

**The Challenges Faced by Teachers of Japanese  
in New Zealand Secondary Schools**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1993 NZC</i>	<i>The New Zealand Curriculum Framework</i>
<i>2007 NZC</i>	<i>The New Zealand Curriculum</i>
ADEET	Australian Department of Employment, Education and Training
APSSCEA	Australian Parliament Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EU	European Union
FL	Foreign Languages
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
iCLT	Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching
KS	Key Stage
L2	Second Language
LAPA	Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance
LOTE	Language Other Than English
LOTEM	Language Other Than English and Māori
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MOE	Ministry of Education
NALSAS	National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools
NALSSP	National Asian Language and Studies in School Program
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NNST	Non-native Speaker Teacher
NST	Native Speaker Teacher
NZAJLT	New Zealand Association of Japanese Language Teachers
NZC	New Zealand Curriculum
NZQA	New Zealand Qualification Authority
SNSWDEC	State of New South Wales through the Department of Education and Communities
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

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Date:

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Permission to undertake this research was granted by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) on 25th October 2012, Ethics Application Number 12/260.

## ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate current challenges that Japanese language teachers are facing in New Zealand secondary schools. There have been many studies on the challenges of foreign language provision in New Zealand, but my research is different from most others in that its focus is on the teacher's perspective. Because of the difficulties of formulating a hypothesis due to a lack of past studies on this topic from the point of view of the teachers, I needed a research methodology that would allow me to start collecting data without a theoretical framework. For this reason, I adopted *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as my methodology. The data were collected through two focus group discussions and follow-up individual face-to-face interviews. A total of 12 in-service secondary school teachers of Japanese in the Auckland area, six of whom were native speaker teachers (NSTs) and six non-native speaker teachers (NNSTs), participated in my research.

My assumption prior to data collection was that the teachers' main challenges would be relating to the new teaching approaches or assessments recently introduced under *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007b). However, what emerged as a significantly recurring theme from data analysis was the apparent lack of value being placed on foreign language education due to the "English-is-enough" mindset that prevails in New Zealand society. Students do not perceive foreign language skills as being relevant career skills and careers advisors in schools do not recommend foreign language study either. As a result, the take-up and retention rates of students studying foreign languages in secondary schools have been declining and, of all the foreign languages, Japanese has been hit the hardest with a 55.5 percent decrease since 1996.

The repercussions of "non-value of foreign language education" are the same for the NSTs and NNSTs of Japanese. They include the need to create learning and teaching resources because of a lack of textbook aligned to learning, teaching and assessment of Japanese in secondary schools; organisation of multi-level classes and inadequate classroom time; and student demotivation to study Japanese because it is not seen as being important for their futures. The teachers were more concerned about these challenges than about the new teaching approaches, *intercultural communicative language teaching* (iCLT) and *task-based language learning* (TBLT). This could

indicate that teaching Japanese in secondary schools in the current socio-cultural context in New Zealand, could be impeding their transition to the new approaches.

Government directives to make foreign language education compulsory and to identify Japanese as a priority language, like those made by the Australian Government, would raise the status of Japanese. However, public attitudes towards the value of foreign language education may take generations to change. In the meantime, the teachers in my research are employing a number of strategies to improve student numbers but their attempts are not always successful. Based on the respective strengths of the NSTs and NNSTs identified in the research, I conclude my thesis with a number of recommendations, which involve active networking and collaboration, to help the teachers resolve some of their challenges as well as to motivate students.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools are familiar with having to deal with challenges. In the socio-cultural context in which they are teaching, “foreign languages”, or languages other than English and Māori (LOTEMs), education, does not have the same status as other subjects, and they have had to adapt to changes from a succession of educational reviews and reforms. Japanese teachers have the additional experience of having gone from enjoying teaching one of the most popular languages in New Zealand to teaching one that is showing the most rapid fall in numbers of all the foreign languages.

Concerns about foreign language provision in New Zealand have been voiced for many years, the most recent by the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013), and for Japanese, in the report commissioned by the Sasakawa Fellowship Foundation for Japanese Language Education (McGee, Ashton, Dunn & Taniwaki, 2013). Historically, English speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand and Australia, have tended to place less significance on foreign language education in schools, and this has been sustained by the fact that English has been an increasingly important world lingua franca (Crystal, 2003). In New Zealand, there has been the “English-is-enough” mind-set among the general public, which appears to prevent the value of foreign language skills from being recognised at various levels of society, including government ministries, the corporate world, universities and schools, and students and parents.

In recent years there have been a number of changes in foreign language education provision in New Zealand in response to social, political and economic needs from globalisation and increasing multiculturalism. *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1993) (hereafter the *1993 NZC*) could be considered one of the significant landmarks for raising the status of foreign languages. Although including foreign languages with English and Māori in the “language and languages” subject area did not afford foreign languages the status of being a discrete essential learning area in the core curriculum, the curriculum framework did acknowledge the intellectual, social and cultural benefits to students, and opportunities to understand the thinking and behaviour of others. The most recent changes have been brought about by the reviews and reforms leading up to and following *The New Zealand*

*Curriculum* (MOE, 2007b) (hereafter the *2007 NZC*). Foreign language provision was extended to Years 7 to 10 in all schools and, for the first time in the history of foreign language education in New Zealand, foreign languages were recognised as an independent subject area called “learning languages”. The reviews and reforms also saw the introduction of new pedagogical approaches that require a substantial paradigm shift for language teachers. All these developments do not seem to have influenced the general attitude towards foreign language education, but have had implications for professional development and increased workloads.

In 2009, when I started as an assistant Japanese language teacher in a New Zealand secondary school, I caught a glimpse of how one teacher was trying to deal with the challenges brought about by these changes. The teacher I was assisting had already started changing her lesson content by introducing more practice of speech and conversation, which were focal points in the new curriculum. She was also adjusting her teaching materials, all of which she had produced herself, not just for Years 11 to 13 but also for Years 9 and 10, to better prepare her students for the changes in achievement standards in assessments for Years 11 to 13 that were to be phased in between 2011 and 2013 (New Zealand Qualification Authority [NZQA], 2009). All these changes were taking her a great deal of time.

This teacher, who is a non-native speaker teacher (NNST), and I occasionally discussed teaching methods and strategies. From these discussions, as well as classroom observations, I came to realise that not only did she have a heavy workload resulting from the review and reform of the new curriculum, she also had a number of challenges as an NNST and as a teacher of Japanese, such as the complexities of the Japanese writing system and having to prepare a lot of learning and teaching materials. It was then that I decided to investigate what challenges Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools might be facing.

## **1.2. Purpose of Research**

The purpose of my research is to identify current challenges faced by Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. In my research I use the term “challenges” to refer to difficulties or problems to resolve or deal with, including issues with teaching approaches, resources, preparation, class management, allocated classroom time, and student numbers. There have been many studies on foreign language education in New Zealand (Holt et al., 2001; McLauchlan, 2007, McGee et al., 2013; among others), but these have tended to focus on changes to curriculum, learner

motivation and retention issues, and very few have discussed challenges from the teacher's perspective. My research was inspired by the questions I had through my experience as an assistant Japanese language teacher, and the focus will be on the teacher's perspective.

For this research I have chosen secondary school Japanese language teachers as participants. This was because my original questions were drawn from my experience in a secondary school and I was particularly interested in the challenges faced by teachers of Japanese. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings of my research will help prompt debates on possible solutions to work-related problems among not only Japanese language teachers but also other foreign language teachers.

### **1.3. Methodology of Research**

I have adopted *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) for the methodology of my research because of the difficulty of formulating a hypothesis due to a lack of previous studies in which teachers discuss their challenges. Grounded theory allows the researcher to modify the focus and direction of his/her research if necessary as a result of data analysis, to lead to a coherent description of the findings and the formulation of a theory. In fact, as will be seen in Chapter 4, it was necessary for me to modify mine. This was because it turned out that, contrary to my expectation, what currently concerns the teachers in my research most was not the recent changes in learning, teaching and assessment, but rather what they perceived as the huge impact of the "English-is-enough" mind-set on the perception of the value placed on foreign language education.

### **1.4. Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters, including this introduction chapter. Chapter 2 reviews existing literature, and in keeping with grounded theory methodology, most of the literature review was carried out at the last stage of data analysis process. This enabled me to review literature that was relevant to the direction that the research was taking.

In Chapter 2, I will first discuss the history of foreign language education in New Zealand, in comparison with that of Australia, with particular reference to Japanese language education in the secondary schools, in order to contextualise the development of Japanese teaching in New Zealand. Following this, I will look at the "English-is-enough" mind-set in New Zealand, which is a legacy from a very monolingual past and which this research has identified as an underlying factor of the teachers' challenges. I

will then summarise five issues associated with the “English-is-enough” mind-set that were identified in my research as being closely related to and/or responsible for the challenges of the Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. There is also a brief overview of motivation theory, as the implications of motivation for language study appear to be ubiquitous in the literature. In addition there is a discussion of different strengths between native speaker teachers (NSTs) and NNSTs, as such strengths have been identified as a possible key to resolving at least some of the teachers’ challenges.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to methodology. I will briefly describe the grounded theory approach and explain my reasons for adopting this approach. This will be followed by the description of my research participants and data sampling methods. The limitations of my research and ethical considerations will also be presented at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 4 focuses on findings. I will first present the results of data analysis based on the grounded theory approach, and the formulated theory to resolve the teachers’ challenges. I will then discuss the strategies that the teachers are employing to manage their challenges. The similarities and differences in challenges experienced by NNSTs and NSTs will also be presented.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings, make a number of recommendations and present my conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In keeping with Glaserian grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992), most of the review of the literature in this chapter was carried out at the last stage of the data analysis process when it was possible to identify literature relevant to the emerging findings (see Section 3.2.3). The literature review, therefore, focuses on: (1) the history of language education in New Zealand schools with particular reference to Japanese, in order to gain an understanding of the current language education system and the implications for Japanese language education, (2) the current situation of Japanese language education in New Zealand secondary schools under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b), (3) reasons why foreign language study is less valued in New Zealand than in non-English speaking countries, as well as similarities to other English speaking countries, (4) issues that could present challenges for Japanese teachers in New Zealand secondary schools, (5) the theory of motivation with respect to language learning, as motivation is a recurrent theme in my data, and (6) different strengths between NSTs and NNSTs as a key to managing teachers' challenges.

In Section 2.2, I will look at the history of foreign language education of New Zealand, in comparison to that of Australia, and show how these two countries have gone separate ways in spite of the fact that they share many common features, such as history, geographical location and economic organisation. In Section 2.3, I will present an overview of the current situation of Japanese in New Zealand secondary schools, in terms of student numbers and retention rates. I will discuss, in Section 2.4, New Zealand's legacy of colonisation and the ramifications of English as the dominant language, and the arguments for a national language policy to raise the status of language education in New Zealand. In Section 2.5, I will review the literature relating to five issues identified during the data analysis that could present challenges for teachers. As motivation occurred frequently during the data analysis process and permeated the literature that was reviewed, I will discuss motivation theory in the context of language learning in Section 2.6. In Section 2.7, I will discuss literature on the respective strengths of NSTs and NNSTs as these were identified during data analysis as being important factors in how teachers could resolve some of their challenges.

## **2.2. History of Foreign Language Education in New Zealand and Australia**

New Zealand and Australia have many common features; (1) geographically they belong to the Asian Pacific region, (2) historically they started as colonies with the UK being their sovereign state, (3) they have languages of the indigenous people but (4) they are English-dominant countries, (5) economically they depended on the UK and experienced economic stagnation following the UK's recession in the 1970s, and now (6) they are multicultural countries and have many other community languages. New Zealand has been influenced by Australia in various ways, but when it comes to foreign language education, it has not followed suit. In this section, I will first discuss the history of foreign language education in Australia then compare it with that of New Zealand.

### **2.2.1. Australia**

In the 1970s during Australia's economic slump, Asian countries were showing a high level of economic growth and Australia started to search for a way to survive as a member of the Asian Pacific region (Ingram, 2003). Now the Australian Government places importance on the acquisition of Asian languages and cultures for the future generations of Australians in order to promote trade with Asian countries and to enhance Australia's national interests (Australian Government, 2012). Section 2.2.1 overviews the history of Australia's foreign language education and the extent to which its development was actively led by the Australian Government through various language policies.

**From 1983 up to 1991.** During the Hawke Government (1983-1991), the Senate Report *A National Language Policy* (Australian Parliament Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts [APSSCEA], 1984) was published with four fundamental principles: (1) to develop English proficiency, (2) to maintain and manage languages other than English (LOTEs), (3) to provide services in LOTEs, and (4) to offer opportunities for learning second languages (Clyne, 1988). This was followed by *National Policy on Languages* (Lo Bianco, 1987). With a similar vision to the APSSCEA (1984) report, the report encouraged school education to offer nine languages in order to enjoy cultural and intellectual benefits from learning second languages; Japanese was recommended along with Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian/Malay, Italian, and Spanish (Lo Bianco, 1987). *Australia's Language: The Australia's Language and Literacy Policy* (Australian Department of

Employment, Education and Training [ADEET], 1991) was then announced, and this included clear target number of students studying LOTEs by the year 2000.

**From 1991 up to 1996.** The Keating Government (1991-1996) took a more economic-driven approach that focused a small number of Asian languages to remedy past failures that too many priority languages resulted in too many low-quality programmes and attrition (Lo Bianco, 2009). In 1994, a report commissioned by the Council of Australian Government called *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future* (Council of Australian Government Working Group, 1994) recommended four priority languages: Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian/Malay and Korean (Ingram, 2000). In response to this recommendation, the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Taskforce was established; the NALSAS Taskforce's aims included the introduction of priority language education into primary schools throughout Australia from 1996 and more vigorous target numbers and retention rates of students of LOTEs to achieve by 2006 (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2002).

**From 1996 to present.** The Howard Liberal Government (1996-2007) was not as keen on a language policy with LOTE education as the previous Government had been (Lo Bianco, 2005). It decided that the NALSAS Program would not achieve the implementation goals during the first term of its operation due to slow progress, and withdrew funding for the program in 2002 (Henderson, 2007). However, when the Labor Government took power again in 2007, the Rudd Labor Party, which had been advocating the importance of understanding Asian cultures through their languages (Australian Labor Party, 2007; Rudd, 2007), re-established the program in 2009 under the new name of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) (State of New South Wales through the Department of Education and Communities [SNSWDEC], 2011). Japanese and the other three languages remained as the priority languages (Australian Government, 2010).

The NALSSP ceased to exist at the end of 2011 (SNSWDEC, 2011), but then a white paper called *Australia in the Asian Century* (Australian Government, 2012) was announced the following year. The white paper states the aims to be achieved by 2025, which include: (1) compulsory study of at least one of the priority Asian languages throughout schooling for all students, and (2) studies related to Asia as core subjects in Australian schools. Korean has been replaced with Hindi in this white paper but Australia still focuses on four priority languages (Australian Government, 2012).

Under the great recognition by, and strong leadership of, the Government for economic growth and competition, Australia has promoted foreign language education since the 1980s, and this has led to identifying priority languages and setting the target values. The establishment of the priority languages enables financial support to be concentrated on the maintenance of the relevant educational environment, teachers and teaching materials (LILAMA Network, n.d.). A large number of students indeed take up foreign language study at a young age nowadays, but the retention rates are low at senior levels where such study is optional (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010), and in 2012 only 12.8 percent of Year 12 students graduated with a language and merely 5.8 percent of those with an Asian language (Radievska, n.d.).<sup>1</sup> Asialink (2012) explains this situation as follows: “*Strategies have been mostly focused on the ‘supply’ side* (e.g. ensuring teaching materials were available, funding additional language teachers) without the same intensity of funding and focus to better understand what drives student, parental and teacher demand and developing parallel mechanisms to stimulate their interest and commitment” (p. 25). Therefore, it would seem that encouraging good retention rates throughout the schooling period is more than just a matter of funding and priority languages, and that there is a need to raise the value of foreign language education through other measures, such as a rewards scheme used by many Australian universities mentioned in 2.2.3.

### **2.2.2. New Zealand**

Australia has had a national language policy since 1987 and there have been strong government directives reflecting economic strategies, whereas New Zealand has had no such language policy to this day (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). However, “the New Zealand Curriculum is the official policy for teaching, learning and assessment in New Zealand schools” (MOE, 1993, p. 3), and the Government has since delivered its direction through a series of reviews and changes in school curriculum (McGee et al., 2013) as its “language planning” (Starks & Barkhuizen, 2003, as cited in Spence, 2004, p. 393). In Section 2.2.2, therefore, I will overview the history of New Zealand’s foreign language education in the secondary school sector through the curriculum changes, with particular reference to Japanese language education.

**Up to the 1990s.** In regard to second language education in secondary schools, the only options up until the 1960s were Latin and French (Haugh, 1997). With a

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<sup>1</sup> Year 12 in Australia is equivalent to Year 13 in New Zealand.

similar economic background and a similar geographic location to Australia, New Zealand also explored the possibility of the introduction of Asian language education. Unlike Australia, however, Japanese was more prominent than other Asian languages at that time because of “an increasing economic profile, Japan’s status as a major Asian culture, and an historical relationship which has been longer and more substantial than New Zealand’s connections with other Asian countries” (Harvey, 1988, pp. 105-106). Japanese was then implemented in Years 7 and 8 tentatively from 1967 to 1970, and in 1973 it was officially included in the then accreditation, School Certificate and Bursary (Haugh, 1997).

In the 1970s, New Zealand’s economic stagnation was not as serious as that of Australia at first, but economic stability had become difficult to maintain by the beginning of the 1980s (Crocombe, Enright, Porter & Caughey, 1991). The fourth Labour Government (1984-1990) is often remembered for its economic reforms known as Rogernomics, but its policies also included major educational reformation. The reorganisation of main educational areas was announced in the Government’s official document, *Tomorrow’s School* (MOE, 1988), and among the key issues included in the document was the transfer of the responsibility for school management from the Government to individual schools in order to meet the needs of local communities (Philips, 1993, 2000). Since the reformation in 1989 based on *Tomorrow’s School* (MOE, 1988), New Zealand schools have been self-managed and it has been each school’s responsibility, as part of school management, to decide on the implementation of foreign language education (Benton, 1996).

The developments in New Zealand contrast with those in Australia around that time, where following *National Policy on Languages* (Lo Bianco, 1987) was to lead to the announcement of *Australia’s Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (ADEET, 1991). Australia had very clear policy statements for language education provision and very clear targets for numbers of students studying LOTEs by the year 2000, and Japanese was to become one of Australia’s priority languages since 1994.

**1990s.** When the fourth National Government (1990-1999) took power from the Labour Government in 1990, the focus of educational reformation shifted from organisation and administration of education at the Government and school levels to the development of new curriculum, assessments, and ways of accreditation (Philips, 2000).

In 1993 the Government announced the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993), which had seven

main study areas and eight main skills. “Language and languages” was one of the main study areas and the eight main skills included communication. The establishment of the study area “language and languages”, which meant “English and languages other than English”, was intended to provide opportunities to study foreign languages for all students of Year 7 or higher. The *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993) recognised the benefits not just for language abilities but also for enriching students intellectually, socially and culturally, enabling them to understand the thinking and behaviour of others, and providing the potential to further international relations and trade. It further stated, “students will be able to choose from a range of Pacific, Asian and European languages, all of which are important to New Zealand’s regional and international interests” (MOE, 1993, p. 10). This was to provide the basis for all further developments in language education (East, Shackleford & Spence, 2007).

The developments of foreign language education in New Zealand have important contrasts with those in Australia over a similar period of time. In 1994 the Australian Government declared four Asian languages, including Japanese, as priority languages as mentioned above, which could enable the concentration of financial support on the maintenance of educational environment, teachers and teaching materials for a limited number of languages. On the other hand, the New Zealand Government promoted “a range of Pacific, Asian and European languages” (MOE, 1993, p. 10) and was not concentrating its support on Asian languages such as Japanese. In fact, one could question whether a more strategic planning approach, not necessarily exactly along the lines adopted in Australia but one that targeted resources more effectively, could have improved language provision. In 1994, the Government had to announce that it would be impossible to make foreign language education compulsory at a national level because of a shortage of teachers (MOE, 1994, as cited in Spence, 2004), despite the recognition of the importance of such education for economic development and competition (MOE, 1993; Waite, 1992).

**2000s to present.** Developments in educational provision had been ongoing since the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993). Eventually, in an attempt to take a more strategic approach to language education provision, the Ministry of Education published *Learning Languages: A Guide for New Zealand Schools* (MOE, 2002b) with the aim to provide schools with guidance on developing language programmes. The issue of the status of languages was also very much part of the Curriculum Stocktake between 2000-2002 (MOE, 2002a) and the 2004-2007 NZC Project (MOE, n.d.), leading up to the

2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b).

