Communicative competency in New Zealand's secondary level Japanese education:

an investigation into the present situation and future potential

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Abstract

New Zealand's Ministry of Education has the intention to increase the number of young learners who

have the knowledge and skills in foreign languages (FL), and achieving communicative competence

(CC) in a FL is now one of the main focuses in the New Zealand Curriculum. Nevertheless, New

Zealand is yet to see a real change in the FL education system. The purpose of this research is to

identify the key issues surrounding FL teaching, particularly focused on Japanese, in the New

Zealand education system to question whether the New Zealand Curriculum's aim of achieving CC

is a realistic goal for New Zealand students learning Japanese under the current system.

The first section of the research focuses on the current situation in New Zealand secondary schools

and previous research conducted on relevant issues within FL learning in order to give background

understanding about FL education. The second section of the research surveys Japanese language

secondary school teachers in Christchurch in order to investigate the present situation of Japanese

language teaching, and to gain authentic perceptions of the teachers with regard to CC, its issues

and feasibility as a main aim of the education and assessment. The results from the first two

sections of the research identify three key problematic areas in the current Japanese education

system in New Zealand; namely 1) governmental guidance, 2) the Curriculum, and 3) the system of assessment. These three problems are likely to impact on students' achievement of CC in Japanese and are key to understanding whether it is possible for New Zealand secondary school students to achieve CC as expected by the government. The third section looks at the FL education, especially Japanese, and assessment system in Australia as a comparison to New Zealand, with the aim of finding both positive and negative aspects of Australia's current system. The aim was to find new approaches that could potentially solve some of the problems raised in this research, and therefore provide alternatives for New Zealand to follow in its development of this section of its education policy. Through this comparison it became apparent that the three key areas of problem mentioned above could be improved through the adoption of approaches already implemented in Australia. This thesis offers suggestions for a new approach to the New Zealand system of education for and assessment of CC at secondary level Japanese, which, if implemented, would, I argue, make the achievement of CC in New Zealand schools more successful.

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Abbreviations

A: Achieved (NCEA grade)

AC: Australian Curriculum

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ACT: Australian Capital Territory

ALLiS: Asian Language Learning in Schools

AQF: Australian Qualifications Framework

ATAR: Australian Tertiary Admission Rank

NZQA: New Zealand Qualifications Authority

BICS: Basic interpersonal communicative skills

CALP: Cognitive academic language proficiency

CC: Communicative competence

CCAFL: Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages

CLS: Community Languages Schools

E: Excellent (NCEA grade)

FL: Foreign language(s)

HSC: Higher School Certificate

JLTAWA: Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Western Australia

JTAN: Japanese Teachers' Association of NSW

L1: First language

L2: Second language

M: Merit (NCEA grade)

MOE: Ministry of Education

NCEA: National Certificate of Educational Achievement

NSW: New South Wales

NT: Northern Territory

NTCET: Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training

NZC: New Zealand Curriculum

NZQA: New Zealand Qualifications Authority

QCAA: Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

QCE: Queensland Certificate of Education

QLD: Queensland

SA: South Australia

SACE: South Australian Certificate of Education

SSCE: Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

TAS: Tasmania

TCE: Tasmanian Certificate of Education

VCAA: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

VCE: Victorian Certificate of Education

VIC: Victoria

VSL: Victorian School of Languages

WA: Western Australia

WACE: Western Australian Certificate of Education

Chapter One: Introduction

As the world becomes more globalised it becomes easier for people to travel overseas for leisure, business, study or for a life change. In New Zealand the population has also become more diverse and the society more complex: to the extent that it has been called "superdiverse", with 160 languages spoken daily by residents nationwide.[1] This fast pace of social change has prompted New Zealanders to recognise the growing importance and urgency of establishing and strengthening connections with the wider world, including with those who do not speak the same language or share the same cultural values. The business world too, is becoming more open and competitive in its search for opportunities in the global market. The need for economic growth and building business relationships around the world, especially with Asian partners, is frequently discussed in the media. The Executive Director of the Asia New Zealand Foundation,[2] John McKinnon, emphasised that "for young New Zealanders to succeed in the world and get good jobs, they will need to be global citizens who are comfortable in Asian settings, know Asian business and social nuances, and who can ideally speak an Asian language".[3]

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[1] The New Zealand Herald, 2013

[2] The Asia New Zealand Foundation is a non-partisan and non-profit organisation established in 1994. It is a non-government organisation which works in five main areas – business, arts and culture, education, media and research.

[3] http://asianz.org.nz/newsroom/media-releases/asia-aware-students, accessed on 01/05/2014.

Globalisation has brought significant changes to the content and context of language learning worldwide, prompting much recent research on second language (L2) acquisition and language teaching in New Zealand. These changes are reflected, to a large extent in the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), which was renewed in 2007.[4] One of the key changes to the NZC upon its renewal was to include foreign language (FL) learning in the curriculum as one stand-alone learning area called 'Learning Languages'. Prior to the curriculum renewal in 2007, Learning Languages was categorised under the subject of English (more about the NZC will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3). Realising that actively promoting FL teaching and learning in schools, especially at an early stage of pupils' learning, is a global trend, since 2010 all New Zealand schools with students in Years 7 to 10 are expected to offer all students the opportunity to learn an additional language.[5] Moreover the Ministry of Education (MOE) also states in the 2007 NZC, that the ability to communicate effectively in a chosen language and or languages will "equip them for living in a world of diverse people, languages, and cultures" (MOE, 2007, p.24).

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[4] The NZC applies to all English-medium state schools in New Zealand and it includes curriculum levels from 1 to 8 (curriculum levels are different to the school years, however, usually spread throughout Year 1 to 13).

[5] http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Learning-languages/What-s-new-or-different#communication

Achieving communicative competence (CC) in the target language is now one of the main focuses of the Learning Languages area in the NZC. This is a clear shift away from the traditional focus on vocabulary and grammar-based learning. CC is broadly defined as "the ability to communicate effectively in the chosen language or languages" (definition by the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* summarised by Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010). This will be one of the key concepts in this research, and the definition of CC will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

In recent years, the New Zealand government has begun to regard Asia as the focus of the 21st century, which it has called "the Asian Century", and therefore has prioritised "Asia knowledge". A special website has been established by the MOE[6] in association with the Asia New Zealand Foundation, which is designed to help and encourage schools to develop their curricula to incorporate the learning of Asia, based on the NZC. These authorities recognise the need for New Zealand students to have opportunities to learn about Asia in order to equip themselves to succeed in this changing globalised environment. The website gives examples of how teaching and learning can have an Asian focus. In 2009 the Asia New Zealand Foundation published "Educating for Asia: New Zealand Curriculum and

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[6] http://asia-knowledge.tki.org.nz/

Asia Guide", which gives guidelines on how Asian contexts can be incorporated into programmes across the school curriculum, including English, Social Sciences, Learning Languages and the Arts. There have also been multiple guides and resources available for teachers and school leaders to become "Asia Aware" and promoting the concept within each school.[7] In August 2014, the New Zealand government also announced that they will set up Asian Language Learning in Schools programme (ALLiS) and commit a total of 10 million dollars over 5 years to increase Asian language learning in schools. Schools were encouraged to apply for the funding to establish new Mandarin, Japanese or Korean language programmes, or expand and enhance existing Asian language programmes. Schools that were chosen in their first round of selection are to begin their language programmes in the 2016 school year (Parata, 2014; MOE, Asian Language Learning in Schools programme (ALLiS)).

A number of surveys have also found that New Zealanders are now valuing learning another language more than in the past. The survey "New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian People in 2013"[8]

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[7] For example, on the Asia New Zealand website (http://asianz.org.nz/our-work/educating-asia) there are guidelines such as the "How your school can become Asia Aware", "Developing Asia Aware Teachers Guide" and "Asia in the curriculum". accessed on 28/04/2014.

[8] The results from *New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples in 2013* was based on 1,000 telephone interviews carried out between 1 August and 5 September 2013, and a follow-up online forum. The survey results can

conducted by the Asia New Zealand Foundation, found that 93% of participants thought it was valuable

to learn another language. Of those, 64% thought Chinese would be the most valuable to learn,

followed by Japanese, 31%, and Spanish, 22%, many mentioning the fast-growing trade links between

China and New Zealand. The survey also revealed that 80% of the participants believed Asia was

important to NZ, and 63% thought more should be done to help New Zealanders understand Asian

cultures and traditions. Furthermore, according to the results of the "Asia Aware Students' Survey"[9]

conducted by Asia New Zealand Foundation in May 2013, of more than 1,000 students interviewed,

74% of Year 12 and 13 students (mostly aged 16 to 18 years) regarded the Asian region as important

for New Zealand's future. At the same time, 55% of those students said they lacked the knowledge

and understanding to engage confidently with Asian people and their cultures, and 72% felt they were

under-prepared to engage with the people and culture of Asia.

Even though the importance of FL education and gaining understanding of Asian cultural values

having been discussed for some time in New Zealand, it is apparent from these surveys that many

young New Zealanders still lack these skills. Moreover, despite the rhetoric heightening the

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be accessed from Asia New Zealand website, http://asianz.org.nz/newsroom/media-
releases/2014/perceptions-asia-2013, accessed on 30/04/2014.

[9] http://asianz.org.nz/sites/asianz.org.nz/files/Asia_Aware_Students_Survey_May_2013.pdf, accessed on
3/04/2014.

importance of Asian language and cultural education, there has been noted a steady decline in the

numbers of students learning a FL at secondary and tertiary levels. This is especially true for

Japanese, which, although currently the second most commonly taught FL, and the most commonly

taught Asian language in New Zealand (McGee et al., 2013),[10] the drop in student numbers are

worrying many teachers and schools. It was recorded that in 2014, about 18% fewer secondary

schools were offering Japanese to their students, and the news media reported that some teachers

are worried that they may lose their jobs.[11] The news media has also reported that the number of

students learning a L2 in New Zealand secondary schools in general has dropped to its lowest in

over 80 years.[12]

Some of the reasons that researchers have mentioned to explain this decline of FL learners include

the lack of a national policy on the learning of languages, the fact that it is the only non-compulsory

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[10] Also see http://www.ambafrance-nz.org/Foreign-languages-teaching-in-New. This website gives the number of students learning the 5 most commonly taught FLs in New Zealand schools (French, Spanish, Japanese, German and Chinese), for Years 1 to 8 group and Years 9 to 13 group between 2004 and 2012. Under this data too, Japanese has been the second mostly studied FL in secondary school since 2004, but the number of students learning Japanese has been experiencing a clear drop and when combining both primary and secondary schools Japanese has fallen to the third mostly studied FLs since 2011, after French and Spanish. accessed on 28/04/2014.
[11] Tan, L., (2015, Apr 26). Fewer pupils learning languages. *The New Zealand Herald.* accessed from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11438943
[12] Ibid.

learning area within the NZC, and the 'thinning effect' referred to by McLauchlan (2007, p.33) when

discussing the new NZC offering a variety of subjects which were previously seen as extra-

curricular, thereby creating more competition for student enrolment between subjects. Individual FL

not only compete with other subjects from different learning areas, but also within the languages

subject area itself. Other factors adding to this drop in student numbers, more closely related to

Japanese language in particular, include the difficulty of mastering the language compared to some

of the European languages, the weakening of the Japanese economy and New Zealand's fast

growing business relationships with China and Spanish-speaking South American nations, thereby

attracting more people to learn Chinese and Spanish.[13]

These factors not only influence the number of school-age students learning languages, but could also

have negative effects on the quality of teaching and outcomes of language classes. Despite the fact

that achieving CC in the target language is now the focus of FL education in New Zealand, it is widely

understood by language teaching practitioners that it takes time and effort to acquire the skills to

communicate confidently and effectively in a FL: a fact which many students and parents, and perhaps

many politicians too, do not fully understand. In reality, even after several years of FL learning at school,

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[13] http://www.jpf.go.jp/j/japanese/survey/country/2013/newzealand.html

many students do not feel confident communicating in the target language. If the student give up learning the language after primary school or in the first one or two years of secondary school, it is extremely unlikely that they would have gained any competency in the target language which could be applied meaningfully outside the classroom.

The question then arises whether students are given enough time and learning opportunities to gain skills to communicate effectively in the target language in the classroom setting. The government is urging young New Zealanders to learn a FL and aspire to be able to communicate effectively in the target language, but are students accurately informed about what they are realistically likely to achieve from their FL learning at school? What does achieving CC actually mean for New Zealand secondary school students under the current system, which is one of the main focuses in the NZC? In their efforts to promote FL, boost student numbers and counteract the 'thinning effect', some schools and teachers, too, may also be creating the wrong impression of what is achievable and therefore fostering high expectations amongst their students. This research aims to explore how effective the New Zealand education system is for teaching FL, particularly Japanese, and generating learners who have CC in the target language, as a stated aim in the NZC. This study tries to identify where the problems lie and give some suggestions on how the New Zealand education system for FL could be improved. This will

be done by examining current research, a survey of secondary school Japanese teachers' experiences

and perceptions, and a comparative study of the secondary Japanese language education system

between Australia and New Zealand.

This introductory chapter has presented background information on the current challenges New

Zealand FL education is facing due to globalisation and changing society. The following literature

review will introduce relevant previous studies conducted on FL education, focusing on Japanese

language teaching at secondary level which will highlight the main issues and gaps in our

understanding, some of which I will attempt to address in this study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

In this chapter, I will investigate a range of previous studies and government documents that are essential to give the background to the issues explored in the survey and the comparative work with Australia, which are the two main investigations of this research. Understanding the existing corpus of research is important to see what problems have been identified, but also what has yet to be sufficiently examined and what areas may need to be addressed in the future.

The foreign language education in English speaking countries

The teaching and learning of foreign languages (FL) has a very long history in anglophone countries, and current issues challenging New Zealand, Australia, England and the United States has been the focus of much recent research (for example, Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2000; East, 2008; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009). Most researchers believe that many anglophone countries share similar problems regarding FL teaching and learning due to an entrenched monolingual attitude among the public, based on the notion that 'ability in a FL is desirable but not necessary' (Ellis, 2000). This is reflected in the comparatively low status of their FL education, both at the governmental policy level to the employment rate (demonstrated, for example, in New Zealand's case by the lack of long-term policy

for language learning, and insignificance of FL skills when looking for jobs as mentioned by McLauchlan, 2007). However, globalisation has created the need for people who are competent in FL and cultures, mostly for business and diplomatic purposes, but also the growing access to foreign travel and leisure opportunities which have increased the need for better linguistic and cultural competency in the general populace. As a result of these stimuli, many English speaking countries, including New Zealand, have begun working towards reviewing and improving the status of FL education in schools and it is also becoming one of the focuses in their curricula. In order to understand the status of FL education in the anglophone world, it is important to look at a few commonly debated issues connected to language learning.

New focus on foreign language education

As previously mentioned, FL teaching is a new focus in the New Zealand education system reflected in the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) (2007). Instead of treating the learning of FL as purely an academic subject and focusing on simply mastering grammar and vocabulary of the target language, the focus of FL learning has shifted to the ability to use the target language to communicate in the real-world setting. This initiative is in line with the aim of the Common European Framework, which is to foster "plurilingualism" and "plurculturalism to meet the needs of a diverse society. It is explained in

the Common European Framework (2001) that:

the plurilingualism approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person's

experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the

home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether

learnt at school or college), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in

strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative

competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in

which language interrelate and interact. In different situations, a person can call

flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication

with a particular interlocutor… From this perspective, the aim of language education is

profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two,

or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the

ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all

linguistic abilities have a place. (pp.4-5)[14]

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[14] Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2001. pp4-5

'Communicative competence' (CC) is a commonly discussed term in second language (L2) or FL

learning since the early 1970s, and has been recognised as the ideal approach by many researchers

(such as Nunan, 1989; Savignon, 1991). This term has been defined in various ways by researchers,

for example, Hymes (1971) defines CC as representing "the ability to use language in a social context,

to observe sociolinguistic norms of appropriateness" (cited in Savignon, 2002 p.2). The term CC will

be discussed further in Chapter 4. The shift from the view that language learning involves mastering

the structures of language to achieve "native speaker" level, to the ability to use language to express

meaning, had a profound effect on language teaching, syllabus design and textbook development

(Nunan, 1999). The traditional language teaching syllabus included various kinds of translation,

grammar and audiolingual drills which we now believe limited learners to use only what they had

learned in class when communication outside the classroom.

Attempts to revise and update teaching methods to make them more 'communicative' increased with

the growing recognition of the need for 'meaningful language use' in the target language. The focus of

teaching has shifted accordingly, from the traditional grammatical framework to the communicative

language teaching approach (Savignon, 1987). This new approach to syllabus design focused on what

learners will be able to do at the end of their learning, so that learners leave the classroom with skills that can be applied in the real world. In order to perform these skills, students of course still need to learn vocabulary and grammar, however, these are not the main focus of their learning (Nunan, 1999).

At the time of this research, the Australian Curriculum (AC) for languages was under development and the policies for Japanese language learning were only made available for state and territory use in March 2015. This curriculum also emphasises the importance of intercultural language learning and the ability to communicate effectively. It is stated in the *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011)*:

> The major rationale for learning languages is that being able to communicate proficiently provides learners with essential communication skills in the target language, an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication… This rationale for learning languages should be seen in the context of the contemporary world. Learning languages uniquely broadens students' horizons to include the personal, social and employment opportunities presented by an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world... It has also

brought the realization that, despite its status as a world language, a capability in

English only is insufficient and that a bilingual or plurilingual capability has become

the norm in most parts of the world. (pp.9-10)[15]

The situation of foreign language education in New Zealand

In recent years, New Zealand has recognised the need for increased language learning education,

especially of Asian languages, and it subsequently undertook a process of review of the curriculum

documents, which eventually produced the current NZC (2007). This action at the highest level was

welcomed by many researchers, and was expected to boost the number of students learning

languages nationwide. However, despite the government's promotion, the number of students taking

Asian languages as a subject, or in fact any L2, is declining in many secondary schools (McLauchlan,

2007; MOE, 2011).[16] It has been reported in the media that 2014 marked the lowest number of

secondary school students enrolled to study a FL since 1933.[17] The decline of the number of students

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[15] ACARA. (2011). Consultation Report – Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, ACARA, Sydney, November 2011. pp.9-10

[16] Also look at http://www.ambafrance-nz.org/Foreign-languages-teaching-in-New. The number of students learning a foreign language in Years 9 to 13 has declined by 12.2% overall during 2004 to 2012. Out of 5 major foreign languages researched Japanese and German experienced decline of student number in both primary sector (Years 1 to 8) and the secondary sector (Years 9 to 13).

[17] In 1933, 32.2% of the students were studying two or more languages. The figure rose up to 39.6% in 1963 at its peak, and dropped to its lowest, 20.3%, in 2014.

learning Japanese is especially significant, and has not improved since the curriculum change in 2007.

Japanese is the second commonly studied FL among secondary school students, and is the first of the

Asian languages offered in New Zealand, nevertheless it has been found that 37% fewer secondary

students chose to study Japanese in 2012 than in 2005 (McGee, Ashton, Dunn & Taniwaki, 2013). This

worrying situation prompted the research *Japanese Language Education in New Zealand: An*

evaluative literature review of the decline in students since 2005 by McGee et al. (2013), which was

prepared for the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education, and published in

August 2013.

From this research, it is evident that there has been a clear drop in the number of students learning

Japanese since 2005, and this decline has been especially significant since 2009. Problematic issues

surrounding the national policy itself are named in this research as one of the major factors for the

weakening of FL education, as currently there is no national language policy in New Zealand, unlike in

England or Australia. One of the key roles of a national language learning policy is to provide long-

term strategic guidance for the MOE, which would lead to long-term planning for the development of

education resources and professional development of teachers, calculations to predict student

Refer to an, L., (2015, Apr 26). Fewer pupils learning languages. *The New Zealand Herald.*
accessed from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11438943

numbers and therefore supply the number of additional language teachers necessary to meet future demand. Lo Bianco (2008, cited in *Japanese Language Education in New Zealand: An evaluative literature review of the decline in students since 2005* p.14) believes this kind of long-term commitment in planning and stability of policy is important in order to make any true changes to the status of language learning and to make it possible for the students to achieve stated learning outcomes.

It is also argued by experts (for example, Lo Bianco, 2008; Harvey, Conway, Richards & Roskvist, 2010) that the non-compulsory nature of FL study in the NZC is creating the image of language courses as 'a nice optional extra', not only among students but also principals, career advisers and parents. Since 2010, it has been expected for all schools with students in Years 7 to 10 to offer the opportunity to learn an additional language. It was hoped that this measure, focusing on learning languages at a younger age, would increase the number of students with experience and knowledge of an additional language when they enter high school.[18] However, in contrast to the other seven learning areas in the NZC, the teaching of FL is still optional: language courses are only expected to be offered and are not mandatory. Also, what language(s) are to be taught, for how many hours, in what manner and by whom (specialised/general classroom teacher, native/non-native) all depend on each individual school to

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[18] TKI. Learning Languages – What's new or different? http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Learning-languages/What-s-new-or-different#communication. accessed on 30/04/2014.

decide (McGee et al., 2013). The present Education Minister of New Zealand, Hekia Parata also noted

that language learning is a student's choice, and "it is up to students, and their parents, to decide which

of the many options available at school to pursue."[19]

McLauchlan (2007) also notes that "promoting L2 uptake is one issue where successive governments

have seldom shown the commitment sought of them by L2 groups" (p.118). Unless the policy is clearly

defined it is difficult to expect that any of what McLauchlan (2007) mentions as "lip-service" would

become committed action which would be truly beneficial to FL learners. However, there has arisen a

movement in New Zealand by the Auckland Languages Strategy Working Group (facilitated by COMET

Auckland) formally launched in November 2015, which aims to promote and foster multilingualism in

Auckland. They have set out nine long-term goals, which include promoting and celebrating all

languages of Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, the maintenance and extension of community and heritage

languages, and increasing the teaching of languages important for trade, tourism and international

relations in schools, tertiary institutions and adult and community education. Under the "Goals and

actions" section of this strategy documentation it states various ways of raising awareness of foreign

and heritage languages to promote the value of them in the society (Tamaki Makaurau Auckland

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[19] Tan, L., (2015, Apr 26). Fewer pupils learning languages. *The New Zealand Herald*.
accessed from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11438943

Languages Strategy Working Group, 2015, pp.5-7). This is one of the positive movements in New Zealand and it is hoped this will bring a common goal and cohesion to maintaining, valuing and teaching languages in Auckland (Walters, 2015). At the time of this research the effectiveness of this strategy is not yet apparent, however, Michelle Lodge (the president of New Zealand Association of Japanese Language Teachers NZAJLT) also writes that it is an exciting initiative, which is hoped to bring positive changes to how FL education is seen in New Zealand.[20]

Japanese Language Education in New Zealand: An evaluative literature review of the decline in students since 2005 by McGee et al. (2013), alongside other works done by researchers, including McLauchlan, were particularly beneficial for my research because they provide a recent review on major issues affecting New Zealand's FL education system, specifically the decline in number of Japanese language learners. Although this is not my research focus, many of the issues raised in the research are also related to my exploration of how successful New Zealand FL education has been in fostering students who are competent in communicating in Japanese, and to identify problems associated with this.

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[20] From an email sent through NZJNET, a network of New Zealand Teachers of Japanese language on 12/11/2015.

<u>What are students aiming to achieve?</u>

It is commonly understood that language learning takes time. Cummins (1981) suggests that it takes two years for learners of English as a FL, studying in an environment where English is used, to acquire basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), and between five and seven years to acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).[21] Ellis (2009) suggests that if New Zealand schools were aiming to educate students to gain BICS, it would require something equivalent to two years of natural exposure to the target language, however, in reality, even five years of studying a language (for example from Year 9 to 13) for four hours per week would not achieve this. Especially for non-European languages like Japanese, which are understood to be more difficult for English speakers to acquire because of the challenging script, difference in grammar structures, as well as cultural differences and it is extremely unlikely that students will gain BICS if school was the only place where they were exposed to the target language.

Research by Newton et al. (2010) also found that a number of scholars argue that expecting a native speaker-level CC for learners of FL is an unrealistic goal for most (or even BICS for New Zealand students considering how many hours of FL classes they have access to). Therefore, instead of

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[21] See also Collier 1987 and Klesmer 1994.

demanding very high competence, which in the current context is difficult for many students to achieve,

Newton et al. (2010) claim that the desired learning outcome of FL learning in New Zealand schools

was for pupils to have a sound and satisfying experience of studying a L2 and attain some degree of

communicative ability. This expectation saw the need to foster students' 'intercultural communicative

competence', where students "communicate and interact across cultural boundaries" (Byram, 1997, p.

7 cited in Newton et al., 2010). However, there is an obvious mismatch between the governmental aim,

to foster young New Zealanders who are competent in FL, and the actual practice and reality in schools.

This matter is also discussed by McGee et al. (2013), who note the following:

> There currently appears to be a mismatch between what is said at the ministerial
>
> level and what actually appears in terms of policy directives and
>
> implementation…..The lack of a national policy for languages, and the fact it is not
>
> a compulsory learning area within the NZC may send a negative message about the
>
> importance of language learning in New Zealand. (p.19)

It has also been reported by the Asia New Zealand Foundation that, in 2012, 84% of the survey

participants believed it was important to develop ties with Asia, and, another survey in 2013 also found

that 93% of the participants thought it was valuable to learn another language.[22] Nevertheless, 72%

of them felt they were under-prepared to engage with people and culture of Asia, and 21% of them

listed 'communication barriers' as one of the major obstacles to making this successful.[23] McLauchlan

(2007) also notes that "Earlier statements by the Ministry such as the one made in 1995 that

"secondary school L2 learners are expected to become competent communicators in the language...

were hugely unrealistic" (p.18). He then states that, although the FL teaching approaches in New

Zealand have changed significantly over the past few decades and it is far more communicative and

practice-based today, "most L2 students leave secondary school with limited ability to communicate

with native speakers and disappointed with what they have achieved" (p.20).

Many other researchers, including East (2008), also question the quality and effectiveness of language

learning practiced in schools, arguing that the optional, taster language courses offered, especially in

the primary sector, will not prepare students to become competent in the target language.[24] Especially

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[22] Asia New Zealand Foundation conducted a telephone survey to random sample of 1000 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over between 3 September to 1 October 2012, and 1 August to 5 September 2013. Refer to Asia New Zealand Foundation. (2013). New Zealanders' perceptions of Asia and Asian peoples in 2012. accessed from http://asianz.org.nz/sites/asianz.org.nz/files/Perceptions_of_Asia_report_2013.pdf. and New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples – 2013 Annual Survey. accessed from http://asianz.org.nz/newsroom/media-releases/2014/perceptions-asia-2013

[23] ibid

[24] Also see Gibbs & Holt (2003) for limitations of "taster" language courses.

if students were to drop out of learning languages after primary school, or at an early stage of their secondary education, he believes that the likelihood of them gaining any competency in the target language is minimal. East (2008) argues that because the New Zealand government is expecting schools to offer learning of FL to students at Years 7 to 10 without adequate support, plans, or up-to-date teaching materials, it is difficult to expect such courses to be effective in fostering students with any FL competency.

These findings are vital to my research because as it clearly shows that contradiction exists between what the government is aiming to achieve and what is actually possible at a practical level. Given that there is this incongruity between what is directed at the ministerial level of government and what is currently practiced, questions arise as to the level of proficiency that students should be expected to achieve. It is clear from these findings that it is difficult for secondary school students to achieve CC within the current education system to the level expected by the New Zealand government. The question arises whether students are informed of the actual or realistic level they are able to achieve? McLauchlan (2007) consider under the current education system that most secondary school students leave school with limited ability to communicate in the target language and face disappointment with what they have achieved, and he and Oshima (2012) suggest that one of the reasons why students

discontinue their language learning, after some years of schooling, is related to motivation, which is

closely connected to students' achievement. Students may not have been accurately informed of the

expected proficiency they might eventually reach at the end of the course, and the realisation that they

are unable to use the new language as imagined may give them a sense of failure, which could

influence their motivation to continue with their language learning. What it means to succeed in FL

learning and the motivational factors associated with this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter

4.

Issues with the National Certificate of Educational Achievement

There are also problematic issues with the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

Interact Standard, which was introduced into secondary school FL assessment criteria gradually from

Level 1 in 2011 and to Level 3 in 2013. NCEA is a standards-based assessment, where students gain

credits if they meet the assessment criteria. Standards can be assessed internally or externally. There

are five standards students could gain credits for in FL courses in NCEA, including the *Interact*

Standard. This standard was developed as the result of the communication-centred teaching of FL,

shifting from the previous one-off end of year examination type of assessment to a compilation of on-

going recording of students' oral work. NCEA will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.[25]

A survey conducted by East (2012, 2014a&b) revealed that many teachers of FL in New Zealand understand the positive value of the *Interact Standard* and the government's intention to promote the ability to communicate in the target language. However, in practice, many teachers find it challenging to adequately incorporate the *Interact Standard* into their teaching due to the significant workload increase it demands. Moreover, they struggle with the reduced teaching hours in which they have to conduct the *Interact Standard*-related assessments, and have picked up on the uncertainty and stress felt by the students expected to prepare for the "spontaneous and unrehearsed" conversation assessments.

