learn something different about the language.*

They also felt that students who were bored or discouraged disrupted the class. These students wanted to see Chinese split into two streams, advanced and beginners.

Positive aspects of learning the language included:

- report writing and presentations on specific topics;
- learning new words and characters, structuring sentences and writing stories;
- having the teacher speak Chinese in class;
• speeches and class presentations.

At the same time, students wanted class activities to involve more group discussion and interaction and less on 'textbook work'. They felt that the textbook was better used for extra study outside the classroom.

**Perceptions of Parents**

Parents views varied, but often aligned with the views of their children. Parents of Chinese origin felt that the cultural identity and heritage was very important. Some of these parents normally spoke Chinese at home and were able to help their children with the language. Some parents also enrolled their children in private lessons in Chinese.

Some parents felt strongly that learning a LOTE was beneficial for travelling and communicating with people from different parts of the world. In this view, Chinese was seen as important since an increasing number of Chinese speaking people were travelling and migrating to Australia. Several parents noted a lack of information about LOTE, including the benefits of Chinese and the level of language skills that students are expected to achieve.

**Perceptions of Teachers**

Teachers felt that students arrive at secondary school with a poor attitude to learning a LOTE. The teachers put this down to their experiences in primary schools.

*If a language is not taught well, don't teach it. The primary stuff seems to be based on 'having fun', and if the teacher is a good teacher, the kids do. But in these good lessons, what do they learn? It seems like they learn how to have fun, and when they come to high school, that's what they've learned they want.*
How many kids can actually speak a language from primary school, and how many should? Maybe we should call all the primary school society and culture stuff LOTE, or all the LOTE society and culture and just get on with teaching.

Do any primary school kids ever learn to speak a language? Do we really need it done in primary school?

The teachers thought that the Chinese programs were particularly important for students from Chinese backgrounds.

It is important for the Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysian Chinese people to go through the Chinese language and have exposure to the mother tongue.

They believed students took Chinese for two main reasons: to enhance their employment opportunities and to get high scores for university entrance (particularly background speakers). The latter is of importance to students as some universities are giving extra credit for tertiary entrance if a LOTE is taken in entrance exams.

At least one school considered the language program to be as important as the other subjects. LOTE was seen as academically strong. It was not regarded as a soft subject. There were several teachers at the school who taught more than one language. This was seen to provide students with a positive role model. School staff were encouraged to develop cross curricular activities. The drama teacher attends the Chinese class to teach children how to role-play and play games. Art classes also incorporate Chinese art and history.

Some concern was expressed about making LOTE compulsory for all students. Issues such as learning more English, timetabling difficulties, and additional resources were raised.

Non-LOTE teachers felt that good LOTE programs required:

- good teachers, who for years 11 and 12, were background speakers;
• adequate time allocation (four hours per week);
• having large numbers of native speakers enrolled in the advanced classes to provide the program with numbers, stability and continuity;
• good communication with the students and community;
• exchange programs;
• relevance.

Perceptions of the LOTE Teachers

Again, views varied. In the main, however, most LOTE teachers felt their lives were difficult. They spoke of a lack of time, resources, dealing with students who did not want to learn the language, a feeling of being marginalised, and a sense of a lack of support. Certainly, there was an alternative view that many language teachers at a school provide a supportive environment. Each felt, however, that ‘their program’ was well accepted and operating well. There was a considerable range of issues related to:

• vastly different levels of ability in groups;
• Modern Standard Chinese being taught to background speakers of Cantonese;
• the consequences of compulsion.

One teacher who is not a background Chinese speaker felt that Chinese background students believed only Chinese teachers can teach Chinese. Alternatively, there is a view that background speakers have difficulties adapting to the relatively flexible Australian school culture. Support from the Education system for teachers, both background and non-background speakers was mentioned. For the former, this was described as teachers requiring general pedagogical skills. For the latter there was an emphasis on language training.

Limited resources were constantly mentioned. It is not specific to Chinese, but few LOTE teachers appeared to have direct access to a ‘budget’ line in the school budget. Many were ‘placed’ in other departments – for example, the Mathematics Department – and had to go ‘cap in hand’ for any funding. This makes access to resources time-consuming and wearying.
Factors Working Against Sustainable Chinese Programs in Secondary Schools

Classroom Resources

There was a view that LOTE programs generally were affected by the limited teaching materials available. The lack of ability to access 'Word' programs in Chinese was mentioned, as was the very restricted ability to access the Internet due to limited computer resources. Only one school – an independent school – considered itself to have adequate access to computers. Teachers mentioned the expensive nature of available materials. One teacher felt that the currently available books are too hard for students, especially students from non-Chinese backgrounds.

Teacher Availability

There is a limited availability of Chinese teachers as is evident from earlier examples. Further, it appears that some excellent teachers, particularly background speakers are attracted to private schools by the more traditional culture of those schools and better resources. Other factors include workload, the lack of resources, ‘marginalisation’ and a lack of stability due to declining numbers of students.

Declining School Numbers

Several factors were mentioned in schools with declining or static numbers. Of these the most pertinent appears to be the perceived difficulty of the language, and the need for greater relevance of the language to the students. Even if these schools are to increase numbers by making the language compulsory, its survival will be dependent on relevance, quality teaching, adequate resourcing and the teacher feeling part of the school in general.
Competition Between Languages

Competition between languages can have a detrimental affect on staff as they ‘sell their wares’. Knowing that the survival of the language is dependent on their ‘marketing skills’ adds to an already stressful situation. Vulnerability is a key word here for the teachers. School administrators find decisions about which languages to keep, to drop, and to be able to cater for in timetabling a considerable issue. Even where there are few languages, the competition is strong, and can be damaging to Chinese. For example, Japanese was considered to be more useful in this regard than Chinese. The schools which offered both Chinese and Japanese found that the Japanese programs were more popular with students than the Chinese programs.

There are so many languages being offered. It is a problem. We cannot fund so many languages - something has got to go.

Perceived Economic Benefits

Students at all the schools regarded Chinese as beneficial for their future employment prospects and for international trade. How accurate this is could be a moot point. If students are ‘sold’ a language on the basis of future employment and it does not eventuate, long-term harm will come to the language.

Background Speakers in the Community

Ironically, the number of background speakers in the community can work against the sustainability of Modern Standard Chinese as non-background speakers are reluctant to compete against students of Chinese extraction.
Factors Promoting Sustainable Chinese Programs in Secondary Schools

Background Speakers in the Community

In schools where there are background speakers of some numbers, it appears that retention rates of background speakers of Chinese to years 11 and 12 are generally higher than for non-background speakers. This was borne out in three of the four secondary schools. In other words, the sustainability of a program through to senior secondary levels may be enhanced by the presence of background speakers. At two schools, the majority of students studying Chinese in years 11 and 12 are of Chinese origin. At a third, there is a large minority of background speakers. Many speak a Chinese language at home and attend Chinese school on the weekend. They regard Chinese as an opportunity to increase their tertiary entrance scores.

A Supportive School Administration

As stated earlier, the supportive administration is a key element in sustainability. The LOTE teacher at one school felt very unsupported by the school. She teaches across all years from year 8 to 12, with background and non-background speakers divided into three groups, non-language experience, extended language and specialist groups. The teacher feels overloaded in work terms with 30 lessons across 6 grid lines. In addition, the school does not provide a relief teacher. The school has not invested in any technological support for the program and has no program for word processing in Chinese.

By contrast a teacher at another school with a special language program felt that the school was supportive of the Chinese program. The school executive was prepared to support small classes even when this was costly. The school also uses a variety of means to promote the language programs including advertisements in newspapers, open days and parent information nights.

The principal's role in promoting the program was regarded as vital. Where the principal was committed and supportive, the sustainability of the program seemed
enhanced. In part, this was because there was far more chance of the teacher remaining with the program. In a school where the executive was stretched and focusing on other priorities, there was a strong sense that the program was being sustained only through its compulsory nature.

Supportive School Staff Members

Even where the school administration is positive about LOTE, a lack of support from teaching colleagues could cause a program to be unsustainable. Some non-LOTE teachers do not see the value of learning another language. Other staff are sceptical about LOTE becoming a part of the curriculum for all students. Some have even responded with remarks such as:

*How are you going to teach them Chinese if they can't even speak English?*

In such a situation, the language teachers feel they are operating in isolation, particularly where there is only one teacher for the language and collegial support for Chinese is limited.

The Status of the LOTE Teacher in School Decision Making

It seemed that where LOTE teachers were involved in school decision-making, the program had more chance of being sustainable. In part, this is simply because involvement in such decision-making is involvement in budget matters. The LOTE Coordinator at one school is included in the senior staff meetings. She is also part of the committee that is reviewing the school's curriculum in preparation for LOTE being made a part of the curriculum for all students. In another, the head of department of Asian languages is involved in decision-making and this gives the language status.
Incorporation of Chinese into the Life of the School

Where there was some incorporation of the Chinese program within the 'life' of the school, the program had a sense of vitality and sustainability. In part, such incorporation is a simple means of public relations and promotion of the language. One school had incorporated some Chinese 'cultural' activities into the Creative Arts program at the school, including a collection of Chinese lanterns made by the students. This created some recognition of the Chinese program throughout the school.

Another school staff was encouraged to develop cross curricular activities. The drama teacher attends the Chinese class to teach children how to role-play and play games. Art classes also incorporate Chinese art and history. Languages are also well integrated into the school's International Baccalaureate program.

Special Language Programs

Two of the schools in the sample have cultivated reputations as special language schools. This provides the LOTE programs with some status within the school and a high profile outside the school. Many international students attend the two schools as a result of these programs.

One school has five levels at which students can study Modern Standard Chinese. All languages are offered at background speaker fluency level and all the teachers have background speaker competencies. This, according to administrators, is to avoid students being bored by the language classes and to minimise the chances of students with previous knowledge of the language having to re-start the languages from the beginning. The advanced language classes were perceived by the school staff as being integral to the status of LOTE at the school, particularly because of the large number of international students attending the school. The advanced classes were perceived as providing a critical mass for the LOTE programs and as providing stability and continuity for the programs.
This school also offers an International Baccalaureate program. Students enrolled in the program must study at least one LOTE. The program is designed for students who are academically able and who want to do well. For this reason, most of the students in the language classes are keen to learn the language.

Another school offered a Saturday morning program for students, specifically for those who wanted to learn a language but could not fit it into the school timetable and those who wanted extra help in the language. The program was seen as useful for students.

Other Issues

Purpose

There appeared to be dichotomous views expressed about the purpose of Chinese depending on whether the students were background speakers or non-background speakers. There is a sense that the purpose of Chinese is perceived to be achieving fluency in the language if the student is from a Chinese speaking background. This does not appear to be the case for non-background speakers who are perceived to be unable to achieve the same outcomes in terms of language fluency. The result of this is that in the primary school context, Chinese is presented in terms of cultural exposure rather than as language learning.

Parents, particularly of primary school students, expressed concern that they did not know how fluent the students were expected to be at the end of the program.

The Need For Practical Language Application

Students and parents were looking for practical application of the language. This stresses the notion of relevance mentioned earlier. Students at one school had some opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom. Background speakers often spoke some 'variant of Chinese' at home, although at times not Modern Standard
Chinese. One school made a concerted effort to focus on contemporary issues and on the practical application of the language.

Technology

Only one of the high schools in the sample has integrated a technological component into its LOTE program. The school has a huge language laboratory with around 24 state of the art computers and programs. They have ‘Word’ in Chinese characters and are connected to the Internet; however, this is not yet used for language learning. A teacher from another school strongly believed that the school needed to introduce word processing packages with Chinese characters.

LOTE for All

Two of the schools provide streamed language classes. This is seen by both schools to be beneficial as it prevents the more advanced students, who are generally background speakers, from becoming bored and it takes account of other students who, when working with background speakers tend to become discouraged. Another school prohibited students with a background in a language from studying that language at school as this was seen to be unfair to non-background speakers. LOTE teachers from schools that did not have streamed classes commented on the difficulty of having to cater for students of mixed abilities in the class. The teachers appeared to have a preference for streamed classes because it made it easier for them to prepare and teach.

Promotion

The LOTE teachers have to take on additional roles, particularly marketing roles to promote their subjects. One school uses newspaper advertisements, open days and parent information nights to promote their language programs and to provide interested people with more information about the programs.
In general, the schools provide very little information to parents and students about the different LOTE programs offered. Parents and students are often influenced by what they hear in the media and through friends and relatives about particular languages.

**Exchanges And Other Incentives**

Exchange programs and hosting an exchange student were seen as positive strategies to increase the students' exposure to the language. At one school the Japanese government was seen to be actively involved in the school's Japanese exchange program. The LOTE teacher at another school also commented that Japan has had considerable influence in getting schools to offer Japanese as a LOTE subject by offering different incentives. This contrasted with the experience of most schools teaching Modern Standard Chinese and was a source of envy.

The principal at one school is initiating some connections with a sister school in China. Regular visits between a school in China and the independent school in the sample are a feature. Another school had previously had a sister school arrangement with a school in China. A former Chinese teacher at the school had instigated this arrangement, but the relationship did not continue after the teacher retired.

**Modern Standard Chinese/Cantonese Or Some Other 'Variant Of Chinese'**

One school offers a Chinese program which caters for international students. The teacher is a background speaker of Modern Standard Chinese. Many of the international students are from Hong Kong and are background Cantonese speakers. This creates problems. The LOTE teacher at the school feels that she is fighting the attitudes of the Chinese - Mandarin versus Cantonese.

