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15. MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Exploring Students' Motivations Concerning Elective Second Language Learning

Recent research indicates that the teaching of languages other than English (LOTE) in schools is again becoming an increasingly valued feature of education curricula throughout Australia (Lo Bianco, 2009), and recognises the importance of introducing languages at an early age to ensure that students are able to “effectively participate in a globalised world” (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, cited in Group of Eight [Go8], 2007, p. 3). The study of languages is stated as a key area in the Australian Curriculum with the rationale that it is “a core component of the educational experience of all Australian students” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2009, p. 3).

Despite the scholarly recognition of its value, Australia’s languages education is reportedly struggling due to neglect and inaction (Clyne, Pauwels, & Sussex, 2007). Recent research indicates steady decreases in the number of languages offered for study and the number of students who choose to enrol in language classes (Go8, 2007). The initial attrition rate from Year 8 to 9 is the largest and student enrolments continue to decline through to Year 12, with the percentage of students graduating with a second language falling from forty per cent in the 1960s to thirteen per cent in the late 2000s (Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990; Go8, 2007). All of the past language policies have failed to reach their stated goals, leading to Lo Bianco (2009) explaining that “Australia has an impressive record of policy development and program innovation in second language education, but a relatively poor record for consistency of application and maintenance of effort” (p. 6).

These issues became the initial basis for my interest in researching second language motivation, and the specific purpose of a Bachelor of Education Honours project undertaken in 2011 was to explore students’ motivations for learning a second language as an elective subject in senior secondary school (Clayton, 2011). This interest led to the commencement of my Doctor of Philosophy in 2013, and this chapter outlines how my Honours study has informed and shaped my current Doctoral studies along with the application of a new theoretical framework by Zoltán Dörnyei (2005), the *L2 Motivational Self System*. This chapter begins with a brief review of the literature outlining the history of L2 motivational research. The Honours study is then detailed, with a summary of the findings, followed by the

proposal of the current Doctorate study. While no data has yet been collected, this proposal describes the future of educational research in the second language learning field, and as such fits the theme “where next?” upon which this book is based.

SECOND LANGUAGE MOTIVATIONAL RESEARCH

There is a long history of second language (L2) motivational research, with more than 50 years of continuous research, which involved a number of developments. Dörnyei (2005) explains that this history can be divided into three phases: the social psychological period (1959–1990), which is characterised by Gardner and his associates’ work in Canada; the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), characterised by research drawing upon cognitive theories in educational psychology; and the process-oriented period (2000 to current) which is characterised by work initiated by Dörnyei, Ushioda and their colleagues in Europe, with an interest in motivational change.

The social psychological period began when the earliest theories of L2 motivation were developed by Gardner and Lambert in 1959, where they introduced the concept of integrative and instrumental orientation (Nicholson, 2013). They postulated that there were two types of motivation that could be applied to L2 learning and described them as integrative and instrumental. An integrative orientation describes a learner who is interested in the culture of the language group and being accepted as a member of the other community. The form of instrumental orientation describes learners who are studying the language for material purposes such as career advancement, and reflects a utilitarian value of linguistic achievement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). According to Dörnyei (1994a), Gardner and Lambert set a high standard for L2 motivation research, grounding their research in a social psychological framework and developing standardised assessment techniques and instruments.

Although Gardner’s motivation construct did not go unchallenged over the years, it was not until the early 1990s that the domination was seen to have created the problem of an unbalanced field, and a shift in thinking occurred as new concepts began to be considered. A provocative paper was written by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) to re-open the research agenda and consider new approaches, and Ushioda (2001) explains that “it was the year 1994 that witnessed the principal response to this call, through a resurgence of discussion and debate in a series of articles published in *The Modern Language Journal*” (p. 93) (see Dörnyei, 1994a, 1994b; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a, 1994b; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). There was growing discontent with Gardner’s theory outside bilingual contexts, as the relevance of integrativeness was questioned for foreign language learning, where there was no target community with which learners could assimilate. The growing dominance of English as a world language also supported this argument, as to which target community does English belong? One of many researchers becoming dissatisfied as a result of these issues, Dörnyei (2010) suggests that the metaphor

of integrativeness was seen to become too generalised, with the lack of target communities undermining Gardner's concept. Dörnyei (1994a) explains that in this cognitive-situated period, a more education based approach was called for: one that was grounded in the foreign language classroom and in line with mainstream educational psychological research.