Genet (2014) also questions the reliability of the *Interact Standard* assessments and raises concerns over what "spontaneous and unrehearsed" should mean in practice. It is common for students to be given the topics and questions of the task in advance, and that the recording of the students' work can be done without teacher oversight. Consequently, Genet notes, it is possible for students to prepare the conversation and rehearse them as role-plays, and it is also difficult to know how many attempts

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[25] For more information on NCEA, also refer to NZQA website on NCEA. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/understanding-ncea/. accessed 21/12/2015

students had at recording the work before submitting the final one. East (2012) states that many

teachers feel that students are not ready and confident to do the *Interact Standard* if they were not

given time to prepare the script and practice. This research by East is also valuable to my research,

and its findings led me to consider conducting a survey of Japanese teachers in Canterbury so that I

could find out more about teachers' experiences of and thoughts about the *Interact Standard*. My

survey aimed to ascertain the situation in Canterbury concerning issues raised by researchers in the

past, including East, and to find out if those issues raised can be applied to the Canterbury area, in

2015.

In New Zealand, despite the commonly understood benefits and needs of communicative language

teaching, one of the reasons why some teachers are unable to apply this in the classroom may be due

to the pressure of examinations. East's research indicates that although teachers understand the

needs for students to be assessed under spontaneous and unrehearsed conditions for the *Interact*

Standard, some thought that because the portfolio style assessments were still assessments, students

"want to do well" and they were "always going to want to practice beforehand" (East, 2014a, p.13).

Instead, as a formal assessment, the *Interact Standard* should be collection of students' ongoing

classroom oral work, however, East (2014b) states in his research that, "classroom embedded is a

concept that teachers do not appear to have grasped, thereby leading to the desire to rehearse and pre-plan, and a sense of significantly increased workload" (p.80). Therefore, their teaching also becomes more or less 'examination-driven'.

East also states (2014b) that there are different understandings among teachers between "unrehearsed and spontaneous" versus legitimate scaffolding, and assessment versus classroom embedded as part of normal classroom work, and it is necessary for teachers to have a clear picture of the appropriate balance between these matters. However, because there is no clear guideline on how to teach or prepare students for the *Interact Standard* in the NZC, it is difficult for teachers to share a consistent understanding about how students should be assessed under this standard, and consequently difficult to maintain fairness nationally. The *Interact Standard* is the only formal method to examine students' communication skills under NCEA, therefore further understanding of this assessment is necessary for this study in order to identify to what extent New Zealand students could achieve CC, and review whether achieving a high grade in examinations also means achieving CC, or whether they are two separate aims. The New Zealand education system and NCEA will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The situation of foreign language education in Australia

Australia faces similar issues to New Zealand in terms of FL teaching. Its history makes it one of the most multicultural and multilingual societies in the world, where English is the dominant language spoken but also another 350 languages (including many of the dialects from Indigenous languages) are used regularly each day (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009). Despite the release of the National Policy on Languages in 1987, which emphasises the importance of FL studies, the education system has not been successful in retaining students committed to long-term language learning (Mueller, 2003). While the curriculum has its main focus on English literacy and numeracy, FL learning is often viewed as an extracurricular option, a situation almost identical to that in New Zealand, regardless of the studies demonstrating how learning other languages actually helps students' develop advanced skills in their first language (L1) (Macgibbon, 2011).

However, since 2008, the Australian Curriculum (AC) has been undergoing major changes. Instead of having a different curriculum for each state and territory, they are now developing a National Curriculum which will be used throughout Australia. This will be introduced in detail in Chapter 4. One of the focuses in the curriculum review, especially for the *F-10 Curriculum,*[26] deals with the teaching

[26] F-10 Curriculum is the National Curriculum for Foundation year to Year 10 students in Australia. It is separate to the Senior Secondary Curriculum for students in Years 11 to 12.

of FL. The Department of Education states that their goal is to ensure at least 40% of Year 12 students are studying a language other than English, and they aim to make the study of at least one FL from Year 5 to 10 compulsory within a decade. [27] The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* for F-10 (Foundation to Year 10) was under development until the end of 2013 and was made available for implementation from May 2014. It includes a newly developed language specific curricula and the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages. The Curriculum is designed bearing in mind students with varied background in the target language and the different entry points into languages[28] It is based on the belief that learning languages is for all students in Australian schools, "with individual students bringing their own linguistic and cultural background to their learning, whether this is English or the target language or various combinations of languages".[29] The full impact of the implementation of the AC is yet to be seen, and on-going issues surrounding FL education such as staffing problems [30] will also need to be addressed if the government is to

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[27] Australian Government Department of Education. http://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/strengthening-australian-curriculum. accessed on 09/05/2014

[28] For example, there will be three learner pathways to be developed in Chinese, to cater specifically for L2 learners, background language learners and L1 learners. ACARA Languages, http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/learning_areas/languages.html. accessed 10/05/2014.

[29] ACARA Languages, http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/learning_areas/languages.html. accessed 10/05/2014.

[30] It was revealed by Chilcott (2011) that nearly 80 state schools in Queensland were not able to offer FL due to shortage of qualified staff. Many Queensland state schools not teaching foreign languages despite education policy, *The Courier Mail.* [online]. http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/sayonara-to-foreign-languages/story-e6freoof-1226218580862. accessed 12/05/2014.

successfully implement the changes. However, the modifications made by Australia to improve the

current situation should offer some ideas and solutions that New Zealand could learn from. I will focus

Chapter 7 of my thesis on an in-depth analysis of the relevant issues.

Investigation of previous research conducted on FL education, especially in New Zealand, has

uncovered many valuable works based around student retention rate, and why students are not

studying FL, especially Japanese as mentioned above. However, it is believed that there has been no

research done to date on whether secondary school students are achieving CC in the target language

as part of the language education they undertake through NZC, or whether achievement in NCEA FL

necessarily means gaining CC. There is no evidence available to show whether or not secondary

school students in New Zealand can actually achieve CC under the current education system, even

those who have continued their language learning from Year 9 until Year 13.

However, through analysing previous studies by researchers and organisations such as McLauchlan,

McGee, and the Asia New Zealand Foundation, it is clear that FL education in New Zealand has not

been as successful as the government hoped, and students are not achieving the desired level of CC,

despite the changes that the New Zealand education system has gone through to promote the learning

of FL for communicative purposes. I can suggest three main potential reasons for the failure based on

previous studies. These reasons are:

a) Governmental guidance; Issues surrounding lack of national language policy as discussed by McGee et al. (2013), and McLauchlan (2007), which would provide long-term strategic guidance for the MOE, leading to committed planning for development for teachers and of resources. This may also have an influence on sustaining the status of language subjects in the New Zealand education system.

b) The Curriculum; Mismatch as discussed by McGee et al. (2013), between what the government hopes learners of FL to have achieved after completing the NZC, and what is actually practiced in schools which influences what the students could actually achieve. McLauchlan (2007) and Oshima (2012) also support the idea that students may discontinue with their language study when they realise there is a mismatch between what they believed they could achieve and what they can actually achieve.

c) The examination system; Challenges surrounding the NCEA *Interact Standard* as discussed by East (2012, 2014a&b) and Genet (2014). Many teachers in East's research raised issues regarding NCEA *Interact Standard*, for its uncertainty and reliability of how students are assessed and graded for their "spontaneous and unrehearsed" conversation.

These three issues identified from the literature review will be examined further throughout my research, and they have prompted me to also consider the following questions: What does it mean to achieve CC for New Zealand secondary school students? To what extent, can they achieve CC? These are the questions which I intend to answer through this research, as well as to investigate what other problematic areas exist in the New Zealand secondary FL education system and identify reasons why, to date, it has not been particularly successful (according to McLauchlan) in fostering young learners who are competent in FL despite the New Zealand government's strong and well publicised intentions to do so.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The focus of my own research is to identify reasons why, as the previous comments show, New Zealand FL education system has not been fully successful in fostering young learners who are competent in FL, especially Japanese as the most commonly taught Asian language at schools, despite the New Zealand government's intention to do so nationwide. This research will centre around FL learning at secondary school level, particularly at the senior secondary level, and tries to identify whether it is in fact possible for New Zealand secondary school students to achieve Communicative Competence (CC) under the current education system. Namely to see whether the government's aims are realistic, or whether researchers such as McLauchland, McGee et al. and Oshima's assessment of the goals as 'unrealistic' is in fact the reality. This research aims to identify where the problems exist in New Zealand's FL education system, provide some possible solutions to those problems and identify avenues for further research needed if we are to improve the situation in the future. Japanese language has been chosen because it is one of the most studied FL in New Zealand secondary schools, and yet, it is also the language which has been facing a significant drop in student numbers in recent years despite the New Zealand government's promotion of Asian languages.

This research will be divided into three parts; the first focuses on the current situation in New Zealand secondary schools and the collation and summary of previous research conducted on relevant issues within FL learning. This section will explore the issues that New Zealand's FL education is facing and provides background information to help form my research questions. The second section will deal with the present situation facing secondary school Japanese language teachers in the wider Christchurch area. I will gather data on what is actually happening in the 'front line', how teachers understand CC and deal with the expectations of the government regarding FL education and the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) system. The third section will provide a comparison between the situation in New Zealand and Australia regarding Japanese language education at secondary schools. Australia was chosen for this comparative section because it is the closest country to New Zealand in terms of its history and sociocultural background, and is also facing similar issues regarding FL at secondary level. This comparative work will explore how Australia has tackled many similar Japanese language secondary level education challenges and expectations, which will provide me with ideas and concrete examples of alternative approaches that may apply well to New Zealand's situation.

Section one of this research, the introduction and literature review has covered the main issues

concerning New Zealand's response to the challenges of globalisation, focusing on the changing expectations and practices of FL education. It has explored the aims of the New Zealand government to increase the number of New Zealanders who have knowledge and competency in FL, and discussed the reality that these expectations have not yet been met. The literature review introduced relevant previous studies conducted on FL education, particularly those focusing on secondary level learning, New Zealand's situation and the specific challenges of teaching and learning Japanese. All this information is important for understanding what issues there are, what research has already been done, and what has yet to be sufficiently researched. This highlighted the gaps in our understanding that this thesis aims to address.

This introductory first section continues with Chapters 4 and 5, where the key terms of this research will be introduced in depth. Chapter 4 explores who language learners are and the different needs associated with them. It will also define what CC is and highlight key theories concerning success in language learning. These concepts will form the basis of my own research questions regarding whether students in New Zealand secondary schools can be successful in learning FL and achieving CC as expected by the government. In Chapter 5, the New Zealand education system, the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), and NCEA framework will be explained in detail, using official documents

to outline the government's expectations for secondary level language teaching. There are clearly issues within the NZC and NCEA which contradict the intentions of the government to foster CC in students, and these issues will be introduced through further analysis of research conducted by experts in the field.

Section two (Chapter 6) introduces the first of the main studies of this research, namely to explore and describe the current situation of the secondary level Japanese language teaching environment in Canterbury, and to identify some of the issues teachers encounter with Japanese language education, and for their students to achieve CC. This will also allow us to see if the previous research conducted on FL education in New Zealand can be applied to the current situation in Canterbury. For this research, a survey has been designed, its primary focus is to gather information on how teachers understand the key term 'Communicative Competence' and what they do in order to support their students to achieve it. It will also question the usefulness and reliability of the NZC and NCEA. Although the number of participants was a very small portion of the whole Japanese secondary school teachers in New Zealand, it is hoped that this will create a small but focused survey that can highlight some of the sentiments and situation in Christchurch and should paint an authentic picture of teachers' perceptions of the issues. These results should be indicative of the national situation as Christchurch is New

Zealand's third largest city by population and does not exhibit any particular anomalies in terms of secondary language learning.

Section three of this study is Chapter 7 which is detailed in four sections. This chapter focuses on my second investigation, namely of secondary language learning (especially of Japanese) in Australia, in order to give a meaningful comparison to the situation in New Zealand. Australia was chosen because it is one of the closest countries to New Zealand which shares many of the same challenges in terms of FL education. In recent years, Australia has also begun to take initiatives to increase the number of people who can communicate effectively using FL. Initially, the United Kingdom (UK) was also chosen as a comparison alongside Australia, because the UK also shares many cultural, educational and linguistic similarities to New Zealand. However, Australia has separate curricula and examinations for each of its states and territories (due to regional differences in culture, demographics and diversity), so this, on its own, provides a rich variety of approaches to the same series of problems. Therefore, I chose to only focus on Australia for my comparative data, as my findings are anticipated to provide a rich variety of approaches taken by individual regions. Moreover, although a wider comparison which included the UK, looking at all the major differences between the individual educational situations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, would no doubt prove interesting and enlightening, it

was felt that this would be beyond the scope of this MA research project.

In the final concluding chapter, I will first summarise New Zealand's present situation regarding FL education, and what changes it has already made regarding how we perceive FL teaching and learning. This will bring together the frontline issues New Zealand FL education is currently facing, as highlighted in my study of previous research and my own survey. It will also explore the nature of, and viability for the New Zealand context of, a number of alternative approaches it could adopt, as highlighted in my thorough comparative study with Australia. This section will offer my assessment of where the problems exist and my findings on the question of whether the level of CC that the government expects can be achieved by New Zealand secondary school students. It will conclude with a discussion of changes that the current New Zealand education system could or should undertake in order to make FL learning, especially Japanese language, successful and achievable. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the ongoing development of language projects in New Zealand, such as the Auckland Language Strategy, to make FL learning more successful and achievable in the future.

Chapter Four: Foreign language learners

In this chapter, we will look at who the foreign language (FL) learners are, and what it means to be successful in FL learning. This chapter gives definitions of some of the important terms which will be raised in this research, for example, in the survey in Chapter 6, and the comparison with Australia in Chapter 7. An understanding of the identities, needs and goals of FL learners is central to success in any FL learning programme in any country at any level, and this will be explored in detail here.

In order to answer the question of whether it is possible for New Zealand secondary school students to succeed in their Japanese language study, and to achieve communicative competence (CC) as expected by the government, it is also necessary to understand exactly what CC means, as well as what it means to be successful in FL learning. Later in this chapter, I will therefore introduce the broad-ranging theories concerning this matter and the possible effects that motivation brings to students' success. These theories and concepts will be applied to New Zealand in the next chapter, to illustrate how the FL education system in New Zealand measures success and how this effects students' achievement.

<u>Who are the language learners?</u>

A first language (L1) is the language learnt from ones' parents as the method of communication (Sakoda, 2002). In contrast, a second language (L2) or FL is learnt additionally. In some cases L2 and FL could be differentiated, but in this study, the terms L2 and FL will be treated the same - as any language learnt additionally. Kelleher (2010) also categorises heritage language learners, or 'background speakers', who are people studying a language but have some proficiency in that language or cultural connection to it due to their home environment. Many of these students are, to some degree, bilingual in that this is the language they use at home. In New Zealand, the most common heritage languages are te reo Maori, Chinese languages, Samoan, and Hindi: and the multilingual population is continuing to grow in New Zealand.[31]

According to Butler & Hakuta (2008), "Bilinguals are often broadly defined as individuals or groups of people who obtain the knowledge and use of more than one language" (p.114). However, the definition of bilinguals or multilinguals has not been agreed upon among researchers because of the complexity

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[31] New Zealand Human Rights commission for the New Zealand Diversity Action programme, August 2008, http://hrc.co.nz/files/8314/2388/3768/21-May-2009_15-42-34_Statementonlanguagepolicy.html#STATEMENT_ON_LANGUAGE_POLICY. accessed 24/05/2015, also Statistics New Zealand. 2013 Census QucikStats about culture and identity. http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/languages.aspx. accessed 22/05/2015.

of their nature. For example, it is not possible to measure 'how much' one needs to 'know' of a

language to be qualified as bilingual, and it is also difficult to define what it means to 'know' the

language. Moreover, it should be noted that within these different classifications, some bilinguals can

be 'balanced' and some 'dominant' (or 'unbalanced') in the proficiencies of their language skills (Butler

& Hakuta, 2008).

Bilingualism is defined by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (MOE) as "using two languages, not

necessarily with equal proficiency", [32] and on the MOE website '*Language Enhancing the*

Achievement of Pasifika' [33] it lists different types of bilingual speakers and the degree of their

bilingualism, noting that a bilingual person may be able to:

- Speak, read, and write fluently in two languages – that is, they are biliterate

- Speak, read, and write in one language, but only speak another

- Speak, read, and write in one language, but understand to some extent what is said in another

  language - that is, they can understand what a speaker of their second language is saying,

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[32] TKI – LEAP (Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika), Bilingualism. http://leap.tki.org.nz/bilingualism. accessed 16/07/2014

[33] TKI – LEAP (Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika), What is bilingualism? http://leap.tki.org.nz/What-is-bilingualism. accessed 16/07/2014

even though they may not be confident about speaking that language (This is termed passive

bilingualism).

As mentioned earlier, apart from L1 and L2 learners, the heritage or background learners may also

exist within a FL classroom. Having the needs of each heritage or background learner with their own

different degree of competence in the target language, and the need for a system to accommodate

them within a school curriculum designed primarily for L2 learners, are matters of serious discussion

among the L2 teaching community and researchers in many countries (for example, Pyun, 2009;

Valdes, 2005; Kagan, 2005). According to Kagan (2005), the proficiency level and goals for heritage

learners are considerably different from those of L2 learners. Some believe these learners have an

'unfair advantage' over the L2 learners in the FL classroom, but others believe that those heritage

learners without literacy in the target language should be treated as beginners and be taught alongside

L2 learners. Kagan offers the following points which curriculum designers or teachers and schools

should understand about the complexity of heritage learners' situation. They;

1) cannot be dismissed as native speakers who need no instruction;

2) do not need to be placed in beginning language classes;

3) can be tracked and placed according to their backgrounds; and

4) need a curriculum with a structure and a set of materials that differ considerably from those intended for FL students.[34]

In Australia, the existence of heritage language learners has been recognised and discussed within the education system. Ogura & Moloney (2012) reported that in Australia some high school-aged heritage learners of Japanese have been placed into classes which were inappropriate for their level, and, as a result, in some cases, have withdrawn from the FL programme. The Australian Curriculum (AC) for Japanese, which was under development at the time of this research, is designed for L2 learners, however, in some states and territories, there are separate 'first language', 'heritage', or even 'background' syllabuses to cater for the different learning needs of different students (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009).

Understanding and awareness of the situation of heritage learners in FL classes, and their impact over L2 learners, is one of the important matters that the New Zealand education system also has to deal with, because it has the potential to significantly influence students' learning of the target language. The approach taken in Australia will be discussed further in later chapters, as an example of an

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[34] Kagan, (2005). P215

approach that New Zealand may need to adopt in order to cater to the needs of its own heritage learners. This is because in New Zealand, the specific needs of heritage learners have not been addressed in the current New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). Consequently, problems have arisen here with the presence of heritage learners in the L2-learning classroom, as well as with native speakers who may be overseas exchange students studying English in New Zealand.

Perhaps the most serious issue that both L2 learners and teachers are facing with these students is the perceived unfair advantage that L1 and heritage learners have in achieving the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) credits and scholarships in FL examinations. It has been reported in the media that some top L2 learners were missing out on scholarships due to the competition with their native or near native speaking classmates, because there are no restrictions on native speakers sitting NCEA or the Scholarship examinations alongside their L2-learner classmates.[35] Teachers are advised that the standard criteria for achieving A (Achieved), M (Merit) and E (Excellence)[36] is the

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[35] There was a case where one student who has spent years in France was awarded the New Zealand's top French scholarship prize towards her tertiary study, thereby creating a situation where another strong contender missing out on the scholarship. Refer to Hunt, T. 2011, *NZQA defends scholarship policy*, stuff.co.nz education [online], http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/6118829/NZQA-defends-scholarship-policy. accessed 18/06/2014

[36] Within each standard, a student could either gain 'Not Achieved' if the student does not meet the criteria of the standard, 'Achieved' for a satisfactory performance, 'Achieved with Merit' for very good performance or 'Achieve with Excellence' for outstanding performance. NCEA will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

same for any student being assessed regardless of whether the student is a L2 or a native speaker.[37]

It has also been noted that 17% of the candidates for Level 3 NCEA Japanese examination in 2014 were L1 and that such candidates generally performed well in the examination. This clearly has had a marked effect on the overall spread of performance indicators.[38] The 2013 Assessment Report also stated there were a greater number of Japanese native speakers taking the Japanese NCEA examination than in previous years and this affected the overall results. This indicates that the number of native Japanese speakers studying and taking the NCEA Japanese examination is increasing and they are gaining better results than the L2 learners, as a result, the overall spread of performance indicators was affected.[39] More about the NCEA framework will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Seals (2013) mentions that the majority of heritage language programmes in New Zealand are community-based and usually run during weekends or after school, separated from their local schools.

[37] NZQA. September 2012 moderator's newsletter. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/french/moderator-s-newsletters/september-3/. accessed 27/07/2015

[38] NZQA. National Certificate of Educational Achievement 2014 Assessment Report Japanese Level 3. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/ncea-resource/reports/2014/level3/japanese.pdf. accessed 19/08/2015

[39] The status of native Japanese candidates have been reported in the 2013 and 2014 NZQA Assessment Report Japanese Level 3 but not in the previous years, which indicates that the number of Japanese speaking candidates have grown and became more noticeable in the recent years. Refer to NZQA. National Certificate of Educational Achievement 2013 and 2014 Assessment Report Japanese Level 3. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/ncea-resource/reports/2014/level3/japanese.pdf. and http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/ncea-resource/reports/2013/level3/japanese.pdf. accessed 30/08/2015

Because these programmes are often ran by the community, not by the New Zealand government, there are a few concerns, namely;

1) quality of the teachers

2) the curriculum

3) focus is mainly on younger students

Because these community-based programmes are supported by the local community, teachers may be volunteers who may not have had formal training in teaching. For Japanese language in New Zealand there are community schools, such as the Canterbury Japanese Supplementary School (which also has schools in Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton), where students attend to maintain some proficiency in their native (or their parents' native) language. Students who attend these schools in New Zealand often have different needs and achievement objectives to the L2 learners in local high schools. Therefore, they teach their own curriculum rather than the NZC. The Canterbury Japanese Supplementary School for example, uses the curriculum used in schools in Japan, because the aim of the school is to enable their students to return to Japan and fit back into the Japanese education system. However, at the Auckland Japanese Supplementary School, they offer three different courses for students to choose from, where classes not only run on Saturdays but also during the week, after

school, depending on which course students choose.[40]

Once students finish their study at these supplementary schools, most of them should have acquired

Japanese proficiency much higher than what is expected at NCEA Level 3. Therefore, there is no class

available at their level to continue with their Japanese study in local secondary schools once they

complete their study at these supplementary schools. Seals (2013) mentioned that the community-

based programmes are often organised for younger children in the hopes that once they reach

secondary or tertiary level, students could continue with their learning at their local school. However,

in many cases at secondary school level it is difficult to continue with their learning because there is

no curriculum for heritage learners taught at their local school appropriate to their level. The way the

Auckland Japanese Supplementary School organises their classes will be one of the important factors

to think about when this research tries to answer the question on how New Zealand FL education

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[40] The three courses are;

Course A: which uses the Japanese Curriculum and is for students who intends to return to Japanese school in the future and aims to achieve the same level of Japanese proficiency to those studying in Japan.

Course B: which uses a curriculum based on the Japanese Curriculum, and is for students who also aims to achieve a reasonable level of Japanese proficiency but may not intend to return to school in Japan.

Course S: which teaches Japanese and mathematics and it is intended for students who would like to gain some level of Japanese and mathematics and can only attend classes on Saturdays.

For further information. Refer to Auckland Japanese Supplementary School. http://www.ajss.ac.nz/modules/tinyd0/. accessed 25/07/2015)

system could improve to make it more successful.

As the number of native speakers and heritage learners grow in New Zealand,[41] it will probably become necessary for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to consider having a separate curriculum and examination system for them. The impact of native speakers in the L2 classroom will also be investigated in my survey in the next chapter, and the situation of heritage learners in Australia will also be discussed in the comparison work in later chapters.

Communicative competence

CC is a well discussed term in the field of FL education. As it is summarised by Newton et al. (2010), CC is the ability to communicate effectively in the target language, however, Gilmore (2011) states that it is a complicated term which could be interpreted differently by different people. Gilmore (2011) lists five closely interrelated components of CC in his research;

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[41] It is noted from the 2013 New Zealand census that the number of multilingual population is continuing/g to increase. Statistics New Zealand. 2013 Census QucikStats about culture and identity. http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/languages.aspx. accessed 22/05/2015. Also, the number of international students studying in New Zealand has grown in recent years. Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. International students: Studying and staying on in New Zealand. http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/international-students/international-students_03.asp. accessed 05/07/2015.

1) linguistic competence – the language knowledge

2) pragmalinguistic competence – understanding of the speech act (the speaker's ability to interpret the conversational implicature)

3) sociopragmatic competence – understanding of social or cultural appropriateness of the conversation

4) strategic competence – ability to use the communication strategies such as asking for clarification

5) discourse competence – ability to produce unified, cohesive, and coherent spoken or written discourse (pp.787-788)

This approach to understanding the CC is also similar to that of other researchers such as Canale & Swain (1980, cited in Pillar, 2011) who acknowledges that CC is comprised of four areas of knowledge and skills (the same as with Gilmore's component except for pragmalinguistic competence). Pillar (2011) notes that apart from the four areas mentioned by Canels & Swain (1980), it is also important to consider paralinguistic (non-verbal) input, which is similar to pragmalinguistic competence that Gilmore lists. Gilmore states that different researchers assign different areas of the CC components to a central role when communicating, however, teachers should aim their learners to gain competence

in all five areas. It is true that in a real communication, a native speaker would be using all of these skills in normal conversation. Having a reasonable balance of these components makes the speaker likely to achieve good communication with people from another culture and enables them to interact appropriately with other speakers, which is the aim of the Learning Languages skill as described by the NZC. Understanding that achieving CC involves more than gaining knowledge of the target language and the recent shift in teaching of FL from focusing on accuracy in grammar and vocabulary to communication itself is an important step towards prompting more realistic FL communication skills.

What is important in achieving successful foreign language education?

According to Gilmore's (2011) definition, CC is complicated and difficult to be measured. If we are to measure all of the above communicative skills, it is likely to give a more holistic, accurate picture of the students' communication skills, however, as Pillar (2011)'s research shows, such assessment is a very time consuming process. How then can 'success' be measured in FL education? Ellis (2009) defines successful language learning in terms of several factors; 1) success in public examinations, 2) ability to communicate in a second language, 3) generating learner autonomy, and 4) generating the motivation to learn a second language.

Ellis notes that students' FL ability is usually measured in terms of their performance in examinations. This is because it is necessary for schools, teachers, parents and also the students themselves to be able to see and compare the outcomes of their language study, and examination is the commonly used method of measuring this 'success'. Students' performance is tested and scored against the marking schedule with set criteria. As evidence of how successful the students are, they receive a test score, or grades, such as an A, M or E as in the case of the NCEA. Assessing students' learning is an important procedure in daily teaching and is one of the 'teaching as inquiry' processes established in the NZC. The NZC describes this fundamental baseline and direction of teaching as follows: "The teacher uses all available information to determine what their students have already learned and what they need to learn next" (The NZC, p.35).

As mentioned already, current approaches to teaching FL focus on developing students' CC. In order to judge the results of FL learning among students teachers seek to elicit samples of language use from their students. This could be focused on either their correct use of language (focusing on form) or their use of the language to communicate a message (focusing on meaning). The latter is acknowledged as the students' ability to use the target language in real-life (Ellis, 2003), which leads to CC. In the FL classroom the aim is increasingly focused on preparing learners for the multi-language

global society and providing them with the skills needed to communicate in various settings. However,

how New Zealand students develop CC, and how their CC is assessed under examination conditions,

raises important questions which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Another 'successful' language learning concept mentioned by Ellis (2009) is the development of

learner autonomy, in other words, creating learners who are capable of the life-long learning. Little[42]

describes reasons why learner autonomy is important in FL learning. He writes that if the learners are

autonomous they actively engage with their learning, which is likely to make their learning more

efficient and effective. They are also proactively committed to their learning and their motivation will

help them overcome any setbacks they may encounter during their study. Lastly, because FL learning

depends on language use, those learners who seek opportunity to use the skills acquired in the

classroom in real life are more likely to gain CC in various settings. Nunan (1988) also comments that

one of the major aims for FL classes is related to the teaching of specific language skills, but the other

aim is to develop learning skills in students so that they can start getting involved in the decision

making process about their learning, what they learn and how it is taught, which would consequently

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[42] Centre for Languages Linguistics & Area Studies. Learner autonomy and second/foreign language learning. By Little, D. https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409. accessed 27/05/2015

increase student motivation (pp.3-4).