All too often Chinese is an umbrella term used to refer to Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkein and other Chinese languages. The degree to which students really
are background speakers of Modern Standard Chinese is often not sufficiently explored in the background speaker debate.

**Continuity**

An oft-promoted notion among government schools is the need for secondary schools to develop better relationships with feeder primary schools. For at least one teacher, it was necessary to ensure that students start a LOTE at a young age, and then have the opportunity to continue with that language through to tertiary level if they so desire.

**SUMMARY**

The perception of Modern Standard Chinese as a difficult language to learn is a complex uptake issue. Who is perceiving, and how and why they perceive in a particular way, has a significant impact on the manner in which Chinese is viewed. The background speaker of Chinese may feel that only someone who is Chinese can really teach this 'special' language. Children of speakers of some 'variant of Chinese' may perceive it as being difficult to meet parental expectations in writing Chinese. The non-background learner of Chinese in the same class as students considered to be background speakers of Chinese may consider the language to be too difficult. The parent who sees Asian children studying in the same class with his or her child may consider their child to be disadvantaged by learning this difficult language. Alternatively a community may choose to question the study of this ideographic language when there is access to a language perceived to be less difficult.

A number of issues emerge from this 'perception' of difficulty. The fact that a significant proportion of students studying Chinese in Australia are considered in some way to be 'background speakers' is impacting on the here and now of Chinese language teaching and is also threatening its future. Having to deal with both background and non-background speakers is a major theme in the research. The background/non-background speaker split impacts on perceptions about both purpose and pedagogy. Background speakers are perceived as needing to become fluent users of the language and are described as often preferring rote learning methods of
instruction. Non-background speakers are not perceived as being able to achieve the same outcomes and there are generalisations about their preferred learning styles being more interactive and perhaps less rigorous. Within the primary school context the issue of the difficulty of Chinese seems often to be interpreted in terms of the study of culture as the appropriate program focus and not language.

The perception of difficulty is often linked to Chinese being a scripted language but the fact that this has not been a significant impediment in the uptake of Japanese does not go unnoticed in the research. What does make Chinese more 'difficult' is that China is much less visible and is certainly less active than Japan in propagating Chinese language study. There is a sense of China's remoteness. There is a lack of technological interface with China and Modern Standard Chinese and opportunities for exchange and in-country experience are much more limited. There is the notion of Chinese somehow being useful for the future of students but this too is distant and, in fact, appears more as rhetoric than reality.

Thus, the reality of Chinese in Australia is that it has two faces - a far off face which is about future and trade, and the face of Asians and Asian Australians who are of Chinese extraction. To service the needs of both groups is a real difficulty for Chinese and one that needs to be addressed if Chinese language study is to be sustained in Australia.
CHAPTER 6

THE UPTAKE OF KOREAN

INTRODUCTION

The Korean sample consists of two primary schools, one independent school with students enrolled from prep to year 12, one government senior college and two government high schools.

One metropolitan government primary school is set in a lower socio-economic area. There are 775 students at the school. 2 per cent of the school population is from non-English speaking backgrounds, predominantly Filipino, Sri Lankan and Indian. The school offered Chinese as a LOTE until it changed to Korean in 1995.

Another government primary school is located in an isolated rural town with a population of 1300. A high proportion of the town's inhabitants are unemployed. The primary school has 240 pupils. There are no non-English speaking background students in the town and no students from Aboriginal backgrounds. Some children in the school have not visited a large town or ever been to a capital city. The school introduced Korean in 1995.

A non-government, independent school for girls was also studied. There are 750 students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and from different parts of the state. The majority of students are white Anglo-Saxon. Only a small number of students have Asian, Italian, Greek and other European backgrounds. Six students have a background in Korean. The school offers French, Italian and Korean. French has the largest enrolment (350 students), followed by Italian (145 students) and Korean (88 students). Korean is taught in years 2 and 3 and at the secondary level from year 8 to year 12.

The other government high school is a metropolitan, co-educational college with 1120 students enrolled in years 7 to 12. The student population is academically strong with
over 90 per cent of students proceeding with university studies. The school's LOTE and music programs receive emphasis. The local community is classified as middle to upper middle class. The students come from up to 40 different ethnic groups. About 40 per cent of the school is Jewish. There are two students with a home background in Korean. The school offers French (257 students), German (200 students), Korean (153 students) and Russian at tertiary entrance level.

There are two government high schools in the sample. One is situated in close proximity to the fifth largest central business district in Australia. It is a comprehensive, co-educational government high school with 640 students and a number of special support units to cater for students with special needs. Pupils at the school come from a diverse range of cultural, ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds, with 47 per cent being from non-English speaking backgrounds. There are 31 different language groups represented although the predominant languages are Chinese and Korean. The language program in the school has been operating for at least 20 years. Korean has been taught for the past three years.

The other government high school is also co-educational. Students are enrolled in years 11 and 12 only. There are approximately 900 students in the school. The student population comes from modest to very affluent backgrounds. Approximately 65 countries and 50 languages are represented in the student population. Non-English speaking background students are of migrant, refugee, academic, business and diplomatic families. The college also enrolls international private students. The school offers both Chinese and Korean. Approximately 10 students have a home background in Korean.
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Why Did the Primary Schools Initially Choose to Teach Korean?

Continuity

Continuity of language programs between primary schools and their local high schools was an important factor in the implementation of Korean programs. Two schools had previously had other language programs running to a greater or lesser extent, but chose to teach Korean when their local high schools started offering Korean. One principal expressed a strong commitment to the need for continuity between the feeder primary schools and local high schools. The other school also based its decision on the fact that Korean was being offered in the local high school, but noted as well that Korean was considered to be a suitable trade language.

Interestingly, one secondary school LOTE teacher observed that although local primary schools offer a LOTE, many students who have studied a language in primary school often want to learn a different language at high school.

The third school taught students from prep to year 12. Three languages were offered, French, Italian and Korean. Students are introduced to the languages in two to three year blocks at primary school. All languages are offered in year 8 and students can choose which one they want to study.

Technology and Resourcing

The *Korean using Technology* program facilitated the introduction of Korean programs in both the NSW primary schools. The program was trialled in 1994 and began in 1995. It covered 50 teachers and 2,000 students in 36 schools in NSW, funded in the first three years by the New South Wales Government.\(^\text{11}\) It provided training and development for teachers, hardware requirements and ‘audio-graphic

\(^{11}\) Funding for the program in 1997 also included support from the South Korean Government. The bulk of funding, however, is still provided by the New South Wales Government.
delivery. Schools interviewed received between $7,000 and $40,000 as a one-off establishment grant. A background speaking Korean teacher is available at the ‘Hub’ in Rozelle, linked via phone lines and modems to the distant classrooms. The LOTE teacher on site serves as a support teacher and learn alongside the students. Teachers have been given intensive training and offered one month at Sogong University in Korea. The ‘Hub’ has also run single week intensive language and cultural programs. Schools were asked to commit a minimum of 15 students for two years.

Prior to the introduction of the program, one of the primary schools had conducted focus groups with parents. The parents had determined that they wanted their children to learn a language and to have greater access to computers. The Korean using Technology program assisted them in achieving both these goals.

Both schools joined the program in 1995. One school chose their 15 ‘brightest’ students to undertake the program at times when other students were offered remedial mathematics and English. The other school initially committed one class to the program. The class was taken to the high school where they had one period of linkup with the ‘Hub’. In 1996 the school set up its own computer room. The program has now expanded and there are two teachers in the school teaching Korean to four classes in years 4-6.

**Economic Benefits**

One primary school referred to parents and teachers perceiving Korean to be a 'suitable trade language'. This is notable given that Korean is often marketed by reference to the future economic benefits it offers to students by way of employment and international trade.
Perceptions of Korean in Primary Schools

The Issue of Difficulty

Almost all the students interviewed were very positive about the Korean language. Some found the sounds weird and different and others found the mixed around word order difficult. A small number at one school, who had studied French before, felt that French was easier to learn and pronounce. They also perceived it as a more 'romantic' language. Having said this, only one student expressed a wish to study French over Korean.

Two children who had started German at another school before transferring wished they had continued with German. This appeared to be less about the difficulty of the language itself and more to do with the fact that they were finding it difficult to learn Korean when the other students were so far ahead.

One LOTE teacher felt that children did not have good auditory discrimination skills and that this impeded their progress in the language. From the other perspective, students at the same school believed that Korean could be introduced in the early primary years. They felt that you could start learning the basics early by way of simple words and songs and then move to more serious study around year 4.

One of the schools that taught Korean through both primary and secondary levels had a system whereby students studied Italian from prep to year 1, Korean in years 2 and 3, and French from years 4 to 6. At the primary level, however, LOTE was limited to learning the alphabet, single item vocabulary learning and the singing of some songs. There was no evidence of students being required to explore, learn or use meaningful chunks of text or to engage with any of the difficult aspects of the language. Because of this approach, researchers are unable to determine the extent to which the difficulty of the system of the Korean language is an impediment or an advantage to the early commencement of Korean language learning.
Perceptions of Students

All the students interviewed at one primary school expressed a wish to continue with Korean into high school. They hadn't known much about Korea before they started the course, but they really enjoyed the cultural aspects of the program and found it wonderful to learn about different places. In another school, many students felt that Korean would be useful for their future employment.

The students at primary schools were particularly motivated by tasks that enabled them to develop their language skills. At one school the students stated that they particularly liked learning the songs and pretending to have conversations over the phone in Korean. Students appeared to enjoy speaking another language and many wanted to visit Korea.

Students also expressed a desire to meet more Koreans. One LOTE teacher felt that students with Korean friends appeared more motivated than those without. A primary school, with a sister school in Korea, had a group of Korean students come to stay in the town. The students really enjoyed the Korean visitors and this was seen as a source of motivation for further study.

Students also had a number of suggestions to improve the program. They wanted Internet contact, more linkups on the Korean using Technology program, and the chance to email or write letters to Korean key pals and pen pals. They wanted ‘better written’ resources, including more simple reading books in Korean, more Korean/English text-books and a Korean handwriting book. Some students also wanted to see small tests introduced so that they could see their progress. They felt that these would increase their motivation and make them work harder.

Perceptions of Teachers

Perceptions of teachers were very mixed. Some were very positive about LOTE and confident that it was of benefit to, and fun for, the children. Others were concerned that the curriculum was already too crowded. One teacher said he was not ‘anti-
LOTE’ but could not see the value of teaching a language when the students needed to concentrate on English first. There was a belief that there were too many government priorities, pressures and expectations, and that the government was focusing more on literacy than LOTE. Teachers at one school felt that there was considerable kudos for the school in their LOTE program.

The LOTE teacher expressed concern that, as only a minority of students studied Korean, they might be teased in the playground.

While the principals of all schools expressed their support of LOTE, one stressed the pressure of other priorities. Another felt that the school was offering a very high quality program but was uncertain about how much it would benefit the students in the long term. At two schools, LOTE was championed by the deputy principal.

**Perceptions of Parents**

Parental perceptions of Korean were mixed. Parents who were interviewed from one school appeared to be very supportive of the Korean program. They believed that it was important to learn another language and said that their children loved learning Korean. There was a sense that the parents at this school felt included in the school's decision making process. They are regularly involved in focus groups to decide the school's priorities and are convinced that learning a language is important. Further they felt that Korean was a useful trade language and that it articulated with the high school program.

In a school with a struggling program, teachers commented on low parental involvement and lack of support for LOTE in preference to literacy. This may indicate a lack of understanding of the benefits of LOTE programs for the development of literacy. It may also indicate a lack of communication with parents and a failure to sell the positive benefits of LOTE learning.

One parent also expressed frustration with the lack of continuity of LOTE teaching in the school. Her child had previously studied one year of French before studying
Korean. In addition, some parents questioned the value of studying Korean when other LOTE backgrounds represented in the student population were not reflected in the curriculum offerings.

It appears, therefore, that greater parental awareness in the school may strengthen the LOTE program. Parents who have been involved in the decision to implement LOTE are more supportive of the language program.

**Factors Operating Against Sustainable Korean Programs in Primary Schools**

**Funding**

Funding from the *Korean using Technology* program was seen as vital to the success of the Korean programs in the primary schools linked to the project. In 1997, funding from the program to one of the schools had ceased. The effect was that the school could only afford to utilise one teacher to teach Korean. She was swapping classes in order to teach Korean to both year 6 classes. Although students did not appear to mind, the arrangement was proving very difficult in light of other time pressures. The principal was particularly unhappy about the fact that funding restrictions made it difficult for him to use other staff to support the teaching of LOTE. The other school was also concerned that the withdrawal of support from the *Korean using Technology* program would jeopardise their Korean program.

There was a very strong sense that these programs are perceived by the school's decision-makers as dependent on external funding, rather than as an integral part of the school curriculum.

**Teacher Availability**

Access and training of Korean LOTE teachers is a problem. There seems to be limited support to access, train or retrain teachers in Korean. Both schools considered that there was only a limited pool of teachers available to teach Korean. If the LOTE
teacher from one school was to transfer the school's program may be jeopardised as the new teacher would be unlikely to speak Korean. There was a feeling that it would be easier to find a teacher capable of teaching German or French.

The LOTE teacher at a second school felt that if there were sufficient funds available he could teach many of the staff enough Korean for them to teach their classes the basics of the language. In this way, he would be able to team-teach Korean with other interested teachers in the school. Such an arrangement may be important to the stability of the program in a school, but whether this strategy would enhance the sustainability of the program as a whole, is dubious. Limited linguistic knowledge on the part of the co-teachers is unlikely to enable the provision of the language rich learning environment that the students deserve.