The review and change in pedagogy following the 2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b) built on the rationale for learning languages promoted in the 1993 NZC (MOE, 1993) which had included the benefits to New Zealand's growth (MOE, 1993). The 2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b) treated linguistic proficiency and social and cultural proficiency equally, as reflected in the concept of intercultural communicative competence.<sup>2</sup> Major developments in pedagogy saw the introduction of *intercultural communicative language teaching* (iCLT) and *task-based language teaching* (TBLT). iCLT, which Liz Tedesco from Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations describes as "the biggest change in language teachers' practice since the 1980s" (Australian Department of Education, Science and Training, 2006, p. 15), focuses on the ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010). TBLT, which can be used for teaching both linguistic and cultural aspects, engages students in authentic communication by offering a real purpose for using the target language in a motivational way (East, 2012; Ellis, 2005). TBLT, unlike *communicative language teaching* (CLT), does not disregard the development of grammatical competence for effective communication (East, 2012; East & Scott, 2011; Ellis, 2005). In order to conform to the pedagogical changes, new standards and assessments were developed in a way that teacher discretion was further expanded for more real-world, open-ended and meaning-focused teaching (Scott & East, 2012). The new National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) standards of Japanese (NZQA, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) were to be phased in from 2011 to 2013 (East, 2012; NZQA, 2009).

With the intention of increasing provision of foreign language education, the Ministry of Education announced that they would offer the opportunity to take up foreign language study to students from Year 7 to Year 10 in all schools as an "entitlement" subject (see Table 2.2); they also announced that they would treat foreign language education as a stand-alone study area by taking foreign languages out of "language and languages" (MOE, 2007b). For the first time in the history of foreign language education of New Zealand, foreign languages were recognised as an independent subject area called "learning languages" (MOE, 2007b).

New Zealand now has "learning languages" and schools must offer at least one

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<sup>2</sup> Intercultural communicative competence has affective, behavioural and metacognitive dimensions and requires an individual to understand the relationship between culture and language and to learn how to communicate effectively rather than being able to speak like a native speaker (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010).

foreign language to Years 7-10 students as an entitlement. Unlike Australia, however, New Zealand still has no priority language to promote. East et al. (2007) explain this situation, using the notion of win-loss relationships of language status, rights and resources asserted by Herriman and Burnaby (1996). Herriman and Burnaby (1996) maintain that “rights given to some groups can be regarded as diminishing the rights of others; resources provided for one activity may give rise to demands for resources for other activities” (as cited in East et al., 2007, pp. 14-15). However, it could be argued that providing such an element of choice means less effective use of resources to meet two of the goals in the Government’s international agenda, which is to ensure “New Zealand students are equipped to thrive in an interconnected world” and “New Zealand receives wider economic and social benefits” (MOE, 2007a, p. 6).

Despite no plans yet for compulsory language education in the near future, the New Zealand Government, nevertheless, has been trying to improve foreign language education provision with the revised pedagogy under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b). However, as will be discussed in Section 2.3, these measures have so far not been successful in preventing the downward overall trends in students studying a foreign language, or the dramatic decline in numbers of students studying Japanese over the past decade.

### 2.2.3. Current Situation of Foreign Language Study in New Zealand and Australia

Before moving to the discussion on student numbers and retention rates, I will briefly summarise the current situation of foreign language study in New Zealand’s and Australian education systems in this section.

Table 2.1. Current Situation of Foreign Language Study in Australia  
(Japan Foundation, 2014b)

The Australian Capital Territory	No state rule about foreign language study; managed by each school and usually offered from Years 8 to 9.
New South Wales	Compulsory - 100 hours of study from Years 7 to 10.
Northern Territory	Compulsory but no rule about the school years or the number of hours; managed by each school.
Queensland	Compulsory - 90 minutes per week from Years 6 to 8.
South Australia	Compulsory until Year 10.
Tasmania	Not compulsory but recommended; entitlement from Years 7 to 10.
Victoria	Not compulsory but highly recommended from Years 5 to 10.
Western Australia	Compulsory from Years 3 to 10.

The Australian Government advocates not just foreign language study but particularly the study of Asian languages and culture, including Japanese, as well, and the element of compulsory LOTE study has been introduced in the Northern Territory and four out of the seven states (see Table 2.1). Furthermore, by 2025 Asian language study will become mandatory during the compulsory education period throughout the nation (Australian Government, 2012).

In New Zealand, on the other hand, the treatment of foreign language study in its education system has lagged behind not just Australia but other English-speaking countries, such as England, as well (Philips, 2000). For instance, as Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show, both in Australia and in England, whose education system has influenced that of New Zealand (East, 2008), foreign language study has reached a more advanced stage. Among the three countries, England shows the most advanced status by making foreign language study compulsory from the age of seven till thirteen from 2014 onwards (see

Table 2.2. States of Foreign Language Study in Educational System  
(Australian Government, 2012; United Kingdom Department of Education, 2013; East, 2008; Japan Foundation, 2014b)

Pupil Age	England			Australia			New Zealand		
	National Curriculum Key Stage (KS)	Present	From 2014	School Year	Present	By 2025	School Year	Present	
17	KS5	Optional	Optional	12	Different from state to state (see Table 2.3)	Entitlement	13	Optional	
16				11			12		
15	KS4	Entitlement	Entitlement	10		Compulsory	11		
14				9			10		
13	KS3	Compulsory	Compulsory	8		Compulsory	9		Entitlement
12				7			8		
11				6			7		
10	KS2	Desirable	Compulsory	5		Compulsory	6		Some availability
9				4			5		
8				3			4		
7	KS1	Desirable	Desirable	2	Prep	3			
6				1		2			
5				Prep		1			

- NB: 1. 'Optional' means not necessarily all schools offer the opportunity to take up a foreign language programme; when they do, students can decide whether or not to take it.  
 2. 'Entitlement' means all schools must offer the opportunity to take up a foreign language programme; students can decide whether or not to take it.  
 3. 'Compulsory' means all students must take up a foreign language programme.  
 4. 'Some availability' means that there are some schools that offer foreign language programmes.  
 5. 'Prep' is short for 'Preparatory'.

Table 2.2). Nonetheless and perhaps significantly in view of developments in New Zealand, the UK was one of only two European Union (EU) members that had not made foreign language study compulsory during primary school terms when *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe 2012* (European Commission, 2012) was published.<sup>3</sup>

In Australia, making Asian language study compulsory, along with the rewards scheme offered for successful completion of a foreign language in Year 11 or 12 (Sussex, 2008) by many universities, can be seen as raising the status of language learning in the school curriculum and as providing motivation to continue language study to tertiary level. In New Zealand, however, no language study is required for entrance to any university faculty (see Appendix), except for English and Te Reo Māori, the latter of which became the first official language of New Zealand under the Māori Language Act 1987 (New Zealand Legislation, 1987). Arkinstall, Bouterey, Chung, Leggott and Ryan (2012) are critical of this situation, saying, “languages other than Te Reo are somehow of secondary importance or of lower status [than Te Reo]” (p. 3), and McGee et al. (2013) point out that the non-compulsory nature of languages as a subject in New Zealand curriculum has caused the fragmentation of language teaching and a lack of planning progression between different levels of education system.<sup>4</sup> This could reduce motivation not only to continue studying Japanese, or any other foreign language, at tertiary level but also to carry on to higher levels in secondary schools.

### **2.3. Current Situation of Japanese in Secondary Schools**

Up until the mid 1990s, the total number of students studying foreign languages in secondary schools continued to increase, following the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993). However, it then started to gradually decrease and by 1998 the number had dropped by 14.5 percent from its peak in 1994 (see Table 2.3). Of all the foreign languages, Japanese was hit the hardest with a 39.4 percent decrease between 1996 and 2002. This may be due to the bubble burst and declining economic status of Japan, as mentioned by McGee et al. (2013). There was an overall increase in numbers, including for Japanese, following the introduction of the NCEA (NZQA, n.d.) between 2002 and 2004, but the downward trend for Japanese has continued since 2004.<sup>5</sup> In Section 2.3, I will look into

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<sup>3</sup> The other EU member was Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> According to the teachers in my research, students who take Māori language study are exempted from any foreign language study even when their schools have a compulsory foreign language study period.

<sup>5</sup> However, the increase was likely due to the fact that the method of counting student numbers changed that year. Prior to 2003, subject data were collected as “a ‘snap-shot’ view of the numbers of students studying a language at the time of data collection (July of each year)” (East et al., 2007, p. 20). Many

the current situation of Japanese in secondary school, in comparison with other languages, in terms of student numbers and retention rates.

Table 2.3. Students Taking Main Languages in Secondary Schools  
(Education Counts, 2014a, 2014b)

Year	Chinese	French	German	Japanese	Spanish	Sāmoan	Pacific languages total	Foreign languages total	Māori
1989	61	31,275	8,500	10,039	218	—	—	53,940	18,909
1990	2	28,964	9,008	12,442	268	—	—	54,239	19,470
1991	64	27,720	9,009	15,921	258	—	—	56,323	19,818
1992	180	26,409	9,395	19,738	856	—	—	59,753	22,303
1993	395	26,057	9,196	21,991	980	(1,015)	1,264	62,832	22,657
1994	1,186	26,117	8,951	26,301	1,264	(411)	614	67,047	23,874
1995	664	24,511	9,365	26,486	1,343	(490)	894	65,649	25,134
1996	1,048	22,815	9,102	27,039	2,370	(573)	790	65,726	25,278
1997	948	21,166	8,550	25,399	2,158	(475)	619	61,335	22,325
1998	988	21,676	7,912	22,376	2,580	(432)	498	58,571	21,462
1999	1,021	23,705	7,762	22,155	3,318	(649)	728	61,197	20,189
2000	1,262	24,727	8,240	21,529	3,858	(895)	1,021	62,713	20,720
2001	1,767	23,816	7,496	19,981	4,407	(926)	1,261	61,123	20,555
2002	1,398	24,056	7,073	19,400	4,823	(994)	1,342	60,608	21,015
2003	1,618	24,253	7,603	21,449	5,820	(1,473)	1,473	64,605	23,852
2004	1,276	25,689	6,809	20,928	6,505	(1,715)	1,897	65,666	24,817
2005	1,481	26,128	6,896	19,689	7,543	(1,853)	2,183	66,377	24,158
2006	1,728	27,614	6,686	18,489	8,100	(2,168)	2,493	68,098	23,903
2007	1,687	27,284	6,623	18,440	9,531	(2,142)	2,513	69,452	24,864
2008	1,891	28,245	6,251	18,157	10,900	(2,311)	2,728	71,730	27,620
2009	2,077	27,197	6,085	17,304	11,167	(2,161)	2,969	69,331	26,525
2010	2,119	23,858	5,554	14,506	10,970	(2,047)	2,886	62,141	24,140
2011	2,632	23,234	5,200	14,398	11,309	(2,181)	3,091	62,065	24,848
2012	2,849	22,379	4,663	12,473	11,372	(2,257)	3,259	58,982	24,087
2013	3,277	21,570	4,477	12,044	11,680	(2,391)	3,270	58,351	24,466

NB: 1. Pacific consists of Cook Island Māori, Niuean, Sāmoan, Tonga and Tokelauan.

2. Māori is composed of Te Reo Māori and Te Reo Rangitira.

students in Year 9 do not take a year-long course (East, 2008; East et al., 2007; Peddie, 2003), which means that students not taking the course in July were not counted in the statistics until 2002. “Since 2003, data are collected on subjects taken for more than 20 hours per year, over the whole year” (McLauchlan, 2007, p. 24).

Developments in foreign language provision following the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b) have not been entirely successful in putting a brake on the decrease in the number of students studying foreign languages, especially in Japanese. Around the time the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b) was announced, the total number of foreign language students turned upwards and showed an increase, mainly thanks to Chinese and Spanish. Between 2007 and 2008, for instance, the numbers increased by 12.3 percent for Chinese and by 14.5 percent for Spanish, and their numbers are still on the rise. However, in the past five years since 2008, the total number of foreign language students has decreased by 18.7 percent, from 71,730 to 58,351. French, which has long been the most popular foreign language in New Zealand, continued to increase the number of its learners after the introduction of the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993) until 2008, but its popularity has been declining since 2009. As for Japanese and German, there was no benefit following the implementation of the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b), and their student numbers have continued to decrease. The most dramatic decline in the actual number has been for Japanese, down by 55.5 percent compared to its peak in 1996. Even more disappointing is that the establishment of “Asia 2000” (now known as the “Asian New Zealand Foundation”), to promote Asian languages and studies (East et al., 2007), seems to have made little impact because the number of Japanese learners has

Table 2.4. Number of Students Taking up Foreign Language Study at Each School Year Level in 2013 (Education Counts, 2014b)

	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
No. of Students	59,336	57,929	60,805	55,277	48,905
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Japanese	5,928	2,758	1,592	1,039	727
Chinese	1,492	647	424	335	379
French	11,190	5,432	2,511	1,350	1,087
German	2,008	1,118	627	414	310
Spanish	5,713	2,986	1,485	846	650
Pacific	1,126	835	572	389	348
(Samoan)	(739)	(588)	(476)	(301)	(287)
Others	1,092	442	190	131	178
Total	28,549	14,218	7,401	4,504	3,679
	48.1%	24.5%	12.2%	8.2%	7.5%
Māori	10,759	5,314	4,340	2,314	1,739
	18.1%	9.8%	7.1%	4.2%	3.6%

never stopped decreasing since its establishment.<sup>6</sup>

Table 2.4 shows the numbers of students taking up foreign language study at each secondary school year level in 2013. About half of the Year 9 students (48.1 percent) studied a foreign language, though not necessarily throughout the year. The number of students in each foreign language almost halved in Year 10, and further halved in Year 11 across the board. The numbers continued to decrease as the year advanced. Based on the statistics, the retention rates from Year 9 to Year 13 were approximately 10 to 15 percent, with the exception of Chinese and Pacific languages which had higher retention rates. The statistics confirm what the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) claims:

The non-mandatory nature of entitlement means that significant numbers of students are still able to complete their compulsory education without encountering language study, and for many who do, the time spent on language study is limited. This contrasts heavily with the current environment of language learning in the United Kingdom and Australia (p. 6).

The status of foreign language study as an entitlement from Year 7 to Year 10 under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b) indeed does not seem to have much of an effect on students' decision to study a foreign language.

As for Japanese, the trends have not changed much since mid 2000 (see Table 2.5). The number of students taking up Japanese in Year 9 has been on the decrease, and fewer than half of them have continued to Year 10. The retention rates have been 50 to 60 percent from Year 10 to Year 11 and from Year 11 to Year 12, and 60 to 70 percent from Year 12 to Year 13. However, in 2013 there were signs of recovery; although the total number of students dropped by 3.6 percent from 2012 (see Table 2.1), at each year level the retention rate improved. This may be as a result of measures to increase access to language study as well as changes in pedagogy under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b), but it is still too early to make any judgment.

The fact that the total number of foreign language students has been decreasing is worrying, but the fact that Japanese has been hit the hardest is alarming. In the next two sections, I will look into the reason why foreign language education is not valued in New Zealand (Section 2.4), and issues with Japanese study and the consequences of the declining number of Japanese language students (Section 2.5).

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<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, the New Zealand foreign language study promotion does not focus only on Asian languages. For example, there was "Focus on Latin America", a 12-month programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in 1996 and "Latin American Strategy" was established in 2000 to promote languages in Latin America (East et al., 2007).

Table 2.5. Number of Students Taking Japanese and Retention Rate  
(Education Counts, 2014b)

Year	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Retention 9 to 13
2006	9,697 (100%)					
	↘					
2007	9,756 (100%)	4,095 (42.3%)				
	↘	↘				
2008	9,371 (100%)	4,041 (42.2%)	2,374 (58.0%)			
	↘	↘	↘			
2009	8,935 (100%)	3,869 (41.2%)	2,361 (58.4%)	1,321 (55.6%)		
	↘	↘	↘	↘		
2010	6,883 (100%)	3,410 (38.2%)	2,046 (52.9%)	1,281 (54.3%)	886 (67.1%)	9.1%
	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	
2011	7,033 (100%)	3,415 (49.6%)	1,864 (54.7%)	1,211 (59.2%)	875 (68.3%)	9.0%
	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	
2012	5,895 (100%)	3,100 (44.1%)	1,717 (50.3%)	1,033 (55.4%)	728 (60.1%)	7.8%
	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	
2013	5,928 (100%)	2,758 (46.8%)	1,592 (51.4%)	1,039 (60.5%)	727 (70.3%)	8.1%

#### 2.4. The “English-Is-Enough” Mind-set

McGee et al. (2013) say there is no one clear cause for the decline in numbers of students studying Japanese in schools and that it is the result of a complex interplay of factors. Studies indeed have pointed to various factors. Section 2.4, however, will look at one factor that was identified as the most influential through the data analysis of my research. It is the “English-is-enough” mind-set, which is the legacy of New Zealand’s colonial history and the consequences of English being the dominant language.

English has acquired its international and practical status as the main lingua franca in the world, so it is not surprising that people in most English-speaking countries, such as New Zealand, might not see the need to learn other languages. According to Crystal (2003), the current status of the English language is the consequence of two factors; one is the advance of British influence through colonisation that reached its peak at the end

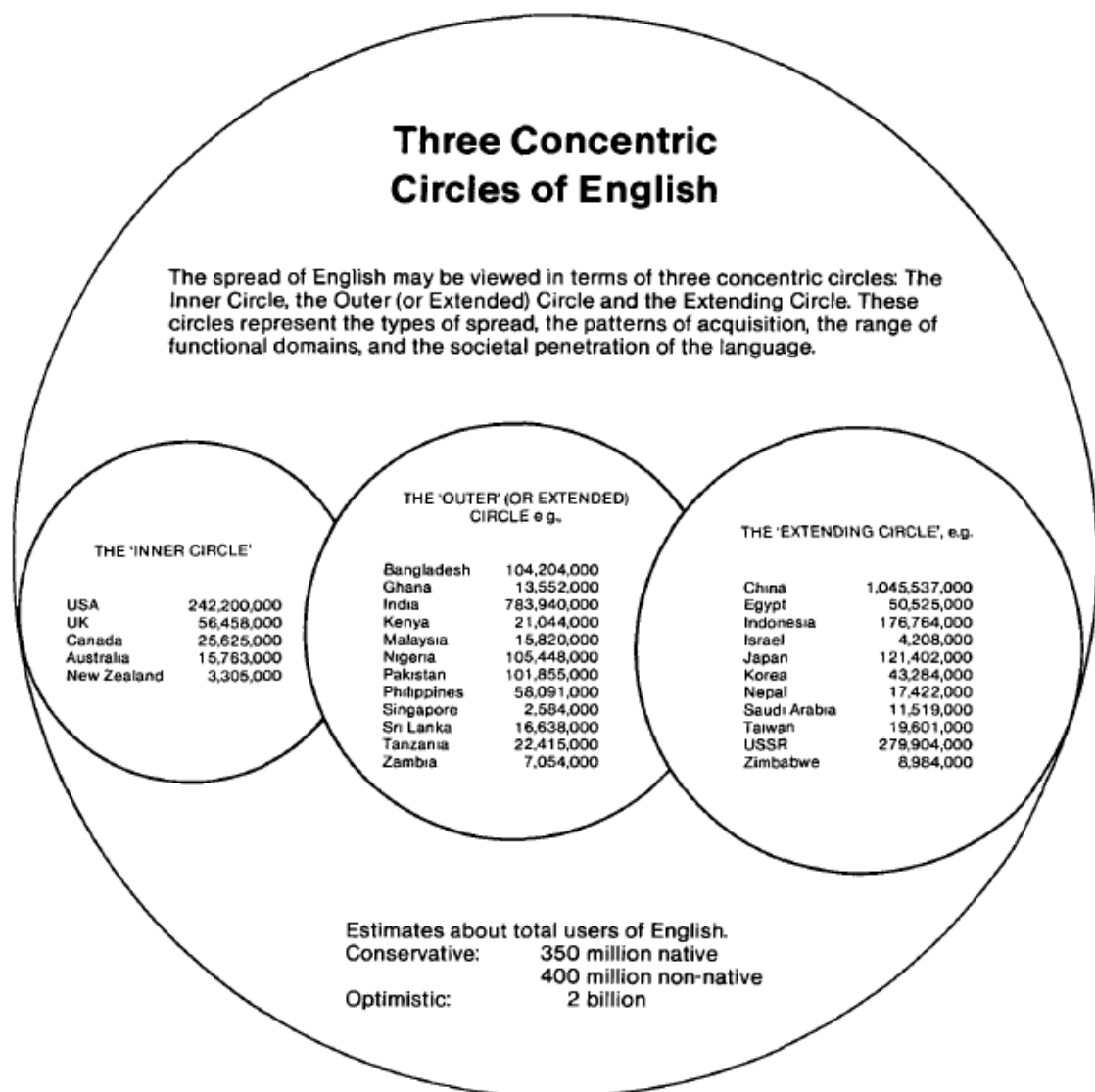


Figure 2.1. Three Concentric Circles of English (Kachru, 1988, p. 5)

of the nineteenth century, and the other is the emergence of the United States of America (USA) as an economic leader in the twentieth century. Kachru (1988) sees the expansion of English as three concentric circles based on spread, acquisition, functional domains and the number of English speakers (see Figure 2.1).<sup>7</sup> New Zealand, as a traditional English-speaking country, is included in *the Inner Circle*. Countries in *the Outer or Extended Circle* are at the embryonic stage of the expansion of English where English plays an important role as a second language in a multi-language environment. Countries in *the Extending Circle* have no experience of being colonised by the members of the Inner Circle countries and do not give any administrative state to English, but recognise the importance of English as an international language. At

<sup>7</sup> This does not necessarily mean that all countries fit naturally into the model, but Kachru's idea has been widely accepted as a useful approach.

present, English is spoken by at least 1.75 billion and it is estimated that English will be a language used by two billion people by 2020 (British Council, 2013). English alone enables us to communicate with so many people, including New Zealand’s major trading partners, such as China, Japan and Korea in the Extending Circle. Without an understanding of the advantages associated with language learning, such as cultural competence, it is no surprise that learning an additional language might not be seen as necessary or of value.