 "The ability to take charge of one's learning" as defined by Holec (1981, cited in Nunan, 2003) is also

one of the focuses of the NZC (2007), which states;

> The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in
>
> education. It takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as lifelong learners
>
> who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved. It includes a clear
>
> set of principles on which to base curriculum decision making. It sets out values that
>
> are to be encouraged, modelled, and explored. It defines five key competencies that
>
> are critical to sustained learning and effective participation in society and that
>
> underline the emphasis on lifelong learning (p.4).

The NZC tries to teach students to 'learn how to learn', which Ellis (2009) believes is more important

than actual success in developing proficiency in a language while at school. As students' contact time

with the target language and the language teacher at school is extremely limited, it is up to the student

about what to do with the skills and knowledge they gained in the class. Learning how to learn is

believed to foster life-long learners.

The above reasons that Little and Nunan give for the importance of developing learner autonomy are closely related to Ellis's last criterion for 'successful' language learning, namely having the motivation to learn a FL. Ellis (2009) explains that even if FL learners do not pass their examinations, or develop communicative skills, or learn to become autonomous in their learning, their language learning could still be considered successful if the experience that they received at school helped them develop a taste for learning a FL and motivate them to learn further later on. Although under the current education system in schools, students are assessed on their performance in examinations and continuous assessment exercises, motivational issues are also important factors to think about, especially in New Zealand and Australia. This is because one of the problems facing Japanese language classrooms in secondary schools in both countries is the declining retention rate of students, which is closely linked to motivation. If the FL education system is successful in motivating students to carry on with their language learning until they reach senior levels of schooling, and even further into tertiary education, the likelihood of them achieving CC will be much higher than those who discontinue with their learning in primary school, or after the first few years of secondary school.

The access to opportunities for FL learning is another major factor influencing its efficacy. It is

commonly acknowledged that learning languages requires time, which is one major reason why

Peddie, Gunn & Lewis (1999) support a 'starting younger' theory,[43] which could potentially give

students a longer time for learning. They state that the amount of contact time with the target language

has a clear influence on students' ability to achieve proficiency in that language. This is an important

factor when we consider the fact that CC involves more than the language knowledge but also the

understanding of the appropriate communication skills that are unique to that culture. Therefore, we

can assume that if there were enough motivational factors to encourage students to continue the FL

learning and become life-long learners, it is more likely that they would achieve CC. However, due to

the lack of a comprehensive language policy in New Zealand, there are no requirements for schools,

at any level, to set aside a fixed number of teaching hours for FL teaching[44] and, as mentioned in the

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[43] It is generally said, and many researchers such as Peddie, Gunn & Lewis (1999) and Barnard (2004) also agree to some extent, that starting younger is better for language learning, and this is why many countries introduce L2 at an early age.

[44] For example in Australia, where they are working on creating a National Curriculum at present, in the new curriculum for languages (which is available for use and is awaiting for final endorsement at the time of this research, July 2014), there are allocations of learning hours for FL indicated for the purpose of school curriculum development. Refer to Australian Curriculum – Languages Overview, http://beta.australiancurriculum.edu.au/languages/implications-for-teaching-assessment-and-reporting. accessed 18/07/2014

In Japan, under the language policy for English education, all junior high school students are to attend set hours of English classes. Refer to Kashihara (12[Th] OECD-Japan seminar: "Globalisation and linguistic competencies: Responding to diversity in language environments" English education and policy in Japan) http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/41521944.pdf. accessed 19/07/2014

literature review, under the current situation, some researchers suggest that even the five years of language learning at secondary school will be not enough to gain basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS).

Moreover in New Zealand, especially in the senior years when students specialise in their chosen learning areas, it is common for FL classes to combine mixed-year groups in one room due to the low number of enrolments at the senior levels. These combined classes are unusual in any other subject other than FL, and it not only puts pressure on teachers to teach different levels in one class, but some researchers suggest that this may also put some students off their FL learning (Oshima, 2012; Shearn, 2003; McGee et al., 2013). This issue will be investigated in my survey (Chapter 6) in order to establish whether this is also true in the Canterbury region, and investigate how teachers actually see the influence of a mixed-level combined class on student achievement and motivation.

Barnard (2004) argues that no matter what age the FL learning begins, unless it is "supported by high-quality materials, appropriately trained teachers and favourable public attitudes, the experience may be negative and effects counterproductive" (p.208). However, while Gilmore (2011) describes some teaching materials as "fail[ing] to meet many of their communicative needs" (p.791) he also questions

the usefulness of textbooks and non-authentic teaching materials for achieving CC, because they are

"based on contrived discourse, invented by writers to illustrate particular points in itemized structural

syllabi" (p.791). His research results suggest that use of authentic materials was better able to develop

CC than those used in textbooks because the authentic materials provided richer input for learners.

Some teachers in Canterbury, as shown in the survey (chapter 6), also voiced the need for more

teaching materials to be developed for New Zealand students. In order to make the FL programme

successful, which will lead students achieving CC, teachers must have the ability to select the

appropriate teaching materials for their students. Further, the current situation in New Zealand is that

it is common for teachers who do not have competence in the target language or L2 pedagogy to be

teaching the language in the pre-secondary level, due to the shortage of the appropriately trained

teachers. Even at the secondary level, where the subject is more specialised, there is no official

requirement for teachers of languages to have experience or language knowledge, and only a

sufficient teaching qualification is required. Moreover, it is also not possible for New Zealand teachers

to learn Japanese pedagogy in New Zealand.[45] Most of the New Zealand learners of Japanese or any

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[45] All teachers are required to have 'up-to-date content knowledge' and 'up-to-date pedagogical knowledge' (New
Zealand Teachers Council Registration Policy, Updated February 2012), but for specific languages, most teachers
have not received any formal training in how to teach the specific language. For example, most teachers teaching
Japanese at a secondary school have learnt Japanese themselves or been to Japan and have some degree of

FL, do not have input of the target language other than from their classroom teacher, therefore, their

teacher and the teaching materials are likely to have at least some impact on how students achieve

CC. Another reason why teachers cannot adopt more authentic teaching materials in the classroom

may be due to how students are assessed, and how the classroom teaching is 'examination-driven'.

New Zealand's examination system, NCEA, will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

The shortage of up-to-date materials, qualified teachers and positive public attitude towards FL

education are commonly discussed among researchers as major issues that affect the uptake of

language education in schools in New Zealand and other anglophone countries (Gutherie, 2005;

Barnard, 2006).[46] This issue will also be explored in my survey to identify whether teachers consider

a teacher's language and pedagogical knowledge, as well as teaching materials, have a positive or

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language competence, however, there is no specific "Japanese pedagogy" course at any institutions in New Zealand,
therefore candidates training in New Zealand who are willing to become Japanese teachers could only receive
Foreign language pedagogy and not Japanese pedagogy (Japan Foundation Website).

[46] Also see Kidd, R. 2014, Foreign language teaching archaic: academic, staff.co.nz education [online],
http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/9961785/Foreign-language-teaching-archaic-academic.   accessed
18/06/2014, and Helliwell, G. 2012, Foreign language lessons pay off, *Bay of Plenty Times* [online],
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/bay-of-plenty-times/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503343&objectid=11067682.   accessed
18/06/2014. Ratcliffe, R. 2013, Languages in primary schools – getting ready for 2014, *theguardian* [online],
http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/may/15/languages-primary-schools-2014.   accessed
18/07/2014

negative impact on students achieving CC. These commonly debated issues surrounding FL learning

will also be discussed in relation to Australia in Chapter 7.

Why should students know about what they are learning?

Having clear and achievable academic goals, which can be shared with the learners is also believed

to enhance student learning. This is recognised in the NZC, which states;

> Students learn most effectively when they understand what they are learning, why they
>
> are learning it, and how they will be able to use their new learning. Effective teachers
>
> stimulate the curiosity of their students, require them to search for relevant information
>
> and ideas, and challenge them to use or apply what they discover in new contexts or in
>
> new ways. They look for opportunities to involve students directly in decisions relating to
>
> their own learning. This encourages them to see what they are doing as relevant and to
>
> take greater ownership of their own learning. (p.34)

The NZC also states that it is necessary for teachers to share the learning outcomes with the students

and encourage them to take responsibility for their learning. By knowing what they are learning, the

student will be able to achieve the set goals which will, in turn, create motivation for further learning.

In later chapters, when we compare the New Zealand and Australian education systems, it will also investigate how Australia shares their learning outcomes with the learners.

The role of motivation

Williams and Burden (1997), cited in the report prepared by Peddie, Gunn & Lewis (1999), recognise the importance of goal sharing. They believe that it is necessary for learners to be aware of the previously set goals and intended outcomes of what they are learning so that they can work towards meeting them. Even at the early stage, when young learners may not be able to articulate the reasons for acquiring the language, motivation still plays an important role in their successful language learning.

Oshima (2012) and other researchers (McLauchlan, 2007; McGee et al., 2013) also agree that students' motivation is a major factor influencing the efficacy of FL learning. Because motivation is closely related to students' choice of whether to continue or discontinue with their FL learning as they progress through their schooling, it has created a serious problem in New Zealand's FL education, particularly in Japanese language. This is not a unique situation in New Zealand, as research by Matsumoto and Obana (2001) also shows that among Australian university students learning Japanese there was also a close connection between motivation and the students' learning experience.

Part of the reason why students are discontinuing their Japanese language learning, when the number

of students learning some other FL, such as Chinese, is growing in New Zealand, may be because

some students choose to study a FL driven by extrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Among these researchers, motivation is generally categorised into two types; intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation.[47] According to Ushioda (2008) intrinsic motivation is generated by "own self-sustaining

pleasurable rewards" (p21), related to interest, enjoyment, challenge and satisfaction. Extrinsic

motivation is for those who seek rewards from outside factors, such as gaining a qualification, passing

examinations, pleasing the teacher, or for career benefits. Regardless of whether the motivational

factors are intrinsic or extrinsic, learners with strong motivation are likely to succeed in language

learning. However, it is understood that externally regulated motivation usually has only a short-term

benefit, and educators should aim to foster "learners' own motivation from within" (Deci and Flaste,

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[47]Ushioda (2008) also mentioned that there has been a tendency to conflate the intrinsic and extrinsic distinction with the integrative and instrumental distinction based on Gardner (1985)'s work. Integrative motivation is similar to intrinsic motivation where learners may learn the target language because they are attracted to the target language or the culture (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy 1996). Learners whose learning is oriented by outside factors such as to pass the examinations are instrumental orientation, similar to extrinsic. These distinctions are made because as Schmidt and Savage (1994) note, some learners might have strong integrative motivation but not necessarily experience intrinsic pleasure from the learning process. For more examples of learners with mixture of intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental motivations, see Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy 1996.

1996, cited in Ushioda, 2008, p22). This is because it is understood that unless the students are personally motivated intrinsically, the interest in learning the language is likely to be lost, especially when they encounter difficulties in learning (McLauchlan, 2007). It is also understood that those students who started to study a FL to meet an academic requirement (i.e. it was compulsory to take a FL class at a certain year level, usually the first few years of secondary education), were likely to stop learning FL once they have completed the requirement (Oshima, 2012). In New Zealand, researchers, including McLauchlan (2007, cited in McGee et al., 2013) and Oshima (2012), suggest that a cause behind the decline of Japanese and the growth of Chinese language learning is due to extrinsic decisions made by the students and their parents who no longer see Japanese as a 'career tool' (McGee et al., 2013, pp27-28). Therefore, although it is common for students to begin learning a language due to extrinsic motivations,[48] it is important for teachers to consider how to encourage the students once they begin their learning if they are to foster true 'life-long learners' who will carry on with their language learning throughout their secondary school years, or even longer, who are then more likely to achieve CC.

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[48] Other than the academic requirement at school, among New Zealand secondary school students, the parents' influence over students' choice of subject at school is significant, as well as the career prospects (Shearn, 2003; Coleman, Galaczi, & Astruc, 2007; European Commission, 2012; Beal, 1994; Trotter, 1994 cited in McGee et al., 2013)

As outlined in the NZC quote mentioned above, sharing learning objectives with the students helps

motivate them intrinsically, which could eventually foster them into life-long learners. However, some

researchers question whether FL students are provided with accurate information about what they are

able to achieve from their language classes, which may result in them having unrealistic expectations

towards their learning outcomes (Beal, 1994; Trotter, 1994, cited in Oshima, 2012). They argue that

students (also parents and employers) are likely to be disappointed after they find out that there is a

mismatch between these expectations and the true outcome of their FL learning. The realisation that

they are unable to master the new language as imagined may give students a sense of failure, which

could also influence their motivation to continue with their language learning. In the case of Japanese

language learning and the complexity of the language, competition from other FL as a better alternative

as a 'career tool', and these unrealistic academic expectations are thought to be some of the major

causes of the secondary school student attrition rate, especially among non-Roman script-based

language speakers. A clear, and realistic goal, which aims students to achieve an appropriate level of

CC needs to be shared with the students and the public. This is one of the main purposes of the

curriculum, which works as the guideline for learning. As the curriculum is an important part of FL

education, the NZC will be explored in the next chapter, and the Australian curriculum in a later chapter.

This chapter aimed to identify who FL learners are, and discussed issues they may encounter in their

FL learning. As this chapter introduced, there are L1, L2 and heritage or background learners among

FL learners. However, different learners have different aims, needs and issues when learning a target

language (which could be their L1 or L2), therefore they should not be categorised as one group of FL

learners, even though in a secondary school setting in New Zealand or Australia, most of these

different learners all exist in one classroom. Acknowledging these different learners and considering

how schools and teachers need to cater for their learning, are keys to achieving CC.

This chapter also introduced the definition of CC, which is at the center of this research. The review

of CC made it clear that achieving CC involves gaining knowledge and skills in a wide range of aspects

of communication, and have potentially different interpretations by different people. From analysing

what it means to be successful in FL learning using definitions from researchers, different ways of

measuring 'success' were identified. Despite the fact that these different ways do exist, at schools,

students' FL ability is measured predominantly through assessments and examinations rather than

other factors; generating learner autonomy and motivation are not considered. However, it became

apparent that CC is difficult to measure due to its complicated nature. It is therefore important to

understand about the examination system in New Zealand, and how students are assessed, to see if

the New Zealand oral examination system is likely to measure students' level of CC accurately. Although learner motivation is usually not measured at school settings, it is still important for students to know what they are learning, and what they can achieve from learning FL, which would generate students' motivation. Because the curriculum is the guidance for what students are to achieve from their learning, it is necessary for this research to investigate the effectiveness of the NZC.

In the next chapter, the NZC and the NCEA examination structure will be introduced. This information will form the basis of my discussion of whether the NZC serves as accurate guidance for New Zealand schools concerning the expectations and outcomes of secondary FL courses, and whether the NCEA examination system is a reliable method of assessment, especially for measuring students' achievement of CC. In the later chapters, the curriculum and the examination system in Australia will be discussed to give a comparison with that of New Zealand.

Chapter Five:

The New Zealand Curriculum and the National Certificate of Educational Achievement

This chapter explores the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), which is an official document for all English-medium New Zealand state schools, providing direction for teaching and learning. This chapter also explores the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), which is the national examination system which students in Years 11 to 13[49] usually sit. The curriculum sets out what students should learn and achieve and, as discussed in the previous chapter, because examinations are usually the only method of measuring students' success in schools, these two components of FL learning are therefore likely to have significant impact over students' learning and achievement. It is therefore necessary for this thesis to provide substantial background information of both the NZC and NCEA through a review of previous studies and governmental documents in order to highlight any issues that may have influence over FL students' achievements in gaining CC. Analysis of the NCEA,

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[49] In New Zealand, a child most commonly starts primary school as a Year 1 pupil when they turn five years old. Primary schools cater for children from Year 1 to 8 (age 5 to 12) for a full primary schools, and from Year 1 to 6 (age 5 to 10) for contributing schools where children in Year 7 and 8 (age 11 and 12) may go to a separate intermediate school. Secondary school usually cater for students from Year 9 to 13 (age 13 to 17). There may also be middle schools, which accept students from Years 7 to 10 (age 11 to 14) (For more definitions of different types of schools, see the Ministry of Education website for "Types of schools", http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/SchoolsInNewZealand/SchoolTypes.aspx. accessed 09/08/2014).

focusing especially on the oral examination of FL assessment, will also help in determining how

effective it is in measuring students' CC, which is a problematic issue, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The New Zealand Curriculum

Rather than a detailed plan, the NZC is a framework for the teaching of all subjects in New Zealand

from Years 1 to 13. Its "principle function is to set the direction for student learning and to provide

guidance for schools as they design and review their curriculum" (NZC, 2007, p.6). This means that

schools have considerable flexibility in implementing a wide range of ideas, resources and models to

develop their own teaching programmes. While every school curriculum must be clearly aligned with

the intent of the NZC, it only serves as the backbone for each school's approach and does not serve

as the resource of a 'how to' booklet.

The NZC document is set out in different sections. The first few sections provide the broad direction

of education in New Zealand, namely the 'Vision', 'Principles', 'Values' and 'Key Competencies',

followed by separate sections on eight learning areas; English, the Arts, Health and Physical

Education, Learning Languages, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, Social Sciences, and

Technology. Each learning area has an introduction outlining the basics, the rationale for learning it,

and how the learning area is structured. There are then sections on pedagogy and the school curriculum, followed by achievement objectives for each learning area.[50]

The new curriculum[51] emphasises fostering lifelong learners and for them to be equipped for the fast changing "New Zealand's diverse, multicultural society and the global community" (NZC, 2007, p.4). One of the main reasons for reviewing the curriculum was that society was changing and New Zealand saw the need to educate young people who can, in the future, flourish both in New Zealand and overseas. In order to meet this aim students need the skills and knowledge to communicate with people around the globe. Therefore a new learning area, Learning Languages, was added to the curriculum. It was separated from English (prior to the new curriculum FL was categorised under the English subject) and is now one of the eight learning areas in the NZC. All schools teaching Years 7 to 10 are expected to offer all students the opportunity to learn a FL. Although FL learning is not

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[50] There are also other sections on official languages of New Zealand, the Education Act and so on. For the whole list of sections check the New Zealand Curriculum 2007.

[51] The previous curriculum was renewed to create the current NZC in 2007. This was a result of the Curriculum Stocktake carried out from 2000 to 2002, which investigated a number of problems and issues associated with the previous curriculum and the changing world. Between 2004 and 2007, more than 15,000 students, teachers, principals, advisers and academics contributed to developing the draft curriculum, building on the recommendations from the New Zealand Curriculum Stocktake Report. In 2006 the Draft New Zealand Curriculum was published for consultation and feedback. In November 2007, the new curriculum was published and schools were required to fully implement it by February 2010 (Ministry of Education, Curriculum project archives).

compulsory at any stage of schooling, it is hoped that focusing on L2 at a younger age will increase

the number of students with experience and knowledge of an additional language when they enter

high school (MOE, Learning Languages, 2012).

In the NZC, under the learning area for Languages, it is stated that "learning a new language provides

a means of communicating with people from another culture and exploring one's personal world" (NZC,

2007, p.24). The learning area is structured under three linguistic and sociocultural contexts

categorised by 'strand', namely; 'Communication', 'Language knowledge' and 'Cultural knowledge',

where communication is the core strand, supported by two further strands. The achievement

objectives for the communication strand provide the basis for assessment and the two supporting

strands should only be assessed indirectly through their contribution to the communication strand

(NZC, 2007). Instead of testing students' ability to memorise vocabulary, translate sentences and

speak error free like native speakers, students are to be assessed on their ability to use these skills to

communicate effectively in the target language. This is a shift in views of FL learning from a traditional

linguistic, vocabulary and grammar focus to a focus on communication, where students learn to use

the language to negotiate for meaning (Scarino, 2005).

The NZC is divided into eight curriculum levels. For languages these levels are then sub-divided into

four progressive pairs of levels; Levels 1 and 2, Levels 3 and 4, Levels 5 and 6, Levels 7 and 8. Level

1 is the entry level for students with no prior knowledge of the language regardless of their school year.

The NZC gives the proficiency statement for each progressive pair of levels, and what students should

be able to do after completing each level.

Table 5.1: Proficiency descriptor by pair of levels

Pair of levels	Description
Levels 1 & 2	Students can understand and use familiar expressions and everyday vocabulary. Students can interact in a simple way in supported situation.
Levels 3 & 4	Students can understand and construct simple texts using their knowledge of the target language. Students can describe aspects of their own background and immediate environment.
Levels 5 & 6	Students can understand and produce more complex language. They can communicate beyond the immediate context, for example, past and future events. Students can understand and produce a variety of text types.
Levels 7 & 8	Students can use language variably and effectively to express and justify their own ideas and opinions, and support or challenge those of others. They are able to use and identify the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretation and enable them to respond critically to texts.

The achievement objectives are generic across all languages offered in New Zealand schools,

allowing schools to have more freedom in choosing what languages to offer, while maintaining the

same achievement objectives and keeping the standard across all languages throughout the country.

It also meant that there was a lot of flexibility in developing their own teaching materials and lesson

plans to meet their students' needs because the NZC does not provide the details of what should be

taught, specific to each language. However, this generic nature of the language curriculum has also

brought challenges to languages such as Japanese, and this problem will be discussed further in this

chapter.

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement

The NCEA are the national qualifications for senior secondary school students. They were introduced

in 2002 to the first group of students at NCEA Level 1, replacing the previous qualifications namely;

School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate, and University Bursary qualifications. The NCEA was

introduced to Level 2 and 3 students over 2003 and 2004, as well as a separate Scholarship

examination.

The aim of achieving CC, as stated in the NZC, brought about major change to how students' writing

and speaking skills in the target language were assessed in NCEA. Previously, writing skills in the

target language were assessed externally by writing about a chosen topic during the end of year

examination. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) stated that a "One off assessment is

likely to be less reliable than a range of assessments" (NZQA, NCEA Update 21 NZQA 2004) and,

since 2011,[52] the external writing assessment was phased out. It was replaced by an internally assessed portfolio for each student which contain written submissions collected from them throughout the year on various topics and in different formats. In order to ensure consistency over different language-learning skills, the internally assessed conversation achievement standard is now also in portfolio style. Students are expected to interact in the target language in various situations which need to be recorded. With these changes it was intended that teachers could extend students' knowledge of linguistic and cultural features to a wider range of contexts, audiences and situations (for example, the recorded conversation could be with friends in class, with a stranger on the street, or at a job interview, all of which have different linguistic characteristics). The portfolio format not only assesses students' ability to communicate in the target language, but also their skills to choose the most appropriate structure and language to match the purpose and audience of the given context which are important skills in a realistic situation (MOE, Learning languages, 2012).

The NCEA internal assessments are also intended to allow students and teachers to be creative about how students demonstrate skills in, and knowledge of, the target language. For both oral (spoken presentation and interaction) and written assessments tasks can be carried out in various ways as

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[52] This change was put in place only for NCEA Level 1. Level 2 was renewed from 2012 and Level 3 in 2013.

long as they "provide opportunities for students to demonstrate language use across a range of contexts and for a range of purposes" (NCEA, 2011, p.2). Although there is a suggested length, there is no word or time limit for the assessments and emphasis is placed on the 'quality' rather than 'quantity'. It is also emphasised that incorrect use of language and/or inconsistencies (which includes, but is not limited to, the use of wrong tense, wrong words and unclear pronunciation) should not be overly penalised if they do not hinder communication. The standard aims to assess students' ability to communicate and maintain the communication, as it is important in the real world, rather than perfection. This shift from the 'one off assessment' to portfolio style assessment fits in with the idea that achieving CC involves the five components (linguistic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, strategic and discourse competence) as Gilmore (2011) states, and based on theory, it is likely to assess students' CC better than the previous examinations.

NZQA also reviewed the issues surrounding the limitation of vocabulary taught at schools in 2007. Previously many teachers only focused on lists of vocabulary and grammatical structures which were suggested by NZQA in the curriculum booklet to be taught at each curriculum level. It was thought that this limited students in how they communicated in the target language because often, when a list of vocabulary is provided, they tend not to extend themselves beyond the list, and hence can only

communicate within the minimum expectations of what they are required to learn. Specifying the

vocabulary to be learnt also meant that students learning was highly prescriptive and controlled by the

teacher and the curriculum.

After 2007, such lists of required vocabulary were abolished for all levels, except as guidance for the

listening and reading external examinations. Instead of teaching words listed as 'belonging' to each

particular language level, teachers are now suggested to use their professional judgment to teach

what they feel is appropriate at the time, "as determined by the students' interest and need, and

relevance to the sociocultural and linguistic context in which students are communicating" (MOE,

Learning languages, 2012). In this way, teachers could teach more freely, using authentic texts in their

teaching, and students could learn "real language" which may be quite different to what is written in

the textbook or the vocabulary list. Students are also assessed on their ability to "choose vocabulary

[and] grammar that is not artificial but consistently suitable for the purpose and audience" (MOE,

Learning languages, 2012). This is aligned with the understanding of CC, where perfection in linguistic

competence alone does not equal overall achievement of CC, and that students are likely to develop

their CC better with authentic materials, because such materials provide them with more realistic

language use in real-life communication (Gilmore, 2011).

One of the major advantages of NCEA, compared to the old system, is that it assesses various skills in each subject separately. It was argued that not all skills and knowledge could be assessed through examinations, for example fluency in FL. Therefore, NCEA replaced the old system by providing a range of assessment methods appropriate to each subject area. At the end of each year students are no longer awarded a single grade for the subject but they are awarded grades for what skills and knowledge, called the 'achievement standards' or 'unit standard', they have achieved (CareersNZ, 2014). An NCEA qualification is awarded to students who achieve a specific number of credits earned by completing each standard to the required level. There are three levels of NCEA certificate which relate to the difficulty of the standards achieved. Each assessment or standard measures what a student knows, or can do, against certain criteria of the standard. What this means is that students could be awarded higher grades (Excellence or Merit) for what they are good at.

For example, in FL there are five achievement standards for different skills in each target language (*Listen and Respond*, *Speak/Present*, *Interact*, *View and Respond*, and *Write*) worth 24 credits in total. For Levels 1 and 2 the standards for *Listen and Respond*, *Interact*, *View and Respond*, and *Write* are worth 5 credits each, *Speak/Present* is worth 4 credits. Credits for Level 3 were reviewed in 2013, and

students can now gain 3 credits for *Speak/Present*, and 6 credits for *Interact* (see Appendix 1),

emphasising the importance of the interact/communicate skills in the target language. This is relevant

to our present discussion because this demonstrates how the focus in FL learning has shifted towards

achieving CC in the target language, and that the government puts additional emphasis on gaining

CC once students reach Level 3.

In this system, a student in Level 3, who is good at oral presentation may be awarded 6 credits with

"Achieved with excellence" for the internal *Interact* assessment. In comparison, under the old system,

oral assessment was only a small part of the whole year's work and the overall result at the end of the

year may not reflect how well the student actually did in this particular area. By separating standards

the new system clarifies students' strengths and weaknesses which could foster students' motivation

and learning. It is also suggested that one of the advantages of NCEA is its transparency.[53] As

discussed earlier, in Chapter 1, it is widely recognised that in order to motivate the students, they

should know what they are learning and how they are going to achieve their goals. In NCEA, because

it is a standards-based system, students are told the topic and what they need to do to achieve it in

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[53] NZQA. Factsheet ♯ 1: The development of NCEA. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/understanding-ncea/the-facts/factsheet-1/. accessed 22/06/2015.

advance, which could assist students to engage in their learning.[54]

The NZC and NCEA also offer 'freedom' for students, teachers and schools to make their own decisions about the context for learning, what resources to be used, how learning will be carried out and how their progress will be measured (NZQA, NCEA Update 21 NZQA 2004). Prior to the new curriculum there were separate curriculum booklets for each language which contained achievement objectives, suggested teaching content (including structures, vocabulary and cultural information), learning activities and assessment activities for each curriculum level. The new curriculum only contains achievement objectives, which are generic for all FL. The NZC serves as a guideline but there are spaces for teachers and schools to design their course outline more freely according to present-day student interests and needs. This is an important point about the NZC, which forms the basis of my discussion in Chapter 6.

Controversy over NZC and NCEA for Learning Languages

Prioritising the fostering of global citizens with the knowledge and skills in FL and culture resulted in

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[54] NZQA. Factsheet ♯ 1: The development of NCEA. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/understanding-ncea/the-facts/factsheet-1/. accessed 22/06/2015.

the development of Learning Languages as a separate learning area in the NZC, and the current

achievement standards in the NCEA. The new NZC and NCEA are dedicated to developing FL

learners' CC in the target language, which, as discussed above, constitutes a considerable shift from

focusing on the mastery of the FL through a grammar and vocabulary-based curriculum. These

developments all seem positive for FL learning at the theoretical level, however, as already mentioned

earlier, this change in approach also created problems in practice.