The need for additional training resources was noted by teachers who felt that it was important to have release time available to teachers to encourage staff to take up LOTE or to take on LOTE coordination within the school. In the past, one of the schools had been able to give the LOTE teachers release time for training. Any decline in school numbers, however, would mean the loss of a teacher for the school, making these release arrangements difficult.

**Classroom Resources**

The two schools also identified a need for appropriate resources. At one school, teachers and students produce their own resources to supplement the lack of resources currently available. Students wanted more appropriate written materials, including simpler reading books in Korea, more Korean/English text-books and a Korean handwriting book. Teachers also had a wish list that included more Korean signs. They also commented that many of the teaching audio-tapes were spoken too quickly to be really useful.

LOTE teachers from both schools were waiting for new syllabus documents, which they felt would make classroom planning easier, and increase the prestige of the Korean program.
Competing Priorities

Finding time in a school day to run the Korean programs is difficult, particularly with so many other priorities. At one school the LOTE teacher was swapping classes with the other year 6 teacher so that both year 6 classes could be taught Korean. This was proving difficult and many of the lessons were being postponed because of other time pressures. She felt that it was easier to find time for Korean in the year 5 curriculum than in the year 6. Both the LOTE teacher and the students felt that regular lessons were important. Postponed and cancelled lessons mean a lot of time is spent reviewing and repeating previous work. More repetition of work is then needed before new work is introduced. The LOTE teacher felt that LOTE was not a high priority in light of all the other school priorities.

One principal stated that he would prefer the government to concentrate their efforts on a reduced number of languages and focus on those languages that are likely to give major trading and tourism opportunities. He also saw LOTE as promoting cultural awareness and tolerance.

The Issue of Relevance

The question of how relevant Korean was to the schools was also raised on a number of occasions. Only one school had any ethnic Korean students. The other two schools had no people of Korean backgrounds in their towns. In addition, both these schools were from lower socio-economic areas, and the communities are unlikely to be able to afford to send the students to Korea. One school had a high percentage of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many parents of Filipino background were interested in their children studying Tagalog. Little reference was made to trade, tourism or work opportunities for students.
Factors Promoting Sustainable Korean Programs in Primary Schools

The Commitment of the LOTE Teachers

At two schools, the enthusiasm and commitment of the LOTE teachers has been of prime importance to the sustainability of the programs within the schools. Staff, students and parents saw the teachers at both schools as very enthusiastic. The teachers' enthusiasm was contagious and most of the school community had ‘caught’ it. The LOTE teachers themselves believe that their enthusiasm is pivotal to the success of their programs. They believe that if the teacher is enthusiastic the children focus better.

The willingness of the teachers to learn Korean in their own time has also been essential. At one school, the teachers have visited Korea and children were fascinated with the pictures and stories they have to tell.

The Korean using Technology Program

The technology to have audio-graphic computer linkups supplied by the Korean using Technology program has had a profound effect on the two schools involved in the program. Without this program, and the staff development training it provides for the teacher, the schools could not offer Korean.

Students using the Korean using Technology program enjoyed the class and particularly valued being praised by the background Korean speakers. LOTE teachers considered the resource materials supplied by the program useful.
Incorporation in the Life of the School

One of the case studies was an example of good practice against the odds. A Korean program is being run in an isolated rural setting. One of the key factors contributing to the success of the program has been the school's ability to incorporate LOTE into other school activities. All the children in the school are given some exposure to the language. The LOTE teacher at the school is also the school computer coordinator and the music teacher. He makes a point of giving general classroom instructions in Korean even when teaching computing, for example, 'close the door', 'sit down', 'listen carefully'. He also uses appropriate body language to assist students' understanding. The students interviewed had no difficulty remembering the phrases and the body language that went with them. The teacher also encourages the other teachers to learn LOTE so that they can teach the basics to their classes.

In addition, the school has managed to get the whole community involved in the Korean program. When Korean students came to visit the school in July 1997, farmers and other community people were involved in sponsoring activities for the students. One teacher is also writing articles for the local paper about Korea.

Other Issues

A Question of Purpose

Teachers at the three primary schools appeared to regard language proficiency as secondary to valuable social and cultural development. The LOTE teachers at one school argued that whether or not the children develop proficiency in the language, they are gaining valuable social and cultural skills and knowledge. Non-LOTE teachers often suggested the virtue of LOTE as being to promote racial harmony and tolerance. This raises the question of the purpose of LOTE: linguistic proficiency or cultural exposure?
LOTE for All

Traditionally, LOTE has been regarded as a subject for ‘upper level’ students. At one school 15 of the brightest students in year 5 were chosen to study Korean while the others studied remedial mathematics and English. This created some difficulties, however, when the students entered year 6, because the other students were having extra time for Art while they were studying Korean. Many of these more able students were envious. On the other hand, all students in years 4, 5 and 6 at the other primary school were studying Korean. Some of the more 'motivated' students felt that streamed classes would be a good idea, so those who were not interested in learning a language would not distract them from their learning. The main issue here is that as LOTE becomes a part of the curriculum for all students, LOTE teachers will need to develop strategies to enable all students to engage with LOTE study. This may necessitate a mind shift - that LOTE is not just for able students, and that all students can learn and benefit from the study of a second or subsequent foreign language.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Why Did the Secondary Schools Initially Choose to Teach Korean?

Funding

The issue of funding was a key factor for all schools when implementing a LOTE. One school had been marked for closure in 1978. A strategy for survival was to introduce quality, specialised language programs that were not offered elsewhere. The key reason for offering Korean was to attract international fee-paying students to the school.

Two schools were encouraged to implement Korean programs when they were offered seeding money from external organisations such as the National Korean Studies Centre.
Another school had a well-established language program which traditionally offered French and German. The principal of the school was strongly committed to languages. When she arrived there was no Asian language. The school's decision-makers were considering which language to introduce when the Korean using Technology program was introduced. The program was pivotal in enabling the school to train its LOTE teachers to speak Korean. It also interested parents and teachers who were 'pro-technology' and saw the program as a way of combining technology and LOTE. According to the principal: *The historical moment was right and the technological initiatives allowed us to make breakthroughs.*

**Background Speakers In The Community**

Only one school referred to the number of background Korean speakers in the school community as a reason for offering Korean. There are currently ten students with a home background in Korean and there is a desire to attract more international students to give the school more flexibility with its deployment of Korean resources including offering courses for non-background speakers. Another high school with a high proportion of students from a Korean background did not mention this as a reason for introducing Korean. The school had decided it was going to teach an Asian language and the Korean using Technology program was the determining factor.

**The Economic Benefits**

Contrary to most expectations, no high school referred to job or work benefits for students as a reason for introducing Korean. The principal at one school noted that although Korea is a significant trading partner, this message had not been well communicated within the community. The school was struggling to attract students. Japanese was preferred because of the community's perception of future job opportunities for people fluent in Japanese.
Perceptions of Korean in Secondary Schools

Korean as a Difficult Language

Many staff and parents saw Korean as being difficult to learn, including some of the LOTE teachers. This was predominantly because of the different script and has implications for the uptake of Korean generally. In the words of one Korean teacher:

Students in years 11 and 12 are concerned with their tertiary entrance scores. If they feel that Korean is difficult to learn they will select another language.

Although some students held a similar perception initially, most felt that Korean was not really any more difficult than some other languages. Three students who were studying Korean and French felt at first that Korean was hard because it was so different from English. They now think, however, that French is harder to learn because there were too many irregular bits. Most students interviewed appeared to enjoy studying Korean. They regarded it as an interesting language because they could learn new sounds and script.

Perceptions of Principals

The principal at one school claimed to be very happy with the current good profile of the school's language program, to which she gives her solid support. The school's executive allows reduced class numbers in the language area and where there are not sufficient numbers to retain a class then students are given access to distance education. The principal praised the Korean teacher and language staff. She felt they had taken a good opportunity in the Korean using Technology program and capitalised on it. The linking of language study and technology is considered to be a priority in the school.

The principal at another school also regarded LOTE programs as essential. He felt that the major factors influencing the uptake of Korean by schools was the availability of funding and talented LOTE teachers, in his words teachers who were enthusiastic and could be clearly understood. He also felt that while junior classes did not
necessarily need a teacher with a background in Korean, a background speaker was more of a requirement in the upper school levels.

A third principal saw LOTE as an important aspect of the school's profile.

The school has made a commitment to offer quality language programs. There are no compromises on that. This is what sets this College apart.

He felt that it would take at least three years to strengthen the current Korean program and that this would require the availability of quality teachers and an increase in community awareness about the program and of Korea.

Perceptions of Teachers

Teachers at one school identified the Korean teacher's lack of involvement in school activities as an issue for the program. They felt that employing multi-skilled Korean teachers, who could teach in more than one area, for example, English as a Second Language or Mathematics as well as Korean, could solve this problem. According to them this would increase the teacher's time and involvement in school activities, leading to greater exposure of the language within the school. They noted, however, that there was a potential danger of staff without native competencies being required to teach.

The teachers commented on the difficulty of getting an assured supply of students interested in Korean. There were only a few students from a Korean speaking background at the school, and given the current political and economic situation in Korea, the school was unsure about the future supply of international students. The teachers regarded the advanced language classes at the school, catering for background speakers, as the power behind new LOTE programs and as the new language catalyst. They felt that these classes provided the program with the numbers required for the program to be viable.
Perceptions of Students

Students gave a number of different reasons for choosing Korean at a secondary level. They include:

- a different language;
- parents' influence;
- Korea as Australia's second greatest trading partner and companies are looking for graduates with knowledge of Korean;
- possibility of scholarships outside the school;
- sibling learning Korean at school (she is now going on an exchange program);
- Korean is an Asian language and they were already studying a Latin language;
- *I am Korean and it is important that I am able to maintain my language*;
- opportunity for increased tertiary entrance scores for background speakers;
- a competitive advantage in relation to future employment for a Japanese student;
- helping to be an international lawyer;
- having Korean friends.

Students with a Korean friend or family member, either here or overseas, were particularly positive about studying the language. Their parents also commented on the positive effect this had in motivating the students.

Perceptions of Parents

Parental perceptions were mixed, although most strongly supported languages in the school. Some encouraged children to travel to Korea and had also billeted Korean students in Australia. Parents wanted the children to enjoy their study. They wanted the language taught in an interesting way and for their children to learn phrases and sentences they could actually use. Hence, they favoured an emphasis on conversational language. Parents felt that exposure to background speakers was valuable in motivating students, and activities such as trips to restaurants and Korean cooking and food days were seen as beneficial.
It was also apparent that some parents were expecting students to reach a higher level of linguistic skill. Parents feel that, in lower years in particular, students tend to know a lot about the culture and the history, but not enough about the language. Some parents also felt LOTE should be offered earlier.

Factors Working Against Sustainable Korean Programs in Secondary Schools

Resource Issues

The Korean program is relatively new and teaching materials are still limited. Although the technology is well ahead for Korean study, the workbooks and teaching resources are still being developed. Students and teachers at all the schools studied expressed a desire for user-friendly textbooks and materials. Teaching materials need to be made more interesting and attractive; for example, more glossy or colourful.

Teacher Availability

The issue of accessibility to competent Korean teachers is crucial to the sustainability of Korean programs. The lack of an available pool of Korean teachers with expertise in the language and culture, who are also able to operate effectively within the Australian educational context, was a consistent theme for all the schools studied. One school recognised the problem with getting competent and qualified teachers of Korean and was attempting to introduce an internship program for trainee teachers to work in the school in order to minimise the problem.

High staff turnover at one school had severely affected parents and students' confidence in the program. It also impacted on the students’ progress in learning Korean.

Background Versus Non-Background Speaking Teachers
There is a perception, held by parents and teachers, that background speakers, due to their culture and teaching style, are not able to adapt to the way Australian students learn and behave. According to one teacher: Their social patterns do not allow them to survive in the classroom. They do not have the control to discipline students and also be able to excite them to study the language. At one school, a background Korean teacher was seen to need additional support through the use of a teaching aide because of the teacher's 'gentle nature'. Methodology as a concern was reinforced by a second generation Korean who was a teacher and who felt that LOTE required rote learning. She felt that the self-discipline it developed was valuable for all subjects.

A parent who was interviewed felt that teachers from Korean backgrounds had a different teaching style to Australian teachers, but not one that was so different that it was a problem. There was still a lot of interaction between the students and the teachers.

The VCE Exam

The first year in which second language learners of Korean were candidates for the VCE examinations was 1996. Non-background speakers sit the same exam as background speakers. Non-background speakers feel disadvantaged and this is seen as a disincentive for non-background students to take Korean. Students felt that other students would probably continue with Korean if the VCE exam were not as hard. The perception was that the exam was so difficult that even the best non-background Korean student at the school did not get a high mark last year. Non-background speaking students felt very disadvantaged by the process.

The Korean teacher at one school felt that the curriculum was vastly simplified. This created difficulties for year 11 & 12 students who have to sit a tertiary entrance examination where they are required to prove that they can reach background speaker standards. She felt that the lower school emphasis on culturally related activities was not useful to students as it would not enable them to pass the year 12 exam.

The Need For Practical Language Application
Parents and students were looking for more practical application of the language. It appears, however, that different stake-holders define ‘practical application’ differently.

Parents felt that exposure to background speakers and culture experts was valuable in motivating students. Trips to restaurants, or Korean food days with cooking at school, are also seen as beneficial. Students reported enjoying cooking days and especially liked the idea of exchange programs as a way of applying the language practically: *If you could go there, then you would want to keep studying the language.*

A number of parents of students felt that they did not have enough information about the different LOTE programs and the advantages of learning a language. They felt schools should provide more information about the cultural and economic aspects of the country.