In New Zealand, English overwhelmingly dominates the areas involving government, media, education, work, and entertainment sectors, among others things (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996; Starks, Harlow & Bell, 2005). Although the bilingual or multi-lingual population has been increasing, English is still the first and only language for a large majority of New Zealanders, as shown in Tables 2.6 and 2.7.

Table 2.6. Language Spoken in New Zealand in 2006 Census  
(Statistics New Zealand, n.d.a)

Language	No. of People	Percentage
English	3,673,623	91.20%
Māori	157,110	3.90%
New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL)	729	0.02%
Others	1,018,563	25.29%
Total Responses	4,850,025	—
Total Population in New Zealand	4,027,947	100.00%

NB: Multiple answers were allowed so that the number of total responses exceeded the total population of New Zealand.

Table 2.7. Speaking No, One, or Two or More Languages  
(Statistics New Zealand, n.d.b)<sup>8</sup>

No. of languages spoken	1996 Census	2001 Census	2006 Census	
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	No. of People
None	2.6%	2.1%	2.0%	80,559
One language	83.8%	82.1%	80.5%	3,242,947
Two or more languages	13.6%	15.8%	17.5%	704,891

NB: The numbers are based on the total number of people and the percentage.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics New Zealand does not state who was among those with no language. I assume that the number of ‘none’ includes preverbal children.

The “English-is-enough” mind-set, however, is not unique to New Zealand; it applies to other English-speaking countries, such as England and Australia, as well. In England, where foreign language study becomes compulsory from the age of seven till thirteen from 2014 onwards (see Section 2.2.3), there once was the National Language Strategy to help young people enjoy a positive experience of foreign language learning but the strategy failed to challenge the “English-is-enough” mind-set (Coleman, 2009). Foreign language study at KS4 was made compulsory in 1996 but then was reverted to optional in 2004; since then there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of foreign language students (Coleman, Galacz & Astruc, 2007). In Australia, where there is a compulsory period of foreign language study in the Northern Territory and four out of the seven states (see Section 2.2.3), the majority of the population are still monolingual English speakers (Lo Bianco, Slaughter and Australian Council for Education Research, 2009), and only 12.8 percent of Year 12 students graduated with a language in 2012 (Radievska, n.d.). Furthermore, despite the plans to make priority language study compulsory by 2025 (see Section 2.2.1), the percentage of students graduating with an Asian language was as low as 5.8 percent in 2012 (Radievska, n.d.).

East (2008) states:

Entrenched monolingual and Anglocentric attitudes arguably work against the successful introduction of meaningful courses in foreign languages in schools. At a fundamental level an attitudinal change is required if foreign language learning is to have a chance at real and lasting success (p. 129).

However, as Kaplan (1994) puts it, it takes many generations to change public attitude towards issues related to other languages and other people. Indeed, it would seem that public attitude of New Zealanders may not be easily altered, and it would require at least the New Zealand Government taking a similar approach to a national language policy that Australia has adopted, as echoed by East, Chung and Arkinstall (2012), East et al. (2007), Peddie (1997, 2003, 2005), Royal Society of New Zealand (2013), Spence (2005) and Waite (1992), all of whom emphasise the importance of having an overarching national language policy that reflects multilingual and multicultural society.

The New Zealand Government, in fact, attempted to develop a national language policy in the past, for example in 1992, but the attempts failed because of the non-value of foreign language skills among the general public (Kaplan, 1994). The “English-is-enough” mind-set prevailed in spite of the fact that the then Deputy Prime Minister Don

McKinnon (1992, as cited in East, 2008) argued “English is not enough”. Kaplan (1994), who was invited from the USA by the Ministry of Education in order to develop a New Zealand national language policy in 1992, criticised the attitudes in New Zealand, saying “while on the one hand the evidence seems clear that New Zealand is in fact a multilingual/multicultural community, the evidence also seems quite clear that language receives insufficient attention in any sector of the society” (p. 172). This criticism would seem to include the Government. Taking Japanese as an example, nearly two decades later, McGee et al. (2013) state that, while the importance of Japanese and other Asian languages is often signaled in ministerial documents, “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” (p. 14). New Zealand, therefore, does not have a national language policy to this day, and the “English-is-enough” mind-set still prevails.

### **2.5. Five Issues and Possible Challenges to Japanese Language Teachers**

New Zealand does not have a national language policy and foreign language education has not been made compulsory. This, together with the “English-is-enough” mind-set among the general public, does not help encourage students to study foreign languages. Over the past 30 years, studies on language education in New Zealand have discussed various issues resulting from low take-up and retention rates of students that could present challenges for Japanese teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. Five of these issues are identified in my research as causing serious challenges for teachers of Japanese. These are (1) a lack of New Zealand based textbooks, (2) organisation of multi-level classes, (3) inadequate classroom time for language study, (4) misalignment of foreign language education between intermediate schools and secondary schools, and (5) demotivation to study Japanese due to difficulty in learning, loss of interest, lack of career opportunities, and so forth. In section 2.5, I will discuss these issues and how they affect Japanese teachers.

**A lack of New Zealand based textbooks.** A lack of New Zealand based textbooks for Japanese language education was pointed out as early as 1980s and 1990s (Harvey, 1988; Haugh, 1997; Nuibe, 1992). There have been a small number of locally published textbooks since the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993): the *Getting There in Japanese* series (Corder, Roughan, Short & Wells, 1993-1997), which provided resources to support Japanese teaching in Years 12 and 13, and the *Year 11 Japanese Textbook*

(Takeda, 2003) and *Kitto Dekiru* (Short, 2004) written for Levels 1 to 6.<sup>9</sup> However, some of the content of these textbooks has become outdated or no longer aligns as appropriately with developments in language education around NECA standards of Japanese (NZQA, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) and the 2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b). Now the only local textbook that is up-to-date and available to New Zealand students is *Itomo: NZ Adaptation* (Burrows, Izuishi, Lowey & Nishimura-Parke, 2011a) for Years 9 and 10, which is an adapted version to suit the New Zealand educational environment, of *Itomo Student Lounge* (Burrows, Izuishi, Lowey & Nishimura-Parke, 2011b) published for Australian students in the same year. However, the Australian publisher, Pearson PLC, which published Burrows, et al. (2011a), shut down their New Zealand operation in 2013 (Booksellers New Zealand, 2013) and currently there is no publisher to newly publish local-based Japanese textbooks.

Hunt (2013) emphasises the importance of using current and relevant resources because adolescent motivation often reflects a craving for “the new” and “the now”. However, creating resources for teaching Japanese is time-consuming. Many scholars, such as Chiswick and Miller (2005), Lo Bianco (2000), McLauchlan (2007) and Shimizu and Green (2002), point out the complexities of the Japanese writing system, which does not just involve mastering Chinese character called *kanji*; it also has two syllabaries, one for native Japanese words (*hiragana*) and one for foreign words (*katakana*). *Katakana* has particular rules that change the sound of the foreign word so that it is sometimes unrecognisable. In fact, Japanese is one of the languages placed in the highest category of difficulty and is estimated to take three times longer to master than European languages (Corder & Waller, 2005, 2007; Komori & Zimmerman, 2001; Van Aacken, 1999). Sourcing and adapting materials to supplement a lack of New Zealand based textbooks aligned with the curriculum might be particularly problematic even for native Japanese speaker teachers, especially at higher levels.

**Organisation of multi-level classes.** Another issue stemming from the small number of students is the organisation of multi-level classes, especially at the senior level of language study for not only Japanese but also other foreign languages (Holt et al., 2001; Japan Foundation, 2014a; McLauchlan, 2007; Nuibe, 2000; Oshima, 2012; Shearn, 2003). As the number of students studying Japanese has been declining (see

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<sup>9</sup> The levels of NZC refer to assessment programmes of NZC which explain the achievement purpose of students (MOE, 2012).

Table 2.1), this has been, and will most likely be, an issue for some time.<sup>10</sup> Sankar, Ward and Sullivan (2011) state that the management of multi-level classes is one of the hardest types of work for teachers, and Oshima (2012) explains the burden for both teachers and students, as follows:

Teachers have to allocate her/his time in the classroom between two courses, thus having less time for teaching each course than in a regular classroom setting. However, students are still expected to achieve the same performance level they will achieve in a regular classroom setting. For teachers, classroom management and organising activities for each course which can be conducted without distracting each other are also challenging (p. 12).

It is easy to see that Japanese teachers particularly face difficulties with multi-level classes. Being a character-based language with a totally different linguistic system from English, Japanese requires teachers to spend more time and effort to prepare teaching materials than European languages require, on top of planning and then managing activities. For students, the organisation of multi-classes might reinforce their perception of Japanese being a difficult subject.

**Inadequate classroom time.** Kaplan (1994), who was invited from the USA to develop a national language policy for New Zealand more than two decades ago (see Section 2.4), said the New Zealand “educational approaches to language education are uncoordinated and ineffective” (p. 172). Two years later, Benton (1996) pointed out that, with no clear direction for future development, each school had different degrees of achievement and different language options. As of now, New Zealand still does not have a standardised national provision of foreign language education and the language courses vary from school to school in terms of classroom hours, and many schools do not offer students in Year 9 a year-long course (East, 2008; East et al., 2007; Peddie, 2003).

Back in 2001 Holt et al. (2001) warned that foreign language study should be protected from a combat with mainstream compulsory subjects, such as science, mathematics, arts, social science, business, and technology, and with other optional subjects. However, there has been a flood of complaints from teachers that foreign

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<sup>10</sup> According to Sankar, Ward and Sullivan (2011), there are three methods of dealing with small classes; using multi-level classes is one, and the other two are cancelling classes and using alternative methods of accessing the curriculum (e.g. video conferencing, e-learning, correspondence).

language classroom time has been reduced because foreign language education, including Japanese, has a low priority in the educational system, compared to such subjects as science and mathematics that are seen as being important for careers and thus being given a high priority (McLauchlan, 2007). Harvey (1988), Holt et al. (2001) and McLauchlan (2006, 2007) also point out that foreign language classes are inconveniently scheduled (e.g. clashing with high priority subjects), although “this claim is contentious and difficult to prove” (McLauchlan, 2007, p. 32).

Downes (2001, as cited in Shearn, 2003) provides the reason for languages being given a low priority.

Because of the tendency to judge schools by their examination performances, many principals see FLL [foreign language learning] as a problem area because it is more difficult to get good marks. Consequently, overtly or covertly, languages may be given low priority which inevitably lowers their status in the eyes of students and parents. High dropout rates at 16+ may lead to such small numbers that classes are cancelled, a situation familiar to New Zealand FL [foreign language] teachers, which in turn further lowers the status of languages (p. 43).

For the Japanese language teacher especially, reduction in classroom time could make it very challenging to meet curriculum requirements. The complexity of the writing system means that, in the early stages of learning Japanese, mastering the syllabaries competes with time for speaking, listening, vocabulary and grammar. Any reductions in classroom time might present challenges for the teacher to get students to the required level for assessments.

**Misalignment of foreign language education in the school system.** Another issue arising from lack of clear language education provision is misalignment of foreign language education. Under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b), an opportunity of foreign language study is offered to students from Year 7 to Year 10 in all schools as an entitlement. However, there is no alignment of foreign language programmes between intermediate schools and secondary schools and, as a result, there are always students with different proficiency levels in junior-level classes in secondary schools (Jacques, 2008; McGee et al., 2013; Shearn, 2003).

East (2008) points out that, even if all schools offer foreign language courses from Year 7 to Year 10, students will not be able to achieve language proficiency beyond the very basic level or to enjoy what the *1993 NZC* (MOE, 1993) describes as a “benefit

from learning another language from the earliest practicable age” (p. 10) unless “a consistent and seamless approach across several years of schooling” (East, 2008, p. 127) is adopted. As long as this misalignment of foreign language study programmes between intermediate schools and secondary schools exists, it will continue to reduce the students’ potential of attaining the highest degree of achievement, as Holt et al. (2001) and Spence (2005) allege.

This lack of alignment could mean that Japanese language teachers are faced with the additional challenge of addressing gaps in student knowledge of, or levels of student proficiency in, the demanding writing system. Although this kind of criticism applies to foreign language education generally, it seems all the more significant in the case with Japanese because of the complexities of the writing system.

**Students’ demotivation to study Japanese.** As discussed in Section 2.3, the retention rates are low for all foreign languages. McLaughlin (2007) investigated the reason why students who spontaneously chose to study a foreign language in Year 11 gave it up after a year or two. His participants were ex-students of Japanese, Chinese, French, German, Spanish and Latin in New Zealand secondary schools.

Table 2.8. Main Reasons for Discontinuing Japanese (McLauchlan, 2007)

	Too difficult	Lost interest	Timetable clash	No effort	Didn’t enjoy	Won’t help my career	Other
After Year 11	29.1%	17.1%	23.9%	7.2%	3.1%	4.1%	10.4%
After Year 12	20.5%	32.3%	20.4%	2.9%	2.9%	20.4%	0.0%

NB: 1. The total percentage of the above table is not 100 percent because some students did not answer this question.

2. “No effort” means that the student did not put enough effort into their study.

According to his findings (see Table 2.8), “timetable clash” was one of the major reasons for not continuing Japanese study both after Year 11 (23.9 percent) and after Year 12 (20.4 percent). Apart from that, “too difficult” (29.1 percent) was by far the most common reason for Year 11 students, while many Year 12 students decided to stop studying Japanese the following year because of “lost interest” (32.3 percent), “too difficult” (20.5 percent) or “won’t help my career” (20.4 percent). Of the three reasons, “lost interest” and “won’t help my career” present a big increase from after Year 11 to after Year 12, but “too difficult” was not as big a reason after Year 12 as after Year 11.

Table 2.9. “Too Difficult” by Language (McLauchlan, 2007)

	Japanese	Chinese	French	German	Spanish	Latin
After Year 11	29.1%	50.0%	28.4%	30.0%	31.4%	62.5%
After Year 12	20.5%	0.0%	4.5%	16.6%	30.0%	25.0%

In fact, as seen in Table 2.9, the percentage of “too difficult” decreased, to various extents, for all languages.

Among the modern languages, however, only Japanese increased the percentage of “won’t help my career” drastically, from 4.1 percent after Year 11 to 20.4 percent after Year 12 (see Table 2.10).

Table 2.10. “Won’t Help My Career” by Language (McLauchlan, 2007)

	Japanese	Chinese	French	German	Spanish	Latin
After Year 11	4.1%	0%	5.1%	6.6%	8.7%	0%
After Year 12	20.4%	0%	4.5%	6.2%	10.0%	50.0%

The communicative language teaching methodology and its focus on language proficiency since the 1970s, has resulted in an emphasis on practical and instrumental language skills (Houghton & Yamada, 2012). However, since Japanese has a very different linguistic system from European languages, Japanese language study is sometimes perceived as a time-consuming process by students (Oshima, 2012; Oshima & Harvey, 2013). The degree of achievement in Japanese, after studying it for five years at school, is lower, compared with European languages. Therefore, Japanese skills are often not considered adequate career skills not only by the students but also by their parents, careers advisors and employers. This has been pointed out frequently as a reason for Japanese language students’ demotivation (Harvey, 1988; Haugh, 1997; Holt et al., 2001; Oshima, 2012; Oshima & Harvey, 2013). Furthermore, according to Kaplan and Baldauf (2003, as cited in Oshima, 2012), “New Zealand employers seem to prefer Japanese with English skills to New Zealanders with Japanese skills” (p. 42). Oshima (2012) thus concludes, “considering such a discouraging situation the learners of Japanese are placed in, currently learning Japanese might be less attractive in New Zealand as an investment in terms of gaining satisfactory returns” (p. 42).

“Lost interest”, on the other hand, was a very common reason for discontinuation after Year 12 across the board, ranging from 25 percent to 50 percent (see Table 2.11). As seen above, “too difficult” was commonly given as a reason for discontinuation, but

Table 2.11. “Lost Interest” by Language (McLauchlan, 2007)

	Japanese	Chinese	French	German	Spanish	Latin
After Year 11	17.1%	0%	13.2%	13.3%	28.5%	25.0%
After Year 12	32.3%	33.3%	36.6%	50.0%	30.0%	25.0%

Oshima (2012) argues that moderate difficulty is perceived positively by students who have a relatively high sense of competence and that they will lose interest if they are provided with too easy tasks instead of appropriate level of challengeable tasks. Furthermore, McLauchlan (2007) suspects that the participants may have chosen a reason that they thought they were expected to choose or that would sound academically more acceptable, rather than giving their true reason for discontinuation. Therefore, the high ratio of “lost interest” may be due to various factors.

McLaughlan’s (2007) study shows that, among those who discontinued Japanese after Year 11 and Year 12, up to 53.4 percent after Year 11 and up to 76.3 percent after Year 12 gave a demotivation-related reason for discontinuation (i.e. “too difficult”, “lost interest”, “didn’t enjoy” and “won’t help my career”). Demotivation is a recurring theme not only in McLauchlan (2007) and Oshima (2012) but also in the literature on language education in New Zealand, such as Holt et al. (2001) and McGee et al. (2013). In order to gain more insight into students’ demotivation, I will review literature on motivation in foreign language study in the next section.

## 2.6. Motivation Theory and Its Implication for Language Learning

Research on motivation in foreign language study has a long history. Gardner and Lambert (1959) identified motivation as one of the most influential factors in second language acquisition, along with intelligence, language aptitude, and situational anxiety, and their subsequent work introduced the dichotomy: *integrative motivation* and *instrumental motivation* (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The difference between these types of motivation is the goal; in the case of the former what motivates the learner to study a language is the desire to become a member of the target language community or perhaps simply to make friends with target language speakers, while in the case of the latter it is the desire to obtain some kind of reward, such as gaining university entrance or employment. In both cases, the learner’s purpose is to attain something outside him/herself, hence called *extrinsic motivation* (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1996). In the 1990s, the direction of the research moved towards motivation theory within the framework of psychology (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) and

researchers started to focus more on *intrinsic motivation*, that is, motivation driven by interest or enjoyment in language learning itself (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schmidt et al., 1996).

Vallerand (1997, as cited in Dörnyei, 1998) identifies three subtypes of intrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (1998) explains Vallerand's subtypes as follows: (1) motivation to learn (i.e. "engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of understanding something new, satisfying one's curiosity and exploring the world"), (2) motivation towards achievement (i.e. "engaging in an activity for the satisfaction of surpassing oneself, coping with challenges and accomplishing or creating something"), and (3) motivation to experience stimulation (i.e. "engaging in an activity to experience pleasant sensations") (p. 121). Ushioda (1996) points out the importance of generating and sustaining such intrinsic motivation because it generates its own rewards (i.e. enjoyment, pleasure, satisfaction and self-indulgence) and leads to positive attitudes towards the learning situation and the learning process.<sup>11</sup> Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ryan and Deci (2000), on the other hand, argue in their *self-determination theory* that one is intrinsically motivated only when the following three needs are satisfied: (1) autonomy (i.e. a desire to do something oneself), (2) competence (i.e. a desire to demonstrate ability), and (3) relatedness (i.e. a desire to interact with others). They also argue that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations do not work independently but, rather, interact with each other and that extrinsic motivation, such as remuneration, can either increase or decrease intrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (2009), who has further developed Deci and Ryan's theory, advocates the concept of *ideal self*, the learner's vision of oneself as an effective foreign language speaker, to generate and sustain motivation.

Ushioda (1996) discusses another aspect of motivation in language learning, which is self-motivation. Self-motivation involves taking charge of the affective dimension of one's learning and "fulfilling an active functional role in promoting and sustaining autonomous learning" (p. 39). In order for students to achieve this end, she emphasises the teachers' need to teach them to motivate themselves.