Firstly, there is lack of a specific curriculum for each language. This means that the expected learning

outcomes are the same for students learning European and Asian languages alike, such as Japanese

and Chinese, which are commonly understood to be more difficult to acquire by native English

speakers (McLauchlan, 2007; McGee et al., 2013). This is not only because the language itself, such

as Japanese, is quite different to English, but also due to differences between the cultures. Taguchi

(2011) states that as learners' proficiency in the target language develop, they also gain better control

of pragmatic functions. However there is also evidence that, even among advanced level learners,

they still lack native-like sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge (p.267), which are important

components of CC. Under the current NZC students are not only required to achieve CC, but learners

of Japanese are required to gain the same level of proficiency as the learners of French. This makes

it understandable that some Japanese learners may feel dispirited, considering the effort they put into

learning Japanese, compared to the apparent progress of those learning French, which could lead to

demotivating them to learn further and instead they might opt for an easier subject (The Japan

Foundation, 2014).

This becomes more complex when there are L1, L2 and heritage learners all in one classroom (as

discussed in Chapter 4). It is natural that students learning different languages gain skills and

knowledge in ways which are unique to the language. They would also encounter different problems

depending on the different FL experience, such as students' L1, FL learning environment and so on.

It is therefore unrealistic to expect students learning different languages to achieve the same level of

proficiency in the same amount of time.

The generic nature of the NZC, as well as the shift toward a CC-focused approach in FL teaching, also

brought challenges to some teachers, because the NZC does not state what language structures or

topics learners must work on, at each level, for each language (McGee et al., 2013). The purpose of

introducing the *Interact Standard* to enhance students' communication skills is supported by many

teachers (East, 2012, 2014a&b), however there is no instruction in the NZC on how students could be

trained to achieve good grades in this Standard, nor is there enough supporting material, or training

organised for the teachers to implement these changes (East, 2014a; McGee et al., 2013). There is

also no clear definition of what CC actually means in practice for students at each level. Considering

the complexity of the term CC, and the fact that it is not visibly stated in the NZC, it is unrealistic that

teachers nationwide share the same understanding and criteria of CC for their students, even though

it is the goal for all New Zealand students learning FL. The next chapter, will explore how teachers of

Japanese in Canterbury actually understand the term CC.

The flexibility of the NZC has certain advantages, while simultaneously being critiqued for its

vagueness (Kennedy, 2014). Further to the problem with the lack of clarification of what CC means,

the proficiency descriptors at each level too are missing explanation. For example, at curriculum Level

6 (shared with Level 5) it states that "students can understand and produce more complex language.

They can communicate beyond the immediate context, for example, past and future events. Students

can understand and produce a variety of text types" (NZC, 2007, Levels 5 and 6 Learning Languages,

Proficiency descriptor. Refer to Table 5.1). However, this level of "more complex language" is not

defined in the NZC. Currently, despite the fact that some language-specific NCEA internal assessment

resources are available online, and teachers and students have a better understanding of what is

required at each level in the NCEA framework, the achievement objectives remain uncertain at the

pre-NCEA level.[55]

Another shortcoming of the current NZC is that it is thought, by some, to do little to support students

become 'life-long learners', as stated in the NZC, due to its vagueness. Nunan (1988) argues that by

making the content objectives of a course explicit, it would benefit the students because they "come

to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course", and that "learning comes to

be seen as the gradual accretion of achievable goals" (p.5). This is also related to the student

motivation mentioned in Chapter 4. If learners can clearly see what the objectives of their learning are,

then classroom activities could relate to the learners' real life more, maximizing the potential of the

classroom by developing student autonomy, and encouraging students to make links between

classroom learning and the 'real-world' outside (Nunan, 1988); which is hoped will continue after they

leave school. However, with the current NZC, it is not clear what students can actually achieve from

the course. Schools and teachers may have the freedom to develop their own school curriculum

aligned with the NZC, yet it is questionable if the current NZC is serving an adequate role as the

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[55] There is no national examination pre-NCEA level, therefore there are no specified topics, language skills, grammar or vocabulary to be taught at Years 9 or 10, or pre-secondary school. What students are required to know by the time they reach NCEA level is uncertain.

national curriculum for Learning Languages.

There are another three major NCEA-related issues that researchers have identified as facing schools across all NCEA subjects that need to be addressed here. The first is the workload created by NCEA, the second is the notion that assessment is driving the curriculum, and third is the strong feeling that there is not enough governmental support for the teachers to implement the expected changes.

It is reported that 58% of the teachers surveyed in 2012 (increased from 46% in 2009) indicated NCEA workload was a major issue, and 48% of the teachers in 2012 (increase from 35% in 2009) also identified assessments are driving the curriculum delivery (Hipkins, 2013).[56] A report was issued by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) in 2010 that stated NCEA internal assessment had increased the burden on teachers, not only for the time spent on assessing students, rather than teaching, but also for the amount of marking required for the internal assessments (PPTA, 2010a). Without adequate training or support teachers were expected to set (design) and mark the assessments to the national standard. NZQA expects individual schools to have assessment policies and procedures to ensure that internal assessment is accurate, consistent and appropriate (Office of

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[56] The survey referred to here is the 2012 NZCER National Survey of Secondary Schools. Four groups are surveyed in term three of 2012; all secondary school principals of state and state-integrated schools, all teachers on the PPTA's email database, members of the board of trustees, and a random sample of parents. Various questions were asked, however, to only one or two groups for whom they were most relevant.

the Auditor-General, 2012). However, for learning areas such as Learning Languages, it is common that there is only one teacher at a school who teaches a certain language and it is difficult to ensure this national standard is administered with the same validity throughout the country.[57] This problem is compounded by the vagueness of the NZC which is also an issue.

The second issue is the notion that assessment is driving the curriculum. It is noted that in the same survey as above that 62% of the teachers answered there were barriers to making changes in the curriculum they taught, some of the reasons were due to introduction of NCEA (Hipkins, 2013). In the same Hipkin's (2013) study, mentioned earlier, when teachers were asked to identify specific barriers to curriculum change, NCEA requirements and the time taken for NCEA assessments, at 43% and 39% respectively, were perceived as the major barriers to making substantial positive changes in the curriculum. Teachers who were under pressure to increase their students' NCEA results were more likely to see NCEA as a barrier to curriculum change. For the FL curriculum, especially, the notion that 'NCEA is driving the curriculum' may also be connected to the vagueness of the NZC itself. Because there is no clear statement on what students should be taught at each level and the official supporting materials teachers have access to are the NCEA materials, it is therefore expected that some teachers

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[57] Also refer to a comment made by a teacher in the Education Review series, 2010.

would rely predominantly on the NCEA materials to decide what to teach and how to design the language programme. This way, students can clearly learn the language necessary for them to pass the assessments, and teachers teach what is required for students to be successful in NCEA assessments, thereby the FL curriculum becomes wholly NCEA and assessment driven. Even at the pre-NCEA level (Year 9 or 10) it is not uncommon, for some teachers, to start preparing students for NCEA, by calculating what they would need to have learnt before they reach Year 11. If this becomes the norm then the NCEA pass could become the students' (and teachers') main aim, rather than the acquisition of skills to communicate in the target language, which is what the government hopes NCEA FL study will produce.

East (2014b) has highlighted the point that there is lack of clarity in the NZC and training provided for teachers in order for them to meet the new requirements for NCEA assessments. There are also concerns, shared by teachers of FL, over how to interpret "spontaneous and unrehearsed" communication as demanded of the *Interact Standard*. Although the *Interact* assessment is praised for encouraging authentic communication, both teachers and students have the dilemma that this is still a test, and students "want to do well" (Comment by a French teacher, East, 2014b, p76). Many teachers commented that their students insisted on writing out a script, practising and memorising the

lines until they felt they were confident, before undertaking the test. This no longer made the

assessment 'spontaneous' or natural (East, 2014b).

The NZQA approved the NCEA assessment resource for the *Interact Standard*[58] which states that

students are not allowed to use pre-learnt role-play or dialogue, but because it is assessed internally

in a portfolio style, and tasks are given to the students in advance, it is difficult to determine how many

schools or individual students are actually following this rule. The assessment resource also

encourages the use of "appropriate interactive strategies" and to "make appropriate use of cultural

conventions" (p.6). However, when students are given the opportunity to script their interaction, then,

such communication strategies become inauthentic and it is questionable if achieving high result in

NCEA *Interact Standard* actually equals to achieving CC. This will be discussed further in the next

chapter.

This chapter aimed to introduce the NZC and NCEA and to explore some of the issues associated

with them. The changes made to the NZC and the introduction of NCEA were intended to be a positive

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[58] NCEA. (2012). NCEA Internal Assessment Resource Languages 3.3A Japanese for Achievement Standard 91555. Accessed from https://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-Internally-Assessed-Achievement-Standards/Learning-languages/Japanese/Level-3-Japanese

shift to encourage the growth of a communicative approach to the FL education in New Zealand. However, these changes also brought new challenges and have not yet solved some of the existing issues FL education is facing, despite the New Zealand government's intention. We have seen that there is strong evidence to suggest that the government's expectation for FL learners at secondary school to achieve a high level of CC under the current education system in New Zealand is indeed, as McLauchlan (2007), stated 'unrealistic'. This is especially true for Japanese at the theoretical level. A look at how the NCEA *Interact Standard* operates also suggests that achieving high results in this assessment does not necessarily result in achieving a high level of CC.

The next chapter aims to gain some valuable insight to how teachers deliver the Japanese language programme and what issues they may encounter in teaching Japanese and developing CC in their students. Japanese secondary school teachers in the Canterbury region were asked questions related to the issues raised in this chapter to see if these challenges are also causing problems in Canterbury in current teaching practice.

Chapter Six: The survey

This chapter presents the first main study of this research: a survey which aims to identify and describe

the current situation of the Japanese secondary level teaching environment in the Canterbury region.

The results of this survey are expected to help me detect some of the contemporary issues in current

teaching practice to answer the question of whether it is possible for New Zealand secondary school

students to achieve CC and to identify where the problems lie in the New Zealand FL education system.

The survey's aims and participants

In 2014, secondary school teachers of Japanese in the greater Christchurch area were sent a copy of

my survey, which focuses on how they interpret the concept of 'Communicative Competence' and what

they do in class with their students to achieve this. The survey also tried to identify what factors impact

on students' achievement of CC. As mentioned earlier, McLauchlan (2007) noted that the ambition of

the New Zealand government to foster students' CC in FL through the current New Zealand education

system is unrealistic. Similarly, the research done by East (2012) revealed that secondary school FL

teachers felt that their students were not ready or confident to attempt the NCEA *Interact Standard*

unless they were given the time to prepare the conversation in advance, which indicates that the

students were not able to demonstrate CC. The analysis of the NZC and the NCEA in the previous

chapter also shows there are issues at the higher level which are impacting on how students learn FL

and achieve CC. My survey aimed to see if these issues raised by McLauchlan and East, as well as

from Chapter 5 correctly described the present situation in Canterbury. The survey questions centred

on finding information about Japanese language teaching of Years 9 to 13, however, some questions

focused on the senior school only, because in most cases it is students from Years 11 to 13 who sit

the formal NCEA assessment.

The survey was distributed to secondary school teachers of Japanese in Christchurch and the wider

Canterbury region via the mailing list of the Japanese Language Teachers' Association in Christchurch,

to which most Japanese secondary-school language teachers belong. Teachers in Ashburton and

Timaru were not included in this survey because they were not on the mailing list. Because the number

of potential participants was limited (25 teachers from 20 schools), given the relatively small size of

the area under focus, I had originally intended asking the New Zealand Association of Japanese

Language Teachers (NZAJLT) to distribute the survey to all the Japanese teachers around the country.

However, this plan was rejected because that mailing list included teachers from primary and

intermediate schools and thus many replies may not be relevant to this research. Therefore, even

though the number of participants was expected to be restricted, it was only distributed to teachers in

Christchurch and the wider Christchurch areas in order to keep the replies focused and the data

collection manageable for the scope of this research.

Surveys were distributed to all of the 25 Japanese teachers at the 20 high schools in Canterbury where

Japanese is believed to be taught.[59] Out of those 25 surveys distributed, unfortunately only six were

returned, despite two reminder emails to all the recipients, as well as personal contact with some of

the teachers.[60] The number of participants is therefore disappointingly low, however, of the schools in

the Canterbury region that teach Japanese, there may be some that are not actively involved in

activities around Japanese language teaching and learning at present, thus, the number of potential

replies may have been less than 25.[61] Although the six participants cannot represent the majority of

Japanese language teachers in the Canterbury region and the results of the survey cannot claim to

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[59] Not including some regions such as Ashburton and Timaru and other schools which were not on the mailing list.

[60] Due to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee regulations, it is unknown which teachers returned the survey.

[61] There are approximately 10 schools which are actively involved in activities around the teaching of Japanese language and often participate in Canterbury's Japanese teacher's meetings and other regular local Japanese language activities. It is not to say that teachers who do not participate in these meetings are not active in Japanese language teaching because teachers have various commitments in and outside of school, and for some, it may just be difficult to attend these meetings even if they would like to. However, it is known that among teachers of Canterbury there are some schools which are more actively engaged in the teaching of Japanese than others.

be a statistically viable model, the findings still provide a snapshot of contemporary opinion and experiences of a small sample of those teachers and can therefore contribute to an overview of the variety of teaching practices and the professional engagement of Japanese language teachers in the Canterbury region.

The survey questions

The survey involved a total of 16 multiple-choice, scaled rating and short answer questions. Question 1 aimed to ascertain participants' understanding of CC as it applied to Japanese language teaching. The NZC puts the 'communication strand' at the centre of FL learning and states the importance of "students' ability to communicate" while "developing the linguistic and cultural awareness needed for communicative competence" (NZC, 2007, p.24). However, the curriculum does not define what CC actually means in practice, therefore, it was expected that participants may have developed a variety of different interpretations of this key term. Questions 2 to 9 were based on Question 1 and aimed to gain further understanding of how participants regard, and deal with, the aim of supporting the achievement of CC in their Japanese language courses. Questions 10 to 16 were formulated to gain participants' views on the NZC and NCEA with regards to CC because the curriculum and formal examinations have an impact on how students learn. For all the short answer questions participants

were able to give more than one comment, therefore the number of comments did not always

correspond 6 participants. For all of the questions which required participants to write comments,

instead of multiple choice or rating on a scale, the participants' comments have been summarised

according to key words used in their answers, where they expressed similar meaning but used slightly

different wordings. This will be explained later in this chapter.

Survey findings

Question 1 responses

Question 1 was an open-ended question (refer to Table 6.1), in which participants were asked to define

the term CC in their own words. Although each response was worded slightly differently, overall the

participants' definition of this term can be summarised as 'the ability to communicate and/or interact

in Japanese'.[62] One participant stated that having an understanding of both the language and cultural

features was necessary. Four participants commented that 'communication' involves

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[62] The key words 'ability to communicate' in 'Japanese' or the 'target language' was used by 4 participants. Another participant commented "able to conduct…interactions" which is similar to the other 4 participants' comments. Hence, in this research, the comment was summarised to 'The ability to communicate/interact in the target language (Japanese)'.

speaking/interaction in Japanese, and two out of these four also mentioned that communication includes both of the productive skills (oral and written). It is clear that participants all share a similar understanding of this term.

Table 6.1

1) How would you define 'communicative competence'?
   (Participants' answers have been summarised)

Definition of "communicative competence"	No. of answers
The ability to communicate/ interact in the target language (Japanese).	5
→ involves speaking / interaction in Japanese	4
→ involves productive skills (oral and written)	2
Showing understanding of language features and cultural norms.	1

Question 2 responses

Question 2 was a scaled rating question where participants were asked to tick boxes to rate their opinion on how important it is for their students at the various levels to gain CC in Japanese. The scale rating was from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least important and 5 the most important. The results of Question 2 (refer to Table 6.2) show that most participants believe it is important for their students to gain CC at any year level. All participants responded that it is "very important" for NCEA Levels 2 and 3. One participant, however, considered the achievement of CC not important (1 on the scale) at Years 9 and

10, and another rated 3 (moderately important) for NCEA Level 1.

Table 6.2

2) In your opinion, how important is it for your students to gain communicative competence in Japanese?

Levels	No. of participants' rating from 1 (not important) - 5 (very important)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Year 9/10	1				5
NCEA Level 1			1		5
NCEA Level 2					6
NCEA Level 3					6

Question 3 responses

Question 3 asked participants whether they considered it a realistic goal for their students to achieve

CC (refer to Table 6.3). The answers varied depending on the level of student. Some indicated that

they considered it an unrealistic aim at the lower levels, but as students progress in their school years

it becomes more realistic (2 participants answered it is "not realistic" for Years 9 and 10 students to

achieve CC (rated 1 on the scale), 2 others also gave the rating of 2 for NCEA Level 1. Only one

participant answered it is "very realistic" (rated 5) for Years 9 and 10, as well as for NCEA Level 1.

However, for NCEA Levels 2 and 3, all participants gave a rating above 3, which shows that they

consider it a more realistic goal for students to achieve CC at the higher levels. It is clear that as

students progress in their school years Japanese language teachers consider that it is more realistic

for students to achieve CC and it is most achievable at NCEA Level 3 (refer to Table 6.3).

Table 6.3

3) Do you think achieving communicative competence is a realistic goal for your students?

Levels	No. of participants' rating from 1 (not realistic) - 5 (very realistic)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Year 9/10	2		1	2	1
NCEA Level 1		2		3	1
NCEA Level 2			1	3	2
NCEA Level 3				3	3

Question 4 responses

Question 4 aimed to gain further understanding of the stage at which the participants believed students

had achieved CC. They were asked to give evidence of what students are able to do that is indicative

of their achievement of CC, according to the year levels (refer to Table 6.4). Their answers have been

summarised by identifying the key words used in responses.

Table 6.4

4) What examples would you give as evidence of your students having achieved communicative competence? Please be specific about the year levels where applicable.

(Participants' answers have been summarised. There are more than one comment per participant.)

Levels	Examples of CC demonstrated	No. of answers
Year 9/10	Students can answer simple questions about themselves using the language they have learnt.	5
	Students can greet / use unprompted everyday language (e.g. Can I eat?) in Japanese.	2
NCEA Level 1	Students can talk simple things about themselves, their immediate context (family, friends, school), what they did.	3
	Use the structures, language they have learnt to communicate with support.	2
	Able to hold a simple unprepared conversation.	1
NCEA Level 2	Students are more confident and fluent when speaking Japanese.	3
	Beginning to interact using some complex language.	3
	Can talk about other people and other countries, showing understanding of the cultural aspects of Japanese.	2
	Able to hold an unprepared conversation with some colloquial language.	1
NCEA Level 3	Can hold more natural conversation using variety of language features and structures learnt.	3
	Students can talk about more complex topics involving giving opinions.	2
	Students can maintain a conversation.	2
	Able to hold an extended unprepared conversation.	1

For Years 9 to 10, most participants answered that students with an appropriate level of CC are able to use simple Japanese learnt in class, which may include greetings and everyday language. At NCEA Level 1 the appropriate level of CC has been achieved when students begin to use simple language to talk about their immediate context, including their family and friends, as well as starting to use structures and language they learnt in class in different settings and to form new sentences. One of the participants also answered that compared to students in Years 9 and 10, one of the indicators that students have achieved CC is when, at NCEA Level 1, they may start to use Japanese in unrehearsed conversation.

The participants' comments indicate that when students reach NCEA Level 2 their students' CC level is such that they become more confident with their use of Japanese and also begin to use more complex language. Students are also more generally able to talk about things outside of their immediate context (for example, comparison with other countries), thereby showing some cultural understanding. It is also interesting to note that all the participants only mentioned skills related to speaking, not writing, even though two participants defined CC as the productive skills which include writing as well (refer to Table 6.1). Thus we can assume that although some participants consider CC as the ability to communicate by both speaking and writing, all of the participants relate CC more with

oral skills.

Participants consider that at NCEA Level 3 their students' CC level has risen to the extent that they are generally able to conduct a more natural conversation using the various structures they have learnt, and also give their own opinions. Moreover, many students have the skill and language knowledge to maintain a conversation.

It is clear from the responses that participants consider their students' CC skills improve with study because their increasing language and cultural knowledge gives them more topics they can talk about in Japanese using a variety of sentence structures. As their knowledge of vocabulary and structure grow, and their experiences and opportunity to use Japanese increase, students become more confident in their Japanese and, to some extent, can engage in unrehearsed interactions - thereby achieving the CC criterion as outlined by the participants in Question 1.

Question 5 responses

In Question 5, participants were asked to give examples of activities they do in the classroom to help students achieve CC. The results have been summarised according to key words (refer to Table 6.5).

Table 6.5

5) What do you do in the classroom to help your students achieve communicate competence?

(Participants' answers have been summarised. There are more than one comment per participant.)

Activities participants already do in class	No. of answers
Role play and pair conversation tasks.	3
Classroom activities to prompt students to speak.	2
Use Japanese on a regular basis.	2
Formulaic expressions on posters in the classroom, or notes in the students workbook as a prompt.	2
Bring native Japanese students to class.	1
Listen to Japanese using movies, textbook listening practices.	1

The results show that half of the participants introduce role-play and paired conversation tasks, while two others also introduce classroom activities requiring the students to speak Japanese. It is presumed that most or all participants give students listening practice in class, however, only one participant noted that listening practices contribute to boosting students' CC. Other participants, perhaps, did not think it was a main activity did in class to help students achieve CC, or for other reasons, did not mention it in the survey. Two other participants prepared formulaic expressions for students as prompts and encouraged them to use Japanese phrases regularly in class. Two participants also mentioned that they encourage students to use Japanese on a regular basis, however it is not clear whether it is

in the form of oral or written language, or whether it is just simple greetings in Japanese or requiring students to speak Japanese. One participant mentioned that he/she invites native Japanese students to class, but again, did not state how these native speakers would help the language learners. From their responses we can surmise that most participants feel that it is important to give students the opportunity to speak Japanese in order to boost their CC skills, but these activities and the topics discussed are mostly 'controlled' by teachers using set expressions and prepared tasks.

Question 6 responses

Question 6 asked participants if they are satisfied with what they do to develop CC in their students. Table 6.6 summarises their replies, although some of participants did not fully answer the question.[63]

Table 6.6

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[63] One participant did not answer Question 6, and another participant only marked answers for Years 9/10 and NCEA Level 1 group, therefore, the numbers of participants do not add up to 6.

6) Are you satisfied with the efforts to develop communicative competence in your students?

No. of participants' rating from
1 (not satisfied) - 5 (very satisfied)

Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Year 9/10	1		1	3	
NCEA Level 1	1		2	2	
NCEA Level 2		2		1	1
NCEA Level 3		1	1	1	1

Overall the participants were mostly either neutral or "satisfied" (rated 3 to 5) with their efforts to instil

CC in their students at any year level, except for NCEA Level 2. Two participants marked 2 "not

satisfied" and another two participants marked 4 or 5 "satisfied" or "very satisfied" at NCEA Level 2.

However, it is clear that there is a wide spread of satisfaction across all year levels although it cannot

be summarised that the satisfaction levels increase as the year levels go up. This variation may be

caused by different expectations of CC between participants, however the next question may also help

us understand why some participants are not satisfied with what they currently do to develop CC in

their students.

Question 7 responses

Question 7 was an open-ended question based on Question 6, and asked what participants would like

to do differently to help their students achieve better CC. Participants' responses have been

summarised according to key words and phrases (refer to Table 6.7).

Table 6.7

7) Ideally, what would you like to do differently in your classroom to help students achieve communicative competence more? Please be specific about the different year levels if necessary.

(Participants' answers have been summarised. Multiple comments supplied.)

What participants would like to do differently	No. of answers
More contact time with the senior students.	2
Use more Japanese as language of instruction in class, and students reply in Japanese.	2
Give students time for more feedback on their conversation (including peer and self feedback).	2
Spend more time on speaking activities, especially unscripted activities.	1
Computer for each student to do individual listening practice.	1

One of the participants who marked "not satisfied" for NCEA Levels 2 and 3 made the comment that

he/she would like to have more contact time with the senior students (refer to Table 6.7). Another

participant also mentioned that the senior class is a mixture of Years 11 to 13 students and they do

not receive enough contact hours. This is a common situation in the Canterbury region where the

senior class is a combination of students from different year levels due to a small number of students

enrolled in Japanese language study at each level. It is understood from personal contacts with

teachers that many teachers struggle to teach different levels in the same classroom at the same time

and, at most schools, students are not timetabled to have language classes every day, therefore some

participants feel that senior students are not getting enough opportunity to learn and use Japanese.

Two participants answered that they would like to use more spoken Japanese in class. It is a common

practice that, apart from very simple everyday classroom instructions, the common language of

instruction used in the classroom is English. Two participants also felt they are not giving enough

feedback to students, especially individual feedback, on their conversation practice, possibly due to a

high workload and not enough teaching time. One participant also felt students need more

opportunities to speak unscripted Japanese, which corresponds to the answers given in Question 5

where it is clear that many of the speaking activities participants mentioned are scripted practices. The

participant who felt listening to Japanese was important for students to achieve CC answered he/she

would like better resourcing of computers so that students can do more individual listening practices.

Question 8 responses

Question 8 aimed to gain an overview of the factors that participants thought had a positive or negative

impact on students' achievement of CC (refer to Table 6.8). Participants gave ratings of

positive/negative/both (positive and negative), or neither (neither positive or negative) for a number of

factors connected to Japanese language teaching. Participants were also invited to add other factors

they considered to have a large effect on CC achievement (refer to the bottom of Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

8) In your opinion, do you think any of the following factors have an impact on students achieving communicative competence? Please tick the appropriate box for each factor.

Factor	No. of answers			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Neither
Teaching methods	6			
School trip to Japan	6			
Students' motivation	5		1	
Teacher's language knowledge	5			1
Teacher's pedagogical knowledge	5			1
The current New Zealand Curriculum	4		2	
Native speakers in the classroom	2		3	1
Teaching materials	2		2	2
NCEA achievement standards	2	2	2	
Mixed level classroom environment		4	1	1
Other: NCEA Level 3 Interaction credits		1		
Other: Timetabling		1		
Other: NCEA Interaction achievement criteria		2		

For some factors most participants shared the same opinion, for example, all six participants believed

that teaching methods and a school trip to Japan are positive factors that boost the students' CC. Most

participants thought that students' motivation, teacher's language knowledge and teacher's

pedagogical knowledge were all positive factors (five participants). Four participants thought that the

NZC was positive factor, but two participants thought it was both positive and negative. Four

participants thought the mixed-level classroom environment was a negative factor, which relates to

some of the participants' comments from Question 7 where they mentioned there is not enough contact

time with the senior students because of the mixed-level class environment. This may also be related

to one of the 'other' factors listed from a participant who mentioned 'timetabling' as a negative factor.

No one answered negative for 'native speakers in the classroom', however there were mixed

responses (two answered positive, three answered both, and one answered neither).

The NCEA achievement standards also provoked a mixed response (two answered positive, two

negative, and two both positive and negative). However, some participants mentioned under 'other'

that the NCEA *Interact Standard* was a negative factor. Participants who mentioned either 'negative'

or 'both' may think this way because they think some of the individual achievement standard in NCEA

are positive but some are not. There was also a mixed response concerning teaching materials and

one of the participants who marked 'both' made a comment under Question 9 indicating the need for

development of NCEA level teaching materials to support learning.

Question 9 asked participants using an open-ended question, if they had a difference in thoughts between the year levels for Question 8. The comments listed are mostly in the participants' wording, however, have been simplified to suit the content (refer to Table 6.9).

Table 6.9

9) Do you have any comments on the answers given in Q8 between different year levels?

Participants' comments
• The requirements for NCEA Level 1 Interaction is too high.
• The requirements for NCEA exams are too high - getting students ready for listening and reading examinations take too much time, less time for speaking tasks.
• Senior students lose motivation because of too much assessments.
• Senior students not willing to take risks.
• There need to be NCEA teaching materials.

Participants' answers to Question 9 ranged widely in scope. Two participants commented that the requirements for NCEA, especially the *Interact Standard*, is too high. One of the participants made a comment that the "students are not ready for it", and another participant commented that students are not getting enough opportunity to practice speaking because "getting the students ready for the level 1 listening and reading exams takes so much time". Another participant answered that the senior students can lose motivation because there is too much assessments involved in NCEA.

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Question 10 responses

Question 10 aimed to provide overview of how the participants rate the usefulness and clarity of the

NZC as the guideline for teaching Japanese. The participants were asked to rate the NZC on the scale

of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the lowest) for its "usefulness as a guideline for developing a teaching plan for

Japanese language education" and "clarity as a guideline of what is to be achieved by the learners of

Japanese."

Table 6.10

10) Please rate the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) for its;

	No. of participants' rating from 1 (Low) - 5 (High)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Usefulness as a guideline for developing a teaching plan for Japanese language education.	2	1	2	1	
Clarity as a guideline of what is to be achieved by the learners of Japanese.	1	1	4		

Overall, participants rated the NZC low for both its usefulness and clarity, but especially for usefulness

where three participants rated it 1 and 2 on the scale of 1 to 5, and two participants rated it at a 3.

Only one participant rated it 4 (refer to Table 6.10). With regard to the clarity of the NZC, two

participants rated it 1 and 2 on the scale, and four participants rated it at a 3, no participant rated it

above 3 (refer to Table 6.10).