Students, particularly those in upper years, wanted the syllabus to be more relevant. *We are learning about Marriage, but I wouldn’t even know how to buy a bus ticket.* This student wanted more topics that were relevant to day to day living. Students want to focus more on current affairs, rather than the translating activities.

At some of the schools, there appeared to be a conflict between the teacher and the students with regard to the desired class activities. In one school, students appeared to be interested in playing games and focusing on the cultural aspects of the language - the 'fun' things. According to the LOTE teacher, students in years 11 and 12 at one school were disappointed that they did not play as many games as they had in previous years. In another school, the teacher, with a background in Korean, also felt that class activities in high school needed to focus much more solidly on the learning of the Korean language. Students felt, however, that the games had helped their language skills as well as being fun. They also felt that the teacher changed topics too quickly which meant that the same topic had to be reintroduced the following year.

**Factors Promoting Sustainable Korean Programs in Secondary Schools**

*Technology*
The Korean using Technology program was very highly thought of by teachers and parents alike. Students who were using the technology also found it useful. All students wanted more technology linkups to the Korean Language Base Centre 'The Hub'.

At one school, the LOTE teacher had been learning Korean along with the students through the program. While this may be questionable pedagogy, the parents saw this as a positive thing as the students could identify with the teacher's struggles and successes.

Exchanges and Other Incentives

Exchanges were a very successful way of enticing students to study Korean. One student commented that he had been going to drop the language but decided not to because of the exchange program. Exchange programs gave students a way of practically applying their language skills. There are, of course, funding implications for exchange programs. Students were particularly keen on subsidised exchanges to Korea. The exchange programs also generated a lot of positive publicity for the Korean programs within the school. Staff at two schools, with sister schools in Korea, were particularly proud of their exchange program. The programs generated a lot of interest in the Korean language and increased its profile in the schools.

Students from one school have continued to study Korean after high school. Four students received scholarships to participate in a study program in Korea. These factors have also worked to increase the profile of Korean in the school.
A Supportive School Administration

At some schools, the Korean teacher is clearly regarded as an established and respected member of staff. This appears to have a significant impact on the way the staff and parents perceive the program and is derived to a large extent from the support of the administration. In other schools, which have had difficulty securing long-term Korean teachers, the Korean program has not enjoyed the same status.

While some LOTE teachers reported a generally supportive staff attitude in the school, others felt that they were not receiving much support from the school. One LOTE teacher who felt supported by the school reported a significant allocation of resources to the program. Students had access to a good language laboratory and a Korean room that was decorated with Korean furniture and other objects. In another school there was support for smaller classes and flexible offerings like a mixed medium of open education/face to face/technology links. The school's emphasis on languages was made evident when the administrator responsible for timetabling commented on the importance of knowing in advance when the scheduled linkups to the technology ‘Hub’ would be so that the timetable could be designed to fit around them.

At another school the deputy principal was very supportive of the program. She was involved in negotiating with a university for internships for trainee teachers to work at the school providing on-site training. The school was also active in promoting the language within the school. Activities included wearing Korean costumes at school assembly.

The ability of the school and teachers to develop support networks outside the school is also a significant issue. The teacher at one school has a weekly link with a group of teachers to extend the teacher's language skills and to discuss relevant issues. Over time relationships have developed and this link has encouraged support and networking between the teachers. At another school, the initial Korean teacher had been successful in developing links with other schools. Since she left, however, the links have not been as strong. It appears that this was because the relationships were dependent on the individual and not the school.
Incorporation of Korean into the Life of the School

Almost all the schools had made attempts to incorporate Korean into the broader school curriculum through mainly cultural activities, for example, Korean Art. Incorporation was generally perceived by the school administrations to be important for the uptake of Korean.

One school encourages students to participate in LOTE activities beyond the classroom. Activities include poetry, competitions, restaurant visits and exchange programs. Where possible, the school uses background speakers from the community. In another school attempts made to lift the profile of Korean in the school included the students in building a Korean garden.

Other Issues

Purpose

Teachers with a background in Korean feel that in high school, in particular the upper years, class activities need to focus on the serious study of the Korean language. This is especially important as year 12 students compete with background speakers in the tertiary entrance examinations. One past teacher did not have a background in Korean. She tended to focus on cultural activities, rather than the language. Some teachers felt that this was reasonable in the lower year levels. Background speaker competency and a greater focus on the language skills, however, were considered essential in the upper school levels.

In one school, students have continued to study Korean after high school. Four students have received scholarships from outside organisations to participate in a study program in Korea.
LOTE for All

One of the schools involved in the study expressed a desire to form LOTE classes based on the skill level of the students rather than their year level. This proposal, however, has not been implemented because of timetabling difficulties.

Some students felt that having students of different language levels in the classroom affected their learning. *We waste time when the teacher is instructing other students.* Similarly, while most parents were generally supportive of the notion of LOTE study for all, they were concerned that students who did not want to study a language would disrupt those students who were interested.

Some teachers in secondary schools also found it difficult to cater for students who have taken Korean outside the school; for example in primary school. Students who took Korean in primary school found Korean classes to be boring. They felt that they were not progressing with their learning. *It is boring. We are having to learn it again. We have already done it in primary school.*

Where schools were able to offer small LOTE classes, this met with approval from both students and staff. One LOTE teacher felt that while larger classes are acceptable for cultural activities, the teaching of the language is more effective when taught to small groups. The students were very positive about smaller class numbers. They felt that *you learn more in a small group...in a big group you learn nothing!*

Promotion

The teacher at one school believed a higher profile for the language could increase uptake after the compulsory years of schooling. This was seen as possible through sponsorship from local and Korean businesses. They also considered inviting a local tourism representative to talk to parents about potential tourism jobs.
Continuity

The LOTE teachers at one of the schools felt that continuity was a particular area of concern. It was felt that students benefited from starting LOTE young, at primary level and that there was a need to look at offering serious programs in the school system, which offer continuity from feeder schools and afterwards into tertiary level. According to one of the teachers:

*Our biggest weakness is that there is no continuity of some programs, in particular Korean.*

SUMMARY

Korean uptake and sustainability appear to be contingent on several factors.

Technology emerges as a tool for the provision of Korean, and also as the impetus for the establishment of Korean programs. *Korean using Technology* has enabled schools to 'kill two birds with one stone' as both LOTE and Information Technology are on national and state curriculum agendas. But the technology also makes the programs vulnerable. There are significant resource and infrastructure implications for *Korean using Technology* programs and this implies a fragility that brings into question the long term sustainability of these programs.

Also emerging from the research is the significance of whole school commitment as a factor in program establishment and sustainability. The success of a Korean program within a rural environment, with no connections to Korea or to Korean, provides strong evidence of the importance of incorporating a language program into the broader life of both school and community.

A number of dichotomous factors also emerge through the Korean case studies. Program purpose is perceived in some instances to be cultural enrichment; in others, the attainment of background speaker proficiency in order to pass examinations.
Tensions emerge concerning background and non-background speakers of Korean. The need to cater for Korean students learning in classrooms and the effectiveness of Korean teachers instructing in classrooms are issues raised in the studies. There is also the dichotomy of what is expected in lower school contexts as opposed to upper school demands. Korean program sustainability requires a resolution to these dichotomies and the problems that they pose.
CHAPTER 7

THE UPTAKE OF MODERN GREEK

INTRODUCTION

The Greek sample consisted of four primary schools and two secondary schools.

All four primary schools in this study are government primary schools and are located in metropolitan areas. Three of the schools are located in communities which have experienced strong Greek influences. All three have had Greek programs in the school for many years. The other school does not have a strong Greek community, although there are a few 'third generation' Greek children. Students are predominantly Australian-born, with the majority of students coming from English-speaking backgrounds. Other language backgrounds represented at the school include Cantonese, Vietnamese, Indian, French, Romanian, Malay, Arabic, German and Farsi. The Greek program in this school has been in place since 1992.

The two secondary schools represented in this sample are government, co-educational schools located in metropolitan areas. One has approximately 700 students from preparatory to year 12. The Greek program, however, is only offered in high school. This school offers Italian, Greek, Arabic and Turkish LOTE programs. The main ethnic groups are Arabic (approximately 30% of the school population), Turkish and Greek (approximately 20% of the school population each) and Italian (approximately 16% of the population).

The other school offers Chinese, Modern Greek and Indonesian. There is a sense that this school has a reputation within a 'working class' area as being the school with the strongest academic tradition.
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Why Did Primary Schools Initially Choose To Teach Greek?

Background Speakers in the School Community

All but one of the primary schools studied made the decision to introduce Modern Greek language programs because of the high percentage of students from Greek backgrounds at the schools. The three programs were introduced in the late 1970s to early 1980s.

One school decided to offer Modern Greek in the early 1980s only partly because of a strong presence of people with a Greek background within the school community. By 1997, only 14 students in a school of 219 had a Greek home background. In response to demand from the Italian parent community in the school, Italian was introduced as an alternative language.

Another school was in a community with very strong Greek roots. According to the work, *Memories: The Hellenic Influence, 1939-1996*, the first Greek students came to the school in 1939. In 1966, the Greek Orthodox Community was established in the area and the Community was teaching Greek language to students after school. In 1968 the first teacher of Greek was appointed to the afternoon school, and in 1970 an hourly paid instructor taught the language and culture at the school in school time. In 1973, an experimental language centre, a Kindergarten for children of non-English speaking background, was established to help these children learn English. In 1977, a Greek Liaison officer was appointed to the school, and in 1979, a Greek language teacher was appointed to the school by the state Education Department. Greek was made compulsory in 1989. Now, only 19 per cent of students (some 30 students) are from a Greek background, although this figure is slowly increasing as former students begin to send their own children to the school.

Another school introduced Greek as a community language in 1981. In 1975 over 85 per cent of the school population had been from a Greek background. By the mid 1980s, however, the Greek population was moving from the existing area, closer to
the city. This resulted in a significant decrease in the number of Greek families in the area. Currently only 13 students (3%) are from Greek backgrounds.

Resource Issues

The provision of Greek language teachers by the Greek Consulate has been crucial to the implementation of Greek language programs in three of the primary schools.

The one school without a strong Greek community (there are only a few 'third generation' Greek students at the school) started teaching Greek following an approach to the former principal by the Hellenic Community. As part of the Hellenic Community's plan to promote Modern Greek, the Community offered to provide the school with a Greek teacher who would be paid for by the Greek Consulate. The Greek Consulate also provided a Greek teacher, free of charge, to another of the primary schools.

At another school, the Greek teacher was appointed and paid for by the state Education Department.

Continuity

While the issue of continuity was not the primary reason for teaching Greek at any of the primary schools, one school noted that Greek was also being offered by a number of surrounding schools, including the local high school, and that this allowed for continuity of the language. The school was in an area that historically was a Greek enclave, and this explained why Greek was being offered by a number of the schools in the area.
Perceptions of Greek in Primary Schools

Greek as a Difficult Language

Teachers from one school regarded Greek as one of the hardest LOTEs to learn. They felt that parents have an unrealistic expectation that students will be fluent in the language by the end of year 6. The LOTE teacher at another school believed that Indonesian was regarded as easier than Greek because it applied an English alphabet.

Perceptions of Students

Most students thought it was good to learn another language. The reasons they gave for studying Greek included:

- Greek was the only program being offered at the time I started LOTE;
- I want to learn more about Greek mythology;
- Greece is an attractive place.

Many students commented on the tasks they did in class. Students from one school said they enjoyed educational games, songs and outdoor activities, but did not like having to copy from the board. They disliked having to re-do activities that were taught in previous years, particularly cultural activities. Students from another school, particularly those without a Greek background, were more interested in the cultural aspects of the language program and enjoyed games, songs and story telling. At another they liked learning about religion, playing word games, having quizzes and learning songs. A general theme that emerged was that non-background speakers, in particular, wanted more interactive activities in the classes.

Some students questioned the relevance of Greek as a language for them:

It would be better if you could choose which language - then I would study Italian because my Mother's family is Italian.
Other comments related to the students' ability to use and understand the language. According to one student:

I don't mind studying it, but you feel silly saying things you don't understand.

Greek's a bit boring because I don't understand what I am saying.

The students liked the idea of studying more than one language over their time at school, though not more than one language at the same time. They were less interested in competence than in exposure to other cultures, with language perceived as part of culture.

Perceptions of Teachers

The responses of non-LOTE teachers of the value of LOTE programs varied. Teachers at one school were extremely supportive of their Greek program and praised the quality of LOTE teaching at the school. There were a number of members of staff who were from Greek backgrounds themselves. They regarded the main purpose of the program as being about cultural development.

We need to speak another language to help civilise ourselves. This program isn't about language. It's about history and culture.

Similarly, teachers from another school tended to focus on the cultural aspects of LOTE programs and not so much on the importance of learning a language. They felt that LOTE in primary school was only able to give students the basics of the language. One teacher mentioned that through LOTE students developed learning skills which were transferable to other mainstream classrooms; for example, listening skills.

The teachers expressed the view that successful programs were dependent on good teachers. LOTE teachers had to make the language interesting, to be enthusiastic and to use a variety of activities. At the same time they had to be able to establish
discipline in the classroom, otherwise students would regard LOTE classes as naughty (play) time. They also suggested that the program required more support in the school to lift its profile. LOTE was seen as 'muck around’ time. They thought that it was important for teachers to model to students that they considered LOTE to be an important subject. They also thought the LOTE programs should be promoted more in the community, that parents' expectations about LOTE outcomes at primary school should be clarified, and that more funding should be provided for books.