As can be seen, there are various factors that influence motivation (Dörnyei, 1994, 1998; Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Kakita, 1993, as cited in Agawa et al., 2011). Many of them are beyond teachers' control but some are not, and those that the teachers have some agency for are the factors that they can focus on to motivate their students. Littlejohn (2001), for instance, considering how teachers organise classes can affect

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<sup>11</sup> The positive learning attitudes can induce high academic performance (Harter & Connell, 1984, as cited in Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 1999), higher self-efficacy (Ehrman, 1996, as cited in Pae, 2008), persistence (Ramage, 1990), and a strong intention to continue the study (Noels et al., 1999).

students' classroom experience, suggests eight practical ideas for sustaining motivation, which include “choose larger tasks”, “choose open-ended tasks”, “provide choice”, and “involve in classroom decision-making”.

In the field of second language acquisition there have been a large number of studies as to how to generate and improve motivation, both in theory and in practice. However, not much has been done to investigate the factors for demotivation or solutions for demotivation. Kakita (1993, as cited in Agawa et al., 2011) argues that motivation and demotivation are two sides of the same coin and that the same factor, such as study materials or a learning environment, could lead to the increase of motivation or to cause demotivation. Therefore, as Zhang (2007) points out, learning about demotivation can also help find a way to motivate learners.

Research into motivation and language learning clearly shows its importance, particularly for student retention. However, it is also clear that it is a complex phenomenon in that it is dynamic and very individual, and this could add to the challenges for teachers of Japanese.

### **2.7. Different Strengths between NSTs and NNSTs**

Before the commencement of my research, I assumed that NSTs and NNSTs might have different challenges due to their different language and cultural background. Data analysis indicated that the most significant challenges they were facing were common to both NSTs and NNSTs because the challenges were associated with external factors. However, at the individual level there were challenges specific to NSTs and to NNSTs, and my research suggested that NSTs and NNSTs might be able to resolve their challenges by capitalising on their respective strengths. In this section, therefore, I will briefly overview literature on different strengths between NSTs and NNSTs.

The studies on NSTs and NNSTs originate from that of non-native English speaker teachers in the early 1990s (Braine, 2005). At first, the main focus was to determine which group of teachers, NSTs or NNSTs, would be superior in terms of language teaching practices. Since then the aim of studies has been expanded and includes discussion on issues and concerns specific to NSTs or to NNSTs, as advocated by Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999).

Various studies on NSTs and NNSTs have identified respective strength of NSTs and NNSTs and, according to the literature, NSTs are more proficient in teaching vocabulary (McNeill, 1993, as cited in Coşkun, 2013), pronunciation (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005) and speaking (Benke & Medgyes, 2005). NSTs are also perceived to be

more accurate, fluent, flexible, conversational, and authentic in the use of language (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999), and to be able to present the language in context through the use of various materials (Medgyes, 2001). Furthermore, NSTs are able to provide students with more cultural information that may be of interest to students (Carless, 2006; Coşkun, 2013; Tajino & Tajino, 2000).

On the other hand, NNSTs can set a good example for students as imitable models of successful target language learners (Medgyes, 1992) and, since they have learnt the target language as a foreign language, they have a better understanding of teaching grammar (Benke & Medgyes, 2005). By sharing the mother tongue, they can also offer more information about the language in general (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005), and build student confidence and establish good rapport with them (Coşkun, 2013; Seidlhofer, 1999). By sharing the first-hand experience of learning target language, NNSTs can predict the difficulties students are likely to encounter, understand students' needs and impart effective learning strategies (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Medgyes, 1992). Furthermore, NNSTs have knowledge of the local culture that might help them fulfill better in-class management roles by considering the cultural expectations of students, parents, and schools in general (Coşkun, 2013).

There were many similarities with findings from this research on NSTs and NNSTs of Japanese and they were relevant when analysing challenges they faced at the personal level.

## **2.8. Summary**

Apart from an initial review of a selection of literature on language education in New Zealand, in accordance with Glaserian grounded theory methodology, most of the literature in this chapter was reviewed after I coded what might be contributing to current challenges for Japanese language teachers. It was only then that I was able to identify the relevant literature to review. A review of the literature shows that the current state of Japanese language learning in New Zealand is the result of a complex interplay between language education policy and provision, a lack of value for language education, and also possibly economic factors. The sections looked at the various factors.

Section 2.2 was devoted to comparing the history of foreign language education in New Zealand and Australia in terms of how it affected Japanese language education. The main difference between the two countries is that New Zealand still does not have a national language policy despite one being advocated since 1990 while Australia has

had a comprehensive national language policy since 1987. There are also two major differences that could affect Japanese language education provision and numbers of students studying Japanese. One is that the New Zealand Government, when promoting foreign languages, does not focus on Asian languages but instead includes a range of languages, such as European and Pacific languages, whereas in Australia Asian languages have been made priority languages. The other is that in Australia there has been much more Government advocacy and direction, and that all students will be required to continue studying one Asian language during the compulsory education period by 2025. In comparison, New Zealand has only started to offer foreign language courses to Year 7 to Year 10 students as an entitlement in all schools under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b). Unlike its Australian counterpart, the New Zealand Government has not reached the point where it can commit to concentrating financial support on the maintenance of educational environment, teachers and teaching materials for a limited number of priority languages. However, it could be argued that concentration of resources, especially at the secondary level, might increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching, which in turn might encourage students to take up and continue foreign language study. Having said that, as can be seen in the case of Australia, without funding to better understand what drives student and parental demands and a change in the non-value of foreign language study, there is no guarantee that the necessary retention rates to resolve some of the teachers' issues will be achieved.

Section 2.3 was an overview of the current situation of Japanese in New Zealand secondary schools under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b). Despite the introduction of new standards, the statistics show that the number of students taking up Japanese and the retention rates of students of Japanese have been dramatically declining. This has been posing a number of serious problems for teachers, and it has turned out to be related to their current biggest concern, the lack of value placed on foreign language learning among the general public.

Section 2.4 looked at literature that would give insights into why language education is considered less important in New Zealand than it is in countries overseas. New Zealand's colonial past and the legacy of having English as a dominant language in such areas as international business, science, technology and aviation, seems to have been a significant influence and looks likely to continue to be, at least until there is a shift in attitude. This shift could be encouraged by Government initiatives, starting with a national language policy to be implemented.

Section 2.5 discussed issues identified in the literature, some as far back as 30 years ago, as presenting challenges for the teacher to achieve the necessary learner outcomes, and which the data from this research was indicating still existed. Difficulties, such as a lack of textbooks suitable for the New Zealand curriculum, multi-level classes and inadequate teaching time, seem to be compounded by the complexities of the Japanese language. It also appears that there is an interplay between these issues and students' demotivation to continue their language study. Thus, motivation theory was examined and the implications for language study were discussed in Section 2.6. The literature provided insights into possible causes and reasons for difficulties teachers might be having in motivating students to study Japanese.

Section 2.7 overviewed the literature on different strengths between NSTs and NNSTs. Although none of the studies was conducted in New Zealand and none dealt with Japanese language teachers, the respective strengths identified in the literature were similar to those identified in this study as presenting challenges at the individual level.

In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology that I have adopted for my research, the selection of research participants, and data collection methods. I will then present the findings from my research, based on the analysis of data collected from a group of teachers of Japanese in a number of Auckland secondary schools, in detail in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

My research has adopted Glaserian grounded theory and its data analysis has been conducted accordingly. Grounded theory is a research methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967). It was an attempt to fuse a rigorous and systematic method of quantitative research into qualitative field studies and to develop a new theoretical approach (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Robrecht, 1995). Strauss later collaborated with Corbin and presented a modified version in their book *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (Strauss & Corbin 1990), while Glaser has been truthful to the original version. Both approaches are called grounded theory and have been considered effective research methodologies. However, as pointed out by many scholars (Annells, 1997; Artinian, 1998, 2009a, 2009b; Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Hernandez, 2010; Jones & Alony, 2011; Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994; van Niekerk & Roode, 2009), these two approaches are completely different in the process of data collection and analysis and also in the results of the analysis. These scholars strongly recommend that Grounded theory researchers should choose one or the other in advance, depending on the purpose of research, and never combine or mix up both approaches.

My research aim is to identify challenges faced by Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. As there are not many recent studies that give insights into current challenges, especially from the teacher's perspective, I have chosen the Glaserian approach over traditional theoretical approaches, as well as over Strauss and Corbin's, because I believe that it is the most appropriate methodology when there is a lack of data on which to form a theory or hypothesis and research questions. In this chapter, I will first overview Glaserian grounded theory (Section 3.2) and discuss the rationale for my choice of this methodology (Section 3.3). In Section 3.4, I will describe the data sampling methods, the selection of participants, and limitations of my research, which will be followed by information on ethical considerations (Section 3.5) and summary (Section 3.6).

#### **3.2. Overview of Glaserian Grounded Theory**

The grounded theory approach takes the opposite approach to traditional research

approaches. It does not start with a theoretical framework or hypothesis but instead with data collection, and through data analysis the researcher inductively formulates a theory, rather than proving one.

Collected data are first coded and divided into groups of codes with similar content, which are called *concepts* (i.e. underlying patterns within a set of codes), then similar concepts are put together under the umbrella of another concept. The concepts at the bottom of the concept tree are called *properties* and overarching concepts with properties underneath them are called *categories*.<sup>12</sup> Categories can be further combined under another concept, and the one at the top of the concept tree is called the *core category*. The core category is the most frequently recurring concept within the collected data and, once identified through the initial coding process, the researcher can use this concept as the basis for generating a theory.

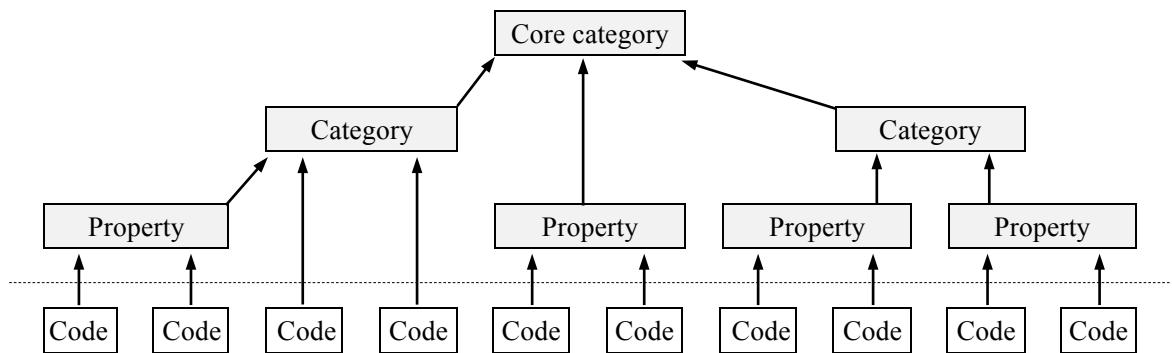


Figure 3.1. Glaserian Grounded Theory Initial Coding Process

In Glaserian grounded theory, two techniques are considered its fundamental framework. These are *constant comparative analysis* and *theoretical sampling*; the former is the analysis method and the latter is the data collection process. In Section 3.2, I will briefly describe these two techniques first, then outline the coding process, as well as an additional process called *theoretical sorting*, with reference to Figure 3.2.

### 3.2.1. Constant Comparative Analysis

Constant comparative analysis is the analysis method that compares the data constantly throughout the analytic process in order to generate a theory. Except for minimum neutral self-directed questions to aid analysis, it is the one and only analytic tool at all stages employed in the Glaserian approach to facilitate the emergence of the theory. The generated theory is considered to be a validated theory only when all the

<sup>12</sup> See Table 3.1 for an example of coding and Figure 3.3 for an example of establishing a category.

analysing processes in the research are fulfilled by using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### 3.2.2. Theoretical Sampling

Glaser (1978) defines theoretical sampling as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 36). Theoretical sampling aims to construct interrelationships between categories and their properties and, ultimately, to generate a theory.

Theoretical sampling involves two data sampling processes; one is *initial data sampling* and the other is *additional data sampling* (see Figure 3.2). In Glaserian grounded theory the researcher cannot plan the direction of data sampling in advance, so he/she initially samples data in all directions then identifies any gaps in information that are needed to construct the interrelationships. The gaps then guide the researcher to the direction for additional data sampling (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling is completed when the core category has emerged and is saturated (Glaser, 1978).<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2.3. Coding Process

When data are collected through initial data sampling, the researcher starts the coding process. The coding process in Glaserian grounded theory is divided into two phases, based on the type of generated codes. One is *substantive coding* and the other is *theoretical coding* (Glaser, 1978, 1992).

**Substantive coding.** Substantive coding is a part of theoretical sampling process. It is the stage where the researcher (1) generates categories and properties, (2) identifies gaps in information necessary to construct interrelationships between categories and properties, (3) determines the direction for additional data sampling, and (4) constructs interrelationships between categories and/or between categories and their properties (Glaser, 1978, 1992). There are two phases in substantive coding: *open coding* and *selective coding*.

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<sup>13</sup> See the section on selective coding below for the explanation of *saturation*.

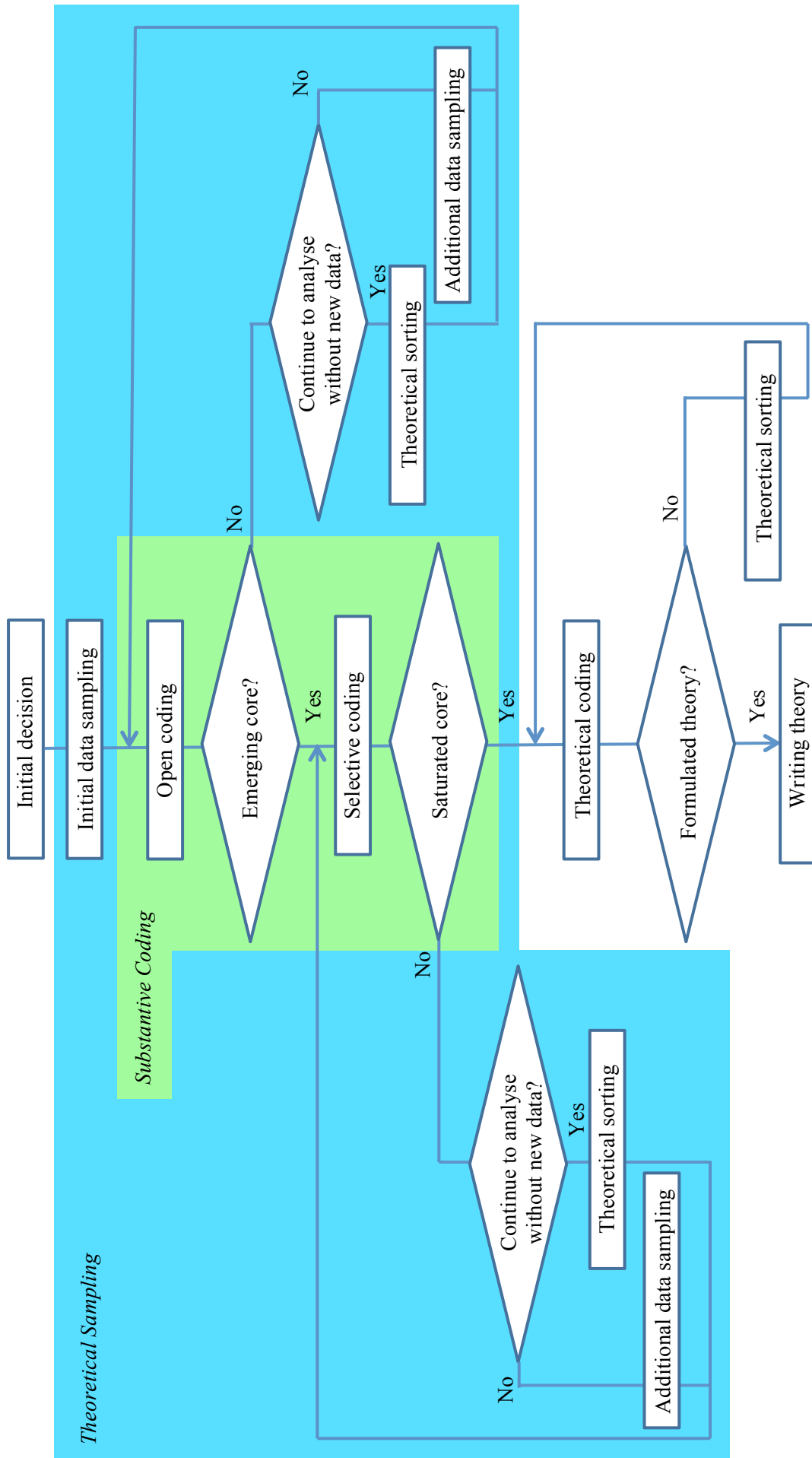


Figure 3.2. Glaserian Grounded Theory Flow Chart

**Open coding.** Open coding is the first phase of substantive coding. Its main purpose is to generate and develop categories and their properties and to ultimately identify the core category. For a start, a number of codes in the data are compared with each other in terms of similarities. When concepts (i.e. underlying patterns within a set of codes) emerge, the researcher continues constant comparative analysis to see if more codes can be integrated into the concepts (Glaser, 1978, 1992). Here is an example of open coding from my own research.

Table 3.1. Initial Coding of Category “New Zealand Based Textbooks”

Teachers’ comments <sup>14</sup>	Coding
a. I do find that resources are a problem, especially the senior. (10-NNST)	a. A lack of New Zealand based textbooks especially at senior levels.
b. I think, with resources, nobody will publish anything in NZ for seniors because there’s not enough market and there’s no budget. (7-NNST)	b1. Low demand for New Zealand based textbooks especially at senior levels. b2. No publishers for unprofitable local based textbooks especially at senior levels.
c. There’s a big drop between Years 10 and 11. (10-NNST)	c. A small number of students taking up Japanese language study at senior levels.

Here “no publishers for unprofitable New Zealand based textbooks especially at senior levels” can be integrated into “a lack of New Zealand based textbooks especially at senior levels” through constant comparative analysis. Next, the category of “New Zealand based textbooks” can be established with two properties: “number of students” and “demand for New Zealand based textbooks” (see Figure 3.3). No publication of “New Zealand based textbooks” is the publisher’s response to the small number of students taking up Japanese language study and the low demand of such textbooks.<sup>15</sup>

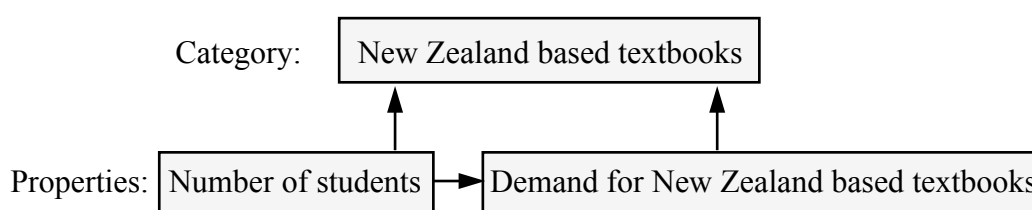


Figure 3.3. Establishment of Category “New Zealand Based Textbooks”

<sup>14</sup> For identification purposes, I add the teacher’s number and either NST or NNST in brackets after their comment, as in 10-NNST. See Section 3.4.2 for information on the participants.

<sup>15</sup> Concepts are supposed to have variables in grounded theory. In the above example, the “New Zealand based textbooks” category may have such variables as “none”, “few”, “some” and “many” but its *core variable* is “none” because of no publication.

Categories can be structured on a number of levels, as seen in Figure 3.1, with the core category at the top, which meaningfully and easily relates to most other categories and their properties (Glaser, 1978, 1998). When the researcher identifies the core category, he/she will no longer need to code all the data and can move on to the next process, which is selective coding. This is because the theory is only generated from categories and their properties that are related to the core category (Glaser, 1978). If two possible core categories are identified, the researcher must choose only one for the current research and set the other aside as another piece of research (Glaser, 1978).

**Selective coding.** When the core category is identified, the researcher moves on to selective coding, the second phase of substantive coding. The main purpose of selective coding is to reduce the number of categories and properties by completely discarding all the concepts not related to the core category and by further integrating closely related concepts under the umbrella of the core category (Glaser, 1978). During the process of selective coding, either additional data sampling or theoretical sorting (see Section 3.2.4) may be required of the researcher in order to determine what to discard and what to integrate, as well as to verify interrelationships between categories and properties when integrating concepts.

When selective coding no longer presents any new aspect of concepts, the researcher is said to have reached the point called *saturation*. The saturation of the core category means that all remaining categories and their properties are also saturated. When the researcher has reached this point, he/she terminates data sampling and moves on to the next phase (Glaser, 1978).

**Theoretical coding.** Theoretical coding is the final phase of the coding process in Glaserian grounded theory. It is the process where the researcher converts the product of substantive coding (i.e. description of interrelationships between categories and/or between categories and their properties) into a *theoretical model* (Glaser, 1978, 1998) in order to formulate a theory. The theoretical model is the final product of the entire coding process.<sup>16</sup> Only when the theoretical model is drawn up, will the researcher start reviewing literature in order to formulate a theory using theoretical sorting.

