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**JAPANESE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN MALAYSIA AND
NEW ZEALAND: RECENT HISTORY, CURRENT PRACTICE
AND CURRICULUM**

A thesis

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By

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ABSTRACT

Comparisons of curriculum have been shown to be useful in terms of finding new ideas to raise the standard of education in one country and to enhance global competitiveness (Adamson & Morris, 2007). The purpose of the research reported in this thesis was to examine Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand. The study compared the approach to Japanese language learning and teaching in both countries and also compared the curriculum and syllabus for both countries. This study employed three methods: semi-structured interview, autoethnography, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out the recent history and current practice of Japanese Language teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand. Four participants, one from Malaysia and three from New Zealand were involved in the interviews. Autoethnography was also infused in the research which permitted the author to share her knowledge and experiences as an experienced Japanese language teacher in Malaysia. The analysis of the curriculum and syllabus documents were carried out to look at the content of both countries' Japanese Language Curriculum to investigate its underpinning approach to language teaching, and to analyze the similarities and differences between the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curricula.

The results show that both Japanese language curricula shared many similarities in terms of their types of syllabus, language learning aims and language areas focused in the curricula content. This indicates that Malaysia and New Zealand, like other countries in the world, follow international trends in language teaching.

Both countries' Japanese language syllabi have strong characteristics of Skills-Based and Outcomes-Based Syllabi. The curricula emphasize the acquisition of four very important language skills: listening, writing, reading and speaking. Both curricula promote teachers autonomy in decision-making and designing or planning programs. However, in comparison, New Zealand shows more teacher-autonomy than Malaysia. The findings also indicate that, although Japanese Language Curriculum in both Malaysia and New Zealand follows the global trends in language teaching, each also reflects its nation's visions and the needs of its people: Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum was established to enable students to recognize and embrace the values that had brought Japan to its economic level now. While, Japanese language education in New Zealand starts because of the government's desire to trade and do business with Japan, a new economic power at the time.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father.

I am forever indebted to my father, Abdul Jabbar Maarof, for his unconditional love, care and support. He is the reason I am here. For me to come here and doing a Master Degree is his dream as much as mine. I remember his last words to me... “whatever happen to me....I want you to go to New Zealand”. Although he is no longer with me, he is forever remembered and this thesis is for him.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	x
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Interest in Topic.....	1
1.3 Malaysia and Its Background	2
1.3.1 Demographic	2
1.3.2 Language.....	2
1.3.3 Education.....	3
1.3.4 Japanese Language in Malaysian Schools.....	5
1.4 New Zealand and Its Background	7
1.4.1 Demographic	7
1.4.2 Language.....	7
1.4.3 Education.....	8
1.4.4 Japanese Language in New Zealand Schools.....	8
1.5 Summary	9
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Overview	11
2.2 Terminology: Curriculum and Syllabus.....	11
2.2.1 Factors Influenced Curriculum	13
2.2.2 Language Syllabus	15
2.3 Comparative Studies in Curriculum.....	22
2.4 Latest Trends in Language Teaching and Learning	24
2.5 Studies in Japanese Language Education	27
2.5.1 Studies around the World	27

2.5.2	Studies in Malaysia and New Zealand	34
2.6	Chapter Summary	42
2.7	Justification of Present Study	44
Chapter 3:	METHODOLOGY	47
3.1	Overview	47
3.2	Research Paradigm for This Study.....	49
3.3	Interview.....	50
3.3.1	Semi-Structured Interviews.....	51
3.3.2	Interview Process	52
3.4	Autoethnography	52
3.5	Document Analysis.....	53
3.5.1	Document Analysis Process	55
3.6	Participants.....	56
3.6.1	Criteria for Selection of Participants.....	56
3.6.2	Recruitment	57
3.6.3	Participants.....	57
3.7	Ethical Consideration	61
3.8	Data Analysis	62
3.8.1	Data Analysis for Interview	62
3.8.2	Curriculum Document Data Analysis	63
3.9	Summary	64
Chapter 4:	RESULT.....	66
4.1	Overview	66
4.2	Overview of Interview and Autoethnography Results	66
4.3	Japanese Language Education in Malaysia	67
4.3.1	Japanese Language Teaching History in Malaysia.....	68
4.3.2	Current Status of Japanese Language in Malaysia	71
4.3.3	Japanese Language Teaching Approach in Malaysia	73
4.3.4	Japanese Language Resources in Malaysia	77
4.3.5	Japanese Language Assessment in Malaysia	79
4.3.6	Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia	81
4.3.7	Japanese Language Teacher Qualification in Malaysia.....	83
4.4	Summary	85
4.5	Japanese Language Education in New Zealand	86
4.5.1	Japanese Language History in New Zealand	87