School staff and administration at another school were concerned about the resource commitments to LOTE in the overall school program. They were also concerned about the future of a program that did not result in language proficiency, is not integrated into the school curriculum and does not lead to further study at a secondary level. In comparison, a teacher from another school argued strongly that:

\[ \text{Greek should not be dismissed just because it is not available in high school.} \]

A number of teachers expressed a preference for Asian languages over Greek, citing Australia's proximity to Asia and the usefulness of these languages for future employment. Another teacher felt that parents are more interested in the usefulness of the language rather than the intrinsic enjoyment of language learning, or its enrichment of one's own language. At the same time, she would support an Asian language over Greek because of the proximity of Asia.

One teacher was in two minds about supporting LOTE, feeling that real language acquisition required time every day, and already the increased allocation of LOTE had displaced the Art and Music programs at her school. The teachers too, she claimed, were overloaded. Another teacher from that school was anxious to support language learning through charts in the classroom or any strategies which would help her carry it through into her teaching, but felt she would need help to know how to do this. In her view:

\[ \text{Once [the LOTE teacher] leaves, I clean the board and Greek is gone for the week. If I had some knowledge, I could reinforce it.} \]
A further teacher from the same school argued that the school's lack of commitment to LOTE was reflected in the lack of an immersion approach to LOTE. He felt that it was not made meaningful, is regarded as another thing to be squeezed in and is not valued by the teachers. He saw the problem with immersion programs as the fact that most people do not know how to implement them. They required, he argued, designated teachers with the appropriate know-how. This teacher, in fact, had a Masters degree in immersion strategies in LOTE, but this expertise was not being used in the school. He could not see a plan for a strong LOTE program at this school because of other priorities.

Perceptions of Parents

Parents of Greek descent who were interviewed at one school, saw it as a measure of pride that the Greek program existed. As one parent said:

_You come to the Taverna (a special night held by the school) and you see these kids all talking Greek and most of them aren't Greek. It's really great. It makes you feel good to see your culture alive._

Another, Australian-born and not of Greek descent, also expressed pride in the program.

_Here language is not a token gesture. And because of it, there is a far greater acceptance here of people who are not native born Australians than anywhere else in Australia._

Many of the parents interviewed at this school had a strong sense of ownership of the program. There was no doubt that the parents of Greek origin were strongly committed to the teaching of Greek at the school and to the program's survival as a means of cultural development, and perhaps, cultural maintenance. Parents who were not of Greek descent also displayed a strong sense of acceptance of the LOTE program, although they were did not seem to mind whether it was Greek being taught or another language.
I don't care which language it is. It's about what the kids learn about other cultures that is important.

The parents saw the program in this school as an example of a living culture within the school. There was a sense, however, that not all the parents liked or supported the program. It was said openly that kids don't need this. This won't help them read and write better. It won't help them get a job. The majority of parents at the school saw the quality of teaching as a major strength of the program.

Parents from Greek backgrounds were very supportive of the Greek programs. At one school, approximately half the students studying Greek were from Greek speaking backgrounds. Their parents wanted the children to be able to converse with relatives in Greek and to know more about the country and its culture. At another, parents stated that learning Greek was helpful in the learning of other subjects, particularly English. Some parents thought that students from bilingual backgrounds tended to take LOTE more seriously.

One parent from a non-Greek background expressed the view that Asian languages were more attractive than Greek, particularly in terms of future job opportunities. Another parent from a non-Greek background disliked having background and non-background speakers in the same class as this resulted in different skill levels.

Many parents were less concerned with LOTE than they were with mathematics and English.

My son could come home with a bad report for Greek and I wouldn't worry, but I would if it were Maths or English.

According to another parent:

I don't regard Greek as being curriculum-based - it's there for a bit of interest.

Some parents from one school felt that their children had little understanding of the language. They wanted their children to be able to speak more fluently by the end of
their primary schooling. Some felt there was too much emphasis on the cultural aspect, and not enough on the teaching of the language:

\textit{LOTE is supposed to be 'Language Other Than English'. Therefore, schools should be teaching the language and not so much culture. Otherwise it would be called something else.}

They felt the program would be strengthened by more interactive classes and greater opportunities to apply the language inside and outside of the school; greater links with the Greek community; more time for LOTE and more information about the teaching methods, the programs and their benefits.

In one school, it was not possible to interview parents. The principal reported that about 20 per cent of parents of year 3 students saw LOTE as an unnecessary 'extra' in their children's program, preferring that English skills receive more attention. Students interviewed indicated that their parents were happy with the program, although at the point of choosing a language, some parents had expressed a preference for an Asian language.

One school had conducted a Parent Survey in 1997 to help determine priorities for development. LOTE was the fifth-mentioned on a list of 29 items. It was ranked 20 out of 29 in the list of priorities ahead of music skills, practical and creative arts, social studies, social justice issues, school development, school council and pastoral care.

\textbf{Perceptions of LOTE Teachers}

The LOTE teacher at one school felt that students were selecting Indonesian over Greek because it was considered to be more beneficial for future employment. She was employed on a part-time basis at the school and teaches Greek at another school as well. She felt the program at the other school was stronger because classes were better resourced, and had more class contact time. She suggested a number of improvements to strengthen the program including better teaching resources in the
school, such as Primary Access to Language via Satellite (PALS) programs\textsuperscript{12}, books, television and videos. She thought more time should be allocated to LOTE.

\textit{For a language to work effectively it needs at least 3 hours per week.}

She thought year 1 students should be exposed to both French and Greek, so that they could make their own choices later on. She also found the curriculum limiting.

\textit{It is a great help and guide, but can be limiting if the children are bored.}

She did not feel supported by the principal or her colleagues, was not involved in the decision making process of the school and only attended staff meetings when asked.

Another LOTE teacher felt that if the purpose of LOTE was language competence, then \textit{an immersion approach was required with at least 3 contact periods per week}. Greek was being phased out at this school at which he was currently teaching. The teacher was concerned that his students had developed an interest in Greek which would be lost unless an after-school program could be offered.

\textbf{Perceptions of Principals}

The principal at one school felt that the Greek teacher was granted the same rights, respect and responsibilities as the other teachers. Nonetheless, he felt that the teacher did not feel part of the staff and did not feel empowered to make a contribution. He considered this to be a difficult issue confronted by many part-time teachers.

The principal also commented on the increasing pressures faced by schools to incorporate numerous activities into the curriculum: \textit{There are far too many things to be incorporated. What would need to go and at what expense?} He also felt that there was a need for high quality training for LOTE teachers. The school had to draw from a limited pool of good teachers. In his view, however, the Greek program was better

\textsuperscript{12} PALS was introduced primarily to support teachers without the language knowledge. Teachers become process facilitators.
placed in the school than the Indonesian program, because it had been established for longer. It was seen as being better resourced and having a stronger history in the school.

The principal appeared to value the cultural aspects of the LOTE program more so than the attainment of linguistic proficiency. He felt that cultural activities made it easier to motivate students. He believed that students were more interested in activities like story telling and Greek mythology and so were less disruptive in class.

A principal from a school that was phasing out its Greek program argued that the community would have continued with Greek if the funding from external sources had been maintained. With the introduction of Indonesian, a strain was placed on school resources. He felt he would prefer that students had exposure to a range of languages rather than proficiency in one. This view, he said, was influenced by his own children's experience. They had too much LOTE and had been turned off.

**Factors Operating Against Sustainable Greek Programs in Primary Schools**

**Changing Demographics**

Greek language programs had been introduced by three of the four schools in the late 1970s and early 1980s in response to the high percentage of people from Greek speaking backgrounds in the school communities. In recent years, the Greek population in each of these schools has declined, bringing into question the continued relevance of Greek for the school communities.

In 1975, more than 85 per cent of students from one school were from Greek backgrounds. During the mid-1980s, many Greek families left the area and moved closer to the city. By the time this study was conducted only 3 per cent of students were from Greek backgrounds. The largest ethnic group at the school is Chinese (4%), followed by Italian and Vietnamese (both 3%). Recently, parents requested the introduction of an Asian language into the school's LOTE program, and an Indonesian
program was implemented in 1996. With the introduction of Indonesian, the number of students studying Greek has declined.

Another school had also instigated a Modern Greek program because of the strong presence of people from Greek backgrounds within the community. By 1997, only 14 students had a Greek home background. The major ethnic groups in the school were identified as Asian (12%) and Italian (15%). In response to demands from the Italian parent community, Italian has been recently introduced. While there are no plans to phase out the Greek program, it is threatened by changing parental demand. Enrolments are declining and there are only 3 students currently enrolled in Greek in the year 3 class. The school has indicated to parents that the program would not be continued if the Greek Consulate were to withdraw funding for the current Greek teacher.

The third school, with its Greek population in decline, showed no signs of Greek being discontinued. The school now has only 30 students of Greek extraction (19%), less than in the past. It was noted, however, that the number of students from a Greek background is slowly increasing as former students have children and send them to the school. The school also has 16 students of Turkish background, nine students of Italian extraction, as well as students from Germany, Vietnam, India, Thailand and Thursday Island. Despite the strengthening Turkish influence in the school, there is no sense of Turkish taking the place of Greek. People of Greek descent motivated the program and it has a special place in the school. The ownership of the program by the Greek community is still strong.

Competition Between Languages

The introduction of other LOTE programs at three of the primary schools was impacting dramatically on the number of students enrolling in the Greek programs.

In response to requests from parents to introduce an Asian language, one school had implemented an Indonesian program. Most students (approximately 65% of the
student population) were now studying Indonesian rather than Greek. This was causing the Greek teacher some concern:

Unless there is a strong flow of children wanting to study Greek, the program will die in a few years.

Student numbers for the Greek program at another school had declined considerably with the introduction of an Italian program. Of the 35 students studying Greek, about half have Greek-speaking backgrounds. Of the 130 students studying Italian, 25 have Italian-speaking backgrounds. Italian is, therefore, the language of choice for most students without a Greek or Italian background. The school does not provide parents with any detailed information about either of the LOTE programs offered. All they are told is that there are risks in choosing Modern Greek because the classes may cease at any time and there is no pathway into secondary school.

Another school had introduced Indonesian into the curriculum and was gradually phasing out Greek, apparently as a result of school district planning. According to the principal it was intended that there be community consultation about the choice of language, but in the end the decision had been made quite quickly when the local Community College indicated it would continue to offer Italian and Indonesian. The primary school decided to offer Indonesian so that students could continue into secondary school. In addition, most parents thought that an Asian language was more relevant than a European language.

Resource Issues

School staff and administration at one school expressed concern about the resource commitments to LOTE in the overall school program in terms of teaching time. They were also concerned about the ongoing commitment of the Greek consulate given the current climate of change and uncertainty. The LOTE teacher did not feel that the Greek program received enough resources from the school. She felt that Greek needed its own room at the school and that it needed better teaching resources such as access to television and video and better Greek texts.
The survival of the Greek program at another school was clearly dependent on the provision of funding and support from the Greek consulate. The school intends to run the Greek program as long as some parents indicate that they want their children to study Greek and the consulate is able to provide a teacher at times scheduled by the school. The school has indicated to parents that the program will be discontinued if the consulate cannot provide the teacher at times that the school determines are appropriate.

A principal from a third school was phasing out its Greek program after only five years, despite the fact that students, parents and staff were generally happy with the Greek program. The principal argued that the community would have continued with Greek if the external funding had been maintained. With the introduction of Indonesian, a strain was being placed on school resources.

The Issue of Relevance

Many of the people interviewed did not consider Greek to be relevant to the students apart from its cultural value. Some parents felt that Asian languages were more relevant to students' future job opportunities. Indonesian had been introduced at two of the schools for that reason. Students from one school argued that *Greek was fun to learn but that it didn't serve much purpose.* Some felt that learning a LOTE was a good idea for travelling or when in contact with people from that country, but according to one student:

> It's not necessary - there's not that many Greek people here and you don't go to Greece for holidays.

Some teachers also believed that the schools should concentrate on Asian languages *from a practical point of view*, that is, thinking about jobs and the need for Australians to interact with Asia. In one teacher's view, Greek was isolated, of no use, and *it might as well be Martian.*
Continuity Issues

One factor operating against the sustainability of the Greek program at one primary school was the lack of a clearly articulated pathway to continue the language into high school. The primary school offers both Greek and Italian while the local high school offered Japanese and Italian. In presenting information to parents about the primary school language programs, the school emphasises the fact that there is no pathway into secondary school. There are currently 135 students studying Italian at the primary school, with only 35 students choosing to study Greek.

At another school, the decision was made to phase out Greek and to offer Indonesian instead, because the local high school was only offering Indonesian. It was thought to be important that the students continue with the language into secondary school. Teachers from a third school identified continuity between primary and secondary schools as a challenge for the program. As students were able to attend any high school, it was difficult to establish a relationship between the high schools and the primary school as a feeder school for the LOTE programs.

Factors Promoting Sustainable Greek Programs in Primary Schools

The Role of the Greek Teacher/Coordinator

The strength of Greek at a number of the schools lies in the ability of the Greek teachers to interest students by using a range of interactive teaching and learning strategies and by introducing the students to matters of cross-cultural interest as a context for language learning. Staff at two schools commented positively on the quality of the teachers, and the majority of students interviewed from all the schools seemed to enjoy the programs.