This is an interesting result, as in Question 8 four participants marked the NZC as a "positive" factor for achieving CC. We can conclude that most participants feel the NZC is not a useful guideline for knowing what students should be taught and does not serve as a clear guideline of what students should achieve, but is still one of the positive factors behind students' achievement of CC.

Question 11 responses

Question 11 asked participants to indicate which FL achievement standards their schools offer to their students by ticking the box for the achievement standards they teach at each level.

Table 6.11

11) Which Achievement Standards do you offer to students this year?

Levels	No. of answers				
	Listen and Respond	Speak, Present	Interact	View and Respond	Write
NCEA Level 1	6	6	5	6	6
NCEA Level 2	6	5	5	6	6
NCEA Level 3	6	6	5	6	6

The results show that one school does not offer the *Interact Standard* at any levels, one school does not offer the *Speak, Present (speech) Standard* at Level 2, but all other schools offer all 5 achievement

standards available at NCEA at all levels (refer to Table 6.11).

Question 12 responses

Question 12 asked the participants to note the reasons for replies to Question 11 indicating that their

school was not offering a particular achievement standard. The one participant whose school did not

offer the *Interact Standard* at any levels answered as follows;

1) concern with authenticity of the work produced by students

2) time and workload issue concerning recording and marking students' work

3) lack of clarity of the achievement standard criteria

This participant has also listed 'NCEA Level 3 Interact credit' as one of the "other" negative factors in

Question 8, which emphasises their opinion that the *Interact Standard* is not a fair assessment.[64]

The participant whose school does not offer the *Speak, Present Standard* at Level 2 gave the reason

that they consider this standard as too easy, so they do not focus on it at Level 2 when students need

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[64] As mentioned in Chapter 5, the credits that students can earn upon successful completion of the *Interact Standard* are different for NCEA Level 3 compared to Level 1 and 2. The *Interact Standard* credits for Level 1 and 2 are 5 each, whereas for Level 3, it is 6 credits. Thus it can be said that at Level 3 there is more emphasis on testing students' communication skill than any other levels. For all other standards refer to the Japanese Matrix on Appendix 1 or the TKI website, http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-Internally-Assessed-Achievement-Standards/Learning-languages/Japanese. accessed 26/11/2014

more time to master grammar and *kanji* and also work on their portfolio.

<u>Question 13 responses</u>

Question 13 asked participants whether they thought NCEA measures students' CC adequately. The

participants were asked to tick a box for "Yes", "Yes, some Achievement Standards do", or "No".

Table 6.13

13) Do you think that NCEA measures students' communicative competence adequately?

Response	No. of answers
Yes	1
Yes, some Achievement Standards do	3
No	2

There is a wide spread of responses (refer to Table 6.13). One participant considers that NCEA

measures students' CC adequately and two do not. However, half of the participants thought that some

of the NCEA achievement standards measure students' CC adequately, and those who answered "Yes,

some Achievement Standards do" were asked to answer Question 14 to mark which achievement

standards they thought measure CC adequately.

Question 14 responses

Table 6.14

14) If you answered "Yes, some Achievement Standards do" to Q13, which
Standards DO you think measure students' communicative competence?

Levels	No. of answers				
	Listen and Respond	Speak, Present	Interact	View and Respond	Write
NCEA Level 1	2	1	3	1	2
NCEA Level 2	2	1	3	1	2
NCEA Level 3	2	1	2	1	2

Out of the three participants who indicated in Question 13 that they believed at least some

achievement standards achieve CC, most, according to the results of the follow-on Question 14,

agreed that the *Interact Standard* measures CC most adequately, while 2 participants also indicated

that the *Listen and Respond*, and *Write* standards also measure CC adequately (refer to Table 6.14).

These findings match well with the definition of CC that participants provided in Question 1, as well as

the response for Question 4. Most participants understand CC to be the ability to communicate/interact

using spoken Japanese, therefore the *Interact Standard* is the best of the available achievement

standard to measure CC. In Question 1, some participants also mentioned that CC includes written

communication which can be measured in the *Write Standard*. Two participants also indicated that the

Listen and Respond Standard is also valuable for measuring CC (refer to Table 6.14).

Question 15 asked participants to indicate the extent to which the achievement objectives stated in

the NZC for Learning Languages are realistic goals for students of Japanese. Participants were asked

to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is not realistic) for each year level if they thought the achievement

objectives were realistic or not. The participants were given a Curriculum page which had the list of

achievement objectives for each level as a reference.

Table 6.15

15) Do you think the Achievement Objectives for learning languages as
stated in the New Zealand Curriculum are realistic goal for your students?

Levels	No. of participants' rating from 1 (not realistic) - 5 (very realistic)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Year 9/10	1			3	1
NCEA Level 1	1		1	3	
NCEA Level 2	1	2		1	1
NCEA Level 3	1	1	1	2	

The results were expected to be similar to the results of Question 3, where participants were asked to

rate if they considered CC is a realistic goal. Table 6.3 showed that most participants believed that

students can achieve some CC at any level, but that it is especially achievable at the higher NCEA

levels. However, Table 6.15 indicates that more participants believed that the achievement objectives

for Years 9/10 are realistic than those for NCEA Level 3.[65] For Years 9/10 four participants ranked the

achievement objectives is either 4 "realistic" or 5 "very realistic", at NCEA Level 1 three participants

ranked the objectives as a 4, but no participant ranked the objectives as a 5. For NCEA Levels 2 and

3 only two participants think the achievement objectives are a realistic goal (at NCEA Level 2, one

participant ranked 4, another ranked 5, and for NCEA Level 3, no one ranked 5 but two participants

ranked 4). It is clear that, in general, participants believed that as the year level rises the achievement

objectives become more unrealistic. It should also be noted that there was one ranking of "not realistic"

for all 4 Levels (refer to Table 6.15).

Question 16 responses

In Question 16, participants were asked to give reasons for their choice in Question 15 as an open-

ended question.

Table 6.16

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[65] One participant did not answer this question, therefore it only adds up to 5 participants.

16) Give reasons for your answer to Q15.

(Participants' answers have been summarised. Multiple comments supplied.)

Reason	No. of answers
The achievement objectives / statements are generic for all languages.	2
The achievement objectives are too high, unrealistic for students to achieve.	2
Not enough teaching hours.	2
There needs to be more supporting/ teaching materials.	1
The Interact standard do not allow students to perform their communicative skills naturally due to nervousness in front of a camera.	1
The achievement objectives are too vague.	1

Most participants commented on the reasons why they thought the achievement objective was not realistic for several year levels. Two participants noted that the achievement objectives are generic for all languages meaning that all students learning any languages are expected to reach the same level of proficiency at a certain year level. Two participants commented that there are not enough teaching hours. The perceived lack of teaching hours may be related to the achievement objective being too high for Japanese learners thus, in order to achieve the level stated in the NZC, some Japanese teachers feel that the standard 4 hours a week of class time is not enough, especially for those with mixed-level classes. One participant also mentioned that the achievement objectives are too vaguely

written in the curriculum, so it is not clear what the students are expected to be able to do. Other comments included the lack of adequate teaching materials and the way the *Interact Standard* is assessed (refer to Table 6.16).

Discussion

The survey results have identified that Japanese language teachers consider it is important for their students to achieve CC at any level and achieving CC is a realistic goal for them, especially for the senior students. Teachers prepare various activities for their students in order to develop CC and most of them are satisfied with their efforts. They consider that their students are achieving CC to some extent however the survey results also highlighted four main problems in Japanese education in Canterbury. These problems may also apply to all of New Zealand because, as the study done by McGee et al. (2013) suggests, many of the issues Japanese language education is facing in New Zealand can be seen throughout the country (for example the decrease in the proportion of students taking Japanese). Therefore, although these survey results are only a reflection of a small portion of Japanese teachers in Canterbury, it is expected that these issues are seen not only in Canterbury as a whole, but also in other parts of New Zealand. The four problems identified are;

1) the vagueness of the NZC. It is not clear to New Zealand FL teachers exactly what achieving

   CC means to their students and how they are expected to measure students' achievement of

   CC.

2) there is an over-emphasis/over reliance on a teacher-centred learning environment. This

   may demotivate students from learning Japanese because it does not help enhance their CC

   in real-life contexts. Teachers try to include classroom activities that involve students

   speaking Japanese but the effectiveness of such activities, in terms of achieving CC, is

   questionable because of its little application to real life.

3) the lack of clear correlation between the expectations of the *Interact Standard* and the

   achievement of CC. The way students are tested under the *Interact Standard* does not seem

   to be a true test of their CC abilities and this is likely to be one of the reasons why some

   teachers cannot teach true communicative activities through the learner-centred approach.

4) There are issues with school timetables, lack of equipment and facilities, and mixed-level

   classroom environments, all of which are often beyond the teacher's control. Part of these

   problems may be the result of a lack of national FL policy. The role of a national FL policy

   has been addressed by McGee et al. (2013) where it is identified as having the role of

   promoting the learning of FL as well as providing a long-term strategic guidance for the

Ministry of Education (MOE) for future FL development which could, ultimately help provide a

better learning environment for FL (p.14, also refer to Chapter 4).

Results from this survey suggest that most participants share a similar understanding of what CC

means in the context of NCEA, namely the ability to communicate/interact in the target language

(Japanese). However, their understanding of how well students should be able to communicate and

what students need in order to communicate effectively do differ. One participant mentioned that for

New Zealand high school students this meant being able to "conduct basic social interactions",

whereas another participant mentioned that the ability to communicate varies "depending on the

student's level and length of study." Participants consider there are different levels of CC that students

could achieve, but this 'grey scale' that participants use to measure CC varies between teachers.

This variance in teacher expectations and perspectives regarding CC is highlighted in the results of

Question 3, where some participants indicated their belief that different degrees of CC is achievable

at all levels, yet some considered lower level students incapable of achieving it. As discussed in

previous chapters, this variation may be because the definition of CC is indeed complicated, but may

also be because the NZC does not give a clear definition of what CC is and what students should be

able to do after completing each level.

The results demonstrate some consensus among the participants in my research concerning the tasks

that students at different levels should be able to do in order to be considered to have achieved CC

(refer to Table 6.4). However, this result somewhat contradicted the results of Question 15 where

participants were asked to rate the reality of achieving the achievement objective as outlined in the

NZC for each year level (refer to Table 6.15). Participants also considered it realistic for students to be

expected to achieve some degree of CC, especially at the senior level (refer to Table 6.3).[66] However,

when they were asked the same question concerning how realistic it is to expect students to achieve

the achievement objective set out in the NZC, more participants indicated they considered these

expectations unrealistic, even at the senior level.[67]

This somewhat contradictory result raised the question of whether the achievement objectives in the

NZC are a reasonable, fair statement which serves as an adequate expression of the expectations of

different levels of competency, including CC, in FL learning. As apparent from the results of Question

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[66] In Years 9 and 10, 3 participants answered either 'realistic' or 'very realistic', 4 participants in NCEA Level 1, 5 participants in NCEA Level 2, and 6 participants in NCEA Level 3.

[67] In Years 9 and 10, 4 participants answered either 'realistic' or 'very realistic', 3 participants in NCEA Level 1, and 2 participants in NCEA Level 2 and 3. Refer to Table 6.15.

10 (refer to Table 6.10), most participants rate the usefulness and clarity of the NZC, as a guideline for the teaching and learning of Japanese language, as low. This may be the result of one of the issues raised in Chapter 5; lack of a specific curriculum for each language. They question the validity of the expected learning outcomes stated in the NZC, which are generic across all languages, as they do not specifically state what students are expected to achieve at each level in each language. Nevertheless, some participants still consider the NZC as a "positive" factor for achieving CC (refer to Table 6.8) and this may be because the participants understand the reason and theory behind the 'vague' generic curriculum which allows scope for CC to be achieved. However, in reality, it is not very useful as a framework to guide teachers or students on exactly how CC is to be achieved in practice.

Although, unfortunately, my results do not present a statistically viable sample due to the low number of participants, and cannot be assumed to present the overall ideas of Japanese teachers in all of Canterbury, they do show that the teachers who participated have their own ideas of CC and believe they are working towards achieving it. However, they do not feel that the achievement objectives in the NZC for FL articulates the realistic aims and expectations for students, nor does it describe the level of proficiency expected of students and therefore does not serve as a good guideline for them.

In terms of what participants do in their classroom to help students achieve CC, many of them listed

activities which give the students opportunity to use spoken Japanese (refer to Table 6.5), however,

those activities listed are mostly 'controlled' by the teachers. The benefit of 'teacher-initiated' activities

or 'teacher-centred learning' are questioned by some researchers (for example; Nunan, 1988; Anton,

1999; Loke, 2002) because students tend to become passive learners, and it may discourage them

from being active and motivated in their learning (refer to discussion in Chapter 4 on the importance

of learner autonomy). There is also a corresponding risk of students becoming dependent on the

teacher for their learning. Hancock, Bray & Nason (2003) cited in Mascolo (2009) defines 'teacher-

centred learning as;

> Teacher is the dominant leader who establishes and enforces rules in the classroom;
>
> structures learning tasks and establishes the time and method for task completion;
>
> states, explains and models the lesson objectives and actively maintains student on-
>
> task involvement; responds to students through direct, right/wrong feedback, uses
>
> prompts and cues, and if necessary, provides correct answers; asks primarily direct,
>
> recall-recognition questions and few inferential questions; summarises frequently
>
> during and at the conclusion of a lesson; and signals transitions between lesson points
>
> and topic areas (p.366).

Therefore, despite the fact that the teachers who participated in the survey try to include various communicative activities in their classroom, these activities themselves and/or the whole classroom environment may be so 'teacher-centred' they may not be particularly beneficial in terms of helping students develop CC in Japanese. In contrast to this, in the 'learner-centred' learning environment the teacher's aim is to assist FL learners achieve CC which can be used outside the classroom, thus students become "able to transfer knowledge and skills developed in the rather artificial environment of the classroom to new contexts and situations in the real world outside" (Nunan, 1988, p.78).

This finding emphasises the fact that there is a gap between what the government wants, which is CC generated in a learner-centred environment, and the best that teachers can currently provide, where CC is produced primarily in a teacher-centred environment, which has limited use outside the classroom and perhaps cannot be described as CC at all because it has little application to real life. Apart from the question of how effective some of the teacher-centred activities are in achieving CC, there is also a question of how reliable NCEA *Interact Standard* is in measuring students' CC. Pillar (2011) argues that measuring true CC is a complicated and time consuming process, and at secondary school level, an unrealistic aim (also discussed in Chapter 4). Some of the teachers in the research conducted by East (2014b) note that, due to how the NCEA *Interact Standard* assesses students, it is

difficult to teach and assess students' real CC which makes it very stressful for the students who still want to gain good grades at the end of their learning (also discussed in Chapter 5). Some teachers in East's (2014b) work commented that it is "good to practise conversing", but it is "difficult for students to have a natural, authentic, unrehearsed conversation with limited language and at the same time have to consider the level of language they are using. These two factors don't fit together" (comment by a Japanese language teacher, p.78). Another teacher in East's (2014b) work also commented that "for the majority, the utterances resulting from a spontaneous exchange contain very little of the language at the required level" (Comment from a French language teacher, p76). Although students of all abilities may be able to communicate in the target language to some extent, which may be what students need in a real-life situation, but they may not meet the requirements of the NCEA *Interact Standard*. In the same research by East (2014b), some teachers who supported the *Interact Standard* expressed their satisfaction that this new assessment is more "natural" and "real-world" than the previous examination. However, it is obvious that there is uncertainty over whether achieving satisfactory results in the NCEA *Interact Standard* really does equal achieving CC in real life, and it is difficult to expect teachers to work towards creating a true learner-centred classroom or for students to achieve true CC under the current examination system.

While the participants in my survey indicated that they were at least somewhat satisfied by their efforts to develop CC with their students (refer to Table 6.6), they consider the factors influencing students' achievement are not only controlled by what they, as teachers do, but also by other factors, as evidenced from their answers to Question 7, "What would you like to do differently to help students achieve CC more?" (refer to Table 6.7). For example, two participants answered they would like more contact time with the senior students. This is a limitation caused by the timetable, which the school is in charge of arranging. Two participants also answered that they would like to give students time for more feedback on their conversation skills. This may also be related to the limitations placed by timetabling of class time. Another participant mentioned they would like computer access for each student for individual listening practice. This is related to the provision of equipment. Different schools face different problems due to lack of equipment, facilities or teaching materials. Another problem highlighted by the participants of the research was from the mixed-level classroom environment. Question 8, which asked the participants to give their opinion on factors that have influence over students' CC that are "positive", "negative", "both" or "neither", four participants noted that the "mixed level classroom environment" has a negative impact on students achieving CC. This teaching environment is beyond the control of teachers as it is a timetabling and funding matter allocated by the school. These problems are, as McGee et al. (2013) state in their research, one of the results

created by lack of national policy for languages, and the non-compulsory status of FL in the New Zealand education system (refer to the discussion in the literature review chapter). McGee et al. (2013) consider that unless a national policy for languages is introduced in New Zealand, and learning FL is made a compulsory part of NZC, it is difficult to secure adequate teaching time or resources (p.15, also refer to the discussion in Chapter 4).

All of these problems may feed into the vicious cycle of students not being able to achieve CC, demotivated to continue with their FL learning, discontinuing with their FL learning, not enough student numbers to run separate classes for senior students, less contact time for each year level due to the mixed-level environment and so on. The survey elicited mixed comments for having native speakers in the classroom (refer to Question 8, Table 6.8). Even though there are issues with having different learners in the classroom (for example unfairness over achieving NCEA, as mentioned in Chapter 4), some teachers see having native speakers in the classroom also has some positive influence over L2 learners' to achieve CC. This may be because such students could be the only 'authentic material' in their learning, and they could also work as the motivator for L2 learners to actively seek real-life Japanese language from those native speakers. Teachers could also gain some up-to-date information about Japan from such students (if they are newly arrived in the country) which could be shared in

class.

Summary

Although this survey only reflected the opinions and experiences of a very small number of Japanese language teachers in Canterbury, it is still valuable as evidence of the range of approaches to CC achievement in Japanese. Opinions concerning the degree to which students can attain the 'ability' to communicate may vary between participants, but the teachers surveyed all agreed that it is important and, to some extent, possible for their students to gain some level of CC. The variation of teacher expectation may be one of the consequences of the vagueness of the NZC with FL learning.

It may be argued that some of the classroom activities introduced by teachers in order to boost their students' CC may not be as beneficial as teachers intend because of the underlying 'teacher-centred' learning environment. A better understanding of, and greater experience in, teaching based on the communicative approach needs to be developed and shared among teachers if true 'learner-centred' communicative learning is to be achieved in the classroom environment. All six participants in this study indicated that they considered teaching methods to have a positive impact on students' achievement of CC, therefore it is important that all teachers have the up-to-date knowledge, and experience to create a positive and valuable learning environment where genuine communication,

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useful in the world outside the classroom, can be taught, practiced and polished. However, it is also necessary to consider, as discussed earlier, if it is possible to create a true "learner-centred' environment under the current New Zealand education system, where teachers are to prepare students to achieve satisfactory results in NCEA, and students are expected to succeed in their examinations and are given grades on their academic progress. As teachers in East's (2014b) research mentioned, true communication cannot be assessed under the current NCEA *Interact Standard,* which is also apparent in Gilmore's (2011) research.

This research confirmed the notion outlined by McLauchlan (2007), McGee et al. (2013), and East (2014b), that apart from factors related to the teacher and teaching methods, there were various other factors which influenced students' FL achievement and therefore the achievement of CC. This includes the limitations put on the learning environment by the schools, such as: timetables, mixed-level classes and available facilities, which is also related to the lack of a national policy for languages and the non-compulsory nature of FL in the NZC.

As highlighted by McGee et al. (2013), my research also shows that there is a discernible mismatch between what FL teachers believe students can achieve and the expectations outlined in the NZC.

Among the four problems identified from this research (refer to the discussion section), problems 1 and 3 (the vagueness of the NZC, and the lack of clear correlation between the expectations of the *Interact Standard* and the achievement of CC) have close links with the problems of the NZC and NCEA which were raised in Chapter 5. These results indicate that the current New Zealand education system has some negative influence over students' achievement in CC in Japanese, and there may be the need for the New Zealand government to consider redeveloping the NZC and NCEA to enhance true CC in New Zealand secondary school students.

From my study of the previous research done on New Zealand FL education, especially on Japanese language, and the analysis of the NZC and NCEA in the first few chapters of this thesis, as well as this chapter's survey of Japanese teachers, we can see that it is unlikely that many New Zealand secondary school students can gain CC in Japanese to the degree that the New Zealand government would hope. In the next chapters, this research will examine how New Zealand's closest neighbour, Australia, approaches secondary FL teaching and assessment, especially in the field of Japanese language. The comparison between New Zealand and Australia is hoped to show some similarities and differences which may help answer how New Zealand's current education system could be improved. The four problems, above, which were highlighted by my survey will form the basis for the

first section of Chapter 7; comparing the present situation in Australia and New Zealand. This

comparison will inform my research on alternative approaches that may help New Zealand high

schools to better support their students in developing CC, and support their teachers to better teach

and assess that skill, which will be explored in the second section of Chapter 7.

Chapter Seven: Comparison of foreign language curricula, syllabi, and examinations between

New Zealand and Australia

<u>Why Australia was chosen as the comparison</u>

Australia is one of the closest countries to New Zealand in terms of its language, history, culture and

sociocultural relationships, and is also one of its biggest trading partners and tourist sources.[68]

Australia and New Zealand share a similar British colonial heritage and history and, in terms of FL

education, both have exhibited a predominantly 'monolingual' attitude towards the learning of

languages. In this matter, Australia faces similar problems to New Zealand where, despite a significant

number of languages being spoken at home other than English and growing international business

relationships, many Australians still lack FL capability (Stanley, Ingram & Chittick, 1990; Lo Bianco,

Liddicat & Crozet, 1999). Moreover, as discussed in the literature review, Australia, like New Zealand,

has felt a great need to increase the number of people who can communicate effectively on the global

stage, especially those who also have the cultural knowledge to complement their FL skills.

As Australia shares many similarities to New Zealand, it is useful for this study to examine the

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[68] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade – Australia. http://mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-
Relations/Australia/index.php. accessed 31/08/2014

Australian education system and curriculum documents. It is hoped that by examining the similarities and differences in FL education, concerning Japanese in particular, we can understand the problems that these two countries face in this area, thereby providing some strategies for New Zealand to follow. However, at the time of this research Australia has just launched the implementation of its National Curriculum, and was still in the process of transitioning to the latest version (version 8.1). It requires a couple of years of implementation before the effectiveness can be properly assessed, thus the true value of the new curriculum is, as yet, largely unknown.

In this chapter, the background to Australia's education system and its curriculum, especially those areas pertaining to FL and Japanese, will be introduced in detail. It will then closely explore the Japanese curriculum and the examination system of three chosen regions in Australia; New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (QLD) and Victoria (VIC). This will enable me to provide a meaningful comparison to the situation in New Zealand, which will be presented in Chapter 8. This chapter could have been divided into a number of smaller chapters, however, in order to maintain its flow and maintain the chapter focus on Australia, I have decided to make this one long chapter divided into four sections.

Section One:

The education system and foreign language education in Australia

<u>Introduction to the education system in Australia</u>

The school education system is mostly similar throughout Australia, but there are minor variations[69] depending on the laws and structures in the different states and territories.[70] The year level names are one clear difference, however, for in Australia the school education lasts 13 years and is divided into primary school (Foundation[71] to Year 6 or 7), secondary school (Year 7 or 8 to 10), and senior secondary school (Years 11 and 12). In Year 12, students can study for the school-leaving certificate; the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE), which is required for entry to most tertiary providers in Australia. Although the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) manages and assures the SSCE, it is not the same for all regions, as each state and territory has their own separate

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[69] Future Unlimited - Australian education system, http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/global/australian-education/education-system. accessed 30/08/2014

[70] Australian Government – State and territory government. http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-government/state-and-territory-government. accessed 30/08/2014

[71] In some regions, the first year of schooling (one year prior to Year 1) may be called 'Kindergarten', 'Preparatory', "Pre-primary', 'Reception' or 'Transition'. Refer to ACARA - National Report on Schooling in Australia 2009: Schools and schooling, http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national_report_on_schooling_2009/schools_and_schooling/school_structures.html. accessed 19/09/2014. However, the National Curriculum uses the word 'Foundation' therefore, in this research, the word 'Foundation' is used to mean the preliminary year.

examination system. Therefore, names of the SSCE varies between region and each regional

governing body has the responsibility for authorising the issuance of qualifications at the senior

secondary school level under its jurisdiction.[72]

Australian students who want to study at university will also need to score satisfactorily in the nationally

standardised ranking system, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which measures

students' overall academic achievement in the school-leaving examination.[73] In Australia, in most

cases, a pass at SSCE is not necessarily equivalent to a university entry requirement. This is different

from the NCEA in New Zealand which, if a specified number of credits are gained at Level 3, satisfies

the New Zealand university entry requirements. Selection for Australian university courses is based

on both eligibility and rank, where the eligibility allows students to be considered for selection and the

rank determines whether the students are competitive enough to be selected for undergraduate

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[72] The SSCE are called different names depending on the region. Information on state and territory government school education can be found in each Department of Education website listed on Australian Government Department of Education website under School Education, http://education.gov.au/school-education, accessed on 31/08/2014. Also refer to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Second Edition January 2013, http://www.aqf.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/AQF-2nd-Edition-January-2013.pdf. accessed 31/08/2014

[73] In 2010, ATAR replaced the previous ranking systems which were named differently according to the region; Universities Admission Index, Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank and Tertiary Entrance Rank. Only Queensland still retains its Overall Position system. Refer to Tertiary Institutions Service Centre TISCOnline – Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, http://www.tisc.edu.au/static/guide/atar-about.tisc, accessed 31/08/2014

courses. In most cases eligibility is achieved by gaining a satisfactory result in SSCE and the ranking

is reported by the ATAR or other equivalent ranking system.[74] The SSCE qualifications will be

discussed further in later sections, focusing on the three chosen regions in Australia.

<u>Australian National Curriculum</u>

The Australian Curriculum (AC) is a set of national standards from Foundation to Year 12, developed

progressively from 2008 to 2013 by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

(ACARA). Prior to the development of the AC, individual states and territories were responsible for the

development of their own curriculum. However, each state had a different approach towards curriculum

organisation, priorities and values, which were often influenced by historical, geographic and/or

demographic matters. Clearly this created opportunities for inequality in access to quality education

around the country.[75] Thus, the Australian national state and territory governments agreed in 2008

that an AC should be developed to provide a nationwide curriculum that was accessible and relevant

to all young Australians, regardless of where they live, their social or economic background or the

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[74] SATAC - University entry requirements, http://www.satac.edu.au/pages/university-entry-requirements. accessed 19/11/2014

[75] The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Graduate School of Education Curriculum Policies Project - Curriculum and State Differences, http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/curriculumpoliciesproject/states.html. accessed 03/09/2014, also refer to Yates, L. (2011). State Differences and Australia's Curriculum Dilemmas. Conference paper from; ACSA Conference Sydney October 2011

school they attend.[76]

The development of the learning areas of Geography, Languages and the Arts for Foundation to Year 12 was conducted from 2010 to 2012, and the remainder of the courses were developed from 2011 to 2013. In 2014 the AC for Foundation to Year 10 was implemented in all states and territories of Australia. ACARA released Version 7 of the AC website on 21 July 2014 and has since released Version 7.5 which is available for use until 31 December 2016. Schools are currently in transition, introducing the latest version of the AC, Version 8.1, which became available in September 2015.[77] Curriculum documents for most subject areas are ready to be used including Languages, where Japanese is one of the 14 FL available.

Australian Curriculum: Languages

It is stated that the aims in the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* are to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure that students are able to:

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[76] NSW Department of Education and Communities - The Australian Curriculum, http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/home/national.htm. accessed on 01/09/2014

[77] Australian Curriculum - An overview, ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) October 2011 edition, accessed from http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/ACARA_Brochure_2011.pdf. accessed 02/09/2014. Also, Australian Curriculum. http://v7-5.australiancurriculum.edu.au/. accessed on 26/01/2016

1) communicate in the target language,

2) understand language, culture, learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication,

3) understand themselves as communicators,

all of which are common to all languages.[78] It is thus clear that the AC puts the ability to communicate in the target language at the centre of learning and aims to develop successful communicators. The focus of the document is to understand the interrelationship of language, culture and learning. The curriculum states that students should learn to build an understanding of how languages and culture 'work', and how they relate to each other. It is not "a 'one plus one' relationship between two languages and cultures, where each language and culture stay separate and self-contained", but it is rather the "experience of being in two worlds at once". This involves "noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how language and culture shape identify", how students move between the new language and their own language and learning to communicate meaningfully across these linguistic and cultural systems in different contexts. There is a need to understand these distinctive structures and systems, their conventions for use, related culture(s), their place in the Australian and international

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[78] Australian Curriculum - F-10 Curriculum - Languages: Learning area,
http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/languages/aims. accessed 08/11/2015

community, as well as its own history in Australian education.[79]

The balance of oracy and literacy learning differs with languages with writing systems distant from English, for example Japanese, which requires more time for students to learn the written script than alphabetic-based languages. The cultural aspects, as well as the contexts of language use, which can be very different between languages and are thus vital in order to communicate successfully, are able to be considered and catered for individually in this framework. It is a positive move by Australia that they recognise there are differences in how different languages can be learnt, a factor which is not seen in the NZC.