There were two broad trends which characterised this period: the desire to expand understanding of L2 motivation by importing concepts from the advances made in motivation psychology; and the desire to adopt a micro perspective of L2 motivation as it occurs in actual learning situations. Gardner's theory remained as a macro perspective against which the patterns of motivation for whole learning communities could be characterised and compared (Dörnyei, 2005). In the last 16 years, since the process-oriented period began in 2000, research has been turned towards cognitive aspects of motivation to learn languages, which was not included in Gardner's model. Dörnyei (1998) asserts that "L2 motivation is a complex, multifaceted construct, and that the diverse approaches highlight different aspects of this complexity. Thus, they do not necessarily conflict, but rather enrich our understanding ... provided they are properly integrated" (p. 117). The latest development in L2 motivational research is the L2 Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei, which aims to provide another framework for those dissatisfied with the relevance of Gardner's model in the twenty-first century.

Dörnyei (2009) explains that "[t]he L2 Motivational Self System represents a major reformation of previous motivational thinking by its explicit utilisation of psychological theories of the self, yet its roots are firmly set in previous research in the L2 field" (p. 9). This theory occurred through the combined effects of significant theoretical developments in the field of L2 research and mainstream psychology (Dörnyei, 2009). The *Self* is a popular concept in psychology (Markus & Ruvulo, 1989; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Cantor, 1990; Higgins, 1987; for a review of recent self theories see Leary, 2007), and although interest in it dwindled for some time, there was resurgence in the study of self and identity in the 1970s and 1980s (Leary, 2007). The study of *possible selves* and *future self-guides* from the field of psychology are most related to motivation and are successfully applied in educational contexts (Dörnyei, 2005). The more recent concepts of self are based on theories of self-motives, which Leary (2007) explains are approaches that "assume that human thought and action are affected by motives to maintain or promote certain kinds of self-images" (p. 318). The L2 Motivational Self System draws on the seminal paper of Markus and Nurius (1986), the work of Higgins (1987, 1998, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005), Gardner's (1985) theory of integrativeness, and motivational studies throughout the 1990s that recognised the motivation impacts of the classroom learning situation (Dörnyei, 1994a). The system also creates links between two more recent conceptualisations of L2 motivation by Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001), with Dörnyei (2005) describing that the two models "converge in a broad pattern of three main dimensions of L2 motivation, and if we compare this

pattern with Gardner's original theoretical model we also find striking similarities" (p. 105). Thus, in 2005, Dörnyei proposed the three components that comprised the L2 Motivational Self System in an attempt to synthesise Noels' (2003) and Ushioda's (2001) paradigms:

- *Ideal L2 Self* – one's L2-specific 'ideal self' which is a powerful motivating factor due to the desire to reduce the discrepancy between the present and future self. Traditional integrative and internalised instrumental motives correlate to this component.
- *Ought-to L2 Self* – the self that one thinks one ought to be to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes. This component refers to Higgins' (1987, as cited in Dörnyei, 2009) ought self and more extrinsic types of instrumental motives.
- *L2 Learning Experience* – motives related to the impact of the learning environment and learners' experiences, such as the teacher, peers, curriculum and levels of success. This component is conceptualised at a different level from the two self-guides, as it is a bottom-up process in which initial motivations come from successful engagement with the L2 learning process and thus initiate the possible self image (Dörnyei, 2009).