School Support for LOTE

Unlike the other Greek programs, which were in decline, one primary school had a relatively successful Greek program. A fundamental difference seemed to be the
support this program received from the wider school community. The school administration was supportive, placing the Greek program on an equal footing with other subjects. All students do Greek. In the words of one staff member:

*It is a mainstream subject ... one of the eight areas of study and is compulsory. It has been since 1989.*

The Education jurisdiction funds a Greek liaison officer who offers classroom support, translates newsletters and reports, organises cultural events and liaises with parents. This has made it possible for members of the community to have input into the program. In addition, the school has deliberately developed a link with a sister school in Thessalonika. Parents remarked that all the staff appeared to be committed to the program, with those from Greek backgrounds being especially supportive.

By contrast, one school appeared to support the Italian program in preference to Modern Greek. In presenting information to parents about the two language programs, the school apparently presented Greek in a negative light by emphasising that classes may cease at any time and that the secondary school does not offer Greek as an option. The LOTE teacher also felt unsupported by the school. She felt that she was offered very little recognition as a co-teacher. There was concern, she added, that she was not informed of parent-teacher evenings by the school, and so had no contact with parents. It appeared that the school has chosen to continue Modern Greek as a low-resource, second-option LOTE as long as there is some parent demand for it and a Consulate-funded teacher.

A non-LOTE teacher from another school, felt that the LOTE program was not well organised within the school. It was difficult to schedule classes and sometimes the students would miss out on a week of LOTE. Another mentioned that the LOTE networks outside the school did not seem to operate at the same strength as other subjects. The LOTE teacher herself felt unsupported. Although the principal claimed that he scheduled staff meetings for times when the LOTE teacher was at the school, the LOTE teacher felt that it was only appropriate to attend when she was invited. The LOTE teachers at the school were employed on a part-time basis and had little
involvement in the activities outside the classroom. This appears to have affected the visibility and the status of the program within the school.

One school appeared to exhibit a lack of commitment to the Modern Greek program. This was evidenced by the fact that there was no office or classroom for LOTE. In addition, the principal admitted to having no knowledge of the origins of the program at the school. One teacher, while happy with the program, had no involvement in the LOTE program, had no particular expectations of the program, and did not know the learning outcomes for LOTE. Another teacher with a Masters degree in LOTE was not involved in the LOTE program in the school in any way, despite the fact that he had indicated his interest and expertise. There appeared to be a gap between the 'place in the sun' given to LOTE in the school development plan and the real everyday thinking and decision making of the principal and teachers about LOTE in relation to everything else being addressed.

Incorporation into the Life of the School

Parents at one primary school with a flourishing Greek program described the program as an example of a living culture within the school, and it was evident that the school was committed to maintaining and promoting its Greek program. The program has been woven into the broader life of the school and its community. A special Greek cultural event called the Taverna takes place annually and parents are invited. This is also the major fundraising activity in the school calendar. There was strong evidence that this program was owned by the general community, both Greek and non-Greek. The commitment to its survival - the passion and concern and pride - was strongly felt. Part of the strength of the program is the commitment by the teacher and the Greek liaison officer. The Greek liaison officer organises events and liaises with, and translates for, parents.

At other schools there was no attempt to integrate Greek into the broader school curriculum. Teachers from one school wanted to incorporate Greek into the mainstream curriculum, but felt that the teaching program was already too crowded. This was echoed by the school principal and the parents. There was a strong sense
that the teachers and principal did not regard Greek as part of the mainstream program of the school. LOTE was something 'extra' that added to the pressures of an already crowded curriculum.

**Other Issues**

**Purpose**

All the case studies were characterised by confusion of purpose of the LOTE programs. Non-LOTE teachers from all the schools tended to focus on the cultural aspects of LOTE rather than the importance of learning a language. According to one teacher, *LOTE was needed to help build up a world view*. By contrast, many parents wanted to see their children become fluent in learning a language. Many felt there was too much emphasis on the cultural aspect, and not enough on the teaching of the language. These parents wanted to see their children relatively fluent in the language by year 6, a goal considered by most teachers to be unrealistic.

**LOTE for All**

Another parent from a non-Greek background disliked having background and non-background speakers in the same class as this resulted in different skill levels.

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Why Did Secondary Schools Initially Choose Greek?**

**Background Speakers In The Community**

Both of the secondary schools included in this study made the decision to teach Greek in recognition, and as a reflection, of the community context. One high school has offered Greek and Italian since the 1970s. Arabic and Turkish have been part of the
LOTE program for the last seven years. The four LOTE programs were selected based on the background speakers in the community. The school's LOTE philosophy is one of recognition and respect for the ethnic communities in the area. Similarly, the second high school regards Greek as a community language. In the words of the principal:

*There are family connections where it can be spoken, people here know Greek people, and the resources are visible.*

The principal was referring to the wider State community, given the number of people of Greek descent who live there, rather than the specific school community. The language was seen to have relevance to the students, although not necessarily within the immediate district.

**Perceptions of Greek in Secondary Schools**

**Perceptions of Principals**

Both high school principals were strong advocates for the inclusion of LOTE study in school curricula. One regarded languages as absolutely necessary to the curriculum. She believed that it was important for Australians to communicate with other parts of the world and also argued that languages increased our value to the community.

The two principals emphasised the cultural aspects of the teaching and learning of LOTE. One stated that a successful LOTE program had a clear purpose for teaching the language and then mentioned that these purposes might include learning about the culture, learning greater tolerance, and accepting diversity. The other felt that it was due to the multicultural nature of the school that there was little racism among the students and staff. The principal wants to develop the school as a multicultural centre in the area. The four current LOTE programs are seen as central to this development, with music, art and community activities interacting and intersecting with the LOTE programs.
The principal at one school saw a good LOTE teacher as one who engaged all students, noting that: *this was a challenge for many LOTE teachers.* She thought that engaging the students meant there was a quality of having fun while doing the language - *cooking, learning about the culture.* She also felt that it was important that LOTE was treated as equal to the other subjects in the curriculum and was not cast out on the periphery. In addition, she felt that it was important to get the expectations of, and support from, the system clear.

Both principals noted some concerns about the future of the LOTE programs. According to one: *I fear a bit for Greek. I don't know that it will survive.* She also had suggestions for how the profile of the program might be raised: *Everyone knows a Greek. Capitalise on that and sell the history.*

The other principal noted that the number of students studying Greek in years 11 and 12 at her school had dropped over the years. This was seen to be a result of a combination of factors. The percentage of Greek students in the school was decreasing. Parents were no longer forcing their children to study Greek. In addition, students are now confronted with other choices and priorities, for example, computer skills.

One also noted that there were considerable pressures placed on teachers to be involved in a variety of activities outside the classroom. This was seen to limit the time dedicated to the preparation and delivery of lessons. The principal would have preferred to offer the students streamed LOTE classes, but felt funding cuts made this impossible. According to her, mixed-level classes required greater creativity and preparation time on the part of the teacher.

**Perceptions of Students**

Of the fourteen year 9 students interviewed at one school, six intended to continue with Greek. One other wanted to, but found it impossible because of the way the timetable was structured. Those who wanted to continue saw part of the reason as being the quality of the teacher and the fact that they felt they were learning the
language. Those who were not continuing in the main, said it was because they were not enjoying it, were not good at it, or saw no point in it.

The students interviewed from the other school were all from a Greek background. They enjoyed studying the language. They felt that LOTE provided them with the opportunity to communicate with other people. They felt that it was important in terms of travel and employment opportunities.

Some felt that it was good to focus on one language so that they could become fluent. Others were of the opinion that it was important to learn another language, other than English and Greek, since they were in contact with people from other backgrounds. Some mentioned that Greek had helped them in other subjects like Science, History and English, because Greek was the root of many English words.

Factors influencing the choice of Greek were:

- Friends speak the language;
- Parents and grandparents wanted them to learn;
- The school encourages those from non-English speaking backgrounds to study the LOTE;
- It was easy to get good marks (this was primarily because they already had a Greek background);
- They already know how to speak and write in Greek.

There were mixed feelings about classroom activities. Some felt that too much reading was boring. Others, however, recognised the importance of reading in their learning of Greek, for example, Greek culture, grammar and writing skills. Students wanted more field trips and outside the classroom activities. Some also wanted more history and different projects (for example, projects on the Olympics). Other students stated that while songs and games were fun in the primary school years, they would be bored with the activities at a secondary level. Students from the other school commented that although they did not enjoy the rote learning, they felt that it was a necessary part of the process of learning a language.
Some students commented that they did not want to be dealing with, or being in the classroom with, students who did not want to learn the language as they found this disruptive.

Students from both schools appeared to like and respect their teachers, with only one student commenting adversely.

Perceptions of Parents

All parents interviewed had a Greek background and were keen on the idea of children learning languages in general, and in particular, Greek. They felt that the learning of languages is something that should be strongly promoted. They saw languages as promoting world understanding and increased job opportunities in the future. They also felt that it was important for their children to learn about their heritage.

Some parents expressed concern about the school's program. They felt that the students learned more at the Greek school. One parent wanted grammar to be introduced earlier. All the parents wanted more time allocated to Greek classes. Some recognised, however, that this should not be at the expense of other subjects such as English. While parents felt that languages were important and should be encouraged, they did not want to see LOTE being made compulsory. *I would not like to see languages being pushed. It is a personal choice. Languages should be made interesting so that children choose to take on a language.* Ways to make the language interesting involved interactive activities like role-plays, class discussions and theatre.

Perceptions of Teachers

The teachers from one of the schools regarded LOTE as valuable. They felt that it added to the culture and atmosphere of the school. The loss of a language was seen to be a way of oppressing a culture. They regarded languages as important for future job opportunities and to support other subjects.
LOTE was also seen as one area in which background speakers could get good marks. This was particularly important in years 11 and 12.

They referred to the strong commitment the school had to LOTE. The teachers regarded timetabling as an important issue, especially given the small classes in years 11 and 12. They noted that LOTE was always offered, even if it was at the expense of another subject with higher student enrolments. The school has also changed the timetable structure to include an extra period in order to accommodate LOTE in years 11 and 12.

Conversely, the teacher interviewed from the other school noted the lack of commitment on the part of the school to seeing a LOTE program through to completion. The teacher argued that starting a child in a language in year 8 should bind the school to seeing the child through to year 12 rather than ‘offloading’ the students and the program to distance language learning.

As a former LOTE teacher, she also commented that the process of marketing LOTE was draining. There is a feeling that you have to go out and sell it to kids and parents to ensure the required numbers for a class. It also seemed that possibly the teacher was doing it alone, without support from the school, or, without seeking support from the school.

A teacher from the same school noted the impact of peers on student choice of language:

*If a good teacher runs a good program in any subject, it goes in a wave. Some kids will get involved and others will come with them and then it will fade and something else takes its place.*
Factors Operating Against Sustainable Greek Programs in Secondary Schools

Resources

One school had received special needs funding from the Commonwealth. This enabled them to provide small LOTE classes in years 11 and 12. With the declining numbers of students continuing with Greek into upper high school, this funding is of great value. Nonetheless, the school has experienced funding cuts. The principal noted that this has required the school to have mixed level students in the same class and forced the teacher to spend more time preparing classes. There was a sense that if this funding were withdrawn further, the future of the Greek program would be in jeopardy.

Declining Population

The issue of the decreasing numbers of Greek students at one school was identified as an emerging issue for the sustainability of the program. The program at one school was set up as a community language program in the 1970s. The percentage of Greek students in the school has decreased since then and the number of students taking Greek had fallen proportionately. The principal stated that they would know how successful its programs were by the number of students from non-Greek backgrounds taking Greek in years 11 and 12.

Competing Priorities

It was noted that students are now faced with a number of competing priorities. This included priorities within and outside of schools, and that this had led to fewer students choosing to study Greek.
Factors Promoting Sustainable Greek Programs in Secondary Schools

Supportive School Administration

Both principals expressed their commitment to LOTE. One school valued the LOTE program very highly. LOTE teachers felt supported by their colleagues and the principal. The principal was highly enthusiastic about the school's LOTE programs and praised the teachers' abilities and skills.

The program seemed to be regarded as being equally important as other subjects offered by the school, if not more important. In fact, its budget was the highest of all the departments. The school always offered LOTE subjects irrespective of how small the classes were, even if this meant another subject with a higher student enrolment could not continue. The school was actively involved in developing links with primary schools in the area in order to facilitate the transition between primary LOTE programs and the program offered at the school. Ethnic Media was also used to promote the program and the school to the broader community.

The other program was in the throes of change. Previously, more traditional European languages underpinned the program. Now, however, Modern Greek and Asian languages have been introduced. There appeared to be some ill-feeling between the LOTE staff as a consequence of these changes. One staff member believed the program would be more successful if the principal was able to encourage non-LOTE staff to promote the program. The LOTE coordinator felt that she received strong support from the principal. In referring to this support she said that: The principal must come out and say that this (LOTE) is needed and must be supported. It's not the LOTE teachers' job to do this.

A former LOTE teacher at the school noted that there was a feeling that the job of the LOTE teacher was to go out and sell the course to the students and parents. This was referred to by others in different ways, and came down to a feeling of selling your wares. It created competition between languages in the school, and created further tension.
Special Status In The School

One high school was interested in becoming a multicultural centre in the area. The program is well established; the school has been offering languages since the 1970s (Italian and Greek) and expanded its LOTE program to include Turkish and Arabic in 1990. LOTE was seen as pivotal in the development of the school's image, and the school expended resources and effort to promote the programs including liaising with local primary schools and using Ethnic Media to reach the wider community. The language resources available to the LOTE program are also extensive. They include books, newspapers, magazines, radio programs, audio-visual material and other material developed by the teachers. The faculty budget is one of the highest in the school. The principal of this school had an important role in raising the status of the LOTE programs in the school.