4.5.2	Current Status of Japanese Language in New Zealand	90
4.5.3	Japanese Language Teaching Approach in New Zealand.....	92
4.5.4	Japanese Language Resources in New Zealand	97
4.5.5	Japanese Language Assessment in New Zealand	98
4.5.6	Japanese Language Curriculum in New Zealand	99
4.5.7	Japanese Language Teacher Qualification in New Zealand.....	104
4.6	Summary	105
4.7	Overview of Document Analysis Results	106
4.8	Description of Malaysian General Statement	107
4.8.1	Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum	107
4.8.2	Objectives	108
4.8.3	Curriculum Organization	108
4.8.4	Interpersonal, Informational and Aesthetic.....	109
4.8.5	Language Content	111
4.8.6	Cultural Content	112
4.8.7	Educational Emphases	112
4.8.8	Assessment	113
4.8.9	Summary	113
4.9	Description of New Zealand General Statement	114
4.9.1	Learning Languages Learning Area.....	115
4.9.2	Objectives	115
4.9.3	Curriculum Organization	116
4.9.4	Levels and Strands in Learning Languages.....	117
4.9.5	Summary	118
4.10	Description of Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Syllabus Specifications	118
4.10.1	Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus.....	119
4.10.2	New Zealand Japanese Language Syllabus.....	123
4.10.3	Summary	129
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION		131
5.1	Overview.....	131
5.2	Comparison of Current Japanese Language Teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand	131
5.2.1	Japanese Language Teaching History.....	132
5.2.2	Current Status of Japanese Language	133
5.2.3	Japanese Language Teaching Approach	135

5.2.4	Japanese Language Resources	137
5.2.5	Japanese Language Assessment	138
5.2.6	Japanese Language Curriculum	139
5.2.7	Japanese Language Teacher Qualification.....	140
5.2.8	Summary	141
5.3	Comparison of Curriculum Document	143
5.3.1	General Statement of Curriculum.....	143
5.3.2	Syllabus Specification	148
5.3.3	Summary	153
5.4	Discussion of Current Findings in the Light of the Literature Review	155
5.5	Limitations of Study	161
5.6	Conclusion	162
REFERENCES		166
Appendices.....		182

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Participants information	60
Table 2: Summary of Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language Education	142
Table 3: Syllabus Types	150

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter begins with an explanation of my interest in the topic in 1.2. In the next section (1.3), I will present the background to both Malaysia and New Zealand regarding their demographic background, educational system and Japanese language education.

1.2 Interest in Topic

I am a Japanese language teacher teaching in a secondary school in Malaysia. I have been teaching Japanese for eight years now. I have a deep interest in and passion for Japanese language teaching, curriculum development and course design, and I believe that comparing New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum with the Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia will produce new knowledge which may be very beneficial for future curriculum development. The opportunity to come to New Zealand to study in the area of Curriculum Development at University of Waikato has led me to this research topic. I wanted to use this opportunity to learn about New Zealand's Japanese Language Curriculum and syllabus, including its recent history and how Japanese is taught in this country.

1.3 Malaysia and Its Background

In this section, I will give essential background information about Malaysia including its demography, the languages spoken and the education system.

1.3.1 Demographic

Malaysia is a multiracial country situated in South East Asia with a population of about 28.3 million (Wikipedia, 2010). The people of Malaysia comprise many ethnic groups. There are three main ethnic groups in Malaysia which are the “Bumiputra” (Malays and aborigines) with the population of 65.1%, Chinese 26%, and Indians 7.7%.

1.3.2 Language

The national language of Malaysia is Malay language. With the establishment of a National Education Policy, Malay language became the official language of administration, education, and the mass media in Malaysia (Morais, 1998). Language policy in Malaysia also identifies the status of other languages. In Malaysia, Malays speak Malay and the majority of Malaysian Chinese speak a variety of Chinese dialects including Mandarin, Cantonese, Teochew, and Hokkien. Most Indian Malaysians speak Tamil. In Malaysia, English is a second language and it is used widely in educational institutes, businesses and private sectors. According to Hj. Omar (1995), the people of Malaysia use Malay and English in daily life interactions more frequently than compared with other languages, and often, Malaysians use a mixture of Malay and English in

conversation. As for foreign languages, currently the languages being offered in selected secondary schools around Malaysia are Arabic, Japanese, French and German.

1.3.3 Education

Schooling System

In Malaysia, education is viewed as an important tool in transforming a heterogeneous, traditional, pluralistic society into one that is united, democratic, just, progressive and liberal (Hj. Ahmad, 1998, p.463). The medium of instruction used in most public schools in Malaysia is Malay Language. The national education system in Malaysia is comprised of 6 years of primary school, 3 years of lower-secondary, 2 years of upper secondary and 2 years of pre-university.

In Malaysia, under the national education system, a child begins their education with pre-school education at the age of five or six years. However, it is increasingly common for parents to send their children for pre-school education as early as four years old in private kindergartens. Children are admitted into the first year of the 6-year compulsory primary education in the year in which they reach the age of seven. The government provides 11 years of free primary and secondary education. Upon successful completion of 11 years of free education, further education is no longer automatic but is subject to the individual's academic performance and financial capability. Upper secondary school graduates can choose to continue their education in post-secondary schools to

obtain a pre-university qualification such as the Sixth Form or Matriculation programme, known as GCE 'A' levels before furthering their education at tertiary or higher institutions.