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System is the framework for analysing the data from my Doctoral study and helping to understand students' motivations concerning languages learning. Dörnyei's theory has been chosen due to its value to the Australian context of second language learning. In Australia, an island country, there is a lack of contact with target language communities; apart from the learning of Indigenous languages, all second language learning can be described as foreign language learning (FLL). A number of researchers argue that this prevents Gardner's (1959) theory of integrativeness from being effectively applied in similar contexts (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). To overcome this, while Dörnyei acknowledges the importance of Gardner's concept in his new theory, he makes it more relevant to second language learners globally, regardless of contact with a target community, and this more neatly fits the context of second language learning in Australia. The L2 Motivational Self System provides an analytical framework that is especially relevant to Tasmania, which as the only island state, experiences even stronger isolation from other cultures and target communities. This theory is gaining strong popularity in research in other countries (Al-Shehri, 2009; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Lamb, 2012; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Yashima, 2009) however is yet to be used in any Australian studies apart from 2 qualitative studies by Schmidt (2014a; 2014b). Furthermore, no studies in Tasmania have investigated the attrition gap between Years 8 and 9, so using a motivational theory to explore subject choice is timely and relevant, and as a doctorate study is well-suited to fill this research gap. The use of this framework assists in developing a more sophisticated understanding of student motivation in regard to second language learning than is possible in a small-scale honours study.

THE HONOURS PROJECT

In developing my Honours literature review, I discovered a gap in the scholarly research on student perceptions of the value of LOTE and the efficacy of programmes designed to accommodate this value in the curriculum. Understanding students' perceptions of the value of LOTE, their motivations to learn other languages, and their expectations concerning participation in such programmes is fundamental to a cohesive approach to the resolution of this gap. While previous studies (Chambers, 1999; Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council [ACSSO & APC], 2007) had explored students' perceptions of learning a second language in some states of Australia and overseas, little research has been conducted in Tasmania. According to Ashman and Lê (2007) second language learning is extremely important in Tasmania as it "empowers our community and lessens the cultural and linguistic isolation that we experience as a state with a small population" (p. 8), with these factors also setting Tasmania apart from other Australian states. The study focused explicitly on the French language, in part due to my keen interest in the language, as well as the noted decline in traditional languages such as French, and the fact that, of the four senior secondary colleges situated in the North West of Tasmania, three of them offered a French language class as an elective subject.

My Honours study explored students' perceptions of learning French at senior secondary college through an exploration of three dimensions: their motivations, their expectations and their experiences. It was a mixed methods study designed to generate a rich understanding of these phenomena in the North West of Tasmania, with an invitation to participate extended to the entire population of students studying French as an elective in senior secondary colleges in North West Tasmania. This demographic spread allowed a region-specific insight into student perceptions of learning French, and provided data from public and independent school systems. An in-class paper survey was used to gather quantitative data, which was derived from the literature and was consistent with the previous studies by ACSSO & APC (2007) and Chambers (1999). Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics focused on frequency counts based on measures of central tendency using Likert scale responses, which allowed the researcher to identify the incidence of and ordinal relations among prominent phenomenological themes as they emerged from the data. This is consistent with the method of analysis employed by Chambers' (1999) study.

Of the 28 students who participated in the survey, nine were aged 16 years (32%), 13 were aged 17 years (46%), five were aged 18 years (18%), and one mature aged student was 55 years of age (4%). Six students were male (21%) compared to 22 female students (79%). Sixteen students were in Year 11 (59%), while 11 students were in Year 12 (41%). Ten students were enrolled at a government school (36%) compared to 18 who were enrolled at an independent school (64%). Of the participants, 25 (89%) students had studied French previously compared to three

(11%) students who had no prior experience. When asked if they had ever had the opportunity to hear French used outside school, 23 students (82%) answered yes, while five students (18%) said they had not. Twenty-five students (89%) knew at least one French person compared to three students (11%) who knew no native French people. Of those who did, 19 students (68%) knew someone who spoke French as their mother tongue. When asked to indicate their parents' French language knowledge on a Likert scale, the responses showed that the majority of students believed that their parents had little knowledge of the language (mother: 22 responses of 'none' and five responses of 'a little'; father: 27 responses of 'none', one response of 'a little'). Only one student's mother was believed to have a good knowledge of the French language, being ranked one less score than 'fluent'.