The curriculum also takes into account the diversity among language learners in terms of their level of experience and proficiency in the language. With the changing patterns of migration into Australia, students come to class with great diversity and a varied degree of language background(s). Therefore, the curriculum is designed to cater to three major groups of learners: 'second language learners' (L2), 'background language learners', and 'first language learners' (L1). As discussed in Chapter 4, it can be argued that within each of these groups a wide range in proficiency exists and so it may be difficult

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[79] Australian Curriculum - F-10 Curriculum - Languages: Overview, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/languages/preamble. accessed 08/09/2014

to group them accordingly. However, the acknowledgement that different types of language learners exist, and the development of a framework catering specifically for their needs, are both generally welcomed by schools and teachers.[80]

Currently, not all languages are catered for in terms of all three groups of learners identified, however, each language is being developed for the dominant target audience within the current Australian context. For example, the Chinese curriculum has been developed for all three groups because there is a large community of Chinese living in Australia and there is a significant need to differentiate between these groups in order to meet their learning needs; it is also the same for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. In contrast Arabic, Hindi, Turkish, and Vietnamese are being taught for background learners only. Curricula for the remaining languages have been written only for L2 learners: French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, and Spanish. Currently it is unclear whether ACARA will develop the three types of curriculum statements for other languages offered in the future.

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[80] Morgan, A.M., (2014), AFMLTA welcomes the release of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, ACARAeduau, http://acaraeduau.com/2014/07/21/afmlta-welcomes-the-release-of-the-australian-curriculum-languages/. accessed 08/09/2014

It has been noted that in Australia one of the main reasons for a decline in the number of students studying Asian languages, in particular, as they enter senior secondary school is because many students are concerned that their language examination score will "bring down their university entrance marks" and they must "compete against natural speakers".[81] This issue is clearly similar to the problem faced by students in New Zealand. With the introduction of separate curricula for students of different backgrounds in the target language, the Australian authorities hope to reduce this problem and encourage more FL learners to take and continue learning new languages; or maintain their community language in the case of heritage learners.

For the L2 and background language learner pathways curricula have also been developed to allow for two different entry points; for those starting FL learning from Foundation, 'Foundation to Year 10 sequence'; and for those starting in Year 7, 'Year 7 to 10 sequence' (Year 7 Entry). This takes into account the fact that FL learning often begins in Years 7 and 8, and it also gives flexibility to those who studied different languages in primary school.[82]

[81] Natural speakers may include first, background or heritage learners. Harvey, E., (2013), Students drop Asian languages amid uni entrance concerns, The World Today, http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2013/s3864399.htm. acessed 10/10/2014
[82] Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2013). Consultation Report – Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages Version 1.0, ACARA, Sydney, November 2013. accessed from http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Draft_Australian_Curriculum_Languages__Consultation_Report_-_v1_Nov_2013.pdf

ACARA also indicates the hours expected for FL learning from Foundation to Year 10, these are: 350

hours for Foundation to Year 6 in total, and a further 160 hours for each of Years 7 to 8, and Years 9

to 10. Although not mandatory the indicative hours serve as a guideline for designing the school

curriculum, specifically the time allocate in schools for FL learning, which help to maintain equality

around Australia.[83] Under the new AC all students will learn a language until at least Year 9, however,

schools are allowed to decide what year students begin their language education and what languages

are taught.[84]

Despite concerns about how to actually cater for the different learner groups, the recognition of learner

diversity and the efforts to cater to their various needs through the pathways and entry point structure

outlined above is valued and welcomed in general; it will be interesting to see the effectiveness of this

new initiative in the next few years.

It is clear that the Australian government has put communication at the centre of FL education, at the

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[83] The Australian Curriculum information sheet - Australian Curriculum: Languages,
http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Curriculum_Languages_Info_sheet_Nov_2013.pdf. accessed
15/09/2014

[84] Topsfield, J. 2011. Languages boost for primary schools, THE AGE [online].
http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/languages-boost-for-primary-schools-20110131-1ab6v.html. accessed
19/09/2014

same time, emphasising the importance of understanding the language as well as the culture which would help them become successful communicators. At the curriculum statement level, Australia and New Zealand share mostly the same aims in FL education, however Australia better acknowledges the differences between each language and the learners. How curriculum aims are shared to students and teachers, and how students' communication skills are examined in Australia will be explored in the later sections when I investigate Japanese syllabus in chosen regions in Australia.

Section Two:

Japanese language teaching in Australia

The current situation in Japanese language teaching

Previous studies have indicated that Japanese is the most widely studied language in Australia; however, there is a decline in the number of schools that offer a Japanese language programme as well as the number of learners.[85] The decline in student enrolment is unevenly spread across Australia; the primary sector saw the steepest drop of 21% nationally even though, in some regions,

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[85] De Kretser, A., & Spence-Brown, R. (2010). The current state of Japanese language education in Australian schools. Carlton South, Australia: Education Services Australia.

http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/JapanReport.pdf. accessed 15/09/2014

the number of students learning Japanese at this level have risen. The study by De Kretser and

Spence-Brown (2010) shows that the decrease in enrolments of Japanese learners is linked to a

general decline in popularity of language education programmes. Language teachers have reported

that in recent years there has been the perception that languages are less essential and, thus, less

strongly supported by the school and the community. They also suggested that due to the decline in

the Japanese economy some students may also see Japanese as less attractive and useful for future

employment, so they were more likely to opt for other languages, including Chinese and purportedly

'easier' European languages.[86] It was also reported that both teachers and students believed that, in

recent years, Japanese at senior levels has become increasingly difficult and competitive, and that

this was contributing to a drop in enrolments at some schools (p.29). There are clear similarities here

to some of the issues that New Zealand's Japanese language education is facing. More detailed

comparison will be done in Chapter 8.

It was also noted that there are considerable differences across Australia in the number of students

studying languages in general, as well as those learning Japanese. One of the suggested reasons for

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[86] Jiji, 2012, Aussie students switching to Chinese but Japan's soft power still inspires, The Japan Times [online], http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/12/21/national/aussie-students-switching-to-chinese-but-japans-soft-power-still-inspires/. accessed 16/09/2014

this is because of the different approaches taken by each region in Australia. It is hoped that the release of the new nationwide AC will bring some changes to, and equal opportunities in, language learning for all young Australians across the country. Because there is currently no nationwide Japanese curriculum for seniors, and there are differences in how Japanese is taught and assessed across the regions in Australia, this research will investigate the curricula in the three largest regions to compare their differences, which will also be compared to NCEA in New Zealand.

Development of the *Australian Curriculum: Language Japanese*

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages Japanese (revised draft)* (2014) acknowledges the fact that Japanese is one of the most widely taught L2 in Australian schools and the exchange between Japan and Australia is to be encouraged. The learners of Japanese in Australian schools are predominantly L2 learners, therefore the curriculum for Japanese is currently designed only for the L2 learner pathway, thereby the curricula is catering to the majority of students' needs. However, because many regions have separate syllabi for L2 and background/heritage learners, in the future, they may develop a differentiated syllabus for students with different needs (refer to Chapter 7, Section Three for the Japanese curriculum of each region studied here).

The 'content descriptions and elaborations' section in the AC for Japanese helps teachers decide what

content and language features to teach and also guides them with suggestions of some of the types

of activities they could incorporate into their teaching. The methodology employed is based on the

communicative teaching approach and expectations of student achievement outcomes are given

along with suggested language features involved in the learning. For example, content achievement

for Years 3 and 4 is to "participate in guided tasks with real outcomes (such as origami, calligraphy,

cooking, craft and maths), following simple instructions, using modelled structures to describe steps

and materials" (*Draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Language Japanese* (2013) p.19). It then gives

examples of class activities where students can learn to follow instructions; "making a Japanese dish

such as おにぎり [*onigiri*] using relevant language features such as imperative verb forms and

appropriate vocabulary, for example, おこめをあらって[*okomeo aratte*]、みずをいれて[*mizuo irete*]"

wash rice and add water (p.19). Through these sorts of activities, students learn language associated

with activities and this knowledge enables them to communicate whilst engaging in the activity and

achieving the task. However, it is up to the teacher to decide what task and language features to teach,

according to the students' needs and interests.

This freedom also created concern among the teachers; according to the *NSW Response Draft*

Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese (2013), "there was increasing concern regarding the lack of guidance for teachers in clearly identifying the knowledge and skills students are required to learn and how this would articulate into senior secondary" (p.2).[87] Again, this issue resonated with similar issues faced in the New Zealand context, however, the actual learning outcome of the new AC for Japanese is still unknown.

De Kretser & Spece-Brown (2010) note that there are considerable differences across Australia in the number of students studying languages in general, as well as those learning Japanese. One of the suggested reasons for this is because of the different approaches taken by each state and territory, and the release of the nationwide AC is hoped to bring some changes to and equal opportunities in language learning for all young Australians across the country.

Many of the problems that the Australian Japanese language education system is facing can also be seen in New Zealand. However, Australia has separate syllabi for different languages which is a major

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[87] For the full list of recommendations and feedback, refer to, Board of Studies New South Wales, NSW Response Draft Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese. (2013). http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/pdf_doc/nsw-response-stage2-languages.pdf. accessed 06/10/14

difference between NCEA and AC. Currently nationwide Japanese curriculum for seniors has not yet

been developed in Australia, therefore, the next section will focus on the regional Japanese syllabi

used in the three largest regions in Australia. The results will then be compared to NCEA in Chapter

8.

Section Three:

Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

Across Australia there is wide variation in the name given to the final years of secondary school, the

subjects offered, class structures, and the qualifications issued upon completion, see below:[88]

- Australian Capital Territory (ACT): ACT Year 12 Certificate

- New South Wales (NSW): Higher School Certificate (HSC)

- Northern Territory (NT): Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)

- Queensland (QLD): Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)

- South Australia (SA): South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)

- Tasmania (TAS): Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)

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[88] Studies in Australia – The international students' guide, Secondary education,
http://www.studiesinaustralia.com/types-of-education/secondary-education#1. accessed 04/10/2014

- Victoria (VIC): Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

- Western Australia (WA): Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)

Table 7.1 below (for a larger, A3 size version, refer to Appendix 2) outlines the overall picture of each region's SSCE. This table provides a clear summary of the findings of my detailed investigation into the Japanese examination system at SSCE level in all regions in Australia. It compares Japanese examinations under separate categories which was based on a thorough examination of what was on offer and the systems in the states concerned. This table format makes it easier to see the similarities and differences among each region in Australia and also with New Zealand; this data will be used in Chapter 8. In this chapter only three states, NSW, QLD and VIC are discussed in detail as a full study, across all regions was outside the scope of this Master's Thesis. This selected sample for the study was believed to be able to provide enough material for a meaningful comparison with New Zealand, which is the main focus of this study. I chose these states in particular because they are the three most populous in Australia and therefore were expected to show more diversity in their FL education system because of the larger student number. These three states also had the highest number of university students enrolled in Eastern Asian language degrees in 2013,[89] which may also indicate

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[89] Data obtained from Universities Australia (www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au) through personal email contact with one of the senior economists. A table was sent from the senior economist upon a request for data on the number of

that they have a better FL learning system prior to university entry.

This section introduces SSCE examinations for the three selected states, focusing mainly on the Japanese examinations, their expected outcomes and the method used to test students' ability to use language in a communicative way. I am focusing on CC, that is, speaking, as this is the area of focus in my study of New Zealand Japanese secondary teaching. It is necessary to provide background information about the Japanese examination in general so that we will be able to see where communicative-focused teaching and assessment are placed in context of Japanese language education as a whole. Where there are separate examinations for L2, background and L1 learners, I will focus primarily on L2 learners, because this is the most relevant to the New Zealand context where there is, at present, no effort to cater for these learner differences.

Table 7.1: Summary of Australian and New Zealand Syllabus

(For a larger version, refer to Appendix 2)

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students learning FL at universities in Australia. The data on the table indicates the number of students enrolled in the Language and Literature degree in Australian universities in 2013, which does not include those that have taken language as a unit subject. Languages were divided by the region (i.e. Eastern Asian, Southeast Asian), and NSW had the highest number of enrolments followed by VIC and QLD.

State/Territory	Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	New South Wales (NSW)		Northern Territory (NT) / South Australia (SA)	Queensland (QLD)	Tasmania (TAS)	Victoria (VIC)	West Australia (WA)	New Zealand
Qualification	ACT Year 12 Certificate	Higher School Certificate (HSC)		Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) / South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)	National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA)
Japanese syllabus category									
Beginning/ Beginners	✓	✓		✓	N(1)	✓ (Foundation TQA 2)	N	N	N
Continuing/ Continuers	✓	✓	✓ (Extension)	✓	✓ (Senior Syllabus)	✓ (Japanese TQA 3)	✓ (Japanese Second Language)	✓ (Second Language - General and ATAR)(4)	✓ (NCEA Level 3)
Background		✓		✓	N	N	N	✓(5)	N
Heritage	✓ (Advanced)	✓		N	N	N	N	N	N
First		N		N	N	N	✓	✓	N
Entry requirements to Continuing level	● Studied the language in up to Year 11 (secondary school and primary) ● Native or background speakers without formal education in the language.	● Have previously studied the language for 200-400 hours. ● Students have no more than 1 year's formal education in a school where target language is the medium of instruction. ● Students have no more than 3 years of residency in a country where the language is the medium of communication. ● Students do not use the language for sustained communication outside of the classroom.		● Have studied the language for 400-500 hours. ● Students have no more than 1 year's formal education in a country where the target language is a major language of communication or a medium of instruction.	● Learn Japanese as an additional language. ● Have studied the language for a continuous period throughout Years 8, 9 and 10.	● Pathway from Foundation TQA level 2 course. ● Provides a pathway to the study of Japanese at tertiary level or vocational education and training.	● Students should have studied the language for at least 200 hours prior to the commencement of Unit 1.	● Aimed at students whom the language is a second (or subsequent) language. ● The students are not exposed to or interact in the target language outside the language classroom. ● The students were not born, nor lived in a country where Japanese is spoken. ● The students may have experienced stays of up to 1 year in Japan. ● Students should have studied Japanese for 200-400 hours at the commencement of Year 11.	N
Japanese Language specific syllabus available	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N
Syllabus content									
Entry requirements	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N
Course objectives/ outcomes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓(6)
Assessment framework	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓(3)	✓	✓	N
Assessment marking schedule	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓ (separate document)	✓	N
Prescribed themes/ topics	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N
Prescribed grammar/ structures	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N
Prescribed vocabulary	✓	✓ (separate document)		✓ (separate document)	N	✓	✓ (separate document)	N	✓ (separate document)
Prescribed kanji	✓	✓ (separate document)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (separate document)

Assessment category & weighting (Internal)			Overall course weighting	Weighting				Unit 3	Unit 4	Weighting (until 2014)	Weighting (from 2015)	NCEA Level 3 (Whole course's credits out of 24)(7)
Speaking	25-40%			20%				10%	10%	25-30%	50%	9
Reading	25-40%	60-75% (Weightings in A/T 0.5 Unit)	50%	40%	70%	50% Folio (8-10 assessments) 20% In-depth study	● Students will be awarded an exit level of achievement in all four skills.	● Determined by the schools. ● Students receive a rating of A to C.	N	5%	20-30%	20%	N
Listening				15%				5%	N	20-30%	15%	N
Writing	25-40%			20%				10%	10%	20-25%	15%	5

Assessment category & weighting (external)			Overall course weighting	Weighting						Weighting (until 2014)	Weighting (from 2015)	NCEA Level 3 (Whole course's credits out of 24)(7)
Speaking	N			20%		N		12.5%		25%	30%	N
Reading	N		50%	40%	30%	N	● Not stated	15%		30%		5
Listening	N			25%		N		15%		25%	70%	5
Writing	N			15%		N		7.5%		20%		N

Mandatory content of oral assessment — Internal	● Mandatory unscripted interview/ conversation task	● Mandatory unscripted interview/ conversation task		● Folio includes: -interaction -text production -text analysis ● In-depth study: -1 oral presentation -1 written response to the topic -1 reflective response in English	N(2)	N	● Unit3: Role-play, focusing on the resolution of an issue. ● Unit4: Interview on an issue related to the texts studied.	● Interaction with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions and/or experiences in spoken Japanese (the format of the assessment is not mandatory) ● Tasks are administered under test conditions.	● Two oral assessments: 'Speak, Present' (speech) and 'Interact' (conversation). - A 2-3 minutes spoken presentation in Japanese of a cultural activity that students have participated in ('Speak, Present'. - Folio containing a selection of recordings of 3 spoken interactions, about 4-5 minutes in total ('Interact').

Content of oral assessment — External	N	● Conversation between the student and the examiner. The student will respond to the examiner's questions on the prescribed syllabus topics.		● Conversation between the student and the examiner(s). It consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world. ● Discussion between the student and the examiner(s). The student explores with the examiner(s) the subject of the in-depth study.	N	● Interaction between a student and examiner(s) on the themes, "The Individual", from the pre-scribed themes in the syllabus.	●Conversation between the student and examiner(s) on a general topic about the student's personal world. ●Discussion between the student and examiner(s) to explore the sub-topic chosen for detailed study.	●Discussion between the student and a examiner about a stimulus item the student brings. ●Conversation between the student and a examiner about contexts and topics from Unit 3 and 4 (no topics related to the stimulus item in the first part of the examination).	N

State/Territory	Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	New South Wales (NSW)	Northern Territory (NT) South Australia (SA)	Queensland (QLD)	Tasmania (TAS)	Victoria (VIC)	West Australia (WA)	New Zealand
Qualification	ACT Year 12 Certificate	Higher School Certificate (HSC)	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)	National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA)
Criteria for oral assessment								
Ability to comprehend the content/ context	✓	N	✓	N	N	✓	✓	N
Fluency in response (spontaneous)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	✓
Ability to convey information accurately	✓	N	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ability to maintain a conversation/ discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	✓	N	✓
Relevance and depth of content	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	✓	✓	✓
Understanding of cultural and linguistic appropriateness	✓	N	✓	✓	N	✓	N	✓
Use of communication strategies (fillers, seeking clarification)	N	N	✓	✓	N	✓	N	✓
Good pronunciation/ intonation	N	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
High level of language knowledge (grammar/ vocabulary)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accuracy of language (grammar/ vocabulary)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consideration for some errors or hesitation but which do not hinder meaning	N	N	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	✓

N = Not applicable

(1) Available in Years 1-9 syllabus

(2) The general objectives of Conveying meaning (productive communication), and the four themes are mandatory to be taught, however, there is no mandatory assessment.

(3) There is also a language specific External Assessment Specification

(4) Japanese Second Language is available in ATAR or General course.

(5) Syllabus implemented from NSW

(6) Generic across all second language courses

(7) Schools can choose not to offer all the credits (assessments), for example, a school may choose not to offer one oral assessment 'Interact' which is worth 6 credits, and overall, students could achieve 18 credits.

New South Wales: Higher School Certificate

Higher School Certificate (HSC) is the highest award in secondary education in New South Wales (NSW). In the FL learning area there are 34 languages offered across five differentiated levels: Beginners, Continuers, Extension, Heritage, and Background Speakers. There are language and level-specific syllabi which are designed to cater for a wide range of L2 learners as well as for the maintenance of community languages (some of which are based on the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL), for example Dutch Continuers; which is a national model for the teaching, learning and assessment of language subjects). Heritage language courses in Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean were introduced in 2011. Depending on the language there may only be a Continuers level course (for example, Dutch), or all five levels (for example, Chinese and Japanese). Schools may choose which language and which level of courses they offer and even though there are separate curricula for different levels, most schools do not have the capacity or the student numbers to offer separate classes for students with different learning backgrounds (for example, L2 learners and background students) or to offer minor languages.[90] Therefore, some students study languages via the Open High School, which is a distance education language specialist school, offering 12 languages to students in Years 9 to 12.

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[90] For a list of all the languages offered under HSC, refer to Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW languages page; http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/languages.html. accessed 10/03/2016

Similar to the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) in Victoria (VIC), which will be introduced again in the later section, students in NSW may choose to study the Heritage level course through the Open High School. For Japanese language, the Open High School offers the Heritage syllabus alongside other level courses for L2 learners (that is the Continuer and Extension courses), which is an online course with various study support including phone lessons and study days. This is a distance education programme where students at local secondary schools can enrol if their school does not offer any particular FL or the FL curriculum is not at the appropriate level. Teachers at the students' local school would be the supervisor and the programme would be made available to them to keep track of students' progress. Supervisors at the local school would also be given the information sheet for how to guide the Open High School learning programme.

Some background learners may also choose to attend the Saturday School of Community Languages, which also offer Japanese classes to heritage or background students. Shimoda & Moore (2012) note that due to small numbers of teachers who have the ability to teach the Heritage course, as well as the small number of students wishing to study this course, there are only these two schools in NSW that students can take the Heritage Japanese course, limiting the availability of the separate syllabus

(p.125). However, there are also a number of Japanese supplementary schools which students could also attend to maintain their Japanese proficiency. These schools do not offer the Heritage syllabus, however, still give options for heritage learners to learn Japanese at their level. The Sydney Saturday School of Japanese, for example, aims to provide Japanese supplementary classes to allow students to maintain their Japanese proficiency. Although they do not offer the Heritage syllabus, they aim to achieve the NSW syllabus outcomes for Japanese.

Although NSW offers differentiated syllabi this section will mainly focus on the Continuers course in HSC, which is equivalent to the Level 3 NCEA course in New Zealand, however, the Heritage course will also be raised in Chapter 8 in the comparative study with New Zealand.

For FL the HSC examinations involve a written and a practical examination (except classical languages and Background Speakers' courses). The external oral examination is held outside of school with the examiners appointed from the Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES). It is noted in the document *HSC Languages oral examinations – advice to students* that students are not to identify themselves in the examination and no uniforms are to be worn so that

all students will be treated equally by the examiners.[91]

The oral examination for the Continuers FL courses involves a conversation of roughly 10 minutes between the student and the examiner, where the student responds to the examiner's questions on the prescribed syllabus topics about his or her personal world (for example, family, friends, and interests). Neither the number of questions nor the number of topics covered in the examination is predetermined and the examiner's questions may relate to a previous response made by the student. It is noted in the *HSC Languages oral examination - advice to teachers* that students are encouraged to respond to the questions in a way that demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of a range of structures and vocabulary, rather than with long, pre-learned monologues (in such circumstances the student will be interrupted by the examiner).[92] The marking guidelines state that a student who gains high marks "engages effectively and fluently in a conversation by responding in some depth to a range of questions; uses consistently good intonation and pronunciation; manipulates language with

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[91] Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW. (2014). HSC Languages oral examinations – advice to students. http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/languages-oral-exam-advice-to-student.html. accessed 02/02/2015.

[92] Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW. (2014). HSC Languages oral examination – advice to teachers. http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/languages-oral-exam-advice-to-teachers.html. accessed 26/10/2014.

a high level of grammatical accuracy in a range of contexts; demonstrates and excellent knowledge

of vocabulary and language structures."

This guideline statement is the same for all languages, however, a statement such as "demonstrates

an excellent knowledge of vocabulary and language structures"[93] would be interpreted through the

separate syllabus for each language. Therefore, the 'knowledge' in French would not be the same as

the 'knowledge' in Japanese. 'Knowledge' in this context is the prescribed grammar, vocabulary and

topics which are listed in the language-specific syllabus. The language specificity of the syllabus

means that students will be marked according to the expectations set by the different syllabi. Although

it is beyond my research to know how much differentiation there is between different languages it is

expected that students learning Japanese would not be expected to achieve the same standard as

those learning French.

According to the external HSC achievement criteria, the important factor in oral examination is the

ability to engage in a conversation using Japanese, however, there are a number of factors, other than

simply focusing on the ability to communicate information to the listener using Japanese, that are an

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[93] HSC Languages Continuers Marking Guidelines – Oral examination.

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/languages-continuers-oral-exam-marking-guidelines.html.
accessed 10/03/02016

essential part of this examination. It is recognised that the accuracy of language use, pronunciation, knowledge of vocabulary and language structure chosen by the student also play important part in gaining a high mark. The intention of this type of oral examination is to encourage students to express themselves in a natural conversation style, through reference to topics familiar to them and relevant to their study. This is likely to test students' communicative skills in Japanese and, at the same time, allow them to base their answers on the content of their classroom learning. Although this external oral examination is a one-off examination, there are also internal speaking components in the HSC. Thus, students have several chances to demonstrate their conversational ability and teachers have several chances to assess their students' progress and achievements in this skill throughout the year.

Queensland: Queensland Certificate of Education

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) is Queensland's (QLD) externally moderated school-based senior school qualification awarded to students, usually at the end of Year 12. The syllabi for all FL offered in QLD is available on the Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) website. Most of the FL courses are equivalent to the so-called Continuers syllabus offered in other states, for example NSW, where students have already gained previous learning experience in the target language at an earlier stage of their schooling. There is an Extension syllabus available for selected

languages: Chinese, French, German and Indonesian, which is also suitable for background and heritage leaners.

The syllabus document includes detailed information on the course requirements, providing guidelines on what the course of study should be developed around (including cultural context, settings, themes, topics, language functions, language features and text types. Teachers are also encouraged to choose topics connected to students' interest and relevance. Under the 'language functions' subheading, the syllabus details the purposes of language use and those listed situations where students should be able to use Japanese to communicate by the end of the course.

QCE is based on externally moderated school-based assessment, therefore, students' achievements are documented through a process of continuous assessments of the mandatory aspects of the syllabus. In the case of Japanese, these comprise the general objectives of comprehension and conveying meaning, and the four themes.[94] The syllabus outlines the criteria for each of the mandatory aspects and teachers determine each student's standard in each language skill against

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[94] Refer to Queensland Studies Authority. (2008). Senior Syllabus Japanese 2008. accessed from https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/snr_japanese_08_syll.pdf for the list of 'mandatory themes taught under the curriculum. accessed 04/02/2015

descriptors given in the syllabus (graded A to E, where A is the highest standard). It is noted that it is

not necessary for the student to meet all aspects stated in the criteria descriptor for a particular

standard, but should be judged on how the quality of their work matches the descriptors overall. For

example, for Speaking the criteria for gaining an A grade in the following two categories is defined as

follows;

1) 'knowing and using language features', and

2) 'creating and responding'.[95]

For the former, an A grade student must be able to use "a wide range of vocabulary and grammar

effectively, with few errors; a range of cohesive devices to express connected thoughts and ideas;

register as appropriate to the situation; pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and stress that are

acceptable to a background speaker".[96] For the latter, an A grade student need to ensure that: "ideas,

information and meaning are communicated clearly and effectively, although some errors may occur

in complex language; conversation is initiated and sustained; spoken communication demonstrates

flexibility, coherence, spontaneity and relevance to the context; appropriate pause fillers and nonverbal

features are used where required".[97] Once a student's standard in each language skill has been

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[95] ibid. p.43

[96] ibid. p.48

[97] ibid. p.48

decided they are then awarded one of five levels of achievement; from Very High Achievement to Very

Limited Achievement. Teachers can access the sample assessments from the QCAA website when

making judgments about their students' work.

The QCAA also recognises a range of awards, certificates and studies taken outside school, some of

which could contribute towards the QCE. For example, achievement in the Japanese Language

Proficiency Test N5 and N4 Preparatory Courses offered by The Japan Foundation is recognised and

students would achieve 2 credits each for passing those courses towards their QCE.

Victoria: Victorian Certificate of Education

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is the certificate that the majority of students in the State

of Victoria (VIC) receive on satisfactory completion of their secondary education (usually completed in

Years 11 and 12), which provides pathways to university or employment. To attain the VCE there are

both school-assessed tasks and external examinations monitored by the Victorian Curriculum and

Assessment Authority (VCAA).

In VIC, there are 45 languages available for VCE, of those, the most commonly studied are: Chinese

(Mandarin), French, Japanese, Vietnamese and German. The VCAA collaborates with the nationwide Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL) project and prepared national examinations for 27 languages with small numbers of learners. Some of these languages are available to other states and territories through CCAFL (for example in NSW).

For some language courses in VIC, including Japanese, there are syllabi for L1 and L2. Not all of these languages, or syllabi, are offered at all schools in VIC but students may choose to enroll in the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) or Community Language Schools (CLS) alongside their usual school if theirs does not offer certain syllabus. The VSL are government schools offering language programmes for students in Years 1 to 12 who only have limited language courses offered in their schools, thereby assisting in access of tuition in a wider range of languages. The VSL provides face-to-face or distance education which can be studied out of school hours; for example, L1 Japanese course in a face-to-face, classroom setting is run on Saturdays. In 2013, 50 languages were provided across 41 VSL centres. The CLS is conducted by incorporated community-based, not-for-profit organisations accredited for funding by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Department. The CLS provides language education programmes from Prep to Year 12, also available during out of school hours. In 2013, 36 languages were offered by 172 accredited CLS in VIC.