Types of Schools

There are three types of National Primary Schools in Malaysia. The main stream is called the National School in which the medium of instruction is Malay Language. The other two types of primary schools are Chinese and Tamil medium schools. These schools are known as the National-Type Schools. In the National-Type Schools, all subjects, except Malay and English Language, are taught in Mandarin and Tamil. However, these types of schools are only available in primary education (Year 1 – 6). All primary schools regardless of the medium of instruction use the same curriculum.

For secondary education, there is only one type of school, known as National Schools. However, there are three types of these national secondary schools, including Academic Schools, Technical and Vocational Schools, and Religious National Schools. Japanese language currently is offered only in Academic Schools. There are many categories of Academic Schools, and the schools are ranked according to their performance and prestige. The two main categories of Academic Schools are Residential Schools and Normal Secondary Schools. Residential Schools are full boarding schools that only accept the excellent students to enrol and study there. The admission to these types of schools is based on national examination results in Standard 6 (for Form 1 admission) or

Form 3 (for Form 4 admission). Normal Secondary Schools are ordinary public schools which can be attended by any students living nearby. Normal Secondary Schools have their own rank and distinctive class. The old schools with prestigious names and excellent performance, or new schools with high achievement in national examinations will be the top schools, known as 'premier schools'¹. These kinds of schools will have the privilege to select their own students. Both Residential and Normal Secondary Schools are controlled by the government and both use the national curriculum.

1.3.4 Japanese Language in Malaysian Schools

It is the Malaysian Government's dream to produce a generation that can speak and understand in more than one language and perform effectively in the global world (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). Japanese language education was introduced in 1982 in Malaysian boarding schools under the Look East Policy². Starting with six schools, it has now spread to more than 50 schools throughout Malaysia, including at the premier schools. In the initial stage, the teaching of Japanese language was controlled by Japanese teachers from Japan supplied by the Japanese Government under the 'Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers' or JOCV programme. But starting in 1990s, the responsibility for teaching Japanese language was taken over by local teachers of

¹ 'Premier schools' is a label given to Normal Schools that have prestigious name and

² Look East Policy is a policy introduced by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1982 which urged the country and the people of Malaysia to learn and gain aspirations from the economically powerful countries in the east, especially Japan.

Japanese who have underwent five years training in Japanese universities. In the year 2002, the Japanese language subject was taught fully by the local teachers.

The decision to strengthen the teaching and learning of international languages in secondary schools was decided at the Ministry of Education Management Meeting, chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Ministry of Education on October 2, 2002, which led to a reformation of the Japanese Language Curriculum in 2004 (Harun, 2008). Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) with help from the Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur has reformed the curriculum. The new curriculum is being implemented stage by stage starting with Form 1 in 2008 (pilot testing project) and in 2010 the Form 1 (13 years old), 2 (14 years old) and 3 (15 years old) students started using this new curriculum. Form 4 (16 years old) students used the new syllabus in 2011. The new Japanese Language Curriculum has also been extended to Form 5 (17 years old) in 2009 but at this stage the Form 5 syllabus focuses only on the teaching of Japanese culture. In 2011, the new content of the syllabus for Form 5 was distributed to schools. This curriculum reform was a starting point in upgrading the level of Japanese language subject in Malaysia and it needs more support in the future.

1.4 New Zealand and Its Background

In this section, I will give essential background information about New Zealand including its demography, the languages spoken and the education system.

1.4.1 Demographic

New Zealand is located in the South Pacific Ocean and consists of two main islands known as the North Island and the South Island. The population of New Zealand is about 4.41 million with 67.6% European, 14.6% Maori, 6.9% Pacific peoples and 9.2% Asian (Wikipedia, 2011).

1.4.2 Language

The main language in New Zealand is English, spoken by 95.9% of the people (Statistic New Zealand, 2011). The English language is used widely in administration, mass media, businesses, and education sectors. However, Bell et al. (2005) note that, although English is the main and the most used language in New Zealand, it has never been declared an official language of New Zealand. The Maori language was made an official language by the declaration of Maori Language Act in 1987. Māori is spoken by 4.1% which is about 157,110 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). In addition to English and Maori, the people of New Zealand also speak other languages from the Pacific, Asia, Europe, Africa and a few others.

1.4.3 Education

The compulsory age for children in New Zealand to start schooling is between the age of six to sixteen (Daly, 2010; Spence, 2004). However, Daly (2010) notes that nearly all parents in New Zealand send their children to schools at the age of five. Primary schools start from Year 1 to Year 8 and it is compulsory (Spence, 2004). Primary education can be received by children at a Full Primary Schools (Y1 – Y8) or at a Primary Schools (Y1 – Y6) and Intermediate Schools (Y7 – Y8) (Daly, 2010; Spence, 2004). However, according to Daly (2010), Year 7 and Year 8 education can also be taken at regional Secondary Colleges (Y7 – Y13). Schools in New Zealand use either English or Maori language as their medium of instruction (Daly, 2010).