A focus group interview schedule was developed using the prominent themes that emerged from the analysis of survey data and was conducted in two schools, one government and one independent. The focus groups were conducted during students' class time, with the intention that the first six students to volunteer on the day the interviews were conducted were chosen to participate. This was the case in one school, however, in the other school the entire class volunteered to participate. To capitalise on the willingness of participants and collect more qualitative data, I chose to conduct two focus groups in this school: one with the pre-tertiary students and one with the non-pre-tertiary students. Qualitative focus group data were coded thematically and analysed within a broadly phenomenological framework ('broadly' insofar as, while the analysis did not extend to a full phenomenological reduction of data per se, I did seek to reveal the participants' most direct, lived experience of language learning). This framework sought narrative elements that conveyed the participants' direct lived experience of the phenomena associated with subject choice, learning expectations and class experiences. The findings of this study are presented below (Figure 1).

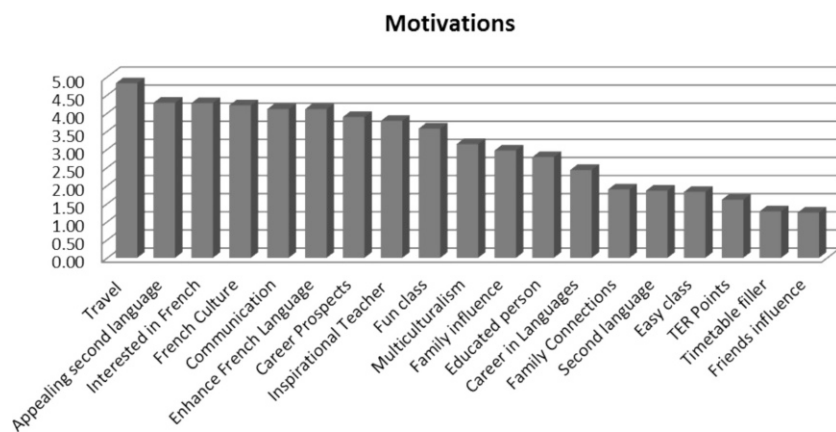


Figure 1. Student motivations for choosing to learn French at college

Motivations for Studying French

Travel was the most popular motivation for students to choose to learn French at school, with an average score of 4.82. Regardless of language choice, this is consistent with previous studies of Asian languages, as according to Kertesz (2011) “travel is the overwhelming motivation among students in Tasmania” (p. 10). During the focus group interviews many students expressed their desire to travel, both those who had never travelled and those who already had the experience. One student explained that “once I’d been to France I realised that I didn’t know enough so I wanted to learn more”. This was followed by the motivations that French was an appealing language (4.29) and students had an interest in the French language (4.28). Learning the French culture, enhancing current French language skills and being able to communicate were all also highly motivating factors. Again, this is consistent with previous studies on Asian languages (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010; Kertesz, 2011). The focus group interviews revealed that a number of students believed it to be beneficial to be multilingual, while another student added that the popularity of the language also influenced their decision. A few students discussed learning about the culture of France as a motivation, with one saying “it’s interesting to get an idea of their culture and just to learn another language”. One of the least motivating factors was the Tertiary Entrance Rank points (TER, now known as Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR]), with an average score of 1.6. It emerged from the qualitative data that this was because the points were low and difficult to get, with one student summarising, “I’m not counting on French to be one of the subjects that goes towards my points, it’s just a subject I wanted to do”. Other low motivations included friends’ influence (1.25), timetable filler (1.29) and the belief that it would be an easy class (1.82).

According to Lo Bianco (2009), it is often assumed that students who choose to learn a second language are motivated by employment opportunities, and the report by ACSSO & APC (2007) found that students believed having a second language would be advantageous when applying for employment. Despite the ACSSO & APC (2007) findings, in this study responses relating to general career prospects and a specific career in languages were ranked seventh and thirteenth respectively, which is reflected in one student’s statement, “I’m not going anywhere with French”. This is consistent with findings from Kertesz (2011) where teachers believed that regardless of ability, students were unlikely to continue their languages learning if they did not see it being relevant to their career pathway.