The other school either saw itself, or was regarded as, the ‘academic’ school in a lower socio-economic area. One of the reasons, apparently, for promoting languages was to gain enrolments of students in LOTE, and therefore, to gain status for the school.

The Student Population Base

The number of students from Greek background at the school influences the uptake of Greek. More than half the students in one Greek program were of Greek descent. The school encouraged students from LOTE backgrounds to study their language of origin. The students saw this as a way of getting better marks in year 12. Other students who were not from Greek backgrounds were taking the class because they had Greek friends who were also studying it.

Parental Support

Parents of Greek descent were very keen on their children learning the language of their origin. It was noted, however, that parents were no longer forcing their children
to study Greek. Both teachers of Greek in these schools were of Greek descent. In one school, the teacher acted as the public relations and liaison person for the school. This gave a close contact and involvement with parents, which was seen as extremely beneficial.

Role of the Teacher Beyond the LOTE Classroom

The Greek teacher at one school was highly involved in activities within the school. As well as public relations, that person had the opportunity to interact with students and staff outside LOTE classes. This had facilitated the establishment of a strong relationship between the teacher and the rest of the school's community. Students also saw the teacher in a different capacity, outside the Greek classroom. The LOTE teacher was Greek and had close contact with the parents and was active and visible in the school and community.

Promotion

One school put a considerable amount of effort into promoting the program. They actively attempted to develop links with primary feeder schools to ensure continuity of the program and raise awareness of the languages offered by the school. They also used Ethnic Media to advertise the program to a wider audience. The other school operated a number of languages, and Greek was one of those. Students in years 8 and 9 had to undertake at least one language for two years. This basically constituted a ‘captive’ audience. There was, however, a considerable ‘drop-out’ rate after year 9. Attempts had been made to promote the program internally in order to encourage students to continue with the program beyond year 9. This year, we sent a letter to successful kids at the end of year 9 and their parents, saying that they had done well, congratulating them. At the same time, there did not appear to be strong links to the immediate community or parents.
Other Issues

Purpose
Both the schools appeared to prioritise implicitly the cultural aspects of LOTE over the development of linguistic proficiency. Teachers, principals and students all mentioned the importance of LOTE for developing a broader worldview. Non-LOTE teachers noted that students did a lot of cultural stuff, like cooking and art.

Greek parents appeared to be more concerned with the need for linguistic proficiency. Some were concerned that the students weren't learning as much as they could be if they were studying at a Greek school. One parent wanted grammar to be introduced earlier in the program.

Students appeared keen to become fluent in a language. They wanted the language for travel and employment opportunities. They wanted to be able to communicate with people from other countries.

Exchanges

In contrast to students interviewed from other LOTE programs, the students from one of the institutions did not regard exchange programs favourably. They considered the Australian education to be far stronger than the Greek system, and had made the judgment that the exchange program was not an experience they felt was worthwhile.

LOTE for All

One school was looking at offering classes according to the student's skill level, rather than by year level. This was still being discussed as it will have a significant impact on the timetable. The school had a system in place where the advanced students tutored beginners. Although mixed classes were not preferred by the teachers, those classes appeared to be effective as they involved the students.
Competition with Asian Languages

There seems to be a generally held belief that Asian languages are more relevant to students than European languages. This belief did not emerge from any of the interviews conducted at the secondary schools with Greek programs in place. In one school, however, there were other languages being taught, and there was a sense that Greek was not the strongest or most popular. Students interviewed, however, were not particularly interested in an Asian language. Those interviewed in year 9 were either continuing with Greek or giving up LOTE. The other school had intended to introduce an Asian language into its LOTE program in 1997, but there was not enough student interest to make the program viable. This may be a reflection of the fact that the two programs were very much internally/community focused.

Technology

Technology was not referred to in any great detail in any of the interviews. One school did, however, have a Greek word processor and other Greek computing software.

Practical Use Of Language

There did not seem to be an attempt to integrate Greek into the wider curriculum at either of the high schools. One school devoted a lot of time to 'cultural' activities such as art and cooking, but this occurred within the LOTE program rather than across into other areas.

At one school there was considerable scope for students to use their language skills in the local community. The principal cited examples of when she applied her knowledge of the different languages in the community. She also wanted to expose the students to more Greek role models in the community by inviting a Greek professor from a university to address the students. In the other school, the use of
Greek appeared to be more because of the number of Greek people in the larger community of the city than with any local cultural ties.

**SUMMARY**

The place of Modern Greek in the schools included in this study appears very much contingent upon the support of the Greek community or on the will of the school principal. Regional demographics and the support of the Greek consulate and community have been pivotal factors in the establishment and maintenance of most of the programs investigated.

Greek community support also seems to have shaped the programs. There is an extensive focus on all things cultural, with language outcomes appearing tangential to the perceived benefits of students feeling good about their backgrounds, knowing something about their backgrounds and being tolerant of others with different backgrounds. 'Background speakerness' emerges as the essential element in the sustainability of Modern Greek programs and even then it is perceived as perhaps not being enough to guarantee the long-term continuance of these programs.
PART 3

SUMMARY
CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF UPTAKE FACTORS

SCHOOL UPTAKE

The research suggests that schools are making choices about which LOTE to offer in response to a number of questions.

Is There a Need to Adopt a Particular LOTE?

In some instances, schools have had to respond to system initiatives and policy. A particular LOTE may have been imposed on a particular school because of system level planning. In other instances, system level planning has informed choice but not necessarily determined it. A secondary school may have chosen to offer a particular LOTE because of a primary program in a local feeder school, or a school may have chosen to offer an Asian LOTE in response to policy guidelines.

The uptake of Asian LOTEs can also be explained by a perception that there are future benefits for students. It is interesting to note that this factor has not emerged from the research as strongly as was anticipated.

Cultural maintenance, and to a lesser extent linguistic maintenance, are also expressed as reasons for LOTE uptake. The existence of a background speaker population has been a significant factor in initial LOTE uptake in a number of schools included in this study. Changing demographics, however, is impacting on the sustainability of some of the programs established on this basis.

Resource Implications - How Much Won’t LOTE Cost the School?

LOTE uptake is strongly connected to resource implications for schools. There are examples of programs where the vast majority of the resourcing of the LOTE program is not borne by the school itself but comes from external agencies such as consular
authorities or secondary schools. Access to these types of externally funded programs has been a simple and cheap LOTE solution for some schools, particularly primary schools. The research suggests that programs implemented on this basis provide little of benefit to students and are not, in general, sustainable. These programs do little to enhance program sustainability at primary level, or LOTE uptake in the secondary context. This does not suggest, as will be seen later, that external support is not valuable or enhancing. It suggests, however, that strong reliance by schools on external funding is questionable practice.

LOTE as a way of providing non-contact time for the ‘normal’ classroom teacher is a common mechanism for LOTE provision. Evidence from schools involved in this study suggests that this practice mitigates against the long term status and acceptability of the program and teacher, and against successful outcomes for the schools and their students.

Korean uptake has benefited significantly from the resource allocation to schools through the Korean using Technology program. For some schools the cessation of this funding is interpreted as jeopardising the future of Korean.

The whole question of resourcing of LOTE programs is an issue of significance. The evidence suggests that schools looking to external sources for the majority of funding of LOTE programs will not achieve sustainable entities. This means that there must be an equitable level of funding in LOTE for schools, and schools must use that funding equitably on LOTE programs. The issue of internal funding is taken up shortly.

**Is There a Quick and Easy Way of Satisfying the LOTE Requirement?**

LOTE choice and its implementation in a number of schools included in this study have often been facilitated by the presence in the school community of someone perceived as being able to teach a LOTE. In instances where the designated person has demonstrated a general ability to teach prior to teaching LOTE, program sustainability is enhanced. The use of background speakers from the community with little or no credibility among students often results in weak, unsustainable programs.
LOTE uptake on this basis emphasises 'the teacher' rather than 'the LOTE'. In a number of the schools studied, the question of which LOTE to implement was very much secondary to teacher availability and continuity.

The extent to which the questions explored above are used as the decision-making mechanisms for initial LOTE uptake can have a significant impact on the shape and future of LOTE programs. Generally, where it appears that expediency outweighs rationale, the long term sustainability of any LOTE program is in question. The need for the LOTE Planning Framework developed later in this report is very apparent.

**STUDENT UPTAKE**

**The Primary School Context.**

For most students in primary schools, LOTE uptake is generally a matter of ‘doing’ the LOTE that is available as a result of someone else’s decision-making processes. For the majority of children in the early and mid-childhood years, LOTE seems pleasurable and enjoyable. Children play games, sing songs, explore aspects of culture such as food and clothing, and learn some target language words. There is very little evidence of more than this being achieved.

For early adolescent learners, there is evidence from the research to suggest that ‘doing’ LOTE as described above is inadequate and is not meeting student needs and expectations. Student feedback generally is not 'anti-LOTE'. It is usually 'anti-' doing the same things they have done for years. Older primary school LOTE learners say they want more from their study of LOTE. They want the teacher to use the target language, to really be able to use the target language themselves, to learn more about target language-speaking communities, to be treated in accord with their growing maturity and to be able to see and feel progress in their language learning.

Primary school LOTE study is, for the most part, a relatively recent educational phenomenon in Australia. In that sense, student feedback from this research can offer
a considerable amount to reflective LOTE teachers who want to provide meaningful programs which take account of all students learning a second or foreign language.

**The Secondary School Context.**

LOTE uptake by students in the secondary context is significantly influenced by primary LOTE learning experiences. The decision to either change or maintain the language of study is dependent on a number of factors which reflect previous experience and also project into the conditions of high school learning and beyond. In making choices about LOTE, students ask themselves many questions. These include:

- Do I like the teacher?
- Do I like the classroom tasks?
- Is the study of this particular LOTE interesting?
- Is it easy or hard?
- Am I making progress?
- Do I have to compete against background speakers?
- Will this LOTE be useful?

The picture painted through the research is that of students being reasonably discerning LOTE learners. The decisions they make are generally informed decisions and they have the potential to impact on LOTE sustainability.

**SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS**

A significant finding from the research is that schools are generally unclear how to support LOTE programs after putting them in place. Even in schools where there is a high degree of satisfaction, questions emerge about long-term program sustainability and about the quality of the LOTE learning outcomes for students. The research does, however, say a great deal about factors that enhance, and factors that work against, program sustainability. Although the findings reported here pertain to German,
Modern Greek, Modern Standard Chinese and Korean, the validity of the findings may well extend beyond these languages to programs for other languages other than English.

**Factors Which Enhance Sustainability**

Incorporation and acceptance as part of the general school curriculum

The research is rich in evidence supporting the notions of 'incorporation' and 'acceptance' of LOTE within the life of a school and its community as being critical to long term program sustainability. A distinction is made between ‘integration’ and ‘incorporation’. In some schools included in the study, there is evidence of LOTE being integrated into other learning areas, or of other learning areas being integrated through LOTE (for example, mathematical concepts being practised through the LOTE). The research suggests that while integration may in some instances be desirable, the notion of incorporation is far more powerful. In the case studies where the flavour of the LOTE permeates the life of the school and its community, there is a communal pride and ownership of the program and LOTE is strong.

Manifestations of this incorporation may sometimes appear to be superficial and tokenistic, as for example, food days. Taken as part of a total approach, however, which includes LOTE links through exchanges, key/pen pals, use of community members, newsletters and the like, LOTE can be perceived as high profile and meaningful, rather than as something else to be incorporated into the already crowded curriculum.

**Whole School Support**

Incorporation as an approach, however, is not enough. There has to be 'real whole school support', particularly from school administration. Evidence suggests that the most powerful factor in a sustainable LOTE program is a committed and supportive school administration.
The case studies provide indicators as to how incorporation can be achieved. For example, in schools where members of the administrative staff are actively involved in teaching the LOTE there is a strong sense of whole school support. Where timetable allocation is based on program rather than economic considerations, then outcomes for students are enhanced. In instances where there is more than one LOTE teacher, or where other teachers are actively involved in learning the LOTE with their students, programs appear more sustainable and less dependent on the personality and commitment of an individual teacher.

A ‘Good’ Teacher

The definition of what constitutes a ‘good’ LOTE teacher goes beyond the brief of this research, but the case studies included highlight the critical nature of teacher persona in program success and sustainability.

There is an overwhelming sense from the research that the ‘good’ LOTE teacher gives more than 100 per cent. There is a very significant public relations dimension to the role of the successful LOTE teacher. The establishment of in-school links (other teachers, administrators and students) together with linking to parents, community and beyond (for example, links with target language speaking communities), are part of LOTE teachers' work. The research suggests that LOTE program sustainability is often tied to the need for the LOTE teacher to do more than teachers of other learning areas and that issues of equity and work load need to be seriously considered by schools and systems.

Program sustainability is also enhanced by good pedagogy. Students interviewed as part of the research have provided significant feedback on successful LOTE teaching and learning. In the primary context early and mid-childhood years, LOTE learning focuses on games, songs, superficial expressions of culture and on single item vocabulary learning. The evidence suggests that students find this enjoyable. There is also strong evidence to suggest that for students exposed to this approach for a
number of years there is a sense of frustration. They are unable to use their language knowledge meaningfully and have little sense of progress or achievement.

The above sentiments are often echoed in the lower secondary school context. Students still want to enjoy LOTE but enjoyment is not defined through the same sorts of tasks that characterise primary school learning. Students want lower secondary programs to acknowledge and extend primary school LOTE learning. They want opportunities to develop their knowledge of language and culture and they want to be better prepared to face the demands of the upper school curriculum. In order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, the research indicates the need for a much more coordinated approach to the provision of LOTE program types and to the monitoring of student outcomes throughout all phases of schooling.