1.4.4 Japanese Language in New Zealand Schools

According to Williams (1997), Japanese language was first taught in New Zealand's schools between the year 1967 to 1971 as a trial program which was taught to Form 6 and 7 students. At that time, it was established only in a small number of schools and it was not until the 1980s that Japanese became popular again (Wevers, 1988). Japanese continued its popularity until present day, and according to Spence (2004), Japanese is one of the most popular second languages taught in New Zealand schools. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of schools teaching Japanese language has increased from 192 (2005) to 216 (2010) schools with 20053 students learning Japanese language in 2010. In the New Zealand Curriculum, the Japanese language and other languages

come under a learning area known as 'Learning Languages' which is of eight learning areas in the curriculum. Learning Languages in the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) states that language learning is important as it connects the people in the world and it encourages the students to learn about other people through languages which will indirectly help the students to become aware of their own culture.

1.5 Summary

Malaysia is a multi-racial society in which the national language is Malay language and English is a second language used widely. Malaysia also recognizes the status of other languages including Chinese dialects including Mandarin, Cantonese, Teochew and Hokkien, and Tamil. There are several kinds of school in Malaysia. Japanese language in Malaysia is currently is offered only in Academic Schools. Japanese has been taught in these selected Academic Schools around Malaysia since 1984 and recently, the Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia has undergone massive reformation as a new curriculum was established in 2004. The reformation is being done stage by stage, and by the year 2011, all students in Form 1 to Form 5 have used the new Japanese Language Curriculum and Syllabus.

New Zealand is located in the South Pacific Ocean with the population about 4.41 million: 67.6% European, 14.6% Maori, 6.9% Pacific peoples and 9.2% Asian. The main language is English and Maori, but the people of New Zealand also speak other languages from the Pacific, Asia, Europe, Africa and a few others. Japanese language was first taught in

New Zealand's schools between the years 1967 to 1971 and in the 1980s Japanese became popular. Japanese continued its popularity until now, and it is one of the most popular second languages in New Zealand schools.

In Chapter Two, I will present the review of literature concerning the curriculum and syllabus, trends in language syllabus, types of syllabi, curricula comparison and previous studies, leading into the research questions for this thesis.

Chapter 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter begins by discussing the differences between the concept of 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' and then, will discuss the factors influencing curricula design, types of language syllabi, and lay out the latest trends adopted in language curricula around the world. Next, this chapter explores the meaning behind comparative studies in education looking specifically at the concept of curricula comparison. Then, in the last section of this chapter, a selection of previous studies done around the globe and in both respective countries, Malaysia and New Zealand, relating to Japanese language teaching and learning will be reviewed.

2.2 Terminology: Curriculum and Syllabus

The terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' are used in different way around the world. In the United States, curriculum and syllabus tend to be used synonymously (White, 1988), while in Britain, the terms curriculum and syllabus are used with different meanings. According to British definitions, curriculum refers to "the whole content to be taught and aim to

be realized within one school or education system” (White,1988, p.4). Candlin (1984), notes that curricula contain general statements about language learning, learning purposes, experience and the relationship between teachers and students. Thus, in Britain, the term curriculum encompasses a broad concept of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned, the roles of teachers in assisting learning, what kind of materials, styles and method are to be used, and what and how to assess learning (Richards, 2001).

By contrast, in Britain, the term ‘syllabus’ refers to a concise statement or the content of a course or the subjects of a series of lectures (White, 1988), and syllabus is concerned with the selection and grading of learning content (Nunan,1988). Allen (1984) points out that, syllabus is a part of curriculum which focuses on specific units that will be taught. Candlin (1984) notes that a syllabus is more personalized as it is a product of classroom interactions which happen between teachers and students during the process of applying the curriculum in ways that are suitable to the students’ needs and situation.

In this research, the term ‘curriculum’ and ‘syllabus’ will be used according to British definitions to differentiate respectively between Curriculum General Statement (contained in the Japanese Language Curriculum document for Malaysia and in the Learning Languages in New Zealand Curriculum Framework for New Zealand) and Syllabus Specification (contained in the Japanese language Syllabus Specification for Malaysia, and in the Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum for New Zealand).

In the next section, I will discuss factors influenced the shapes and direction of a curriculum (2.2.1), then talk about language syllabus and its types (2.2.2).

2.2.1 Factors Influenced Curriculum

“Curriculum is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic concept, and covers a broad range of stakeholders, perspectives, processes and manifestations” (Adamson & Morris, 2007, p.281). It reflects the story about “the nation and its relation to other parts of the world; and about the sense of its citizens, their diversity, religion, values and relationships it tries to build” (Yates & Grumet, 2011, p.8). In other words, curriculum is highly context specific. It is one nation’s vision for their young generation as it is a program exclusively designed to prepare their young people for the world and the challenges that await them (Yates & Grumet, 2011). Curriculum is a tool, like a ‘mould’, as it aims to shape the young generation in any way that a country chooses. The ‘mould’ chosen by one nation may have some similarities with that chosen in another country, but, will never be exactly the same as every nation has different national ambitions, political views, economic system, history, values and cultures (Yates & Grumet, 2011).