Expectations and Experiences

Limited or no literature exists concerning student expectations of or experiences in learning French, so these dimensions are discussed more generally and in relation to the context of this study. The data obtained from the Honours study correlated well with students’ expectations and experiences. The quantitative data revealed

only small increases or decreases of the mean score for students' rating of their experiences compared to their initial expectations. The qualitative data have been grouped according to the main themes which emerged from the analysis, and this allows a direct comparison of students' expectations and experiences.

Quantitative Data

As shown in [Figure 2](#), most students found that the teacher was knowledgeable with an average score of 4.64, which was slightly less than the average score of their expectations (4.71). Many students also found that the class was more interesting than they had initially expected, with an average score of 4.39, which was an increase of 0.45, while students' expectations and experiences of their enjoyment of the class had the same average score of 4.25. In relation to learning about the culture of France, students' experience was nearly identical to their expectation, with only a 0.04 decrease to a mean score of 4.00. Students found that the class was marginally less difficult than they had expected with an experience average score of 3.89, which was a decrease of 0.04. This was a similar result for homework, as students indicated that they received less than they initially expected, with a mean score of 3.25, which was a decrease of 0.14. Many students had indicated that they did not expect to be able to master the language, and from their experiences the mean score decreased further to 2.46, a difference of 0.20, suggesting that students were indeed finding it difficult to master the French language. However, from their experiences, students discovered that the class was somewhat easier than they had expected, with an increase in mean score of 0.28 to 1.82. The following graph represents the increases and decreases in mean scores for students' expectations and experiences:

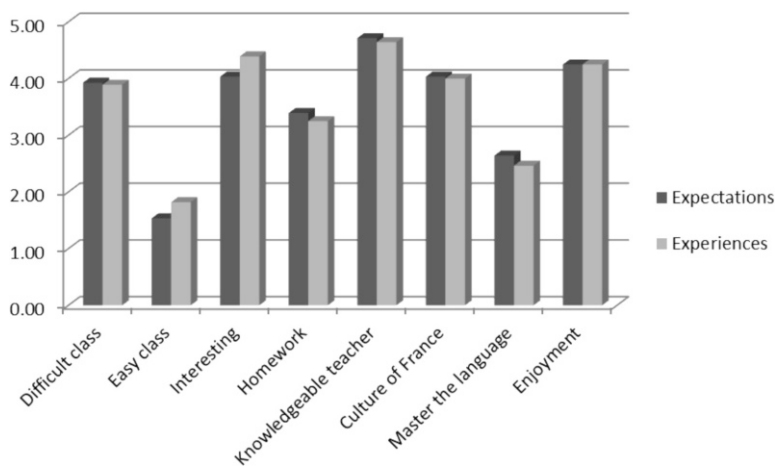


Figure 2. Comparison of students' expectations and experiences of learning French

Qualitative Data

The most common theme which students discussed in the focus group interviews was the level of difficulty of French, which led to the discussion of it being a more demanding subject. As shown above, from the quantitative data most students discovered that learning French was slightly less difficult than they had originally expected. During the focus group interviews some students agreed with this response while others disagreed, believing it to be harder than they expected. According to Kertesz (2011) students' perceptions of language difficulty are the key factor in enrolment decline for Asian languages once the subject is no longer compulsory, with many perceiving it to be a subject of high difficulty. It is important to note the difference in students' perceptions of difficulty, as one student's perception of difficulty may be different from that of another student. Students who found French to be less difficult may have had extremely high perceptions of the level of difficulty compared to those who may have had a low perception and therefore found it to be harder than expected. Of the 28 participants in the survey, when asked to indicate on a Likert scale how much French their parents knew, 22 students indicated that their mother knew none, while 27 participants indicated none for their father. Five students believed that their mother knew a little bit of French while only one student indicated the same for their father. Only one student's mother was believed to have a good knowledge of the French language, being ranked one less score than fluent. However, 19 of the 28 students knew someone who spoke French as their first language. This may have impacted on their perceived levels of difficulty. In relation to this, the focus group data does seem to indicate that students found learning French difficult at least partly in proportion to their commitment to its worth as a subject and, hence, their motivations to choose it as an elective.