For Japanese learners there is also The Melbourne International School of Japanese, a Japanese supplementary school which runs on Saturdays offering both VCE and Japanese curriculum to children with a Japanese background. There are classes for kindergarten level to Year 12, and the unique feature of this school is that students in the junior high school levels, Years 7 to 9, have the choice of Japanese for VCE preparation and Japanese for the junior high school Japanese curriculum (although everyone uses Japanese textbooks for the Japanese curriculum). Once they reach senior high school level, Years 10 and 11, they can study towards achieving VCE Japanese for L1, studying Units 1 and 2 in Year 10, Units 3 and 4 in Year 11, so that they usually gain the VCE Japanese qualification a year earlier then they finish local high school. At this school, the heritage or background Japanese learners could not only learn Japanese language to maintain their level of Japanese, which is how most supplementary schools operate, but also gives the students the opportunity to gain the formal qualification in Japanese for VCE.

For VCE Japanese, there are syllabi for L1 and L2. The L2 Japanese syllabus is designed for students who have previously studied the language for at least 200 hours as an additional language, thus Units 3 and 4 of the Japanese L2 syllabus would be most suitable for comparison with NCEA Level 3 in New Zealand and will be explored in this section. In the L2 Japanese course the students are tested by

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school-assessed coursework and two end-of-year external examinations. The students also need to

undertake a detailed study, during Units 3 and 4, based on a sub-topic related to one or more of the

prescribed topics in the syllabus. The chosen topic of this detailed study forms the topic of discussion

in the external oral examination; which is the same approach to the 'in-depth study' of NTCET (in the

Northern Territory) or SACE (in the South Australia). Examples of possible topics for a detailed study

in the syllabus are, for example, "The appeal of Australia to the Japanese (tourism, wedding

destination, famous sports people, etc.)", and "Studying in Japan (the high school system and tertiary

institutions)".[98]

For the end-of-year examinations the oral examination has two parts; conversation of approximately

7 minutes and discussion of approximately 8 minutes. The conversation is between the student and

the examiner(s) consisting of a general conversation about the student's personal world, for example,

school and home life. The conversation is followed by a discussion where the student and examiner(s)

explore 'aspects of the language and culture of Japanese-speaking communities' with reference to

what the students studied in their detailed study undertaken previously. The overall contribution of

each language skill in the school-assessment and external examination combined is 32.5% for oral,

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[98] Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design. (2013). Japanese Second Language. p.64

20% each for listening and reading, and 27.5% for writing; therefore, the oral component of the course carries more weight out of the four language skills assessed.

The *VCE Languages – Second Language Assessment Handbook 2005-2006* (Updated July 2013) gives the list of descriptors for students' typical performance in each range. For the oral components of school assessments, students develop their communication skills from role-plays in Unit 3 and interviews in Unit 4, they are then tested on their conversation and discussion skills in the external examination. For the school assessments students in the high scoring range have the ability to present and exchange opinions and information effectively with supported (justified) evidence. These students can use a broad range of appropriate language (including vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation and intonation) with a high level of accuracy and consistency.

For the externally assessed conversation section students are measured on the "capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively".[99] Students will not be able to achieve high marks if they only have the ability to use prepared memorised phrases to communicate. In the

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[99] Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2013). VCE Languages –Second Language Assessment Handbook 2005-2018. http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/lote/japanese2nd/jap2ndindex.aspx. p.16

assessment schedule it states that for students to score high marks they need to have the capacity to

engage with the examiners by demonstrating an excellent level of understanding, responding to and

continuing the conversation spontaneously, readily and confidently without support. These students

can also use communication and repair strategies effectively, and the accuracy of their language use

is also an important factor for achieving high marks. In order to prepare students for the external oral

examination, some teachers, especially those schools with an additional language assistant, organise

response practice with the students individually. Through such practice students are likely to, not only

gain experience and confidence in the examination style, but also benefit in achieving CC because

they are exposed to, and are involved in, conversations on a regular basis.

Section Four:

Comparison and findings

Section three has explored the curricula and examination system in three chosen regions in Australia;

NSW, QLD and VIC. There are clear differences in how Japanese is offered in each region, however,

there are also many similarities. The Japanese curriculum documents in all three regions comprise of

similar content including course objectives, assessment framework, and assessment marking

schedule, which, as discussed in Chapter 4, help students' learning by setting and sharing clear

achievable goals, which is important in order to enhance and motivate student learning.

The assessment method is unique to each region, however, in terms of the speaking assessment, it

is apparent from their marking schedules that all students are encouraged to express their own ideas

and opinions in Japanese, as well as using appropriate language features and functions, non-verbal

devices and cultural practices. Rather than concentrating on producing error-free utterances, the

syllabi focus on communicating the meaning clearly and effectively, using a wide range of language

knowledge. Thus, the students are examined on how well they can communicate in Japanese in a

natural manner. In NSW and VIC the external oral assessment is assessed by an external examiner

and their conversation is required to generate naturally, flowing on from the responses between the

student and examiner. Therefore, it is unlikely that students would be able to pre-script and learn the

answers for such a conversation, meaning that students are more likely to be assessed on their true

communication and language skills. Students cannot prepare for their oral assessment in the same

way they would for a role play, however, because there are mandatory themes and topics to be taught

under the syllabus and the assessment frameworks and marking schedules are accessible, teachers

can still guide and prepare students on what they need to know, and be able to demonstrate, in the

oral examination for Japanese to be able to achieve high marks.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the practical issues concerned with co-ordinating external oral examination by external examiners, however, this approach offers some new ideas that are an interesting alternative to New Zealand's *Interact Standard* for NCEA which as discussed in earlier chapters, exists some reservations as to the reliability of the assessment method. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

NSW and VIC (and QLD, but not for Japanese) also have syllabi for different groups of learners, and some L1 or heritage learners have access to such qualifications outside of their local secondary schools though classroom-style learning outside school hours, through an online programme or from the supplementary school. Currently there is no differentiated syllabi available in New Zealand but this is something that New Zealand could consider introducing in the future because, as discussed in Chapter 4, the competition of L2 learners with native, or near native speakers is a matter of concern. Acknowledging different learners in the NZC would not only enhance a positive learning environment for L2 learners but would also mean that students with different learning needs, and aims, could be catered for, which may result in lifting the overall number of people who are competent in FL.

This chapter aimed to introduce the Australian education system, focusing on FL and Japanese education, which would form discussion in the next chapter. Australian FL education too, is facing many challenges similar to that of New Zealand and is undergoing various reforms to address these current issues. Australia's development of its nationwide curriculum is one of the most significant recent changes to its education system, although the impact of this new curriculum is still largely unknown due to its recent and on-going implementation. This will be especially interesting at the senior secondary school levels for FL learners to see how Australia, as New Zealand's closest country, manages some of the issues that both countries are facing.

By exploring different Japanese syllabi in Australia it became apparent that their syllabi are more transparent than in New Zealand and would likely serve as a useful guide on what teachers should teach, and what students should be learning and would be assessed on at each level. The oral assessment approach, particularly the externally assessed oral assessment in NSW and VIC, is likely to prompt students to use their communicative skills together with the language skills they have gained throughout the course; which is likely to test students' true CC level. In the next chapter I will use these findings from Australia and compare them to the NCEA in New Zealand to see where these are

differences and what we could learn from the Australian approaches.

Chapter Eight: Comparison between Japanese language syllabus and secondary school examinations in New Zealand and Australia

This chapter summarises the Japanese curricula and senior secondary school examinations in Australia focusing on the three chosen Australian states, discussed in the previous chapter, and compares them with the NZC and NCEA in New Zealand. From the study of Australian FL curricula it became apparent that the aims of learning FL are focused on communication, which is very similar to the aims of the NZC. Therefore, this chapter will highlight the differences and similarities in the approaches taken by the two countries to achieve the same aim of 'CC'. I will also discuss some of the ways Australia seems to be dealing with four main problems that Japanese education in Canterbury is facing, as identified in my survey (refer to Chapter 6). This will lead on to my conclusions concerning the changes I believe New Zealand's current education system could or should implement in order to facilitate the assessment and achievement of CC in Japanese; rendering a more viable approach to realise the goal of CC for L2 learners in New Zealand.

A better examination system to assess communicative competence

An important difference between New Zealand and Australia is the content of oral examinations. Six

out of the seven Australian states and territories have some kind of mandatory oral assessment in Year 12 which involves unscripted interaction between the student and examiner(s). Five regions (NSW, NT, SA, VIC and WA) out of the seven share a similar mandatory external examination, which involves discussion and conversation between the student and the examiner(s). Another state (TAS) also has mandatory interaction assessments similar to those of the other four regions. Moreover, although ACT does not have external examinations, their internal assessment has a mandatory unscripted interview or conversation task that is similar to what the other regions use in their external exams.

For the four regions sharing the similar mandatory external examination the first task in the external assessment is a discussion between the student and examiner(s) on themes and topics learnt in class, or what the student has researched on, therefore the contents of which are familiar to the student. However, the second conversation task consists of general, personal topics about the student and the conversation is designed to be developed naturally, according to the responses gained from the student. Even though students are familiar with the assessment topics and, to some extent, they can prepare what they will talk about, it is unlikely students could write a script and memorise what they are going to say because it is not possible to anticipate what the examiner(s) will ask in the examination.

Thus, this kind of testing cannot help but be much closer to a real-life conversation.

New Zealand's NCEA has two oral achievement standards, '*Speak, Present*' (speech) and '*Interact*' (conversation), of which the latter is the conversational component. However, the most significant difference between NCEA's *Interact Standard* and Australia's external conversation assessments is that the former is internally assessed; students are given the topics to talk about prior to the assessment, as are their conversation partners. Thus it is possible, and indeed likely, for students to prepare and practice their 'conversation' with their partners before recording it as official assessment material. As discussed in the literature review, many researchers and teachers in New Zealand question the reliability of this Standard. Conversely, in Australia (refer to Chapter 7, Section Three on NSW), in order to ensure equity, the external oral examinations are held independent of their school and examined by an appointed external examiner(s). Although Australian students also prepare for their 'conversation' examination, because they know the kind of things they will need to be familiar with, the conversation is impossible to be 'scripted'. Thus there exists a key difference between the two systems with particular regard to the amount of 'free conversation' possible, and therefore CC demonstrated, that could be expected in these examinations.

As mentioned already, East (2012, 2014a&b) noted that many New Zealand teachers felt their students are not ready and confident to do their oral examinations if they were not allowed to 'prepare' their conversation. One of the participants in his survey also mentioned that the "students are not ready for it" (refer to Chapter 2). However, it is necessary for teachers to think about ways to prepare students for conversation rather than to learn and memorise a pre-prepared script. In some states in Australia there are exam preparation days or workshops where students get a chance to practice for the examination (for example, a Year 12 seminar held by the Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Western Australia (JLTAWA) and Year 12 Continuers Day for Students held by the Japanese Teachers' Association of NSW (JTAN)), which offer extra support for students and teachers. Some teachers also offer regular one-on-one conversation time with their students, preparing them to be confident about having unscripted conversation in the target language.[100] These are all designed to prepare students for examinations and to enhance CC.

<u>Curriculum as guidance</u>

As discussed in Chapter 5, the generic nature of the NZC means that there is little clarity for New Zealand FL teachers about what students should know and how to measure their achievement. The

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[100] Information gained from personal email contact with teachers of Japanese in Australian secondary schools.

NZC offers no clarity over what it means to achieve CC in practice at each level, therefore teachers

have a wide range of expectations for students' achievement of CC. As stated by Kennedy (2014),

"what is missing in The New Zealand Curriculum is a lack of any meaningful prescriptive detail to guide

teachers and their teaching at the various class levels".[101] While the MOE does provide a number of

suggested learning activities to support teachers for each language, the NZC does not provide a

definition of language structures or topics that learners should be taught or an explanation of how to

go about teaching the new CC approach (Scott & East, 2012, cited in McGee et al., 2013). This lack

of clarity causes challenges for teachers seeking more prescription and support in their FL teaching.

It is clear from the Table 7.1 that the Japanese language syllabi in Australian regions are more likely

to provide clear guidance on what is expected in the Japanese language course and what students

should learn and achieve. The new AC is criticised for its lack of guidance for teachers compared to

the currently used syllabus in each region, however, it still includes content descriptions which would

help teachers to decide what content and language features to teach and provides suggestions on

activities they could incorporate into their teaching (refer to Chapter 7, Section 2). Thus, it appears to

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[101] Kennedy, S. (2014). Curriculum, The Culprit? Education Review series.

http://www.educationreview.co.nz/magazine/march-2014/curriculum-the-culprit/#.VYdMuEY-6nI. accessed
22/06/2015

be better able to support the needs of teachers and give guidance than the present NZC.

Language-specific syllabi

The major difference between curricula from Australian regions and the NZC is the availability of language-specific syllabi in Australia, which does not exist in New Zealand. Although Japanese language-specific syllabi are available throughout Australia there are great variations between them (refer to Table 7.1). Theses variations are most noticeable in terms of how many levels the language programmes are divided into (for example, 'Beginning', 'Continuing', 'Advanced', 'Background', 'First' and 'Heritage'), the entry requirements for those divisions, as well as the overall system for assessing students' learning achievements within them. However, there are also similarities in the approaches of these syllabi to the mandatory tasks of oral internal or external examination which, apart from QLD, all have some kind of unscripted oral examination. It is also important to mention that the newly introduced nationwide curriculum for Japanese (Foundation to Year 10) does not currently have separate syllabi for different language learners (refer to Chapter 7).

The existence of such language-specific syllabi in Australia allows some regions to differentiate the syllabus taught to students with diverse language learning backgrounds and to cater to their different

needs. In some states, there is a greater need for a background, heritage or native speaker syllabi

separate from that for the L2 learners. Most regions in Australia have differentiated syllabi for

Japanese, other than that for L2 learners (refer to Table 7.1). NSW, NT, SA and WA offer a syllabus

for background or heritage learners, and ACT has an 'Advanced' syllabus also suitable for heritage or

L1 learners. VIC and WA have a L1 syllabus, and ACT, NSW, NT and SA also have 'Beginners' course

for Japanese learners. While variations still exist among the heritage learners' Japanese competency

and learning experience, development of differentiated syllabi is seen as positive so that students are

less likely to be seen as 'unfairly' gaining high marks in the L2 examination (De Kretser & Spence-

Brown, 2010, p.53, also refer to Chapter 4).

As discussed in Chapter 4, New Zealand currently faces the problem where learners with a range of

differing language experiences all learn the same content in the same classroom and prepare for the

same examination under instruction of the same teacher. This is seen unfair on both students and

teachers. As the population in New Zealand becomes increasingly diverse and more students come

to class with different language experience and learning needs, it becomes ever more necessary for

New Zealand to consider separating the syllabus for students with different language proficiencies.

Without language-specific syllabi this is not possible, because not all languages require the same

differentiation. New Zealand's lack of language-specific syllabi, therefore, is a great obstacle in the development of differentiated teaching and an examination system to better reflect the needs and abilities of different sectors of learners within society.

As mentioned in the literature review, New Zealand recently introduced the Auckland Languages Strategy which may lead to the development of language-specific, differentiated syllabi for different languages in the future. It will be interesting to see further progression of this strategy and its impact on the FL education in New Zealand.

Necessity for setting clear entrance requirements

To achieve the implementation of language-specific differentiated curricula for different groups of Japanese learners in New Zealand, it would be necessary to have clear definitions of entry requirements for the separate curricula. Here again, there is much to learn from the Australian system, for example, the system in NSW. New Zealand could adopt some parts of the NSW system, where they have differentiated syllabi for Beginners, Continuers, Extension, Heritage and Background Speakers. The population of NSW is much larger than that of New Zealand as a whole and therefore not be appropriate or feasible for New Zealand to offer all five syllabi as it is in NSW, however, each

syllabus has clear eligibility rules for students entering the differentiated courses (refer to Table 7.1).

Such clarity makes it easier for teachers and students to find the most suitable level class for students

according to their pre-existing Japanese language ability. Due to the complexity of measuring heritage

learners' language proficiency there are still some problems surrounding the eligibility statements in

NSW for the differentiated Japanese syllabi (Shimoda & Moore, 2012). However, it can nevertheless

provide guidance for teachers and schools to consider which course would be most appropriate for

students. The creation of a language-specific curriculum for Japanese in New Zealand, as well as

creating provisions for students with advanced language skills, due to their Japanese backgrounds,

would allow all students of Japanese in New Zealand to study towards boosting their own Japanese

language capability in a fair and stimulating manner.

Ways of offering differentiated syllabi to students

In a real teaching setting, it is unknown how manageable it would be to teach different syllabi to

different learner groups within the same New Zealand school. It is likely that, under the current situation

in New Zealand where shortages of appropriate language teachers and teaching materials are

common problems, even if there were syllabi available for different language needs (for example,

having a programme for background learners and regular L2 learners) many schools may not be able

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to offer them to students.

One option may be for New Zealand to create an Online-based school which offers lessons for different language needs, like the Open High School in NSW or the Victorian School of Languages (refer to Chapter 7, Section 3). If students, regardless of where they are in New Zealand, could learn the differentiated syllabus (for example, the background syllabus) through online materials managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE), it is more likely that differentiated syllabi could be offered without compounding any difficulties associated with potential teacher shortages and lack of facilities or resources.

Currently New Zealand has a correspondence school, Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, which provides distance education from early childhood level to Year 13 in a wide range of subjects, including Japanese, from Curriculum Level 1 to 8, including NCEA Levels 1 to 3 through a correspondence programme.[102] If the heritage/background or L1 syllabi could be available in the form of distance

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[102] The correspondence school have certain enrolment criteria bound by the MOE. For example, if the student is in Year 12 or 13 and would like to study Japanese, the school is allowed to register their students in the correspondence school for Japanese only if the class size is fewer than 6 students, where the school could register their students under the "small senior classes" entry gateway. Students who are Japanese or have cultural affinity could also enrol in the correspondence school if the school did not offer Japanese at school. Refer to New Zealand Gazette (2014).

learning, this would likely broaden the options for learners of Japanese with different language proficiencies in New Zealand; without placing increased demands on already over-stretched classroom teachers.

Another option for New Zealand secondary schools is to work with ethnic supplementary schools in the area to offer a differentiated syllabus in the future. In Australia some schools host after-school or Saturday Japanese classes for students with different language needs and students from several schools in the area can attend. Most such Japanese classes are offered by a supplementary school, which do not follow the national curriculum, however the Melbourne International School of Japanese (refer to Chapter 7, Section 3) offers classes following both Japan's national curriculum and the local VCE.

New Zealand also has Japanese supplementary schools operating in major cities (Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton and Christchurch), however, because the NZC does not have a differentiated curriculum for students with different needs such supplementary schools have no option but to teach the Japanese national curriculum, or their own school's individual curriculum, rather than the NZC which only offers syllabus for L2 Japanese learners. If there were Japanese syllabi available for

background and/or L1 speakers, some of New Zealand's supplementary schools (for example the Auckland Japanese Supplementary School, where they already offer three different courses depending on students' needs. Refer to Chapter 4) may choose to offer these syllabi, as is done in Melbourne, where students can gain credits from outside their local high school for studying Japanese at a level appropriate to their needs.

Thus, the problem of how to provide differentiated curricula for different groups of Japanese learners could be solved, not by the already over-stretched high schools, but by outsourcing to supplementary schools. This is not only fair for both background and L2 students, as mentioned earlier, but it could also enhance maintenance of Japanese as an ethnic language. The Auckland Languages Strategy, mentioned earlier, indicates in their strategy that they would support the development and operation of community language schools and aims to increase the number of qualified language teachers by offering professional development opportunities and language learning resources for both mainstream schools and community schools (Tamaki Makaurau, 2015, p.7). The availability of such classes would be limited to larger cities in New Zealand, including Auckland, where the needs for such syllabi are greatest, however, online based schools or correspondence programmes do not limit where students live and is likely to fulfil the needs of students better throughout the country.

From the comparison of the Australian Japanese curriculum and examination methods with those of the NZC and NCEA, we can see that there are aspects of the Australian system that New Zealand could consider following. These will be discussed further in the conclusion chapter however, at least theoretically, it is likely that the curricula in the Australian regions serve as better guidance on what students should learn and achieve than the NZC, and their examination methods are a more reliable and fair way of measuring students' CC, as well as preparing them to utilize their CC in real life. It is beyond the scope of this research to investigate how well the Australian methods are actually working in schools, or how manageable it is in practice to offer such assessment methods. However, the results of this comparison have clearly demonstrated that there are aspects of the Australian system that New Zealand could consider utilising in order to improve its efforts to enhance its language teaching approach and strives to encourage a wider achievement of CC. The impact of the new AC on Japanese education in Australia is still largely unknown at this stage, and it would be interesting to follow-up and evaluate this change over the next few years which, may have significant impact on New Zealand's future Japanese education and the Auckland Languages Strategy.

Chapter Nine: Discussion and conclusions

<u>Analysis of the research</u>

Although New Zealand officially recognises the importance of FL education, and has made efforts to reflect this in its redevelopment of the NZC, it is obvious that the country still faces numerous challenges in achieving the desired outcomes from these changes. The purpose of this research was to identify the key problems surrounding FL teaching, focusing on Japanese, in the New Zealand secondary school system. As noted by McLauchlan (2007), most L2 learners leave secondary school with only a limited ability to communicate in the target language, despite government focus on developing communicative skills in the target language. This research aimed to find reasons why FL education has not yet been particularly successful in achieving the aim of fostering students who can demonstrate CC in FL. This study also aimed to explore the question of what CC actually means to New Zealand students and whether achieving CC, as stated by the government, is a realistic goal for those learning Japanese under the current system.

In order to answer these research questions I first looked at governmental documents and previous studies conducted on FL teaching and learning in New Zealand. These provided background

information on the New Zealand secondary school system, the NZC and the NCEA. This investigation

proved most useful in providing accurate and workable definitions for the key terms used in this

research, including the definition of CC, as well as theories concerning the achievement of success in

FL learning. These theories were applied in the careful examination of the NZC and the NCEA.

Through analysing previous studies by scholars such as McLauchlan, East, and McGee et al., I have

identified three main potential reasons for secondary school students not being able to achieve CC,

these were also summarised in the literature review. These were:

a) the lack of a national language policy and the issues surrounding it,

b) the mismatch at the ministerial level and what the government hopes learners of FL to

achieve, and the implementation level in the classroom; between what students hope to

achieve and what they could actually achieve,

c) challenges in the practice of "spontaneous and unrehearsed" conversation for the NCEA

Interact Standard and the reliability of how students are assessed and graded for that

standard.

This background study helped with the construction and design of the survey that I distributed among

Japanese language teachers in Canterbury secondary schools in 2014. This survey aimed to gain an

overview of how teachers themselves interpreted the concept of CC and what they do in class to

encourage their students to achieve it. It was also intended to see if the work done by East (2012) was

also relevant to the situation in Canterbury, New Zealand, and whether teachers felt that their students

were suitably prepared to achieve the *Interact Standard*. Although the survey only reflected the

opinions and experiences of a small number of Japanese teachers in Canterbury, due to its low

participation rate, it still provided valuable evidence regarding how some teachers in Canterbury

interpret the term 'communicative competence' and provided information on the range of approaches

used to achieve CC in Japanese. The survey results showed that many teachers consider it is possible

for their students to achieve CC to some extent and they are generally satisfied with their effort in class

to help students achieve CC. However, it also identified four main problems in Japanese education in

Canterbury, some of which have links to the issues identified in the literature review. The four problems

were:

d) the vagueness of the NZC, which does not state the definition of the CC and how to measure

students' achievement of CC,

e) the predominance of a teacher-centred learning environment compared to the learner-

centred environment which is understood to be a more effective way of enhancing students'

CC in real-life Japanese,

f) assessments under the *Interact Standard* are unlikely to test students' true CC abilities. This is also likely to be one of the reasons why some teachers cannot practice a learner-centred approach,

g) institutional problems that are often also beyond the teachers' control, for example, issues with timetabling, lack of equipment and facilities, and a mixed-level classroom environment.

This first part of this research identified key issues that New Zealand's Japanese language education is facing. It provided overwhelming evidence that researchers believe there is a mismatch between the level of CC that the New Zealand government hopes and expects learners to gain, and what the learners can actually achieve through the current education system.

The second part of this research looked at New Zealand's closest and most similar country, Australia, in order to explore their approaches to Japanese language teaching and provide some alternative strategies or processes that may be useful in rethinking New Zealand's approach to secondary level Japanese language teaching and assessment of students' achievement of CC. New Zealand and Australia face many similar problems with regard to FL education, however, Australia is much more diverse and complex than New Zealand; it has a much larger population, and each state and territory

has, to some extent developed their own education system. At the time of this research Australia was in the middle of constructing and implementing a national curriculum. Although most of this research is based on the current curriculum used at the time in each region, the *Draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Languages Japanese* and the newly implemented Version 7.5 and 8.1 *Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum* were also taken in consideration.

The comparison with Australia made it obvious that there were some significant differences between the NZC and the curricula in Australia as well as assessment methods, both of which impact students' achievement of the expected level of CC. The comparative study provided some ideas on how New Zealand could tackle the issues identified in the background study and the survey; it provided some useful insights on issues raised. It also helped me to identify more issues with New Zealand's current FL education system, which may also have impact on how students achieve CC. The findings from the comparative study with Australia are summarised below.

<u>Where does the problem lie?</u>

From the comparative work, it became apparent that there are three areas where key problems lie in the New Zealand FL education system.

1) The Curriculum

One major weakness of the NZC lies in its vagueness, which was one of the problems identified by my survey in Chapter 6 (problem (d) above). For 'Learning Languages', the curriculum statements are extremely simple and, although this generic curriculum is intended to be used for any language and level that might be taught at any school across the country, it does not serve as an adequate guideline of what students should be taught and expected to achieve, which is what a curriculum should be designed to do. The NZC states that students need to know what they are learning, however, the NZC does not state clearly what students are expected to learn and achieve in each language at any level (refer to discussion in Chapter 4). Most of the participants in my survey also rated the NZC low for both usefulness and clarity, despite the fact that they consider curriculum to be an important document for their students to achieve an appropriate level of CC.

It can be argued that this vagueness of the NZC has also lead to the creation of problem (b), namely the mismatch between what is expected of the students and the actual practice in school classroom teaching Japanese. Because the NZC does not state what students are to learn and achieve clearly, students may not be accurately informed of their potential learning outcome and, as Oshima (2012) notes, students are likely to be disappointed and demotivated to continue with their FL once they

realise there is a mismatch between these expectations and the true outcome of their FL learning. The importance of motivational factors in FL learning is also supported by other researchers, including McLauchlan (2007) (refer to Chapter 4). When there are no clearly stated learning outcomes for teachers and students to follow, it is difficult to expect them to share the same understanding and degree of achievement in CC nationwide.

The results of my survey showed a strong belief among the participants that it is possible for students to achieve CC, but also that the achievement objectives in the NZC are unrealistic. I would argue that this indicates that there is a mismatch between what the curriculum states about achieving CC on the one hand, and how teachers understand the term CC and how their students can achieve this on the other. Because the NZC does not state what achieving CC means in practice for each language and at each curriculum level, there is a varied understanding of the term CC between teachers and to what extent their students are able to achieve it. In the survey most participants rated the usefulness and clarity of the NZC as a guideline for their students' learning unfavourably. We can assume that its vagueness and generic nature are likely to be reasons behind this negativity. Moreover, as introduced in the literature review, many researchers note that secondary level language learning does not necessarily lead to CC because language learning takes time, and requires students to be exposed

to the target language much longer than three or four hours a week, as is the norm for timetabling of FL classes. This, again, indicates that the NZC's expectations regarding CC achievement are unrealistic.

From the comparative study with Australia the potential disadvantages of the non-language-specific NZC became even more evident. In New Zealand because the curriculum is not language-specific students who are learning languages such as Japanese, which is known to be more difficult to master for native English speakers than European languages, are expected to achieve the same proficiency as those learning less challenging languages. Increasing CC requires more than the understanding of language vocabulary and grammar, but also the cultural and social aspects of the target language as well (refer to Chapter 4). This increases the difficulty for New Zealand students who are taught Japanese in a Western learning environment rather than those students acquiring a European language. Therefore, the non-language-specific, generic curriculum disadvantages Japanese learners, exacerbating the problems of limited teaching time and the learning environment while at school.

Moreover, because of its language non-specificity, the NZC cannot provide differentiated syllabus for different language learners, for example for L1, L2 and background or heritage learners. Not all

languages require such differentiation, so it is first necessary for the NZC to consider which languages

would need a differentiated syllabus (refer to Chapter 8). Japanese is one of the most studied Asian

languages in secondary schools in New Zealand and although most students learning Japanese are

L2, the number of native Japanese speakers studying and taking the NCEA Japanese examination is

increasing, thus effecting the overall spread of performance indicators from this assessment (refer to

Chapter 4).