There are many factors influencing curriculum and one of them is politics. It is an undeniable fact that governments use education as one of the ways to deliver their political attentions and agendas (Yates and Grumet, 2011). For example, governments use curriculum to unify people by infusing national identity and encouraging people to be good and loyal

individual citizen who will help the country to progress, participate and compete in global society (Meyer, 2007). However, Yates and Grumet (2011) state that, political motives and influences in curriculum design may not be seen explicitly because most of the time it is indirect.

Another factor that influences the direction of a curriculum is the nation's national ambitions or visions. Each nation in the world has different ambitions or visions when designing a curriculum for their educational system. According to Fiala (2007), ambitions or visions of a nation carry assumptions about how the world works. For example, if the nation's vision is to prepare the young generation for future "employability" (p.20), this vision will mean that the government will design a curriculum that provides skills suitable for occupational market demand. The ambition or vision of a nation is different as each nation has different status and needs. According to Fiala (2007), in comparing developed and developing countries, less developed countries focus their aims or visions on establishing and strengthening national identity and economic growth.

Globalization is another factor that influences curriculum. Globalization is commonly understood as the increasing of economic exchanges among countries in the world (Meyer, 2007). Globalization is a new challenge that educational systems in world face currently. In modern curricula, the main aim is to empower individuals with skills and knowledge that can help them function successfully in the context of the bigger world (Meyer, 2007). Block and Cameron (2002) add that, in order to survive in the era of globalization and be globally competitive, skills acquisition in communication, technology literacy and competency in one or more

foreign language are seen as important. Therefore, many recent educational systems in the world have tried to adopt the concept of globalization into their curriculum by equipping the young generation with skills including the ability to communicate and work in teams with others, and the sense of confidence which will help them to manage their own lives and act autonomously (Yates & Grumet, 2011).

2.2.2 Language Syllabus

The ideology, content and perspective of a syllabus are influenced by the value system and the attitudes of those involved in designing the syllabus (White, 1988). Generally, a language syllabus involves the integration of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned. In fulfilling these purposes, the focus is directed towards the content underlying the language syllabuses. The content of language syllabi are very important as they determine what is to be learned by the learners and what kind of expectations they have in terms of learning outcomes. The content for language syllabus is different according to the type of syllabus one chooses. Reilly (1988) notes that “choices of syllabus can range from the more or less purely linguistic, where the content is focused on grammatical and lexical forms of the language, to the purely semantic or informational, where the content is focused on skill or information and only incidentally on the form of the language” (p.1).

Syllabi for the teaching and learning of language are designed based on assumptions about how a person learns a language. According to studies of language learning and syllabus design, there are two types of

syllabi - Synthetic and Analytic (Wilkins, 1976) also known as Type A and Type B (White, 1988).

Synthetic/Type A Syllabi

The Synthetic or Type A syllabi includes several kinds of syllabi known as structural, lexical, notional, functional and most of situational and topical syllabus (White, 1988; Wilkins, 1976). In Synthetic or Type A syllabi, acquisition of language is described as a process of building up learners' whole structure of the target language which is taught separately, part by part. Synthetic or Type A syllabi can be described as a product-oriented syllabus as they emphasize the product of language learning (Rabbini, 2002). These types of syllabi expose learners to "a limited sample of language at a time" and learners are expected to "re-synthesis the language that has been broken down into large number of small pieces with the aim of making the learning task easier" (Wilkins, 1976). The Synthetic or Type A syllabi assume that learning language depends on the learners' ability to learn the target language in parts, separately (e.g: structures and functions), and when it is time to use them, the learners will integrate or synthesise the pieces and parts learned to form sentences and phrases for communicative purposes (Long & Crookes, 1992).

In the next sections, the syllabi that adopt the principles of Synthetic or Type A will be described.

Structural Based Syllabus

This type of Type A syllabus is also known as a Grammatical-Based Syllabus. It focuses on the acquisition of the structure of the language which emphasizes grammatical areas and language form (Mohseni Far, 2008). The grammatical items in this type of syllabus are “usually arranged in the order in which they are to be taught” (Ellis, 1993, p.91). The basic units of learning underpinning this kind of syllabus are focused on the language structural patterns and its grammatical rules which are typically arranged according to its regularity, frequency, utility, difficulty and complexity (McKay, 1980, Mohseni Far, 2008). According to Ellis (1993), a language syllabus that focuses on structures and forms will direct the teaching and learning process of language to the learning of “knowledge about language” (p.100). This kind of syllabus encourages students to produce language or words in a correct form according to its grammatical rules (Ellis, 1993). In addition, according to Richards (2001) the teaching approach adopted in a structural or grammatical based syllabus is significantly influenced by behaviorism theory where “language learning was thought to depend on habits that could be established by repetition” (p.25). As a result, in many language classrooms, students will be asked to learn language through sentence patterns drilling and memorization of vocabulary, and the students are expected to acquire each structural step to add to their grammar collection (Mohseni Far, 2008).