The findings from this study are significant in their alignment with the current literature regarding students' motivations (ACSSO & APC, 2007; Chambers, 1999; de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010; Kertesz, 2011). The opportunity to design another study in this area came in the form of deciding to continue my studies by completing my Doctorate. The significance of the enrolment decline after compulsory languages study encouraged me to deepen the research of this topic to investigate students' choice of whether or not they choose an elective second language subject after completing Year 8. My Doctoral study is outlined below.

THE DOCTORAL STUDY

Results from the Honours study clearly demonstrate the values held by students who choose to study French as an elective at senior secondary school. The literature readings from the Honours study generated my interest in the current problems of languages education in Australia, and these ongoing issues guide the investigation of my Doctoral study. While the findings of the Honours study were valuable, the time constraints required a small scale project, whereas it is now possible to conduct

a deeper and more sophisticated study at a doctorate level. Discovering Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System has also had a significant impact on the way I have designed my Doctoral study, as it allows me to explore students' motivations concerning second language learning using a prior framework in the new context of languages education in Tasmania with the aim of investigating the research gap of student attrition between Years 8 and 9 via students' motivation regarding subject choice. Dörnyei (2009) explains that a number of quantitative studies, conducted by other researchers and specifically designed to test and validate his new theory, found that there was solid confirmation for the L2 Motivational Self System. Recent studies, which have tested Dörnyei's theory, include Sampson (2012), Lamb (2012), Ryan (2009), and Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009). In Australia, Schmidt (2014) recently used Dörnyei's (2005) system in a qualitative study of university students learning German, however there appears to be no research conducted in Tasmania using this new system.

The main aim of the Doctoral study is to investigate the reasons why students do or do not choose a second language subject as an elective at school. This study will broaden the participant sample to students in Years 9 to 12, as research highlights the dramatic decline in enrolment figures post Year 8 once languages study is no longer compulsory, and which continue to decline up to Year 12 (Baldauf & Lawrence, 1990). It is important to consider that there would be students who desired to choose a language elective but were unable to do so for a number of reasons. This issue relates directly to the significance of my Doctoral study, as this research will assist stakeholders to identify the barriers to languages learning that students experience in their education. Identification of these barriers, such as lesson timetabling, availability of languages, and the language culture of the school, and their analysis in relation to Dörnyei's framework, will enable stakeholders to address these barriers. This study is significant because understanding why students do or do not choose languages as part of their education will inform policy, curriculum and pedagogy reform. Providing a description of current language learning in schools will enable stakeholders to provide a better experience for their students based on the responses that emerge from the data, therefore students who already choose language electives will receive a better educational experience while those students who currently do not choose a language may be encouraged to do so. Understanding students' motivation or demotivation may encourage stakeholders to enhance and create a supportive school language community to demonstrate the value of language subjects to their students which Kertesz (2011) suggests is an important factor in motivation. This study will investigate the problem of declining language enrolments post Year 8.

Similar to the Honours study, the methodology for my Doctoral study is a broadly phenomenological, mixed methods approach. The term 'broadly' is used here to indicate that this will not be a pure phenomenological study, however a phenomenological reduction will be performed on the qualitative data to provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon of choosing languages as an elective subject.

Bryman (2008) defines mixed methods as “research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single project” (p. 603) where each method is as important to the project as the other and the data from each is “mutually illuminating” (p. 603). Recent mixed methods studies in language motivation include Ham (2008), Busse and Williams (2010), Lamb (2004), and Sampson (2012). My Doctoral study uses explanatory design, which is a linear process whereby quantitative data is enriched by qualitative data (Creswell, 2012).