### 3.2.4. Theoretical Sorting

Throughout the coding process (i.e. open coding, selective coding and theoretical

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<sup>16</sup> The theoretical model of my research is shown in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.

coding), Glaserian grounded theory strongly encourages the researcher to write memos on anything in any form at any time in order to freely develop his/her ideas and to keep track of his/her thinking process. Theoretical sorting is a process where the researcher analyses the memos he/she has written for the purpose of verifying, modifying and/or reintegrating concepts, and this process can be taken during substantive coding and/or theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978). When formulating a theory, the researcher sorts out the memos he/she has written during literature review, which takes place after he/she has drawn up a theoretical model, together with other memos he/she has written earlier, and integrates them into the theory.

In Glaserian grounded theory, the researcher will not need to verify his/her formulated theory after theoretical coding. This is because he/she has already verified concepts through substantive coding and no new data are collected after the saturation of the core category. After theoretical coding, writing up the formulated theory is all that the researcher is required to do.

### **3.3. Rationale for Choosing Glaserian Grounded Theory as Methodology**

My research has adopted Glaserian grounded theory, which maintains the philosophy and procedure of the original grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In Section 3.3, I will explain the reasons for choosing this methodology for my research.

The purpose of grounded theory is to theoretically describe a basic social process that is central or problematic to the participants (Glaser, 1992). The researcher can begin his/her research with only an interest in the intended research area and with no anticipation as to where the data will take him/her; he/she can modify the direction or focus of his/her research, if necessary, during theoretical sampling. In the case of my research, teachers' dealing with challenges in school is a basic social process and is central to my research participants, so my research aims matched the purpose of grounded theory. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 1, for lack of previous studies on challenges discussed from the teachers' perspective, it was difficult to start my research with a theoretical framework or hypothesis. With grounded theory it was possible to start generating my theory based solely on the information emerging from the data analysis, so the process of grounded theory suited my research as well.

The reason why I have opted for the Glaserian approach, over the Straussian approach developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), was because of the difference in the

way data are collected and analysed.<sup>17</sup> The Straussian approach adopts several kinds of deductive analysis techniques to extend the scope of existing theories drawn from literature and/or the researchers' experiences, and develops a new theory from those techniques, whereas the Glaserian approach only retains the rigorous use of constant comparative analysis (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Glaser, 1992; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Hernandez, 2010; Melia, 1996; Robrecht, 1995; van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). The outcome of analysis in the Straussian approach will have to be verified because of the adoption of deductive analysis techniques (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Hernandez, 2010; Robrecht, 1995; van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). Therefore, the Straussian approach requires the researcher to continue collecting new data through all three coding phases for verification, which could take a long time. In order to aid the researcher, the Straussian approach provides several procedures, forms, and diagrams, but they look rather complicated and, as pointed out by Boychuk Duchscher and Morgan (2004), Melia (1996) and Robrecht (1995), these procedures could distract the researcher's attention from the data. The Glaserian approach, on the other hand, directly draws the theory only from constant comparative analysis, so the verification of the theory is not necessary (Artinian, 2009b; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998) and the generated theory can be used immediately (Glaser, 1992). This is a huge advantage if there is a limited time frame, as was the case with this thesis. For this reason, I have adopted the Glaserian approach of grounded theory for my research.

### **3.4. Data Sampling Methods, Participants and Limitations**

My research findings are based on the data collected through focus group discussions and follow-up individual interviews. In Section 3.4, I will describe the data sampling methods (Section 3.4.1) and the location, size, characteristics, and context of the participants (Section 3.4.2). This section concludes with the limitations of the research (Section 3.4.3).

#### **3.4.1. Data Sampling Methods**

Two data sampling instruments were employed for my research. One was a focus group discussion as the first phase, and the other was a face-to-face individual interview as the second phase.

**Focus group discussion.** Two focus group discussions were conducted in my

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<sup>17</sup> For more details, refer to van Niekerk and Roode (2009).

research: one with NNSTs, at Auckland Girls' Grammar School on 15 November 2012, and the other with NSTs, at Auckland City Library on 25 November 2012. Discussion venues, dates and times were negotiated to accommodate the participants' requests and convenience. The duration of each discussion was one and a half hours. According to Marrelli (2008), a focus group discussion has an advantage that the participants can explore unexpected viewpoints and ideas in a flexible setting. While I prepared some indicative questions to prompt participants' discussion on a number of existing issues presented by other researchers, the discussion was never intended to be strictly prescribed so that the advantage pointed out by Marrelli (2008) could be utilised.

**Face-to-face individual interview.** After the initial analysis of the data from focus group discussions, face-to-face individual interviews were conducted at different venues, including the participants' schools and local cafes, between 27 November 2012 and 13 February 2013. Again, interview venues, dates and times were negotiated to accommodate the participants' requests and convenience. The duration of each interview was one hour. These interviews were intended as a follow-up in case: (1) there were some who preferred to only participate in an individual interview; (2) there were some issues on which participants did not wish to express their opinions in the presence of others; (3) there were some issues that were not discussed adequately in the focus group discussion for lack of time; (4) there were some who wished to provide further comments and/or to change their opinions, and (5) clarification and/or further explanation was needed on what participants said during the focus group discussion. I adopted a semi-structured interview approach in which I had specific questions but, as recommended by Reber, Allen and Reber (2009), the participants were given some flexibility in the pursuit of topics. In grounded theory it is not necessary to cover the same questions in all the interviews (Artinian, 2009b) because each data sampling and the following analysis might modify the direction of data sampling. Nevertheless, I used indicative questions as a prompt in face-to-face interviews with those who had not joined a focus group discussion.

Glaser does not encourage the use of tape recording because it requires time to transcribe and slows down the research and it could mess with the timing of theoretical sampling due to too much unnecessary data (Glaser, 1998). However, with the permission of the participants, all discussions and interviews in my research were audio-recorded. The main reason for using an audio recorder is that the interviewer is free from the distraction of note taking and can concentrate on interacting with the

participant to help create a more friendly atmosphere; it also produces an accurate and verbatim transcription of the interviews (Whiting, 2008). The recorded discussions and interviews were transcribed word for word and were checked by participants who responded to my request for member checking. The necessary Japanese parts for writing this thesis were translated into English and were checked by my English speaker supervisor, who is fluent in Japanese, to ensure accuracy.

### 3.4.2. Participants

The participants in this research were in-service teachers of Japanese as a foreign language in New Zealand secondary schools. All their schools are located in the Auckland area. Altogether, six NSTs and six NNSTs participated; three of the NSTs and five of the NNSTs took part in focus group discussions and all twelve participated in face-to-face individual interviews, as shown in Table 3.2.

I originally planned to recruit eight teachers (i.e. four each of NSTs and NNSTs) for participants in both focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews, following the suggestion of Reber et al. (2009) that eight to twelve is an optimal number of

Table 3.2. Participants' Background Information

No.	NST or NNST	Gender	Teaching Experience	Type of School	Current Levels of teaching	Participated in
1	NST	F	12-13 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-13	FGD & FFI
2	NST	F	5 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-13	FGD & FFI
3	NST	F	1 year	Co-ed State	Year 12	FGD & FFI
4	NST	F	13-14 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-13	FFI
5	NST	F	9 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-13	FFI
6	NST	F	3 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-10	FFI
7	NNST	F	20years	Girls State	Years 9-13	FGD & FFI
8	NNST	F	18-20 years	Girls Integrated	Years 7-13	FGD & FFI
9	NNST	F	19 years	Co-ed State	Years 9, 10, 12	FGD & FFI
10	NNST	F	18 years	Co-ed State	Year 7-13	FGD & FFI
11	NNST	F	6 years	Co-ed Integrated	Years 11-13	FGD & FFI
12	NNST	F	15 years	Co-ed State	Years 9-11,13	FFI

NB: Abbreviations

NST: native speaker teacher

F: female

State: Government-funded school

Integrated: Government-funded school of specific character (e.g. a church school)

FGD: focus group discussion

NNST: non-native speaker teacher

Co-ed: co-education

FFI: Face-to-face interview

participants in a focus group discussion. As for NNSTs, I could recruit five teachers for the focus group discussion and six for a face-to-face interview within a short period of time. However, I had difficulties in recruiting NSTs. NSTs seemed shy about participating in a research like this and it took me more time to find four teachers for a focus group discussion, which ended up with three participants due to the last-minute cancellation by one. After analysing the data from the focus group discussions, I decided to recruit a few more NSTs only for an interview to have an equal number of participants from both NSTs and NNSTs for a more balanced representation of their experience. This is the reason why face-to-face interviews were conducted over two and a half months.

### **3.4.3. Limitations**

As is often the case with a lot of research studies, my research has limitations. For instance, Artinian (2009a) emphasises the importance of homogeneity of sampling (e.g. teaching experience, current teaching levels, gender of their students) but the homogeneity in my research is not necessarily maintained because of the relatively small number of participants. Therefore, it is possible that the findings might have been different if the participants had had similar teaching experiences, teaching levels, teaching environments, and so forth. Another limitation is also related to the small number of participants. Although my research deals with secondary school Japanese language teachers in New Zealand, the sampling was carried out only in the Auckland area. Teachers in other areas may not have the same challenges as the teachers in Auckland because of such differences as socio-economic, demographic and geographic factors. Also, during the face-to-face interview I realised one more limitation; there has been an increase in the number of Asian teachers of Japanese, especially Korean teachers of Japanese in New Zealand, as pointed out by one of the participants:

There're more and more Korean teachers teaching Japanese in New Zealand. There're lots of Korean teachers and lots of Korean students studying Japanese too. I think it's good for class; very smooth interaction because both speak Korean. [...] I think such unique classroom situations are on the rise, especially in Auckland. You'd feel like you're teaching Japanese in Korea. (1-NST)

Therefore, the findings about the NNSTs' challenges in my research may not adequately reflect those of Asian Japanese language teachers. Furthermore, there were no male teachers among my participants. There may also be some gender-specific challenges.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

This research required formal ethics approval before its commencement because of the participation of in-service secondary school teachers in my research. An application for ethics approval was submitted on 24 September 2012 to Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee and it was granted on 25 October 2012, prior to the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews (Ethics Application Number 12/260).

### **3.6. Summary**

The purpose of my research is to identify the current challenges faced by Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. For this purpose I have adopted Glaserian grounded theory as a methodology. In Section 3.2, I used a flow chart that I had created to show how a research based on this theory develops, and described its entire process step by step. This is the process I applied to the analysis of data in my research. In Section 3.3, I gave three reasons for choosing the Glaserian approach for my research: (1) it would enable me to describe teachers' challenges that have been caused by certain factors in their teaching as a social process; (2) it would allow me to begin my research without clear research questions, as there is limited literature from the teacher's perspective; (3) unlike the Straussian approach, it does not require verification of the generated theory so would be more suitable for a master's research with a limited time frame. In Section 3.4, I described the data sampling process through focus group discussions and follow-up face-to-face individual interviews, as well as the participants and the limitations of my research. The main limitations are the small size of sampling, the different aspects of participants, such as teaching experience and current teaching levels, and the locations of the participants (i.e. all in the Auckland area). The lack of opinions of Asian NNSTs and of male teachers is also a limitation of this research.

The findings of my research will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings on current challenges for Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. Analysis of the data from focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews revealed that the apparent lack of value being placed on foreign language education in New Zealand was a significantly recurring theme for the participants in my research, irrespective of whether they were NSTs or NNSTs. I therefore coded “the value of foreign language education in New Zealand” as the core category and “non-value” as its core variable, in line with Glaserian grounded theory.

After the substantive coding processes were over, I drew up a theoretical model that shows how the concepts, identified through the coding, relate to each other. Analysis of these concepts formed the basis for the grounded theory that emerged from this study. In this chapter, I will first outline the theoretical model in Section 4.2, and then present the findings from data analysis relating to the concepts in the theoretical model, in Sections 4.3 to 4.5. The grounded theory, formulated from data analysis of the concepts shown in the model, will be presented in Section 4.6. Following this, in Section 4.7, I will discuss the strategies that teachers are employing to deal with their challenges, which include helping students find motivation to study Japanese. The findings showed that the repercussions of the core variable and concepts created the same difficulties for NSTs and NNSTs and this was probably because they were common external factors. However, there were differences at the individual level. These were related to differences in their language teaching skills, and knowledge and experiences of Japanese culture and society. In Section 4.8, I will discuss the challenges stemming from these differences.

#### **4.2. Overview of the Theoretical Model**

Through theoretical coding, a theoretical model was constructed from substantive codes. I will describe the model in this section. The details are then presented with some discussion in the sections that follow.

Figure 4.1 is the theoretical model that depicts the interrelationships of the core category “the value of foreign language education”, which includes Japanese study, and its core variable “non-value” with all other concepts. Three concepts, which reinforce

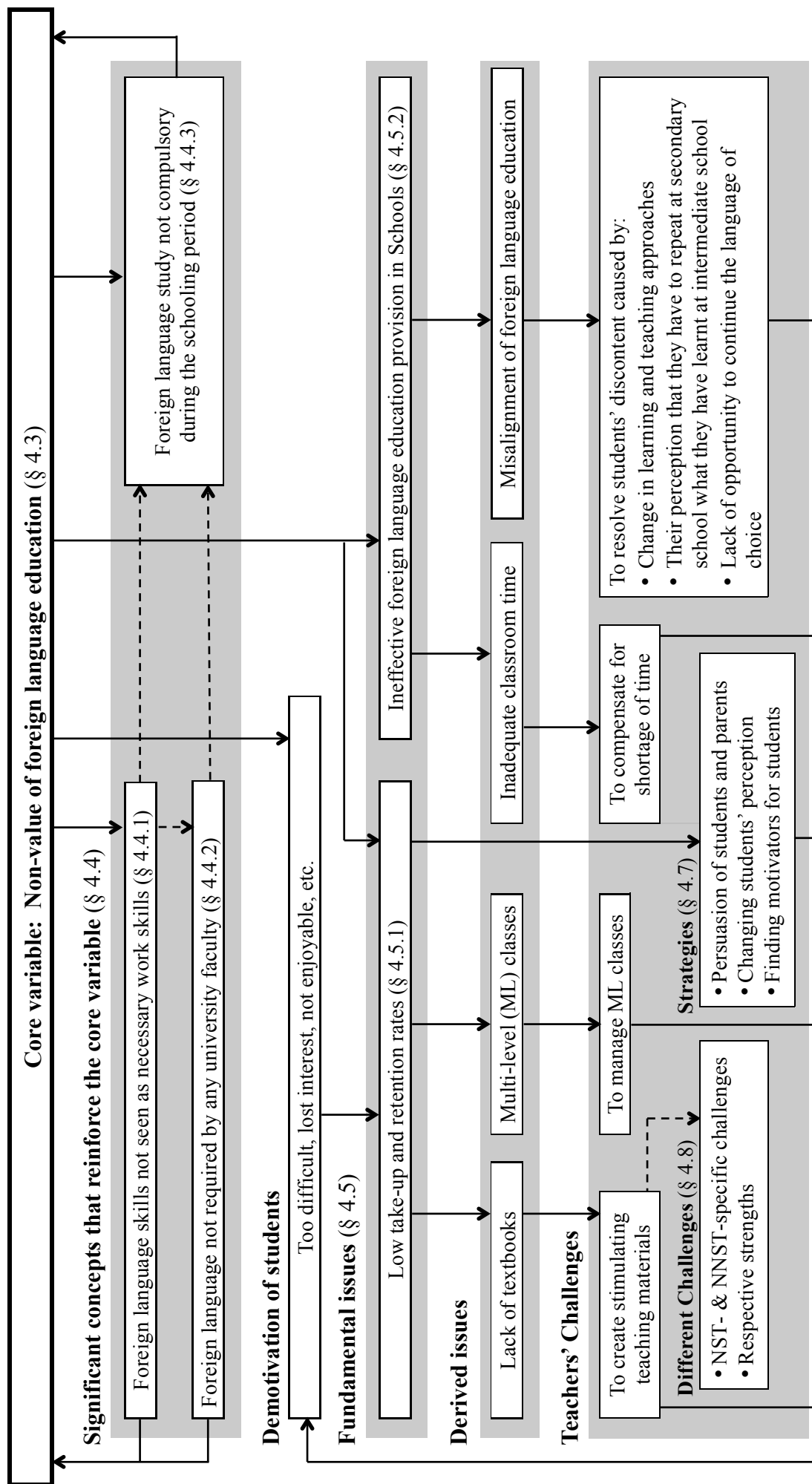


Figure 4.1. Relationships of the Core Category and Core Variable with Other Concepts

each other as well as the core variable, are marked as significant concepts. These significant concepts are (1) foreign language skills not seen as necessary work skills, (2) foreign language not required by any university faculty, and (3) foreign language study not compulsory during the schooling period. There are two concepts, which are called “fundamental issues” in the theoretical model, that are created by the interaction between the core category and the significant concepts: (1) low take-up and retention rates and (2) ineffective foreign language education provision by schools. Derived from the two fundamental issues are four more concepts called “derived issues”: (1) lack of New Zealand based textbooks, (2) organisation of multi-level classes, (3) inadequate classroom time, and (4) misalignment of foreign language education provision. Teachers’ challenges related to the core category arise from these four issues. Students’ demotivation to study Japanese is reinforced by the interaction between the core variable and the significant concepts, and it can also stem from fundamental issues and teachers’ challenges when teachers are unable to resolve any one of the challenges.

### **4.3. The Core Category and the Core Variable**

Through substantive coding, the core category “the value of foreign language education” and its core variable “non-value” emerged. This core variable represents the notion, on which Kaplan (1994) remarked as long as two decades ago, that New Zealanders generally do not consider foreign language education important (see Section 2.4). It seems that the situation has yet to change. As New Zealand is traditionally an English-speaking country, it could be understandable that New Zealanders do not see foreign language learning as necessary or of value. However, this “English-is-enough” mind-set is a major factor that creates challenges for teachers of Japanese in New Zealand.

“Why study a foreign language? It’s useless. Everyone can speak English,” so they say. “I’m OK ‘cause I can speak English.” That’s the way they think. (7-NNST)

The teachers thought that the core variable affects not only Japanese but also all languages.

I guess we still have a mentality that we’re at the bottom of the world and speaking other languages is not relevant and everyone is learning English anyway so why put the effort into learn another language. [...] It looks like it’s

happening with all languages, not just Japanese. (10-NNST)

All the teachers explicitly and repeatedly talked about “non-value of foreign language education” during the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. The “English-is-enough” mind-set has been criticised not only in New Zealand but also in other English-speaking countries for a long time (Coleman, 2009; East, 2008; Kaplan, 1994; Lo Bianco et al., 2009) (see Section 2.4). The teachers in my research considered “non-value of foreign language education” derived from the “English-is-enough” mind-set to be a major problem.

In addition to the “English-is-enough” mind-set, my theoretical coding also revealed a number of significant concepts that contribute to the formation of public attitude towards foreign language study. In the following section, I will discuss these concepts.

#### **4.4. Significant Concepts That Reinforce the Core Variable**

There are three significant concepts identified in the coding, which reinforce the core variable “non-value” as well as each other in relation to foreign language education in secondary schools (see Figure 4.1). They are: (1) foreign language skills are not seen as necessary work skills and, therefore; (2) foreign language skills are not required by any university faculty, especially those that are popular among students (see Appendix); and (3) foreign language study is not required in the compulsory schooling period (see Table 2.2 in Section 2.2.3). I will examine the findings in relation to each of these three concepts.

##### **4.4.1. Foreign Language Skills Not Seen as Necessary Work Skills**

McLauchlan’s (2007) research findings show that “won’t help my career” was one of the main reasons for not continuing Japanese after Year 12 (20.4 percent), but that merely 4.1 percent of those who discontinued Japanese after Year 11 gave that reason for their decision to discontinue it (see Table 2.8 in Section 2.5). However, the teachers in my research generally seemed to think that it was one of the major reasons why students do not take up foreign language study in the first place.

You see, if they don’t have an idea somewhere in their mind that a good command of languages is beneficial or an advantage for their future [they will not take up language study]. (2-NST)

In fact, it seems that this situation has not changed much since Benton (1996) criticised the Government for the lack of clear direction in language education that emphasises the need of foreign language skills and that encourages employment of people with such skills. Nearly a decade later, Cullen (2005) found that Air New Zealand was offering no financial or other tangible rewards to cabin crew with language skills other than English, and similarly McLauchlan (2007) found as follows:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) continues to hire university graduate recruits with no L2 [second language] skills, or worse, to send those with skills in one L2 to a country of a completely different L2. Like so many other employers, MFAT seldom pays more than lip-service to L2 skills, frequently referring to them merely as ‘desirable’ or ‘advantageous’ (pp. 118-119).