As discussed in Chapter 4 and 8, this raises the question of whether it is fair for L1, L2 and heritage

learners to be learning the same content and preparing for the same examination which is designed

for L2 learners. There were mixed feelings from my survey participants regarding the issue of native

speakers in the classroom. This is likely to be because some participants also saw the positive

influence native speakers brought into the learning environment by, for example, sharing their

experiences in Japan and supporting their fellow L2 learners. However, as the number of native or

near native Japanese speakers taking the examination grows, it is necessary for the NZC to consider

who these examinations are really aimed at, and what they are trying to assess from such

examinations. If these examinations are aimed at testing the level of students' CC, then the

government would have to consider creating a separate syllabi for different learners in order to be fair

and accurate, thereby allowing the school's language programme to be meaningful for students with different learning needs.

2) NCEA

This research has also highlighted problems with the NCEA assessment system itself, which is of course closely connected to the curriculum. Because the achievement objectives are not clearly stated in the NZC it is up to the teacher to decide what to teach within the language programme. However, because students are assessed nationally on their achievement through NCEA, it is not surprising if teachers use previous NCEA test papers in order to decide what to teach and what students should know in order to pass the examination. Thus the aim of language teaching and learning in schools has tended to become focused towards exam success, rather than on the overall experience of language learning and boosting CC. From the comparative research on the Australian system it has become apparent that the curriculum and examination system in Australia are tied closely, but the FL teaching is less likely to be examination driven because the assessment is, at least in theory, based on what they have learnt throughout the year, as clearly stated in the curriculum. Furthermore, the oral examination involves a conversation with the external examiners on a familiar topic, where the questions posed by the examiner are developed through the conversation itself. This format is more

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likely to allow examiners to assess the skills necessary for a real-life conversation than a prepared role-play would.

In New Zealand, if the Japanese NCEA examination effectively assessed students' CC level and if the skills required to pass these exams were those skills needed to communicate effectively in the real world, the examination criteria could serve as the guideline for teaching, instead of the curriculum. However, as researchers and the participants in my survey have pointed out, the effectiveness and reliability of the *Interact Standard* is questionable (problem (c) and (f) listed earlier). Some participants in my survey voiced concerns about the authenticity of the work produced by students and about the lack of clarity of the criteria for the *Interact Standard* because it is internally assessed and students are given the topics and assessment criteria prior to the examination. Although students are not encouraged to prepare and memorise the script in advance, it is not clear how many students do just that, and to what extent they are penalised for unspontaneous communication. Despite some external moderation, as with other internal NCEA standard assessment, the final judgement is mostly left to individual teachers. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, because teachers have different understandings of the level to which students can be expected to achieve CC, it is unlikely that all students across the country are assessed using the same scale. Therefore, how accurately students'

CC are assessed under the NCEA *Interact Standard* is questionable.

My survey also highlighted the fact that some teachers may not have the knowledge and skills, as well as the environment, to foster a learner-centred classroom, which is known to be a more effective way of engaging students and developing the types of communication skills that would be necessary in real-life conversations. The classroom activities my survey participants listed as ones they conduct in order to encourage CC were mostly teacher-controlled, and their effectiveness is therefore questionable.

However, because of the nature of the language tested under the NCEA *Interact Standard*, practice of the everyday language which may be useful in real life would do little to prepare students for the examination (refer to Chapter 6). Therefore, even if teachers knew the benefits of the learner-centred, communicative learning approach, and had the institutional support to conduct it, it is possible that some teachers and students would still opt for an examination-centred approach to gain a satisfactory result in NCEA rather than creating a more communicative environment. Because the achievement criteria for the *Interact Standard* and how students are assessed for this oral examination are not clear and reliable, the students' CC skills are allowed to be assessed on their pre-prepared 'role-play'.

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Moreover, the CC-related practice that students receive in class is mostly teacher-initiated speaking activities, so it is doubtful the *Interact Standard* does indeed lead to the acquisition and testing of CC skills useful in real-world situations.

3) Government guidance

Lastly, it became clear through this research that even though the New Zealand government has the intention of encouraging FL learning, it has not committed to developing an official language policy that would support the changes needed to realise this aim (problem (a) listed earlier). As discussed in the literature review, without long-term strategic guidance from the government there will be no long-term planning for the development of resources for learning languages, professional development for teachers, or ensuring an adequate supply of competent language teachers needed for the future. Many researchers agree that New Zealand needs to have the language policy which will guarantee a full commitment to the long-term development of FL education. Although even with a good, robust, long-term, official language policy in itself there cannot be guaranteed success in FL learning, but it would still send a clear message to teachers, learners, parents and future employers that this learning area is an important part of the New Zealand education system, alongside the other seven learning areas.

No language policy can be considered adequate unless it has plans in place to improve the situation of the shortage of appropriate language teachers, and to deliver ongoing professional development to those language teachers to train them to deal with any changes to the curriculum or examination system. Teachers have a significant influence over how and what students learn, and if teachers do not have the most up-to-date, appropriate knowledge and training to deal with changes, it is difficult to expect their students to receive the most appropriate lessons for learning of their target language.

It became apparent from the survey in this research that the participants had different understandings of what CC is and how to teach so that their students could achieve it. If there were ongoing, government supported, professional development for teachers, it would help in maintaining the standard of teachers across the country. It is also important to develop resources for teachers to support their teaching. My survey highlighted a lack of teaching resources that are aligned with the new curriculum and NCEA Japanese examinations, which makes it more difficult and time consuming for individual teachers to modify their teaching methods and resources to achieve the government's new goals.

Moreover, other factors discussed in my survey, such as contact time with the students, and the

learning environment (particularly of mixed-level classes), also influence how students learn FL at

schools (problem (f) listed earlier). These issues may be solved to some extent by an effective

governmental adopted language policy; if FL learning was given the same status as other learning

areas within the NZC, which would include making it compulsory to learn at certain year levels like

other subjects. Improving the learning environment and changing how people view Learning

Languages as a stand-alone learning area could not only benefit the students' learning, but also boost

the lagging student retention rate, which is one of the most significant recent problems raised by

researchers.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the New Zealand government introduced the Asian Language

Learning in Schools (ALLiS) programme in 2014 (refer to introduction), however, each school is still

responsible for sustaining the language programmes once they were established under this initiative.

Schools may be granted funding to introduce language programmes, or to strengthen existing

programmes, but in order to successfully maintain such programmes the issues raised in this research

must be addressed first and long-term ongoing governmental support is essential. ALLiS is a positive

move by the New Zealand government in recognition of the need to support Asian languages in

schools, however, it will not fully succeed to its potential unless the current situation is improved.

Limitations of this research

While attempts were made to ensure the size and make-up of the survey participants (refer to Chapter 6), unfortunately only six teachers, out of 25 invited to participate, returned surveys. Therefore, the number of participants is low, however, it is still valuable as evidence of opinions from Japanese language teachers in Canterbury, and still offers focused and relevant pieces of information which are important for this research.

A further limitation of this research is the lack of practical data from Australia. Most of the study is based on governmental documents, including curriculum documents, and previous research conducted in Australia. Such documents generally lack information about the current situation at the frontline, including teachers' and learners' thoughts on their Japanese study environment and achievement. From my comparative work I have concluded that the Australian Japanese education system is more likely to enable students to achieve a higher level of CC. However, there is no practical evidence to support this because students' CC performance has not been measured using the same measuring scale between New Zealand and Australia. I tried to address this issue by contacting the

governmental department and Japanese Teachers Associations in each region in Australia, and the individual contacts I had with Japanese teachers in Australia supported the aims and objectives laid out in the governmental documents. However, it is not possible to compare students' achievement statistically when they have different curricula, examination system and expectations.

This research was limited to Japanese language learning in secondary schools, and did not include other FL that are available at schools. As discussed in earlier chapters, it is generally understood that European languages such as French and Spanish are easier to learn for students with an English background, however, there is no data collected like that in this research and thus the actual difference of achievement level of CC between Japanese and other languages is not known. The research findings suggest that a language-specific curriculum is necessary for New Zealand, however, there is no data to promote that this will bring success to Japanese language learning with complete certainty.

These limitations must be acknowledged and any conclusions and recommendations for further research must also consider these limitations. Every effort was made to address these issues, but some were beyond the control and scope of this Master's research. Nevertheless, this research still provides evidence of the true voice of the Japanese teachers in the Canterbury region and tackles

some of the current issues New Zealand Japanese language education is facing. It is hoped that this research will contribute to ongoing discussions and development of FL education in New Zealand, especially Japanese.

<u>The Way Forward</u>

<u>Long term commitment from the New Zealand government</u>

As discussed earlier, governmental support such as ALLiS on its own is unlikely to create successful and self-sustainable Japanese programmes at schools because it does not tackle head on the issues that language education in general, and Japanese education in particular, are currently facing. It also does not guarantee to increase in the number of students who have a high level of CC in Japanese or who will carry on with their Japanese learning on to higher education. However, this is still a significantly positive movement introduced by the New Zealand government to acknowledge the importance of learning Asian languages in New Zealand.

The development of the Auckland Languages Strategy is not a national language policy, but this, too, is a significant step towards achieving it; by addressing the need to support the development of a community language framework and increase the number of qualified language teachers, professional

development opportunities and resources. If this Auckland-wide strategy could successfully promote and foster FL learning and multilingualism in Auckland, there is a chance that New Zealand could have a national language policy modelled on this Auckland Languages Strategy in the future.

If the New Zealand government is to encourage young learners to be actively involved in the learning of FL and to put the ability to communicate at the centre of their learning, the NZC for Learning Languages needs to be redeveloped, as well as providing ongoing governmental support in terms of teacher training and resource development. This will only become available if there is a long-term commitment from the government to truly make FL education part of the NZC, rather than spending money just on introducing more language classes, which would only have short-term effect on increasing student numbers. It is necessary for the government to support schools and teachers in pre-existing FL programmes to create a more positive and effective learning environment and maintain this through ongoing training.

Redevelopment of the NZC

The curriculum will only serve as a useful and reliable guideline if it clearly states what New Zealand students are to aim for and achieve from learning FL at school. There should still be space for

modification and a 'uniqueness' to meet the various needs of each school and student, however, in

order to maintain fairness across the country, a clearly stated curriculum is indispensable.

Because New Zealand and Australia share many similarities, New Zealand could look to Australia to

see how individual regions have developed their curriculum for secondary-level Japanese language

teaching. While at the point of this research, the Australian national curriculum was under development

for languages at the senior level, individual regions had already produced curricula that were specific

to Japanese, with clear learning objectives and assessment requirements. Although these regional

curricula contain mandatory learning topics, there is still room for the teachers to decide what they

teach within the topic and because the learning objectives are clearly stated, the examination content

and marking schedule is also transparent. This will not only ease students' anxiety about what they

will be tested on, but also help them develop learner autonomy, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Language-specific curricula would also allow for some languages to develop differentiated syllabi for

L1, L2 and background or heritage learners. As discussed in Chapter 8, even if there were separate

syllabi available for these learner groups, currently it is unlikely that they could be offered at New

Zealand secondary schools alongside the regular L2 syllabus. Here again, New Zealand can look at

Australia for models of how differentiated syllabi can be offered through distance learning or through the assistance of supplementary schools. As the Auckland Japanese Supplementary School already offers three different courses according to students' needs, it is possible for other large cities to offer the L1 or heritage/background learners' syllabi at their local supplementary schools, if such syllabi existed (refer to Chapter 4). By adopting this approach, Japanese language studies at secondary school level would be fairer and more meaningful for learners with different learning experience and needs, whether they are L2, L1 or heritage/background learners. This approach would also support teachers who are currently under pressure to teach the same content not only to mixed-level L2 classes, but which also include native and near native speakers in that learning process.

Redevelopment of oral examination

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Australian secondary FL education system includes a practical oral assessment, including, in many regions, an unscripted conversation between the student and the examiner(s). In some regions this is internally assessed, but this research has revealed their efforts to ensure students are assessed on practical communication skills in situations closer to real-life conversation through a system of external assessment or externally moderated assessment. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is difficult to measure the true CC level of a student in a test situation,

however, the Australian method of oral assessment is more likely to test students' communication

skills better than that of NCEA. Unlike NCEA, where students have the opportunity to prescript the

conversation with their conversational partners, which becomes more like a 'role-play' than a truly

communicative assessment, Australian oral assessments test not only what students have learnt

during the year but also on how well they can maintain the conversation with the examiner(s) and the

conversation is more likely to be closer to a natural, real-life scenario. New Zealand should reconsider

the *Interact Standard* procedure, and reevaluate what they want students to achieve and how it is to

be tested. As part of this rethinking process, it would do well to study Australia's external assessment

system and the way in which the required communication skills and tasks are defined and prescribed.

Rather than testing on how much language the students can memorise in order to meet the criteria of

the *Interact Standard*, students should be tested on what they have learnt during the year and how

well they can sustain a conversation in the target language on a familiar topic, using appropriate

communication skills.

Also, in order to maintain fairness and equity across New Zealand, it is also important that a system

be developed that allows for either external assessment, or better external moderation for internal

assessment. As mentioned in Chapter 7, some regions in Australia require students to be examined

outside of school by external examiners. The practicability of such an examination system in New Zealand is beyond the scope of my research, however, in New Zealand, international English examinations, such as IELTS, require students' oral skill to be tested individually, separate from the written test, thus such examination style is not unique or without precedence. The New Zealand government could also consider either having external examiners visit schools or applying computer generated oral examinations (such as Skype interviews) as alternatives if they were to redevelop their oral examination in the future. These far-reaching improvements would, of course, necessitate further discussion with teachers and schools so as to develop a manageable and reliable system for FL assessment for New Zealand secondary students.

Conclusion and the future potential

The primary aim of this thesis was to investigate if it is possible for New Zealand secondary school students to achieve CC in Japanese to the level expected by the government, under the current FL education system, and to identify problems that the current system is facing in its efforts to decipher and adhere to government directives. Thorough studies of the NZC and the NCEA were conducted in the first part of this thesis in order to identify problematic issues surrounding Japanese language teaching and the fostering of students' CC abilities, and the second part of this study comprises of a

survey of Canterbury's secondary school Japanese teachers, from which an authentic picture of their opinions and experiences, concerning these matters, emerged. The later part of this thesis focused on the Australian FL education system, particularly relating to Japanese language learning, in order to identify potential models that New Zealand could adopt in order to improve the current situation and tackle some of the pressing issues raised in the earlier sections of the thesis.

My background research and the survey conducted suggest that although New Zealand has created various initiatives to encourage the learning of FL in recent years, schools and teachers still lack the support to ensure that these changes are effective. Currently there is a mismatch between the intentions of the FL curriculum and what is actually happening in schools. As most of the survey participants believe, it is reasonable to expect students to achieve at least some level of CC from secondary FL teaching, however, there must be more discussion between educational experts, teachers, students, schools and society over the extent to which CC in different languages can be achieved at secondary level, and how students can best acquire and be tested on that skill. Because the definition of CC is complicated and it is difficult to measure as a skill, the mismatch between the government's expected level of CC attainment and the actual level achieved by students will remain unless it is stated clearly what CC actually means in practice for New Zealand secondary school

students in each language (refer to Chapter 4).

Various problems with the current New Zealand FL system were identified in this research and, in many areas, a thorough understanding of the parallel systems developed in Australia could act as the driver for a meaningful discussion of alternatives and improvements, and in some cases offer a prime model for a new and improved system. It is essential that the New Zealand government sees the need to review their current FL education system and make the learning aim of each language clear to both teachers and students. The way in which students' oral skill is assessed also needs reviewing so that it tests the content that students have learned in class and how this relates to real-life communication, by testing this, at least partly, through spontaneous conversation. The practicability of adopting the Australian oral examination system is beyond the scope of this research, however, it is hoped that the findings of this research will be of use to educational policy makers, including the recent initiatives like the Auckland Languages Strategy, in their ongoing discussions surrounding how we can equip young New Zealanders with the skills to become true global citizens with the relevant FL knowledge and skills to communicate between countries. There is still great need and potential for further research into many aspects of this field.

Appendix 1: Japanese Matrix – From 2013

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Listen and Respond	AS90893 **1.1** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of spoken Japanese texts on areas of most immediate relevance. 5 credits External	AS91133 **2.1** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of spoken Japanese texts on familiar matters. 5 credits External	AS91553 **3.1** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended spoken Japanese texts. 5 credits External
Speak, Present	AS90894 **1.2** Give a spoken presentation in Japanese that communicates a personal response. 4 credits Internal	AS91135 **2.2** Give a spoken presentation in Japanese that communicates information, ideas and opinions. 4 credits Internal	AS91554 **3.2** Give a clear spoken presentation in Japanese that communicates a critical response to stimulus material. 3 credits Internal
Interact	AS90895 **1.3** Interact using spoken Japanese to communicate personal information, ideas and opinions in different situations. 5 credits Internal	AS91134 **2.3** Interact using spoken Japanese to share information and justify ideas and opinions in different situations. 5 credits Internal	AS91555 **3.3** Interact clearly using spoken Japanese to explore and justify varied ideas and perspectives in different situations 6 credits Internal
View and Respond	AS90896 **1.4** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of Japanese texts on areas of most immediate relevance. 5 credits External	AS91136 **2.4** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of written and/or visual Japanese text(s) on familiar matters. 5 credits External	AS91556 **3.4** Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended written and/or visual Japanese texts. 5 credits External

Write	AS90897 **1.5** Write a variety of text types in Japanese on areas of most immediate relevance. 5 credits Internal	AS91137 **2.5** Write a variety of text types in Japanese to convey information, ideas, and opinions in genuine contexts. 5 credits Internal	AS91557 **3.5** Write a variety of text types in clear Japanese to explore and justify varied ideas and perspectives. 5 credits Internal

Source: Ministry of Education, Japanese, http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-Internally-Assessed-
  Achievement-   Standards/Learning-languages/Japanese. accessed on 21/08/2014

Appendix 3

Thank you very much for participating in this research conducted by Kana Deguchi, a Masters Degree student at the Department of Global Cultural and Language Studies, University of Canterbury.
This research is part of the investigation into Japanese language teaching in New Zealand high schools.

This survey will take no more than 30 minutes.
Your participation is anonymous and strictly voluntary, so you don't need to write down your name. If the survey is completed electronically, please return it to my supervisor Dr. Rachel Payne at the University of Canterbury, so anonymity can be maintained.
rachel.payne@canterbury.ac.nz

*For this research, unless otherwise indicated, please answer the questions from an overall view point of all of your students from **all** the year levels, **excluding native speakers** (and near native speakers who have a Japanese home environment, or students who have spent long periods in Japan).*

"Learning Languages" in the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) emphasises students' ability to communicate in the target language(s) at the centre of the learning area, therefore it made the "Communication" the core strand, supported by the two strands "Language Knowledge" and "Cultural Knowledge".
It is believed that these two supporting strands are important for developing **"linguistic and cultural awareness needed for communicative competence"** (NZC 2007, p24)

1) How would you define "*communicative competence*"?

2) In your opinion, how important is it for your students to gain communicative competence in Japanese?

Please rate the importance on the scale from 1 – 5 for each year levels.
1 (not important) --- 5 (very important)

Year 9/10	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 1	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 2	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 3	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐

3) Do you think achieving communicative competence is a realistic goal for your students?

Please rate on the scale from 1 – 5 for each year levels.
1 (not realistic) --- 5 (very realistic)

Year 9/10	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 1	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 2	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
NCEA Level 3	1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐

4) What examples would you give as evidence of your students having achieve communicative competence? Please be specific about the year levels where appricable.

(e.g. NCEA Level 2: The students are able to hold an unprepared conversation in Japanese.)

Levels	Reason
Year 9 / 10	
NCEA Level 1	
NCEA Level 2	
NCEA Level 3	

5) What do you do in the classroom to help your students achieve communicate competence?

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6) Are you satisfied with the efforts to develop communicative competence in your students?

Please rate on the scale from 1 – 5 for each year levels.
1 (not satisfied) --- 5 (very satisfied)

Year 9/10	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
NCEA Level 1	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
NCEA Level 2	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
NCEA Level 3	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐

7) Ideally, what would you like to do differently in your classroom to help students achieve communicative competence more? Please be specific about the different year levels if necessary.

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8) In your opinion, do you think any of the following factors have an impact on students achieving communicative competence? Please tick the appropriate box for each factor.

Factor	Postive	Negative	Both	Neither
The current New Zealand Curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐
NCEA achievement standards	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching materials	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students' motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teacher's language knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teacher's pedagogical knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching methods	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mixed level classroom environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Native speakers in the classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐
School trip to Japan	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please state)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please state)	☐	☐	☐	☐

9) Do you have any comments on the answers given in Q8 between different year levels?

10) Please rate the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) for its;

Usefulness as a guideline for developing a teaching plan for Japanese language education.
1 □------------------2□------------------3□----------------4□----------------5□

Clarity as a guideline of what is to be achieved by the learners of Japanese.
1 □------------------2□------------------3□----------------4□----------------5□

Please rate on the scale from 1 – 5 under each categories.
1 (Low) -- 5 (High)

11) Which Achievement Standards do you offer to students this year?
Please tick the box for the standards you offer.

	Listen and Respond	Speak, Present	Interact	View and Respond	Write
NCEA Level 1	1.1 □	1.2 □	1.3 □	1.4 □	1.5 □
NCEA Level 2	2.1 □	2.2 □	2.3 □	2.4 □	2.5 □
NCEA Level 3	3.1 □	3.2 □	3.3 □	3.4 □	3.5 □

12) If you **DO NOT** offer any particular Achievement Standard, why not?
Please give some of the main reasons. If the same reason applies to more than one Standard, please group as appropriate.

Standard(s) [e.g. 1.3 & 2.3]	Reason

13) Do you think that NCEA measures students' communicative competence adequately?
Please tick one box.

□ Yes   □ Yes, some Achievement Standards do   □ No

If you answered "Yes, some Achievement Standards do" please answer Q14.
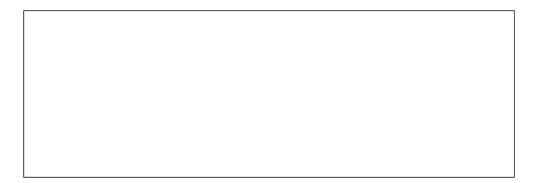**If you answered "Yes" or "No", please go to Q15.**

14) If you answered "Yes, some Achievement Standards do" to Q13, which Standards
DO you think measure students' communicative competence?
Please tick as many as necessary.

	Listen and Respond	Speak, Present	Interact	View and Respond	Write
NCEA Level 1	1.1 ☐	1.2 ☐	1.3 ☐	1.4 ☐	1.5 ☐
NCEA Level 2	2.1 ☐	2.2 ☐	2.3 ☐	2.4 ☐	2.5 ☐
NCEA Level 3	3.1 ☐	3.2 ☐	3.3 ☐	3.4 ☐	3.5 ☐

15) Do you think the Achievement Objectives for learning languages as stated in the New
Zealand Curriculum are realistic goal for your students? Please refer to the
Curriculum page attached at the back.

Please rate on the scale from 1 – 5 for each level groups.
1 (not realistic) -- 5 (very realistic)

Levels 1 & 2   1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
Levels 3 & 4   1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
Levels 5 & 6   1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐
Levels 7 & 8   1 ☐------------2☐-------------3☐------------4☐------------5☐

16) Give reasons for your answer to Q15.

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ご協力ありがとうございました。
Thank you very much for your participation.

Continued from the survey

Learning Languages

Levels One and Two

Communication

Proficiency Descriptor
Students can understand and use familiar expressions and everyday vocabulary. Students can interact in a simple way in supported situations. (Adapted from *Common European Framework for Languages*, Global Scale Level A1: Basic User; Council of Europe, 2001.)

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate
- Receive and produce information.

Managing self and relating to others
- Produce and respond to questions and requests.

Participating and contributing in communities
- Show social awareness when interacting with others.

Language Knowledge

Students will:
- Recognise that the target language is organised in particular ways.
- Make connections with their own language(s).

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:
- Recognise that the target culture(s) is (are) organised in particular ways.
- Make connections with known culture(s).

Levels Three and Four

Proficiency Descriptor
Students can understand and construct simple texts using their knowledge of the target language. Students can describe aspects of their own background and immediate environment. (Adapted from *Common European Framework for Languages*, Global Scale Level A1: Basic User; Council of Europe, 2001.)

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate
- Understand and produce information and ideas.

Managing self and relating to others
- Express and respond to personal needs and interests.

Participating and contributing in communities
- Use cultural knowledge to communicate appropriately.

Language Knowledge

Students will:
- Recognise and describe ways in which the target language is organised.
- Compare and contrast languages.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:
- Recognise and describe ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised.
- Compare and contrast cultural practices.

Levels Five and Six

Communication

Proficiency Descriptor
Students can understand and produce more complex language. They can communicate beyond the immediate context, for example, about past and future events. Students can understand and produce a variety of text types. (Adapted from *Common European Framework for Languages*, Global Scale Level A2: Strong Waystage Performance; Council of Europe, 2001.)

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate
- Communicate information, ideas, and opinions through different text types.

Managing self and relating to others
- Express and respond to personal ideas and opinions.

Participating and contributing in communities
- Communicate appropriately in different situations.

Language Knowledge

Students will:
- Understand ways in which the target language is organised for different purposes.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:
- Understand ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes.

Levels Seven and Eight

Proficiency Descriptor
Students can use language variably and effectively to express and justify their own ideas and opinions and support or challenge those of others. They are able to use and identify the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretation and enable them to respond critically to texts. (Adapted from *Common European Framework for Languages*, Global Scale Level B1: Independent User; Council of Europe, 2001.)

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate
- Communicate information, ideas, and opinions through increasingly complex and varied texts.

Managing self and relating to others
- Explore the views of others, developing and sharing personal perspectives.

Participating and contributing in communities
- Engage in sustained interaction and produce extended text.

Language Knowledge

Students will:
- Analyse ways in which the target language is organised in different texts and for different purposes.
- Explore how linguistic meaning is conveyed across languages.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:
- Analyse ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes and for different audiences.
- Analyse how the use of the target language expresses cultural meanings.

Appendix 4: Information sheet

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Department of Global Languages and Cultures
Telephone: +64 3 366 7001
Email: kana.deguchi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
26/05/2014

'HOW CAN "COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE" IN JAPANESE BE ACHIEVED UNDER THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM?'
Consent Form for the secondary school Japanese teachers in Christchurch and wider Canterbury area.

This survey is being conducted by KANA DEGUCHI from the University of Canterbury, Department of Global Cultural and Language Studies. The information collected is to provide an overview of the teaching practices and professional engagement of high school teachers with the concept of 'communicative competence' and the Interact Achievement standard in NCEA Japanese.

Your involvement in this project will be filling in the survey questions which will mostly be multiple choice, rating on the scale, or short answer questions. The data collected from the survey will be used to identify how teachers interpret communicative competence and what they do in class in order for their students to achieve this. Participants' responses will not be used to compare individual schools' engagement with these issues as a) that is not the focus of the study and b) all responses are confidential. The survey will take no more than 30 minutes.

This survey will be of 'Low Risk' as it does not raise any issue of deception, threat, invasion of privacy, mental, physical or cultural risk or stress, and does not involve gathering personal information of a sensitive nature about or from individuals.

You may receive a copy of the project results by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. To ensure confidentiality only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the information collected, and it will be stored for 12 months after collection, before being destroyed.
A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

The project is being carried out *as a requirement for Master's degree* by Kana Deguchi under the supervision of Dr Rachel Rayne and Dr Masayoshi Ogino, who can be contacted at rachel.payne@canterbury.ac.nz and masayoshi.ogino@canterbury.ac.nz. They will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form with the survey, and return it into the box provided at the meeting, or by emailing Dr Rachel Payne at rachel.payne@canterbury.ac.nz if you are returning the survey by email.

Kana Deguchi

Appendix 5: Consent form

Department of Global Languages and Cultures
Telephone: +64 3 366 7001
Email: kana.deguchi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

'HOW CAN "COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE" IN JAPANESE BE ACHIEVED UNDER THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM?'
Consent Form for the secondary school Japanese teachers in Christchurch and wider Canterbury area.

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and her two supervisors and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants or their schools or students. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after 1 years.

I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.

I understand that I am able to receive a report on the findings of the study by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

I understand that I can contact the researcher Kana Deguchi kana.deguchi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz or supervisor Dr Rachel Payne   rachel.payne@canterbury.ac.nz and Dr Masayoshi Ogino masayoshi.ogino@canterbury.ac.nz for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Please return the consent form with the survey into the box provided at the meeting, or by emailing Dr Rachel Payne at rachel.payne@canterbury.ac.nz if you are returning the survey by email.

Kana Deguchi

Appendix 6: Approval letter for the survey

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2014/19/LR

13 June 2014

Kana Deguchi
Japanese Department
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Kana

Thank you for forwarding your Human Ethics Committee Low Risk application for your research proposal "How can "communicative competency" in Japanese be achieved under the New Zealand curriculum".

I am pleased to advise that this application has been reviewed and I confirm support of the Department's approval for this project.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your emails of 26 May and 3 June 2014.

With best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey MacDonald
Chair, Human Ethics Committee

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