A state-wide survey will be conducted, with the entire eligible population invited to participate (subject to school cooperation). The population consists of students in Years 9 to 12, who are enrolled in Tasmanian schools (Department, Catholic and Independent) and have the option to study a second language elective subject. The survey consists of an online questionnaire that will take approximately twenty minutes to complete and will be undertaken by students in their personal time. Students will be given the opportunity to enter a random draw for one of five iTunes vouchers worth twenty dollars as an incentive for their participation. The questionnaire will collect data regarding attitude to school, subject choice and languages perceptions, as well as demographic and factual data. The questionnaire will be anonymous; however students will have the option of self-selecting to participate in the follow-up focus groups. By doing so, these students will need to provide their names, home group class and school so that they can be identified for possible selection for the focus groups. Therefore, the data of students who self-select for the focus groups will not be anonymous. The questionnaire will be designed based largely on the instrument designed for Zammit’s (1992) nation-wide ACER study, with some inclusions from Dörnyei and Taguchi’s (2010) and Busse and Williams’ (2010) questionnaires of items regarding Ideal L2 and Ought-to L2 selves.

Semi-structured focus group interviews will then be conducted based on survey data and the interview schedule used in Busse and Williams’ (2010) study. Five small focus groups will be held across the state with students to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the discussions will be informed by the survey results. The focus groups will occur in schools, and I will travel to the research sites to conduct the groups face to face. Focus groups will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes and be scheduled during school hours at suitable times as discussed with school principals and teachers. Focus groups will be formed based on the data from the survey, with selected schools invited to participate once they have been identified after the data analysis.

The method of interviewing individual students to collect further qualitative data has been included to capitalise on any unfolding events that occur in the focus groups. Students who appear to have interesting experiences that would provide a richer, more detailed description of the phenomenon of second language learning, or where there are issues of sensitivity, will be invited to participate in an individual interview to further explore their perceptions. Interviews are expected to take approximately thirty minutes and will be scheduled during school hours at an appropriate time as organised with the principals and teachers. I will travel to each research site to

conduct the interviews face to face with the participants, in an open setting visible to other staff members.

Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics to measure central tendency and dispersion, while qualitative data will be analysed using a phenomenological reduction and content analysis. Both sets of data will be further analysed applying Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System to categorise students' motivations. Institutional barriers and other factors that fall outside of Dörnyei's theory will be accounted for in the data analysis.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined my Honours study and discussed how this led to the current development of my Doctoral study that is presently being undertaken. The Honours study aimed to elicit students' motivations, expectations and experiences of learning elective French at senior secondary school. The key findings from the Honours study were the following common themes which aligned with the literature. Travel was the most prominent theme in the motivation aspect, followed by the perception of French as an appealing and interesting language and the interest in French culture. The common themes which emerged from students' expectations of their French class were that it would be difficult, fun and interesting, and that the teacher would be knowledgeable. These common themes correlated well to those of students' experiences, suggesting that students experienced to a large degree what they had initially expected. Due to the nature of an Honours project, time was a huge constraint, therefore the Doctorate study demonstrates a deeper and more sophisticated level of research to attempt to understand students' motivations when choosing or not choosing a second language as an elective subject at school. The problem of declining enrolments remains a major concern, and my Doctoral study has the opportunity to provide valuable and timely data regarding students' perceptions of second language learning and thus the choices that they make, enabling stakeholders to address issues of demotivation and barriers to languages learning. This has the significance of informing policy, curriculum and pedagogy reform. Little research has been done in Australia using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, thus my Doctoral study is well-placed to create new research in this area. It has been more than two decades since Zammit (1992) conducted nationwide research for the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) concerning students' language choices. With the implementation of the Languages aspect as part of ACARA's national curriculum it is timely for new data on the subject.

Dörnyei's theory provides an exciting new wave of L2 motivational research with many future possibilities. I plan to use his new system to investigate the research gap of declining enrolments from compulsory to elective second language subjects through the lens of students' motivations for elective second language subject choice. This framework was developed to combat the bilingual context issue and perfectly suits the foreign language context of Australia. Investigating this gap in the Tasmanian

context will be beneficial for all other Australian states, as the methodology and results can valuably inform approaches in other states and nationally.

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