When I accessed the MFAT (2013) website on 5 December 2013, I found two overseas vacancies, one in the Middle East and the other in Europe, and indeed neither described foreign language skills as essential or required. New Zealand’s flag carrier, Air New Zealand, regularly recruits flight attendants and their website states, “a second language is preferred and priority will be given to applicants who are fluent in Japanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, German, French and the languages of the South Pacific” (Air New Zealand, n.d., “Preferred skills”, para. 1), yet there is still no mention of financial or tangible rewards for foreign language skills. The government ministries and the corporate world still seem to give no credit for foreign language skills.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, there is the indication that “New Zealand employers seem to prefer Japanese with English skills to New Zealanders with Japanese skills” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003, as cited in Oshima, 2012, p. 42). McLauchlan (2007) points out that there is often the impractical requirement that applicants must be able to write Japanese at “native-speaker level” for occupations which would never require such a high degree of Japanese writing skill (e.g. sushi rollers, retail employees, restaurant and bar staff, hotel porters, mini-bus transfer drivers, and so forth). McLauchlan (2007) criticises this requirement, saying “many young New Zealanders who have studied hard, still being

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<sup>18</sup> In other countries, credit has been given to foreign language skills in the form of remuneration. According to Edwards (2004), “in the 1960s, secretaries in the Canadian Federal Government service were given a 10 percent bonus if they used two languages 10 percent of the time. The Public Service Board in Australia used a similar strategy in the 1970s when federal officers in public contact work were given a Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA) as an incentive to use their bilingual skills in their official duties. More recently, the Los Angeles Police Department offered a 2.75 percent salary increase to officers who speak Spanish or one of a number of Asian languages, rising to 5 percent if they can demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing the language” (pp. 154-155).

denied the opportunity to use and benefit from their L2 skills” (p. 108). Oshima (2012) also points this out and concludes “considering such a discouraging situation the learners of Japanese are placed in, currently learning Japanese might be less attractive in New Zealand as an investment in terms of gaining satisfactory returns” (p. 42).

With the current situation being like this, it is no wonder the teachers consider “won’t help my career” to be a major reason why so many students do not even take up foreign language study, particularly Japanese study which is perceived as time-consuming by many, with an expectation of a lower achievement compared to European Languages (Harvey, 1988; Haugh, 1997; Holt et al., 2001; McLauchlan, 2007; Oshima, 2012; Oshima & Harvey, 2013).

#### **4.4.2. Foreign Language Not Required by Any University Faculty**

The majority of the teachers in my research mentioned that foreign language skills are not required for entrance to university faculties that are popular among students (see Appendix).<sup>19</sup> When counselling students, school careers advisors refer to the lists of rank scores, subjects and credit required for admission to such faculties, and the teachers in my research thought that the reason why the careers advisors do not recommend foreign language study to students is that LOTEMs are not included in the lists.

Honestly, we need to get languages on those lists. We actually need to get them and I don’t know how we do that, though, but that is the most frustrating thing because you get these Year 10 students and they are like “oh, I’m going to do medicine” [...] then they’re going to do all these sciences and maths and things and cut down their choices really, and they don’t continue with something they’re really, really good at because they think they have to do these other subjects and that is hugely frustrating. (8-NNST)

It seems that careers advisors’ recommendation to students, based on the lists of university requirements, has a huge influence on the students’ decision as to which subject to take up and/or continue. There is a limitation in the number of optional subjects, and foreign language study seems to be the first to be discarded.

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<sup>19</sup> In Australia, on the other hand, many universities adopt the “LOTE Bonus Point Scheme” for admission (see Section 2.2.3). “Students who complete a ‘foreign’ language at Year 11 or 12 receive an automatic percentage bonus on their Year 12 completion score” (Sussex, 2008, para. 2). Years 11 and 12 in Australia are equivalent to Years 12 and 13, respectively, in New Zealand.

Careers advisors are, well, careers advisors so they offer suggestions based on currently popular jobs, but the thing is, all options are filled with science and maths and [...] it goes like if you don't take this [now], you can't select that [later]. [...] Students think, "oh, I must take maths now 'cause I wanna take that later", so their options are determined even in Year 10. (5-NST)

Even when students do not have a clear objective to go to university faculties that require skills in the STEM fields (i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), it appears that careers advisors offer advice to students in a way that their advice will not diminish students' possibility of going to such faculties and that students accordingly choose STEM subjects first.<sup>20</sup>

[When students advance from Year 9 to Year 10] careers advisors ask students what work they want to do, then tell them to take this subject and that one too if they want to be such and such. [...] The problem is, students say things like "oh, I want to be a doctor", but they won't be. They may say "I'm working at a supermarket but I wanna be an architect", "I wanna be a brain surgeon", and so on, and they take subjects that would fulfil their dreams. There is no room for languages there. They don't need to be able to speak a foreign language. (7-NNST)

Therefore, the lists and the actions of the careers advisors are reinforcing the core variable "non-value of foreign language education" and, as a result, many students simply do not take or continue Japanese study or any other foreign language.

#### **4.4.3. Foreign Language Study Not Compulsory during the Schooling Period**

The need to make the study of languages compulsory was voiced by many of the teachers in my research, and they strongly believed that it had to be government-driven.

Unless the Government steps in behind and says we really value language learning and we are going to make it compulsory, it's really hard for us. I think it's fantastic that Julia Gillard in Australia has mandated Asian languages which help if we followed suit, not just Asian language but any language, but I don't know when that's going to happen. (9-NNST)

They [= Australia] made it compulsory to take Asian language, didn't they? It

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<sup>20</sup> The first official use of the acronym "STEM" was in the 2007 Report of the Department of Education of the USA (Matthews, 2008).

really needs to be government directed. (10-NNST)

Language provision in New Zealand has been devolved to the schools and there seems to be little incentive for schools to implement compulsory foreign language study. This contrasts with Australia where the Government aims not only to have compulsory language study during the schooling period by 2025, but for priority to be given to Asian languages (see Section 2.2.2).

Rather than being compulsory, a foreign language from Year 7 to Year 10 became an entitlement subject under the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b). This means that students can complete their compulsory schooling period without taking any foreign language study and many students are doing just that (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013), especially when they think that foreign language skills bring no benefit for their future career, as discussed in Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, if a subject is not compulsory, people will generally consider taking such a subject not important or a worthwhile activity (McGee et al., 2013; East 2008). This reinforces the “English-is-enough” mind-set. It is not surprising that the take-up rate of foreign language study has continued to drop under the current *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b) (see Table 2.3 in Section 2.3) and that this negative impact is being felt by the teachers of Japanese.

#### **4.5. Teachers’ Challenges Related to the Core Variable**

As mentioned in Section 4.2 and shown in the theoretical model (Figure 4.1), the interaction between the core variable “non-value of foreign language education” and the significant concepts has produced two fundamental issues and four issues derived from the fundamental issues. The two fundamental issues are low take-up and retention rates, and ineffective foreign language education provision in schools. In this section, I will discuss these issues and the challenges that they present for the teachers of Japanese in my research.

##### **4.5.1. Low Take-up and Retention Rates**

The low take-up and retention rates of students of Japanese, due to foreign language education not valued by students, their parents, careers advisors and so forth, was one of the most talked-about topics during the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews in my research. As seen in Section 2.3, just under 10 percent of secondary school students take up Japanese in Year 9 and less than half of them

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<sup>21</sup> An entitlement subject is a subject that all students are given the opportunity to take, as explained in Section 2.2.3.

continue to Year 10. The number drops by 40 to 50 percent after Year 10 and by another 40 to 50 percent after Year 11. From Year 12 to Year 13 there is a further reduction of 30 to 40 percent. The retention rate from Year 9 through to Year 12, therefore, has been roughly eight to nine percent in the past few years (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5 in Section 2.3).

Data from the focus group discussions indicate that most of the teachers, whether NST or NNST, believed that foreign language was perceived by students to be more difficult than the other school subjects. The teachers thought that this, together with the fact that no foreign language is included in the entrance requirements for particular university faculties (see Appendix), would discourage students from taking up, or continuing, Japanese or any foreign language study. According to the teachers, many students often opt for subjects that they think are easier than languages.

They like to take the easy option, don't they? Yeah, drama and dance are very popular at our school. (10-NNST)

Some secondary schools do make foreign language study compulsory for a certain period of time, in which case, students tend to choose a language that they consider the easiest of all the language options and to discontinue it after the period. The teachers gave Spanish as the easiest foreign language option.

Spanish was a default language at our school. That's the one they now choose. "Spanish is easy. I'll just do Spanish. I'll just do it for a year and I won't continue." (9-NNST)

Data from the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews also showed that there are some schools that closed Japanese courses at senior levels or even all levels because the number of students of Japanese rapidly decreased after the introduction of Spanish. In fact, as statistics show, Spanish has been gaining popularity among secondary school students and it looks as if it could replace Japanese as the second most popular foreign language within a year or two (see Table 2.3 in Section 2.3).

According to the teachers in my research, this declining number of students has led to serious consequences that have had a negative impact on Japanese language education in secondary schools. One such consequence is a lack of New Zealand based textbooks and another is the organisation of multi-level classes, both as a result of a small number of students at each year level. In the rest of this section, I will discuss

these issues and the consequent challenges faced by the teachers.

**A lack of New Zealand based textbooks and the organisation of multi-level classes.** As discussed in Section 2.5, past studies noted issues with a lack of New Zealand based up-to-date textbooks (Harvey, 1988; Haugh, 1997; Japan Foundation, 2014a; Nuibe, 1992) and the organisation of multi-level classes especially at senior levels (Japan Foundation, 2014a; McLauchlan, 2007; Oshima, 2012; Shearn, 2003). The teachers in my research are still experiencing these issues.

**Challenge 1: a lack of New Zealand based textbooks.** All the teachers in my research mentioned a lack of textbooks that align with the requirements of the New Zealand curriculum and that suit the learning styles of New Zealand students of Japanese. The data show that this is problematic because of the time and effort required to produce teaching and study materials to compensate for the lack of such textbooks.

I do find that resources are a problem especially for the seniors. [...] It's a constant challenge for all of us to produce stuff that is relevant to our curriculum, relevant to our kids and vocabulary. (10-NNST)

Hunt (2013), a practising French language teacher in a New Zealand school, emphasises the importance of using current and relevant resources because adolescent motivation often reflects a craving for “the new” and “the now”. The content in textbooks will always lose their currency over time, so teachers will always have to make resources. However, the complexities of the writing system of Japanese, as mentioned in Section 2.5, make producing resources without the support of any suitable and relevant textbooks challenging, particularly for NNSTs of Japanese, even with such online dictionary tools as Rikaichan and POPjisyo.<sup>22</sup> It takes a huge amount of time just to adapt resources written in Japanese and make them accessible for students, compared to resources in European languages, as one teacher explained:

French teachers and Spanish teachers can get these amazing resources off the Internet but we can't because of the issue of the language level and *kanji*, and that's a huge challenge. Amazing things and they can use them as is and we can't. (7-NNST)

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<sup>22</sup> For more information on Rikaichan and POPjisyo, see the Softonic (n.d.) website and the Popjisyo.com (n.d.) website, respectively.

In fact, it is an enormous task not only for NNSTs but also for NSTs to find authentic Japanese materials of relevant content that can be easily adapted for their students, especially at senior levels to ensure that students are able to meet the demands of the assessment. Despite this, nowadays, as one of the teachers put it, publishers willing to publish up-to-date Japanese textbooks that are tailored to the standards under the 2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b), especially for senior students, seem non-existent in New Zealand because it is simply unprofitable.

I think, with resources, nobody will publish anything in New Zealand for seniors because there's not enough market and there's no budget. (7-NNST)

As mentioned in Section 2.5, the Australian publisher, Pearson PLC, which published a series of textbooks for Years 9 and 10 New Zealand students of Japanese in 2011, shut down their New Zealand operation in 2013 (Booksellers New Zealand, 2013).<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it is possible that a lack of New Zealand based up-to-date and suitable textbooks will be a problem not just at higher levels but at all levels of secondary education in the future. Being a character-based language, Japanese requires teachers to spend more time and effort than European languages to produce resources, which is creating more work for teachers of Japanese, whether they are NSTs or NNSTs, on top of their already heavy workload.

**Challenge 2: teaching multi-level classes.** In 2000 Shearn (2003) investigated the organisation of multi-level classes in New Zealand secondary schools and found that such classes were common for Japanese, French and German. The teachers in my research confirmed that multi-level classes are still organised for foreign languages to deal with a small number of students at higher levels, but such classes may well be more prevalent now for Japanese because of the recent dramatic decline in the student number (see Table 2.3 in Section 2.3).

Analysis of the data from the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews revealed that all three strategies pointed out by Sankar et al. (2011) were being used by schools to manage small classes (see Section 2.5).<sup>24</sup> However, the most common strategy employed by the schools where the teachers in my research work was multi-

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<sup>23</sup> The series of textbooks were an adapted version of *Iitomo Student Lounge* (Burrows, et al., 2011b) originally written for Years 7 to 10 Australian students of Japanese, as explained in Section 2.5. The New Zealand version is still available for purchase at the Pearson New Zealand (2014) website.

<sup>24</sup> The three strategies that they pointed out are: multi-level classes, cancelling classes, and using alternative methods of accessing the curriculum (e.g. video conferencing, e-learning, correspondence).

level classes. Ten out of twelve teachers had had experiences in teaching multi-level classes in the past, and all except two said that they would have some multi-level classes that year. All the teachers commented that teaching such classes was one of their biggest challenges.

The method of teaching multi-level classes varied from teacher to teacher but whatever the method, they all said that they had to prepare two sets of activities and tasks for each class, one for lower-year students and one for upper-year students, and commented how hard it was to conduct teaching and class management.

It's really hard. You have to have activities that the students can work on reasonably independently and you don't get that time to spend. [...] With mixed class you have to make sure they're actually ready to go because they have to do it on their own. And I also encourage them to help each other. It is hard and it's really tiring. (8-NNST)

It's really hard work preparing tasks and having assessments. I've got to be pretty well-organised. (1-NST)

Even when teachers have worked out ways of organising multi-level classes, they cannot pay as much attention as they hope for to both levels of students in classroom. Most of their classroom time is spent on the lower year and the upper-year students tend to be left alone to work on their own.

You know, kids who've been doing [Japanese] up to Year 13 have mostly established themselves as autonomous students. So I tend to spend more time and effort on Year 12 students. Sometimes I feel sorry for Year 13 students, though. (2-NST)

The teachers, therefore, felt that some students, especially upper-year students, are disadvantaged from the use of multi-level classes.

Well, I tell the upper-year students, as they are seniors, like you make sure to finish these tasks today and show them to me at the end [of the class], then I mainly teach the lower-year students. I [occasionally] walk around among the upper-year students, and say you're doing fine. So, it's not like I teach both years together. [...] I have a feeling the students don't think they are taught much. (1-NST)

Unless multi-level classes are taught effectively and students are not disadvantaged, the outcome could be demotivation of students. One solution to managing multi-level classes could be, as Holt et al. (2001) suggest, to explore “possible collaboration between neighbouring schools in offering a wider choice of second language study to more viable student numbers” (p. 47).<sup>25</sup> However, the teachers in my research thought that this kind of collaboration would be difficult in the current situation where each school has a different programme in terms of the length of course, the frequency of class, the length of classroom time and so forth. Nevertheless, many of them, both NSTs and NNSTs, were still interested in holding joint events among neighbouring schools.

#### **4.5.2. Ineffective Foreign Language Education Provision in Schools**

Another issue much talked-about during the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews was ineffective foreign language education provision by schools. Challenges derived from this issue include (1) inadequate classroom time and (2) misalignment of foreign language education in school systems. In this section, I will discuss these two challenges.

*Challenge 3: inadequate classroom time.* According to the data, the core variable “non-value of foreign language education” has had adverse repercussions in classroom time set aside for Japanese. Being a character-based language, Japanese is estimated to take three times longer to master than European languages (Corder & Waller, 2005, 2007; Komori & Zimmerman, 2001; Van Aacken, 1999). Despite this, classroom time for Japanese is often cut back, rather than increased, in some of the schools where the teachers in my research work. They provided me with some possible reasons why Japanese is losing classroom time, but the major reason seems to be the need to give way to mainstream subjects in the STEM fields, which have been subdivided (e.g. one mathematical subject into algebra and statistics), and to the Māori language, which has become a compulsory subject in some schools. A few teachers also mentioned that there are cases where the attitude of the top management might create a negative impact on their school language education policy with their “English-is-enough” mind-set, which could also lead to the reduction of the foreign language classroom time.

In regard to classroom time allocated to Japanese, only two teachers I interviewed

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<sup>25</sup> There are schools in Blenheim that have adopted this strategy (Hunt, 2013).

said that they had adequate time and the rest said otherwise. When teachers do not have enough classroom time, they have to find a way to make up for it by, for instance, sacrificing their lunchtime.

[There's never been adequate classroom time and to make things worse] one of the classroom hours is always taken away because of a clash with an assembly. [...] I spare my lunchtime for kids who simply cannot keep up and I also offer extra tuition to them. (6-NST)

We ended up doing those [assessments] in lunchtime. [...] We had to do it at lunchtime because we couldn't find any other time to do it. (8-NNST)

It must be a burden both for the teachers and for the students to have extra tuition and carry out assessments during lunchtime, but the lack of classroom time is also impacting on student achievement.

From next year I will have Year 9 for only one term, ten weeks. [...] They have Japanese in Year 7 and Year 8, but Year 9 they'll forget a lot of it and Year 10 I'll have to start from the beginning again. (10-NNST)

If students forget Year 9 Japanese items by the time they resume Japanese in Year 10 as a result of the reduction of the study period to just one term, teachers will have to cram two years' of teaching items into just one year in order to carry out Level 1 portfolio assessments of the NCEA at Year 11. It must be a hard task for the teachers to cover the necessary materials, but also for the students to attain competency to pass Level 1 of NCEA. This may also contribute to the students' perception that Japanese is too difficult.

In extreme cases of reducing classroom time, schools may choose to stop offering Japanese and teachers may lose their jobs. This was a big concern for the teachers in my research.

These days, the number of teachers who lose their position is increasing. [...] I often hear things like "I have no job next year" or "my school decided not to offer Japanese". [...] Though my work is hard, I shouldn't be complaining, should I? I should be thankful I still have a job. (2 -NST)

During the focus group discussions and individual interviews I heard similar tales over

and over again. As mentioned in Section 4.5.1, there were schools, including those where the teachers in my research work, that closed senior Japanese classes, and there were a number of schools that had recently dropped the Japanese language programme altogether.

It has been a while since a necessity for a change in the status of foreign language study was advocated by such researchers as Edwards (2004), Ellis (2009), McLauchlan (2007), Peddie (2005) and Spence (2005), but the situation seems to have gone from bad to worse for both NSTs and NNSTs. Here again, “non-value of foreign language education” is affecting its status within the school system.

***Challenge 4: misalignment of foreign language education.*** Since the 1980s a number of researchers have pointed out the inconsistency in provision of foreign language education in the New Zealand school system, such as the age at which a student can start learning a foreign language, the level of achievement in intermediate schools, and which language is offered (Benton, 1996; East, 2008; East et al., 2007; Gibbs & Holt, 2003; Harvey, 1988; Jacques, 2008; Nuibe, 2000; Shearn, 2003; Spence, 2004, 2005). There was evidence from my data to confirm that the inconsistency was still an issue for the teachers in my research. However, the teachers’ opinions on whether the situation had created problems were almost equally divided. About half of the teachers I interviewed did not consider this to be a challenge.

We offer a taster course to Year 7 and Year 8. [...] There are some who join us in Year 9, but I teach everyone on the assumption they know nothing about Japanese so it doesn’t affect my teaching. They [= those who took a taster course] don’t remember much anyway. (2-NST)

Usually what intermediate schools offer is a taster course, in which Japanese characters (i.e. phonetic scripts called *hiragana* and *katakana*; see Section 2.5) are not taught. *Hiragana* characters are the main items to learn in Japanese classes at the initial stage of secondary school, so some teachers did not consider it problematic whether or not their students studied Japanese at intermediate school.

They need to know *hiragana* to learn Japanese, don’t they? But they don’t know much about it. The first term is spent on learning *hiragana*, so everyone is on a level playing field. [...] I have no trouble [with different starting points for Japanese learning]. (7-NNST)

However, the other half of the teachers mentioned the negative effects of the misalignment of Japanese study between intermediate and secondary schools. Judging from the comments made by the teachers, a taster course at intermediate school was full of fun activities, focusing more on culture and less on language. Those students who enjoyed the taster course at intermediate school and who were expecting something similar of secondary school Japanese study, were bewildered by the change in learning and teaching approaches with more linguistic aspects.

They [= Year 9 students who took a taster course from Year 7 to Year 8] will get confused if we teach them the way we normally teach, because they had so much fun at intermediate schools. They sort of cannot follow. (1-NST)

There were also cases where students had already achieved Year 9 Japanese proficiency while at intermediate school. Nevertheless, most secondary schools have no choice but to teach these students with good prior knowledge in the same class with those who study Japanese from scratch in Year 9. Thus, multi-level teaching may be required as early as in Year 9.