However, this kind of syllabus has received many criticisms as many think that students cannot apply what they have learned and are unable to use and communicate effectively in the target language through

this approach (Ellis, 1993; Wilkins, 1972). Ellis (1993) claims that learners often cannot apply the concept of structural knowledge learned through a Structural Based Syllabus in meaningful conversation unless they are ready and well prepared. Wilkins (1972) adds that students will lose interest in learning the language, especially those who want to be able to practice or use what they have learned in classrooms. Probably the main reason for this is that the structural based syllabus emphasizes the theory of language rather than the theory of learning (Graves, 2008) and therefore, it neglects the students' needs, learning ability and interests. Furthermore, learning language through its structural form encourages learning a language in an unnatural way, thus, it is argued that a Structural Based Syllabus fails to provide an essential condition for the students to achieve communicative competence (Ellis, 1993; Wilkins, 1972).

Situational and Topical Based Syllabus

A Situational Syllabus is another Type A language syllabus which contains a 'collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used' (Mohseni Far, 2008; Reilly, 1988). In other words, language is taught in its contexts or situations, for example 'seeing the dentist' or 'going to the supermarket' as it is believed that language is a social medium (McKay, 1980). The language used in each situation comprises vocabulary, grammatical items, pragmatics knowledge and language skills, which are related to particular social settings (McKay, 1980) and which are combined into a plausible discourse (Mohseni, 2008; Reilly, 1988). According to Mohseni Far (2008), a syllabus that focuses on

situational context not only reflects the way language is used but also reflects how behaviour affects language in daily life outside the classroom. A syllabus of this kind “creates the possibility of a learner-based syllabus” (Wilkins, 1972, p.3) as it tries to concentrate on “what is the most relevant to a particular group (p.4). However, the language covered in situational contexts is typically restricted as emphasis is given more to completing the task rather than learning the language system (White, 1988).

The content of a language syllabus for situational contexts is quite similar to another Type A syllabus known as the Topical Based Syllabus which contains a selection of topics that are meaningful, relevant and comprehensible to learners in order “to stimulate motivation and lead to opportunities for meaningful discussion” (White, 1988, p.68). In a Topical Based Syllabus, learning of language is organized by topic and the language used is chosen randomly and there is not too much emphasis on grammar. In a Topical Based Syllabus, “content provides the vehicle for the presentation of language” (Richards, 2001, p.157). According to Bourke (2006), in this type of syllabus, “a selected topic works as hub for a unit” (p.282) and the teaching of a topic can be stretched from one to two weeks. The topic decides the language items such as structures, functions and vocabulary to be taught (Bourke, 2006).

Notional/Functional Based Syllabus

Another Type A syllabus is Notional/Functional Based Syllabus. It is a syllabus based on the notional/functional context of a language emphasizes communicative purposes and conceptual meaning of the

target language (White, 1988; Mohseni Far, 2008; Reilly, 1988). The content relies on the needs of learners in language use inside and outside of the classroom (White, 1988). White (1988) notes that the content of Notional/Functional Based Syllabi stresses notions and functions of the target language - its usefulness, coverage, relevance and complexity of form. The language teaching is based on the functions of language use, for example inviting, requesting, apologizing and so on (Mohseni Far, 2008). Mohseni adds that for this type of language syllabus, structures, language forms and situational contexts are considered supplementary as priority is given to “the semantic content of the language” (McKay, 1980, p.180). This is to enable students to differentiate meanings and have freedom to express them in daily conversations (McKay, 1980).

Analytic/Type B Syllabi

Analytic or Type B syllabi are a process-oriented syllabus as they focus more on the process than on product (Rabbini, 2002). These types of syllabi are concerned with the purposes of language learning and the language skills that are required to fulfil those purposes (Wilkins, 1972; White, 1988). Hence, the Analytic or Type B syllabi refer to the actions required of learners. According to Rahimpour (2008) a process-oriented syllabus emphasizes the learning process as a whole, and it focuses on the learner and learning. For process-oriented syllabi, “learning is the product of negotiation, which in turn drives learning” (Rahimpour, 2008, p.50).

In the next section, I will describe the Skills and Outcomes Based Syllabus which falls under the Analytic or Type B syllabi.

Skills and Outcomes Based Syllabus

Language syllabi that focus on skills contain a collection of particular skills that are important in using language (Mohseni Far, 2008; Wilkins, 1972). The content of this kind of language syllabus emphasizes the four skills of language learning - listening, reading, speaking and writing (White, 1988). These four skills are the abilities a person must have in order to be competent enough in the target language, and are independent of the situation or setting in which language use can occur (Reilly, 1988). According to Richards (2001), learning language through skills is based on the belief that in completing a language task or activity, learners need to master a number of skills. The content of the syllabus is a combination of linguistic competencies such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse, and in a Skills Based Syllabus, learning of language is incidental (Mohseni, 2008). The distinctive characteristics of a Skills Based Syllabus are: 1) It puts the focus on learners' performance; 2) It teaches skills that can be used in multi-situations; and 3) It recognizes and distinguishes what can be taught and what can be learned (Richards, 2001). However, this kind of syllabus has been criticized as it is claimed that this kind of syllabus has no concrete foundation in determining skills, and it focuses only on performance which neglects the development of a more "global and integrated communicative abilities" (Richards, 2001, p.161).