**LOTE as 'Real' and Beyond the Classroom**

The research suggests that students often feel disaffected as a result of LOTE learning not being real or meaningful. LOTE program sustainability is considerably enhanced where students use the target language in meaningful and purposeful ways, and where opportunities for language use exist beyond the LOTE classroom and school and into the local and global community.

In some instances, students are much more aware of what constitutes ‘real and meaningful’ than even the best intended of teachers. Student interviews in the research process suggest that teachers need to develop a better sense of who their learners are - both cognitively and maturationally - and be more aware of their needs and interests. This pertains particularly, but not exclusively, to boys.

Real LOTE beyond the classroom also encompasses the use of information technology in the LOTE learning environment. A number of schools included in this analysis have embraced this avenue for making LOTE real and meaningful, but a surprisingly large number of schools from the sample do very little in this regard. The research indicates significant benefits for students and schools incorporating
information technology into LOTE. With an appropriate level of resourcing, information technology provides a dimension that supports program sustainability.

External Support

External support, quite apart from financial support or the provision of teachers through funding outside normal departmental or Government allocations, also emerges as a sustainability factor. Schools need adequate resourcing to provide LOTE programs, adequate being defined as equitable with other areas in the curriculum. Additional support from external agencies such as the National Korean Studies Centre or from consular authorities can assist with LOTE provision. Additional non-monetary external support is seen as useful.

The wider school community needs to know about, and support LOTE. The research suggests that the wider school community is often not particularly well informed about LOTE - about the nature of particular LOTE programs, about the expectations they should have of their children’s achievement, or even about the benefits of learning a LOTE. Parents interviewed who spoke a second or subsequent language were much stronger advocates of LOTE learning than their monolingual counterparts. The influence of friendship with a target language speaking student or individual also emerges from the research as a mechanism for providing external LOTE learning support.

FACTORS WHICH WORK AGAINST SUSTAINABILITY

Lack of clarity of purpose

One of the most significant findings of the research is the inability of schools to clearly articulate the purpose or purposes of their LOTE programs. These seemed tied to a lack of clarity of expectations or outcomes. There is a quite remarkable lack of clarity with regard to intended program outcomes for both students and schools. Within the primary context, program purpose seems to have become, de facto, the provision of fun and entertainment for students, together with limited cultural
awareness. In part, this can be explained by time allocation and what is considered feasible within that allocation. There also appears to be, however, little recognition at the primary level of the need for LOTE learning to be continuous and cumulative if an ability to communicate in the LOTE is the intended outcome. If an ability to communicate is not the intended outcome, then there needs to be clarification so that all stakeholders have a better sense of what primary LOTE learning really means.

Program purpose continues to be confused and unclear in the lower secondary sample. The purpose of upper secondary programs is, however, abundantly clear - to enable students to pass tertiary entrance examinations. There may, in fact, be little correlation between this purpose statement and the ability of students to communicate in the target language, but there is at least some commonality of purpose for all stakeholders. This commonality needs to be made clear at all levels of LOTE learning, so parents, students and other staff in a school are abundantly clear about expectations and outcomes.

The research findings indicates that, while systems may be clear about why students are learning LOTE, purpose has not been effectively translated to schools and communities with the resultant situation being that too often, many years of LOTE learning (primary and lower secondary) takes place in a purpose vacuum.

The ‘Part Timeness’ of LOTE

The research reveals that the lack of purpose is often a reflection of, and compounded by, the ‘part-timeness’ of many LOTE teachers. Teachers who work part time, or who work part time in a particular school, sometimes find it difficult to include both themselves and the LOTE within the life of a school. It is often particularly difficult for teachers to be a force in the decision-making processes of a school when they are constrained by limited access. The research shows clearly that a lack of presence in decision making works against program sustainability.
Dependence on External Funding

A theme running through the research was an expectation on the part of school administrators that LOTE would continue to be supported by additional funding from some source. Even with healthy programs, there appeared to be a reliance on extra funding and resourcing and a reluctance to treat the resourcing of LOTE in the same way as the resourcing of areas like mathematics and English. While decision-makers and administrators in schools continue to perceive LOTE as ‘extra’ and always dependent on external funding, program sustainability will be an issue.

Competing Demands

Within primary school communities, remarks about competing demands for curriculum space were not uncommon. The determination and management of school priorities and offerings, including the incorporation of LOTE, presents itself as an area where schools are not particularly comfortable or adept. If LOTE is seen as 'competing' rather than being integral and accepted then sustainability will be threatened. In simple terms, until LOTE is seen as equal in status with, and funded in the same way as, subjects like science, mathematics and English, it will struggle to ‘find a place in the sun’.

Within the secondary context there was evidence of a need to rationalise LOTE offerings. In other words, the proliferation of possible languages to be taught needs to weighed against a host of factors, not the least being the availability of competent staff to undertake the teaching. The incorporation of Asian languages into the curriculum offerings of secondary schools may mean the non-sustainability of a current LOTE, which begs questions of the futures of teachers of LOTEs which ‘disappear’. Schools need to make decisions about which LOTEs to retain, but they need to make them in consultation with parents, staff and students, and with all available information.
Multi-level Learning

Another powerful theme running through the research is the complication of multi-level and mixed ability classes. Inability to address this area effectively will impact on the sustainability of LOTE programs. The needs of both background and non-background speakers must be met in LOTE programs, as must the needs of students who have different experiences of the language being studied. The research suggests that many LOTE teachers are somewhat daunted by having to deal with this level of complexity within the curriculum and within their own classrooms. There is a clear message from the research that schools and teachers need to develop mechanisms and strategies that will enable all students to achieve meaningful outcomes in their study of a LOTE.

Progress and Perceptions

The sustainability of LOTE programs is also hindered by perceptions about educational progress or attainment in the language, and perceptions about LOTE in general. Older students express concern about having little sense of progress in their LOTE learning. Some parents, however, are often relatively unconcerned about progress or course outcomes (if they know them) because LOTE is perceived as unimportant.

Parental perception of LOTE is also subject to the vagaries of politics and the global economy. At a particular point in time Korean may appear attractive because of trade links, Chinese may be less appealing because of a lack of knowledge about China and Greek may appear to be totally irrelevant both politically and economically. A single event or a global trend can change these perceptions and thus impact on program sustainability.
SUMMARY

The research has identified factors pertaining to the uptake and sustainability of the individual languages of German, Modern Greek, Korean and Modern Standard Chinese. The circumstances for each language show some difference, but there are also shared experiences and problems. A review of the literature on the uptake of these languages identified confusion of purpose as a significant issue. This study confirms that uptake and program sustainability are contingent to a large extent on the purposes of LOTE learning being defined and made clear for all the stakeholders of a school community. Issues associated with pedagogy emerge from the literature review and are also reflected in this research. Appropriate pedagogy for diverse learners and for the different phases of schooling are significant factors for LOTE program sustainability. The school environment is also identified, through the literature and by this research, as being critical to program sustainability.

A review of the findings of this research confirms and extends the findings from the literature review. Factors which support, and factors that work against LOTE program sustainability are clearly identified. For this information to be useful, however, systems and schools require a framework to support the uptake and maintenance of LOTE programs. Such a framework will be the subject of further work.
REFERENCES


RESEARCHERS

The principal researchers for this project were Flavia Campos, Dave Goddard, John Hogan, Nick Norris, Geoff Stewart and Gail Thomas. The writers, Dave Goddard, Lindy Norris and Natalía Norris gratefully acknowledge their commitment, advice and work in this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge the interest and support of schools in the various jurisdictions that were so willingly part of this research. The cooperation from principals, LOTE teachers, students and their parents made the task of collecting data both informative and pleasurable. Because we gave a guarantee of confidentiality to those involved, we believe we cannot name the schools or people involved. The best we can say is: 'You know who you are, and we thank you sincerely!'

We thank all the various jurisdictions, and particularly the senior LOTE officer and the staff of various LOTE curriculum and support branches in each State and Territory, for their support and cooperation.

We are immensely grateful to the NALSAS committee members, some of whom acted as reference group members in more than one area of this research. Their wisdom and their willingness to question and challenge contributed greatly to extending our thinking on terms of the research.

Finally, we extend our appreciation to the Education Department of Western Australia, and officers in the LOTE area of that department, for the inspiration behind this research and the opportunity to undertake it.

While we have drawn on the ideas and wisdom of many people, and are grateful to them, we acknowledge that the contents of this report remain our work and responsibility, and ours alone.

Dave Goddard

Nick Norris

SIMPSON NORRIS INTERNATIONAL PTY LTD

7 April, 1998
APPENDIX A

SCHOOL PROFILE INSTRUMENT
LOTE PROJECT

SCHOOL:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: FAX:

CONTACT PERSON:

School Type: Year Levels:

Rural/Metropolitan
Government/Non-Government
Gender specific/Co-educational

Number of Teachers: M F
Number of Students: M F

Description of Student Population:

Description of local community (eg socio-economic characteristics):

What are the major ethnic groups in your school? What is the student population in each of these major groups?
How many students in this school have a home background in (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

Are there other LOTES reflected in the backgrounds of students in this school?

Was the decision to offer (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) based on background speakers in this community?

What are the languages being offered in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LOTE A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Background speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LOTE B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Background speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LOTE C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Background speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the teaching mode of delivery (eg face-to-face, distance education, telematics, etc.)?

How do students select their LOTE?

What is the LOTE Policy in your School?

Are you familiar with the Education Department of WA LOTE 2000 Plan? If so, do you follow a similar LOTE Plan? What is the timeline to implement this Plan in your school?

List any special programs operating in your school.

Please add any additional information that you consider relevant.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
If available, please provide the following documents:
School profile
LOTE department profile
School Development Plans - from 1994 to present
Curriculum Handbook
Selection Sheets
Subject Timetable
LOTE Department policy.
LOTE Department plan.
LOTE Department programs.
Any other document which you think may be of interest to this research project.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENTS
**Interview Principal, Deputy Principal (Timetable)**

Preamble, explain project, request to tape and permission for research.

How do you feel about the LOTE program in this school at the moment?

How has this state of affairs come to pass. Please outline the history of LOTE in this school over the last 5 years. What has happened?

What are the factors affecting the offering of LOTE in this school? (provide some prompts if necessary, eg political position in the State).

What are the factors affecting the uptake by students of LOTE in this school? (eg student choice, gridlines, year ...)

How does all this relate to the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) language? (if necessary, repeat the questions above with reference to (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)

What would it take to strengthen the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) program in this school? What would you do to build up the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) program? What do you think would need to happen to get (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) happening?

What support does the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) teacher get in this school?

Is the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) teacher a background speaker? If not, how did he/she get their knowledge of (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

How did he/she get their knowledge of LOTE teaching methodology?

Are other LOTE teachers background speakers? If not, how did they get their knowledge of the LOTE and of LOTE teaching methodology?

Thank you.
Interview LOTE Chinese/Korean teacher

Preamble, explain project, request to tape and permission for research.

How do you feel about the LOTE program in this school at the moment?

How has this state of affairs come to pass. Please outline the history of LOTE in this school over the last 5 years. What has happened?

What are the factors affecting the offering of LOTE in this school? (provide some prompts if necessary, eg political position in the State).

What are the factors affecting the uptake by students of LOTE in this school? (eg student choice, gridlines, year ...)

How does all this relate to the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) language?

What would it take to strengthen the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) program in this school? What would you do to build up the program? What do you think would need to happen to get (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) happening?

What support do you get in this school?

What actually happens in (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) classes? What is your approach to (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)? How would you describe yourself as a (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) teacher?

What tasks do the students undertake in studying LOTE? Are there any special features of the program that you would like to describe?


Are you a (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) background speaker? If not, how did you get your knowledge of (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

How did you get your knowledge of LOTE teaching methodology?

Are other LOTE teachers background speakers? If not, how did they get their knowledge of the LOTE and of LOTE teaching methodology?
Questions for workshop with students

Preamble, explain project, request to tape and permission for research.

FEELINGS
How do you feel about studying a language? (Some people have deep feelings about wanting to study a language and some have just as deep feelings about not studying one, and there are a range of feelings in between. All of them are okay. We just want to know what your feelings are.) Do you like studying the language? Why/why not?

DECISIONS
What influenced your decision to study or not study (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

Whose decision was it for the student to take up or not take up the language?

How was the decision made? Who do you talk to? What information did you get? Who influenced you?

Did you feel you had enough information on which to make your decision?

Did you feel you had enough choice to make your decision?

IN CLASS
What do you do in language classes?

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING (CHINESE, KOREAN, MODERN GREEK OR GERMAN)
If you were going to keep studying this language, or if you want to drop it, what would keep you going?
QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Preamble, explain project, request to tape and permission for research.

FEELINGS
How do you feel about your child studying a language? (Some people have deep feelings about wanting to study a language and some have just as deep feelings about not studying one, and there are a range of feelings in between. All of them are okay. We just want to know what your feelings are.)

How do you feel about your child studying (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

DECISIONS
What influenced your child's decision to study or not study (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German)?

Whose decision was it for your child to take up or not take up the language?

How was the decision made? Who did you talk to? What information did you get? Who influenced you?

Did you feel you had enough information on which to make your decision?

Did you feel you had enough choice to make your decision?

IN CLASS
How much do you know about what happens in language classes?

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING CHINESE/KOREAN
What would you do to improve/build up the (Chinese, Korean, Modern Greek or German) language in this school?

If your child were going to keep studying this language, or if you want to drop it, what would keep you going?