Some kids know all the stuff from Year 9. It'd be good if such kids could study real new stuff, but we have to adjust our level to beginners. [...] I try to treat higher-level kids differently by giving more challenging tasks whenever possible, but this is pretty hard to do in junior classes because of a large number of students. (6-NST)

Past and present researchers, such as Vallerand (1997, as cited in Dörnyei, 1998) and Oshima (2012), point out that providing appropriate challenging tasks is important in order to keep students' motivation. However, even if teachers can prepare different materials for different-level Year 9 students, class management may be more difficult in Year 9 than in Years 12 and 13 combined, because the number of students at junior levels is much larger and the junior-level students may not be as autonomous as senior-level students. Also, the teachers felt that, even when given more challenging tasks, those who already have Year 9 Japanese proficiency would not have much to learn, at least linguistically, in class. Both NSTs and NNSTs were equally split on this issue, but whether or not some of the teachers did not think the inconsistency was a problem for their teaching, the lack of learning progression could result in demotivating students to continue their study of Japanese.

Another factor creating misalignment of foreign language education is a lack of coordination in language options. Students who have enjoyed studying a foreign language at intermediate school may be demotivated when they find out that the language of their choice is not available in secondary schools.

They're [= intermediate schools are] teaching languages that we don't have like German. And the German teacher is very good so she garners a lot of loyalty from those students and they really love German and so the negative impact we get is, "You don't have German? We really want to do German. We really want to continue that." (9-NNST)

If their secondary school has compulsory foreign language study for a period of time, these students will not have any choice but to study a different language. It could be more difficult for teachers to motivate them to continue studying the language once they have completed the compulsory period of study, than it is to motivate those who have only started to study a language at secondary school.

Holt et al. (2001) and Spence (2005) alleged up to a decade ago that the misalignment of foreign language education provision between intermediate schools and secondary schools seemed to be reducing the students' potential of attaining the highest level of achievement. Unfortunately, this still seems to be the case. Not only that, if students are demotivated to study a foreign language at the initial stage of secondary school because "educational approaches to language education are uncoordinated and ineffective" (Kaplan, 1994, p. 172) (see Section 2.5), it will result in further decrease in take-up and retention rates of not just Japanese but any language study in secondary schools.

#### **4.6. Formulated Theory from Data Analysis**

Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that a theory is "generalized relations among the categories and their properties" (p. 35), and the goal of the Glaserian Grounded Theory, which I adopted for my research methodology, is to formulate a theory through the process of theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978, 1992). Below is the grounded theory I have formulated from the analysis of the data collected through the focus groups and interviews with the teachers, as well as the subsequent literature review, in accordance with Glaserian grounded theory.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Note that my evidence is based on teachers' opinions and not based on the analysis of media or political discourse.

- The overriding factor responsible for the challenges faced by the teachers of Japanese in New Zealand is the prevailing lack of value being placed on foreign language education in New Zealand's key sectors, including government, business and education.
- Teachers' challenges will continue unless this value is changed.
- This value, embedded in the "English-is-enough" mind-set in New Zealand society, can only be altered by Government policies to raise the status of language learning. This would mean a national language policy and clear directives concerning language provision and compulsory language study.
- Increased value of foreign language education would also require it to be seen for its more holistic goal: that it introduces students to "new ways of thinking about, questioning, and interpreting the world and their place in it" (MOE, 2007b, p. 24) by developing greater understanding of their own values and beliefs, and cultural identity.
- The holistic goal of foreign language education would therefore need to be recognised not just as being language proficiency or factual cultural knowledge, but also as including affective, behavioural and cognitive dimensions to cope in cross-cultural situations even with cultures that might be unfamiliar, as embodied in the concept of intercultural communicative competence.
- The value of being able to interact with people with different backgrounds in an increasingly multicultural and diverse world, would need to be recognised as being strongly career-related, irrespective of what other qualifications one might have, or whatever one's career.

The core variable "non-value of foreign language education" and the significant concepts are beyond the teachers' control, and so are the issues that stem from them. Even if the Government took initiatives to further promote foreign language education now, it would take a long time for New Zealand society to appreciate the value of such education, as can be seen from the history of language education in Australia (see Section 2.2.1), because "the modification of public attitudes is a task requiring several generations" (Kaplan, 1994, p. 172).<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the teachers do have some agency

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<sup>27</sup> Some of these findings align with those by Oshima (2012) and some diverge despite following on so closely to Oshima's study. The divergences could be due to the fact that she interviewed students at

in influencing students' continuation of foreign language study, in spite of conflicting external factors. My research findings indicate a number of strategies that they are employing to persuade and motivate students to continue studying Japanese. I will discuss these strategies in the next section.

#### **4.7. Teachers' Strategies to Resolve Challenges**

According to McLauchlan (2007), "too difficult", "lost interest", "timetable clashes" and "won't help my career" are four main reasons for discontinuing Japanese (see Section 2.5). The teachers in my research also gave these reasons for the low retention rates. They did not think that they could retain those students with "timetable clashes" or those opting for a subject that the students believed to have a clearer link to career prospects. Therefore, in order to raise the retention rates, the teachers have been trying to retain those who say "too difficult" or "lost interest" by using mainly three strategies: (1) to persuade students, or their parents to allow their children, to continue Japanese, (2) to change the students' perception that Japanese is too difficult, and (3) to find motivators for students.

*Strategy 1: persuasion of students and parents.* Analysis of the data shows that taking direct measures is one of the frequent strategies the teachers are employing to retain students; these measure include persuasion, and even contacting their parents.

When I get a list of students dropping Japanese, I try to persuade them to stay one by one. [...] I also ring their parents. (6-NST)

However, the competition is fierce because even teachers in STEM subjects, which are supposed to be popular among students, take this measure to retain students.

The science teachers at my school write a letter to all their students telling them like "you are very good at biology so do continue next year." [Among my fellow Japanese teachers at other schools] there is one who writes a letter to parents like "your child is very good at Japanese and will be able to do this and that if they continue to study Japanese." (7-NNST)

Baker (2002) points out that, in the New Zealand school system, parents have direct influences on schools through elected school boards and indirect influences by

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tertiary level on their perceptions and experience of Japanese language learning while at school, whereas my study is based on teachers' perceptions of students' views as well as the literature review.

expressing expectations to reflect their values and priority. Therefore, if parents can be persuaded to encourage their children to continue studying Japanese, then “non-value of foreign language education” may be changed. However, this strategy does not seem to have been working well, despite the teachers’ efforts, because of the competition with the STEM subjects as well as the “English-is-enough” mind-set, which is often evident in parents’ responses.

New Zealand is pretty much a monolingual country and parents think English is enough. “Everyone speaks English anyway so why bother?” [...] Parents are saying “no, you got to do English, maths, science” without thinking that you should keep the options wide. (9-NNST)

McLauchlan (2007) argues that more students will take up and continue foreign language study if they think that it is really important for their future and if their parents think the same way and encourage their children to continue foreign language study. However, according to the teachers in my research, many students and their parents seem to think otherwise. It thus appears that the teachers are consuming a lot of energy with little return for the effort.

***Strategy 2: changing perception that Japanese is too difficult.*** Holt et al. (2001) suggest that Japanese language teachers should devise ways to reduce students’ anxiousness that Japanese may be hard to learn because it is completely different from European languages in grammar and writing system. The data show that the teachers in my research were very well aware of the need to change students’ perception and discussed it in the focus group discussions. Their effort and success are summarised by the comment made by one teacher.

The kids often say to me, “I hadn’t realised that it’s not that hard.” They always think that maybe it’s harder than it is. When they get into it, they say, “the grammar in Japanese is really sensible, it makes good sense.” If you explain things carefully and make sure kids understand things well, they go, “actually I can do this after all.” Once we have that feeling of being able to do things, then they often stick with it. (8-NNST)

However, even when teachers succeed in changing their students’ perception at junior levels, students may still give up easily as they advance to higher levels with

more difficult contents.

According to McLauchlan's (2007) study, "too difficult" is the number one reason after Year 11 (29.1 percent), and the second most common reason after Year 12 (20.5 percent), for discontinuing Japanese (see Table 2.8 in Section 2.5). As mentioned under *Strategy 1*, students would carry on with Japanese study if their future career depended on it even if they thought that Japanese was difficult (McLauchlan, 2007). The reality is, however, there do not appear to be many careers that they think depend on language skills, so this makes the task of motivating students to continue extremely difficult for the teachers.

***Strategy 3: finding motivators for students.*** The teachers in my research realised that, unlike in early 1990s, Japanese skills are no longer perceived as career skills.<sup>28</sup> Now the thought of acquiring such "career-unrelated" skills does not motivate students to take up and/or continue Japanese. The findings show that they are trying other ways to motivate students, and that many of these aimed to foster intrinsic motivation.

Students no longer choose language as their career option [...] so we must find other possibilities for them, and those who love Japanese will continue no matter what. (2-NST)

The teachers in my research discussed various ways that they were employing to try to motivate students. They often use activities, which include in-class and extracurricular activities, as well as community events, in order to engage students and sustain their motivation to continue studying Japanese. When I asked the teachers in interviews what they did to recruit and/or retain students, most of them answered first by describing what activities they were doing. The activities adopted for this purpose were ranging from sushi-making, visits to Japanese restaurants, and participation in a speech contest, to a school trip to Japan. The teachers search for activities that look suitable for their students and try whatever they think may help motivate them. Of all the activities, the teachers seemed to agree that a trip to Japan is the biggest motivator.

[A school trip to Japan is] a great motivator. [...] When we display photos of the trip on the wall, they [= junior students] say, "I know this girl! She went to

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<sup>28</sup> McLauchlan (2007) describes the time when Japanese language skills were considered career skills as "the booming tourist trade catalysed a proliferation in the number of businesses targeting Japanese tourist, and many students were still able to find work locally because of their burgeoning Japanese language skills" (p. 39).

Japan!” It’s huge when we have a trip. Their enthusiasm is different. (2-NST)

A trip to Japan can provide an opportunity to practise authentic use of the language as well as “stimulation” (Vallerand, 1997, as cited in Dörnyei, 1998), and many teachers in my research said that the number of students studying Japanese do increase in a year when their school plans one. It is unfortunate, therefore, that not all schools can organise such a trip on a regular basis due to expense for students, clashes with other trips and so forth.

Despite their heavy workload with pressure to get through the work to meet the NCEA requirements in time, the teachers are trying to spend as much time and effort as they can to motivate students with a variety of activities. However, they know how difficult it is to achieve this goal and that their attempts are not always successful.

They often say, “get kids to look for something about Japan that fascinates them at the beginning of their first year, and have them turn it into their passion.” I think that’s more important than the language itself, though I haven’t been able to [get mine to]. (1-NST)

There were also a small number of teachers in my research who questioned the effectiveness of such activities as motivators.

[...] what I found, that you can really work yourself very hard to try and market it and make things fun but the trend is that the language is dropping nationwide so no matter what you do, you can wear yourself out by trying to change things. [...] I don’t think it makes too much of a difference. (10-NNST)

Oshima (2012) states that students tend to continue Japanese study at senior level if their past learning experience at junior level has been successful. However, students need to take other subjects in order to enter the university of their first choice or for their future career so that they often give up studying Japanese even when they want to continue with it. The subjects that students opt for over Japanese are not only STEM subjects, as mentioned in Section 4.3.2, but also subjects in which they think they can do better than in Japanese.

I’m not too sure [if these activities help to retain students] because their situation is more severe. When they decide what subject to take for next year, some may not take Japanese after all because they want to take a subject that they can get a

better grade in. Those who must achieve excellence or want to take another subject also drop Japanese, so they have more practical reasons [for not continuing Japanese]. (3-NST)

As already mentioned, Japanese is often perceived by students as a difficult subject with no clear link with careers (McLauchlan, 2007). When the number of subjects that students can take as options is limited, the teachers seem to think that activities alone cannot motivate students to carry on with Japanese.

The challenges faced by the teachers and the strategies they have had to resort to, illustrate very clearly the repercussions of the core variable “non-value of foreign language education” and the “English-is-enough” mind-set on the current teaching environment. Even if measures were taken immediately by the Government along the lines of those taken in Australia (Australian Government, 2012), it would take time to change values towards foreign language learning. The teachers, whether NSTs or NNSTs, are therefore constantly faced with having to find effective strategies to reduce attrition rates.

While many of the challenges faced by NSTs and NNSTs were the same, there were some differences. In the next section, I will discuss these differences as well as their respective strengths. Although they are not directly caused by the core variable, the challenges are exacerbated by the socio-cultural context in which they are teaching. These differences will also form the basis for my recommendations in Chapter 5, which promote possibilities for collaboration as a way of managing some of the teachers’ challenges.

#### **4.8. Differences in Challenges Faced by NSTs and NNSTs**

While the grounded theory approach is intended to eliminate prior assumptions, I had expected that the core variable would indicate challenges related to new teaching approaches or assessment, or that there would be differences in challenges between NSTs and NNSTs relating to language teaching. As it turned out, the most significant challenges they faced were those associated with the core variable “non-value of foreign language education” and the significant concepts. These were common to both NSTs and NNSTs probably because they were external factors. Where their challenges differed, was at the individual level, and were related to their respective differences in teaching language and culture.

#### 4.8.1. Differences in Language Teaching Skills

According to the NSTs in my research who had a limited teaching experience, one of the strengths of NNSTs is a better understanding of teaching grammar, which Benke and Medgyes (2005) also point out. This is because, like their own students, NNSTs have learnt Japanese as a foreign language and, thus, learnt grammar from scratch, whereas NSTs acquired Japanese as their first language without having to study grammar.

I've just started to teach and I've never learnt Japanese grammar, so for me teaching grammar is a bit... You'll probably learn as you gain experience. I really feel that Kiwi teachers are very good at teaching grammar. (3-NST)

Another strength of NNSTs is the knowledge of where students may encounter difficulties in their study and what strategies they can employ to overcome difficulties (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Medgyes, 1992). One NNST in my research commented on this as follows:

I think sometimes it's [= being a NNST is] an advantage. It's a strength because you understand you're in the same position as your learners, explaining the strategy of how you've gone about learning is good. You can pass strategies on. You're equal with your learner 'cause you're in that same situation. So I think it's a strength really. (11-NNST)

On the other hand, the NNSTs seem to have challenges related to language skills and this reflects findings of other studies, such as Benke and Medgyes (2005), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), McNeill (1993, as cited in Coşkun, 2013) and Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999). In terms of writing skills, insufficient knowledge of *kanji* (i.e. Chinese characters) can be a concern for NNSTs when searching for resources to aid their teaching.

My biggest weakness is *kanji*. I struggle with *kanji*. Typing is easy. You win some you lose some. And that makes using real text off the Internet and stuff really challenging. (8-NNST)

The challenge stemming from a lack of New Zealand based textbooks seems problematic for both NNSTs and NSTs but for different reasons. NSTs with a limited experience may need support for teaching grammar while NNSTs may need help with

resources production. However, NNSTs may have good ideas for teaching Japanese grammar and some strategies to overcome difficulties in studying Japanese. Analysis of the data shows that NSTs may not experience as much difficulty as NNSTs with resources, which reflects that of Medgyes (2001). If their respective strengths were harnessed through collaboration, they would be able to help each other with teaching pedagogy and resource production. This could have a positive effect on student achievement and, in turn, motivation.

#### **4.8.2. Differences in Knowledge/Experience of Japanese Culture**

During the focus group discussions, the teachers discussed cultural knowledge. This, however, did not develop into discussion on iCLT.<sup>29</sup> Instead, they seemed to be more intent on discussing what they knew about Japanese culture and how they were teaching culture.

The NNSTs seemed to think that one of their weaknesses was their insufficient knowledge of Japanese culture, while acknowledging the NSTs' rich knowledge and experience of Japanese culture as a tremendous advantage, which confirmed what Carless (2006), Coşkun (2013) and Tajino and Tajino (2000) found in their study.

I think one of the biggest advantages of native speakers is cultural knowledge. I often find it. I think Japanese culture's fantastic and it's a lot of fun but I haven't got that in-depth knowledge about a lot of the things. And keeping [up with] that contemporary culture too. (8-NNST)

The NSTs in my research, however, commented that it was not enough just to introduce students to Japanese contemporary culture. They said that what was more important was to be able to talk about it enthusiastically like NNSTs would do so that it would sound appealing to students.

There once was a teacher in Christchurch who was very good at teaching. [...] She passionately talked about Japan being highly developed and Japanese people being very diligent, and told us she was teaching Japanese out of admiration. When I heard her, I thought there was no way I could talk like that. [...] Well, how should I put it? It's something Japanese are not good at. [...] It's not quite bragging about ourselves, but I do tell my students Japan is a nice and very

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<sup>29</sup> This may have been due to the fact that I asked the teachers to discuss their challenges freely during the focus group discussions and that I did not specifically ask them to discuss iCLT though I raised the issue of the 2007 NZC (MOE, 2007b).

convenient place. (3-NST)

The NSTs in my research seemed to agree that the way NNSTs talk about Japanese culture has a certain amount of positive effect on retaining students of Japanese.

What I find difficult is, I cannot explain well how attractive Japan is. [...] The Japanese culture viewed from the perspective of non-native Japanese teachers is different, interesting and really exciting. [...] That view, I lack, as nothing seems special to me. It's something I need in order to promote Japanese and to retain students. (2-NST)

NSTs and NNSTs have different knowledge and experience and even among NSTs or NNSTs their knowledge and experience vary. However, the focus on cultural knowledge, and the comment above by the NST on not being able to identify anything special about Japanese culture, could indicate that teachers have still to develop an understanding of iCLT. Collaboration could therefore be mutually beneficial not just for increasing their cultural knowledge but also their understanding of cultural identity and iCLT.

#### **4.9. Summary**

This chapter was dedicated to presenting my research findings, through data analysis using the Glaserian grounded theory approach, on challenges that Japanese language teachers are facing in New Zealand secondary schools.

In the theoretical model (see Figure 4.1) that I drew up after the analysis of the data, “the value of foreign language education” was identified as the core category and “non-value” as its core variable (Section 4.3). The data analysis also indicated three significant concepts that interact with each other to reinforce the core variable: foreign language skills not seen as career skills (Section 4.4.1); foreign language not required by any university faculty (Section 4.4.2); and foreign language study not compulsory during the schooling period (Section 4.4.3). The interaction between the core category and the three significant concepts created two fundamental issues: low take-up and retention rates of foreign language study (Section 4.5.1), and ineffective foreign language education provision (Section 4.5.2). The low take-up and retention rates were seen as being responsible for two challenges: the lack of New Zealand based textbooks, and the organisation of multi-level classes, both of which could create huge workload as well as difficulty in class management for Japanese language teachers. One of the

challenges caused by ineffective foreign language education provision was inadequate classroom time, which was also linked with the low take-up and retention rates, because there is the cutting back of classroom time caused by the small number of students. The other is misalignment between intermediate schools and secondary schools. There was evidence that all these challenges could prevent students from achieving their potential in language study.

The grounded theory I formulated (see Section 4.6) indicates that the teachers' challenges stem from the core variable: a lack of value being placed on foreign language education in key sectors of New Zealand society, including government, business and education sectors. It will take a long time for a shift in these values to occur, even if the Government were to lead the way with clear policy directives, such as identification of Japanese as a priority language and a decision to make foreign language learning compulsory, as its Australian counterpart has done. Until this happens, the Japanese language teachers are left with developing their own strategies to deal with how to retain students and reduce the attrition rates.

As far as the core variable and the significant concepts were concerned, NSTs and NNSTs were experiencing the same challenges, and the findings identified a number of common strategies that they were employing to deal with these challenges. Their strategies included persuading students and their parents, trying to change students' perception of Japanese being too difficult, and finding motivators for students (Section 4.7). However, it seemed that these strategies are consuming a lot of energy and not always providing sufficient return for the effort.

The findings also identified differences in challenges that the NSTs and NNSTs faced. These challenges were at the individual level and related to how they teach language and culture, and develop resources (Section 4.8). At the same time, the respective strengths of the NSTs and NNSTs came to light, which suggested that collaboration between them could help resolve some of the challenges that they were facing.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, at first I was expecting the main challenges faced by Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools to be related to the changes following the announcement of the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b). However, the data analysis led me in an unexpected direction: non-value of foreign language education. Contrary to my first expectation, neither the additional teacher discretion afforded by the NCEA standards, which were designed for teachers to make the most of more open-ended and less prescriptive language teaching, nor the shift in teaching

methodology from CLT to TBLT were considered the main concern by the teachers in my research. The fact that they did not consider iCLT to be challenging, along with their comments on teaching culture, seems to reinforce the findings in the Harvey, Roskvist, Corder and Stacey (2011) report that many teachers had still not made the transition to iCLT. This may be because the extra time required to cope with their various challenges, compounded by the demands of a character-based language, might be preventing the teachers from being able to spare more time on developing an understanding of the new learning and teaching approaches. My research has adopted the Glaserian grounded theory approach, which means only one core category is identified for discussion. At the time I conducted the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews, what concerned the teachers most was “non-value of foreign language education” and there was very little discussion on new teaching approaches. Therefore, based on the principle of grounded theory, the theoretical model has not included changes in approaches to learning and teaching as challenges.