Outcomes Based Syllabi emerge from the belief that language learning programs are more effective if they are presented through a list of “written learning outcomes” (Young, 2011, p.131). Young (2011) claims that, this kind of syllabus provides learners with more awareness of learning than other types of syllabi as it gives learners clear access to what is expected from them. This is because, according to Young (2011), Outcomes Based Syllabi promote “transparency that replaces the ‘hidden mysteries’ that characterize many syllabus-based models (p.131).

2.3 Comparative Studies in Curriculum

According to Eckstein (1983), comparison refers to a process of studying two or more things to determine their similarities and differences. Manzon (2007) points out that “a prerequisite for any comparative study is to establish the parameters for initial comparability of the chosen units of analysis” (p.88) and she emphasizes that rather than simply listing out similarities and differences, comparison studies should focus on examining the underlying reasons and the causes behind these similarities and differences. Eckstein (1983) notes that, comparison studies promote one’s “total capacity to think” (p.317) and deepen one’s knowledge and understanding of the world. Likewise, Kubow and Fossum (2007) also state that by doing comparison, one can explore and experience foreign cultures and their educational systems which possibly can contribute to generating new and fresh ideas that might be beneficial to one own culture

and educational values. This was certainly the motivation for the current study.

However, to carry out meaningful comparative educational research that can benefit one's own country and as well as the country in comparison, one must possess highly developed comparative thinking skills and an understanding of international perspective (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Kubow and Fossum (2007) believe this is because we are living in a diverse and global world – one cannot make judgement based on one's "own localized and limited perspective" (Kubow & Fossum, 2007, p.6) as every nation has different context of political, economic, social and cultural views and issues.

A comparison of curricula is conducted for various reasons. People, or in the educational case, the stakeholders, make educational comparison all the time. Walker (2003) notes that this is because these stakeholders embrace different and various educational ideas which lead them to push and to suggest for more challenging and newer forms of curricula. For example, parents obviously want the best for their child, therefore, they "compare the offerings of schools" to find the best institutions for their child (Adamson & Morris, 2007, p.263). And as for governments, they compare curriculum of their countries with others from overseas to find new ideas to raise the standard of education in their country and to enhance their country's global competitiveness (Adamson & Morris, 2007). Adamson and Morris (2007) state that curricula comparison can take various forms as different stakeholders have different

purposes and intentions. Furthermore, they add, the concept that is underlying each curriculum varies greatly from one country to another.

2.4 Latest Trends in Language Teaching and Learning

Approaches to teaching and learning of second or foreign languages have changed over time. As a result, trends in language curriculum have also changed to reflect these new approaches to teaching and learning another language. According to Richards (2001), approaches to language teaching are related to one's assumptions about the nature of language and language learning. In the past, it was believed that to learn a new language, learners must be able to absorb and understand as many grammatical rules as they could; and at the same time they must develop the ability to translate the language learned (Johnson, 1982). This approach is known as Grammar Translation and it dominated the style of language teaching and learning in many countries in the early years of the 19th century (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Then, the approach to teaching language changed and this time it was influenced by the theory of behaviourism (Richards, 2001) which led to the assumption that successful language learning is related to "habit formation" (Johnson, 1982, p.3). According to this approach, in order to master a second or foreign language very well, learners need to be taught and drilled in the grammar or the sentence structures repetitively "until the correct use becomes habit" (Johnson, 1982, p.3; Richards, 2001).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the approach to language teaching started to take into account the learners' situation and motivation in learning second or foreign language (Jupp & Hodlin as cited in Richards, 2001). During this period, a new approach known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged and stirred widespread interest as it brought a new direction for second and foreign language learning (Richards, 2001). According to Richards (2001), in CLT it is not the methods of teaching that matter, but, the whole concept of teaching and learning should be re-examined as in CLT, there is a need to make language courses more relevant to the learners by considering societal and learner needs. CLT is focused on communication as the core principle for teaching and it brings into consideration how language is used appropriately in various settings, situations, and roles of speakers (Richards, 2001).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) note that, "CLT marks the beginning of a major paradigm shift within language teaching in twentieth century" (p.151), and its principles are still widely used in language teaching around the world. The communicative approach, to date, has been a trend in language teaching and curriculum design all over the world. Many language curricula in the world make communicative competence their goal and promote effective communicative ability; many also incorporate a balance development of learners' four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), Content-Based Teaching and Task-Based Teaching

are two examples of the current communicative approaches that embody the basic principles of CLT.