I will further discuss the findings and make my recommendations in the final chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

My research aimed to investigate challenges that Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools are currently facing. To achieve this aim, I gathered data by means of two focus group discussions and follow-up individual face-to-face interviews with a total of 12 in-service secondary school teachers of Japanese as my participants, six of whom were NSTs and six NNSTs. For my research methodology, I adopted Glaserian grounded theory, which can allow the researcher to modify the focus and direction of research during data analysis if necessary. This was because, although there is literature on language education in New Zealand, there is very little that discusses challenges from teachers' point of view, so it was difficult to formulate a hypothesis. In this chapter, I will further discuss my findings and present recommendations.

#### **5.2. Non-Value of Foreign Language Education and Challenges for Teachers**

As it turned out, contrary to the impressions I had formed when I was an assistant Japanese teacher at a secondary school, the core category was not pedagogical changes following the curriculum changes around the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b), such as TBLT and iCLT. Rather the data analysis indicated that the core variable was “non-value of foreign language education”. This core variable can be seen to stem from the predominant “English-is-enough” mind-set in New Zealand, largely influenced by English, a leading world lingua franca, being the dominant language. The repercussions of the core variable are seen at a number of levels, such as government, business sector, universities and schools, and students and parents. Developments in language education policy in New Zealand contrast with those in Australia, despite the similarities in their history, geographic location and economic organisation. In New Zealand, there is no national languages policy, Asian languages, including Japanese, are not priority languages, and there is no plan to make foreign language study compulsory. Teaching in this socio-cultural context has created challenges for language teachers.

##### **5.2.1. Japanese Language Education in Secondary Schools**

The literature indicates that many of the concerns about the state of foreign language education in New Zealand are still the same now as they were 20 to 30 years

ago. Despite various changes in education provision, the trends in numbers studying foreign languages are disappointing and in fact the decline in Japanese is particularly marked (see Table 2.3 in Section 2.3). The teachers of Japanese in the research believed that the flow down effect from a lack of recognition of the value of foreign language skills by employers, foreign languages not being an entrance requirement by any university faculty, and foreign languages not being compulsory in schools, has resulted in students' and parents' perceptions that foreign language skills are not of importance for their careers. This, they felt, was having a detrimental effect on uptake of languages, including Japanese, and together with competition from STEM subjects in particular, has contributed to low retention rates (see Figure 4.1 in Section 4.2). The situation is further compounded by student perceptions of the difficulty of learning Japanese. It is well documented that the time taken to reach the same level of proficiency in a character-based language, such as Japanese, is three times longer than for such European languages as French and Spanish (Corder & Waller, 2005, 2007; Komori & Zimmerman, 2001; Van Aacken, 1999). Also, reductions in already inadequate timetabled hours for teaching has meant that teachers and students have been under pressure to master curriculum requirements, thus reinforcing the perception of difficulty and seeing students opt for languages, such as Spanish, or other non-language subjects because they are perceived to be easier.

### **5.2.2. Challenges for Teachers**

The teachers believed that the low take-up and retention rates have had a number of consequences for teaching Japanese in New Zealand secondary schools. Their main concerns are the lack of New Zealand based textbooks that align with changes in curriculum and assessment, because of too small a market for publishers, the organisation of multi-level classes due to the small number of students at senior levels, and the cutting back of classroom time in order to make way for more popular subjects. The complexities of the Japanese language appear to augment challenges faced by teachers when having to produce resources and prepare the required range of activities for their multi-level classes. The inadequate classroom time is more serious for Japanese teachers than European language teachers because of Japanese being a character-based language and having a totally different linguistic structure from English.

There is also an issue of the misalignment of foreign language education between intermediate and secondary schools, which not only results in teachers having to teach

multi-level classes at junior levels, but also affects progression of student learning. According to the teachers in my research, most intermediate schools only offer taster courses, which focus more on culture than language and where no Japanese script is taught. Some students get demotivated when they encounter different teaching approaches and content at secondary school, such as having to start learning the basic phonetic script, *hiragana*. On the other hand, there are also some students who have already achieved Year 9 Japanese proficiency while at intermediate school, and they may be demotivated too if they perceive they are not progressing in their language learning at the initial stage of secondary school.

### **5.2.3. Grounded Theory Formulated from Data Analysis**

The grounded theory I have formulated from the data analysis and the subsequent literature review is that the overriding factor responsible for the challenges faced by the teachers of Japanese in New Zealand is the prevailing lack of value being placed on foreign language education in New Zealand's key sectors, including government, business and education. Teachers' challenges will continue unless this value is changed. This value, embedded in the "English-is-enough" mind-set in New Zealand society, can only be altered by a greater awareness that foreign language education is not just about language proficiency or factual cultural knowledge. It also develops intercultural attributes to effectively interact with people with different backgrounds. In an increasingly multicultural and diverse world, being able to cope in cross-cultural situations, even with cultures that are unfamiliar, is very clearly career-related, irrespective of what the career might be.

Changing the "English-is-enough" mind-set in New Zealand society would take generations, as pointed out by Kaplan (1994). Government-led policies along the lines of those taken by the Australian Government that are clear indications of the value of foreign language study and focus resources more strategically, could provide the necessary catalyst for change. However, this would not necessarily change values towards language education. It would also need changes in values in key sectors of New Zealand society, starting with employers, particularly in the corporate sector, to include valuing the intercultural attribute of the language learner as an important employment skill. Until that happens, however, there appear to be no prospects for a solution to the challenges, stemming from the non-value of foreign languages, faced by Japanese teachers in secondary schools in the immediate future.

#### **5.2.4. Teachers Responses to Challenges**

While the teachers in the research discussed a variety of strategies they employed to manage their challenges, it was clear that underpinning the strategies was the belief in the need to motivate students and to improve retention rates. The strategies developed by the teachers fall into three main categories: (1) to persuade students and their parents that Japanese study is worth continuing; (2) to change the students' perception that Japanese is difficult to learn; and (3) to help students find something that will motivate them to carry on with their language study. However, the teachers' comments suggest that their strategies are not always working and, as the statistics show (see Table 2.1 in Section 2.2.2), the number of students studying Japanese continues to decrease year after year. It is understandable why the teachers expressed frustration and why the discussions kept reverting to the lack of value of foreign language education as being the primary source of their problems.

Nevertheless, the data analysis indicates areas where the teachers have agency to resolve at least some of the difficulties they are facing. The challenges related to the core variable are similar for NSTs and NNSTs, and this is probably because they are caused by external factors beyond their control. However, there are some differences in the difficulties that they experience, and these relate to their teaching as a result of individual factors, such as socialisation, teaching experience and the level of language proficiency. While the difficulties that they experience might not be seen as a direct consequence of the core variable, the related socio-cultural context in which they are teaching seems to have an exacerbating effect.

These different difficulties between NSTs and NNSTs in fact originate from what the teachers in my research believe to be differences in their respective strengths. They believe that NSTs have greater linguistic competence, especially knowledge of the writing system, while NNSTs are more skilled in teaching grammar. NSTs are seen as having an abundance of cultural knowledge and NNSTs as having the skills to talk about culture enthusiastically and to engage the students. Therefore, it would seem that if NSTs and NNSTs could collaborate and capitalise on their respective strengths, they might be able to resolve, or at least manage, some of the challenges that they are facing. My recommendations in the next section are based on this concept of collaboration.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

“Non-value of foreign language education”, which emerged as the core variable through the substantive coding process, influences the students' motivation to take up

and continue Japanese language study. With no external motivators, such as career skills and requirements for university entrance, the teachers must find alternative motivators for students and help them develop their self-motivation to carry on with foreign language study. Ushioda (1996) emphasises that it is more important to generate intrinsic motivators, rather than extrinsic ones, for long-term success in language learning, but Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are not independent from one another and that they interact to either increase or decrease language learners' motivation. As the literature has shown, motivation is complex and different students have different motivators (Oshima, 2012; Ryan & Deci 2000). My recommendations thus are on how the teachers can create the learning conditions to optimise potential motivators, which might provide intrinsic or extrinsic, integrative or instrumental motivation, depending on the individual student, and to help students to develop self-motivation.

### **5.3.1. Network for Professional Development and Resource Development**

The teachers in my research talked about their dream of holding joint events with other schools but said that they had not much opportunity to discuss it between them. They mentioned that there was no active networking among Japanese language teachers in Auckland, and it appeared that, due to their current workload, it was difficult to attend very many professional development programmes, which, as is well known, often provide opportunities for networking. There are a number of existing networks for Japanese language teachers in New Zealand, such as the New Zealand Association of Japanese Language Teachers (NZAJLT), but what the teachers in my research need is the benefit of more locally-based networking.<sup>30</sup>

However, research has shown that networks for just creating or sharing resources, talking about issues and offering advice is not sufficient (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007). Therefore, the networks and collaboration I am suggesting would provide the forum for teachers not just to work together to create resources and experiential learning experiences that will enhance student learning and achievement, but also for professional development. The fact that the teachers focused on teaching culture without reference to iCLT, could indicate that they have not made the transition to iCLT yet, as Harvey et al. (2011) noted in their study. Teachers could get together to explore their own ideas as well as new approaches to learning and teaching, such as iCLT and

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<sup>30</sup> This sort of local-based networking seems to be happening in other parts of New Zealand, Marlborough for one, as described in Hunt (2013).

TBLT. They would be able to question their understanding of culture and identity with each other. This would be particularly useful for the NSTs who, as can be seen from the comment in Section 4.8.2, are so familiar with their own Japanese culture that they do not notice aspects of their own culture or present it in the same way as an NNST.

Producing teaching materials was one of the challenges that the teachers in my research were facing because of the lack of resources that would be provided by textbooks aligned to current teaching, learning and assessment needs. Thus, if NSTs and NNSTs can work together and capitalise on their respective strengths, their collaboration could help make up for the lack of such textbooks and could also result in the production of new experiential learning and teaching activities in less time than by working individually. As Kakita (1993, as cited in Agawa et al., 2011) points out, such factors as teaching approaches and materials can enhance students' motivation. Collaboration could not only save time for the teachers but also lead to increased student engagement and achievement. This could in turn lead to sustained motivation to continue studying Japanese, and eventually even put the brake on the number of students who discontinue Japanese language study.

Needless to say, the scope of collaboration does not have to be restricted to collaboration between NSTs and NNSTs in secondary schools. If they were to invite teachers from intermediate schools into their network, they could also explore how they might be able to resolve the issue of learning progression from intermediate schools to secondary schools.

The time saved from making resources individually would also enable teachers to engage in professional development programmes to help them adjust to the many changes in learning and teaching leading up to and following the *2007 NZC* (MOE, 2007b) and the introduction of new assessments of the NCEA between 2002 and 2004 (NZQA, n.d.). Effectively integrating new approaches, for example iCLT and TBLT, is likely to result in greater student awareness of the relevance of language learning for their futures, and the idea of acquiring such knowledge and skills could work as a much-needed motivator for students.

### **5.3.2. Network for Activities**

Rich experiences of interacting with the culture of the target language would enhance students' motivation to communicate with people of the culture and to deepen their understanding of the relationship between language and culture (Csizér & Kormos, 2008; Harvey, Conway, Richards & Roskvist, 2010; Hunt, 2013). In the rest of this

section, I will discuss how activities through networks and collaboration could be utilised to provide students with rich intercultural experiences and tasks.

**Guest appearances.** NSTs and NNSTs could invite each other to their schools as guest teachers to provide different perspectives on Japanese culture. However, guests will not have to be limited to teachers; guests can be graduates or local business people, as suggested by Holt et al. (2001), and they could talk about how they put their Japanese language skills to practical use. A network among teachers will probably help locate appropriate guest speakers, and an opportunity to listen to such a guest speaker may help students to visualise themselves using Japanese in their careers or to achieve specific aims and/or interest. This construction of “ideal self” (Dörnyei, 2009) could motivate students to further their Japanese study. With opportunities to question speakers and then to reflect in follow-up activities, these sessions could prove to be useful iCLT and TBLT activities.

**Joint events.** About half of the teachers in my research said that middle-level students were not interested in existing competitive events and that their schools would not participate in such events. However, a joint event does not have to be a solely competitive one. The joint events I am suggesting, therefore, are those that even schools not normally participating in competitive events can join in.

One such joint event could be something similar to the one held annually at the University of Auckland for tertiary students in Auckland called “Nihongo Festival”, where participants can not only deliver a speech but also sing a song and perform a skit, among other things, as long as they use Japanese, and there are also quizzes to test the participants’ and their supporters’ knowledge of Japanese culture and society (Consulate-General of Japan in Auckland, 2012). Or, it can be a little more culture-oriented event, like “Taste of Japan” with such activities as origami, calligraphy and sushi-making, in which students from various schools can take the initiative and perhaps be in charge of their chosen activities as well.<sup>31</sup> Local Japanese restaurants and businesses might sponsor and participate in such events if schools jointly approach them. By expanding their network and involving the local community, the teachers could enhance their students’ learning experiences with authentic task-based learning.

Littlejohn (2001) suggests that, in order to sustain students’ motivation, teachers

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<sup>31</sup> “Taste of Japan” is a well-established interactive Japanese cultural festival held in Auckland. For more information, see the Taste of Japan website (New Zealand Japan Society of Auckland, 2012).

choose larger and open-ended tasks and provide choice for students. Being involved in the process of organising a successful event can bring a sense of achievement, which Vallerand (1997, as cited in Dörnyei, 1998) says will generate intrinsic motivation. Language learning should not be bound by classroom walls (Hunt, 2013), and a fun event organised jointly among local schools, as described above, can provide students with an opportunity to not just experience Japanese culture but also meet up with students of Japanese from other schools and engage in collaborative tasks.

Joint events can help teachers to share the organising role, thus, help them to increase the frequency of the events. Students will then have a chance to take part in and experience a variety of authentic experiential activities, which could contribute to students' self-motivation.

**Joint school trips to Japan.** Another event that could be organised jointly is a school trip to Japan. According to the teachers, a trip to Japan is one of the biggest motivators for students to continue studying Japanese. Even if it is not easy for each school to plan one, such a trip may be made possible on a regular basis when interested school parties are combined with a more viable number of participants to negotiate with travel agencies. A trip to Japan can not only provide “stimulation” (Vallerand, 1997, as cited in Dörnyei, 1998) but also an opportunity for students to consciously bridge intercultural gaps and to facilitate authentic application of language. According to Ōiwa (2008), this can contribute to the generation and development of motivation because all three needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness; see Section 2.6) in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) are satisfied through intercultural communication. As the literature suggests, a trip to Japan can indeed work as a motivator, so collaborative trips are certainly worth organising regularly.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

While recognising the limitations of this study in that the number of participants was 12 and all were located in Auckland, recent publications that echo the same concerns and challenges, such as by Hunt (2013) who is a practising teacher of French in Marlborough, and the report commissioned by the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education (McGee et al., 2013), would suggest that the findings of my research depict the current challenges that the Japanese language teachers in New Zealand secondary schools are facing. Despite the various curriculum changes for language provision in the last decade or so, there still seem to be many of the same

concerns that were expressed up to 20 to 30 years ago.

The theory formulated from my research is that the overriding factor responsible for the teachers' challenges is the lack of value placed on foreign language education that permeates New Zealand, and that this has been rationalised and sustained by the "English-is-enough" mind-set. The fact that non-value was the core variable in this study, and not new learning and teaching approaches, highlights the extent of the impact on teaching Japanese in this socio-cultural context. It might also be indicating that the challenges from this socio-cultural context are impeding teachers from making the transition to new learning and teaching approaches, such as iCLT and TBLT. The data would indicate a worrying situation for Japanese language education in New Zealand, with serious implications not only for student motivation but also for teacher motivation. There could also be implications for other foreign languages.

Changing the "English-is-enough" mind-set would take generations, as pointed out by Kaplan (1994). The catalyst would come from changes in values in key sectors of New Zealand society, led by employers, particularly the corporate sector, and universities, in partnership with government-led policies, along the lines of those taken by the Australian Government, that are clear indications of the value of foreign language study and focus resources more strategically.

In the meantime, teachers have to manage the challenges presented by the current situation. I have come to realise, through my research, how heavy each Japanese language teacher's workload is, and it can be easily assumed that their heavy workload may discourage them from establishing a locally based network or even from participating in one. However, I believe that it will be more achievable through collaboration, and through effective utilisation of an active collaborative network, teachers will be able to enhance student learning and help them discover various motivators. Furthermore, the network will enable teachers to engage in professional development to help them adjust to the many changes in language education in New Zealand in recent years. The potential outcome is for greater student engagement and achievement, as well as awareness that the knowledge and skills gained from learning a language are very relevant to their future careers. This would provide an extrinsic motivator that could lead to the increased take-up and retention rates, which in turn could lead to solving the problems with multi-level classes and inadequate classroom time. Networking and collaboration could help teachers to resolve some of the challenges they are currently facing.

It would be my utmost pleasure if my research could prompt debate among not

just Japanese language teachers, but also other foreign language teachers, and make a little contribution to them when addressing their challenges.

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## APPENDIX

### Admission to Universities in New Zealand (Excerpt from the course book of a secondary school in Auckland)

University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington have adopted a ranking system for admission to their universities. Information is in their prospectus and website.

This is an example of the University of Auckland ranking system:

#### **What do you need to get in?**

To be admitted to the University of Auckland you must have a University Entrance qualification based on your Level 3 credits (see pg 11). You must also meet the admission requirements for the programme(s) you wish to apply for, such as required subjects, a portfolio or audition.

Applicants for all undergraduate programmes will be ranked based on their Level 3 credit results. You are encouraged to do your best in your secondary school studies to ensure your application is as competitive as possible. There is information in the Careers room and on the website [www.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.auckland.ac.nz) which shows rank scores and any additional requirements you need for admission into The University of Auckland's undergraduate programmes in 2014.

#### **National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 3**

To be admitted to The University of Auckland you must gain the University Entrance Standard (page 11) and be selected into a programme. You also will be allocated a rank score based on your 80 best credits at Level 3 or higher over a maximum of five approved subjects, weighted by the level of achievement attained in each set of credits. If you achieve fewer than 80 credits, the rank score will be based on those credits you have gained at Level 3 over a maximum of five approved subjects and weighted by the level of achievement. The approved subjects are determined by NZQA and a list is on Page 7. You are strongly encouraged to take Achievement Standards as preparation for University studies.

The rank score will be calculated by awarding four points for Excellence, three for Merit and two for Achieved for up to 24 credits in each approved subject taken at Level 3 in the last two years. The maximum score available is 320.

<b>Example of how a rank score for NCEA Level 3 is calculated</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Standard type</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Calculate</b>	<b>Rank score</b>
English	Achievement	6 Excellence 6 Merit 16* Achieved	6 × 4 points 6 × 3 points 12* × 2 points	66
History	Achievement	8 Excellence 10 Achieved	8 × 4 points 10 × 2 points	52
Physics	Achievement	24 Merit	24 × 3 points	72
Calculus	Achievement	4 Excellence 3 Merit 8** Achieved	4 × 4 points 3 × 3 points	25
Statistics	Achievement	7 Merit 10** Achieved	7 × 3 points	21
Economics	Achievement	6*** Achieved	Not counted***	Nil
<b>Rank score</b>				<b>236</b>
* Only five approved subjects are included in the calculation. ** Maximum 24 credits per subject. Any points above this limit are excluded. *** Not included as only best 80 credits used in calculation of rank score.				

### Conjoint programmes

If you are applying for a conjoint programme you must meet the subject and credit requirements for both degrees.

For entrance to some University of Auckland degrees you will need to meet Table A/Table B requirements as explained in the example on the following page.

### NCEA (Level 3) subjects

Table A	Table B
Classical Studies	Accounting
English	Biology
Geography	Calculus
History	Chemistry
History of Art	Economics
Te Reo Māori or Te Reo Rangatira	Mathematics*
	Statistics
	Physics
*Cannot be used in combination with Calculus and/or Statistics	

### Examples:

These are the rank score, subject credits and other requirements that will guarantee your admission to the University of Auckland in 2014:

Programme	NCEA Level 3 Rank Score
Bachelor of Engineering (BE Hons)	250 with a minimum of 17 external Level 3 credits in Maths with Calculus and 16 external Level 3 credits in Physics
Bachelor of Health Science (BHSc)	250 with a minimum of 18 credits in one subject from Table A and a minimum of 18 credits in one subject from Table B.
Bachelor of Commerce (BCom)	180 with a minimum of 16 credits in each of three subjects from Table A and/or Table B.
Bachelor of Arts (BA)	150
Bachelor of Science (BSc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food and Nutrition</li><li>• Biomedical Science</li><li>• Sport and Exercise Science</li><li>• All other majors and specialisations</li></ul>	200 280 180 incl. 14 credits in Biological Sciences and/or Human Biology at NCEA L3 165
Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS)	230 with a minimum of 16 credits in one subject from Table A and a minimum of 16 credits in one subject for Table B. Plus portfolio of creative work and written statement.