The changes in the trends of language curriculum over the years have also affected learners' and teachers' roles. Current curriculum design emphasizes the needs of learners and takes into consideration the learners' experiences as it tries to develop skills that a learner needs to acquire, for example, "awareness, self-reflection, critical thinking, learner strategies" (Richards, 2001). Learners are no longer seen as the receiving ends in learning but in the latest trend of education, they also have autonomy, taking control and deciding their own direction of learning (Smith, 2003). Teacher autonomy has also been given priority in current curriculum development as "freedom to work within one's area of expertise is critical to the success of the organization" (Dondero, 1997, p.219). Furthermore, Richards (2001) notes that the roles of teachers are pivotal in determining the successful of an approach or a method. Teacher autonomy is defined as a state where teachers are ultimately free from external control in making decision about what and how to teach, and are professionally competent – motivated and confident to choose and act for the good of learners and successful learning (Castle & Aichele, 1994; Littlewood, 1996; Shaw, 2002). In other words, teacher autonomy empowers teachers' roles in education (Dondero, 1997) and gives them full responsibility and trust in carrying out their jobs.

In the next section, I will present a selection of the previous studies done in the area of teaching and learning Japanese as a foreign language.

2.5 Studies in Japanese Language Education

2.5.1 Studies around the World

A great deal of research has been done around the world examining how Japanese language can be taught effectively. The studies for Japanese as a Second or Foreign Language have been widely done in the areas of language discourse and language teaching (e.g: Fujii, 2005; Matsumoto & Okamoto, 2003; Mori, 2002), and also on teachers' use of language instruction in classrooms, and their attitudes and perceptions on teaching Japanese language (e.g: Hobbs & Matsuo & Payne, 2010; Shimizu & Green, 2002). There has also been some research done in the areas of students' anxiety and motivation in learning Japanese (e.g: Matsumoto, 2007; Matsumoto 2009; Matsumoto & Obana, 2001).

From the collection of readings, it is fair to say that most research about Japanese language is done in the United States, followed by Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom. In the rest of this section, I will present a selection of studies that have been done around the world on aspects of teaching Japanese as a second or foreign language.

Language Discourse and Language Learning

There is quite a variety of research done in the world regarding Japanese as second or foreign language especially in the areas of language discourse and language teaching. For example, Fujii (2005) studied learner discourse to examine what learners do to produce meaningful ideas and thoughts in communicative tasks and what kind of problems these learners face especially in the following three areas – 1)

the use of particles 'ga' and 'wa'; 2) the use of 'te'-linkage, and 3) speech styles switching. This study was done based on the analysis of compositions written by 35 intermediate learners of Japanese at an American public university between the years 1999 to 2001. The finding showed that there was a high number of errors regarding the use of particles 'ga' and 'wa' among the learners which caused learning anxiety among the learners. The finding also showed that many of the learners have problems with style switching (formal to informal styles of speech) which revealed the learners' weaknesses in understanding this aspect of Japanese discourse grammar. In addition to studies regarding language discourse, there are also studies relating to language learning. Mori (2002) studied the development of 'talk' in an interaction between learners and native speakers to explore the relationships between task instruction, learners' reaction to pre-task planning, and the actual development of the interactions. The study was done by observing participants in a small group activity where Mori (2002) invited native speakers to engage the participants in a discussion to investigate how participants develop their talk or interactions. From the study, she found that the conversation turned out to be more of an interview where the participants asked the questions and the native speaker answered them. Ohta (1994) examined language use in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom. The purpose of her study was to understand how language use in classroom affects the socialization of learners as they learn Japanese. The study investigated and compared the use of affective particles (e.g: yo, deshoo, ne, ka na, na, no etc.) in conversation, and it also studied the differences in particles use

from teacher to teacher in an academic year. Data in the form of video and audio recordings were taken from first year introductory Japanese classes conducted by three different teachers. The results showed that there were differences in range and frequency of affective particles use in each classroom and it was suggested that the main reason for these differences were the teachers' views or goals of language teaching. From the study, two teachers that viewed their roles as being to facilitate students to communicate in the target language, exposed their students to more affective particles.

There are also studies done to determine students' learning ability in certain aspects of target language. For example, Taguchi (2008) conducted a study of pragmatic comprehension in Japanese as foreign language. She investigated students' ability to understand the underlying meaning expressed in common and uncommon situations. The study also examined the effect of proficiency in comprehension. In this study, 63 American college students at two proficiency levels were selected. These students completed a listening test to measure their ability to understand the three aspects concerning pragmatic comprehension which were 1) indirect refusals; 2) common indirect opinions; and 3) uncommon indirect opinions. The study showed that there was a significant effect of proficiency on the accuracy of comprehension for all three areas. Kanagy (1994) conducted research on the acquisition of negation in Japanese as a second language by adult learners in the United States. This study examined whether there was any common developmental sequences in negation construction. Twelve adults at the beginner level were selected

for this study and were interviewed four times over the academic year. The study showed that most beginners of Japanese language can utter two or three negation types and the higher beginners can use more negation forms.

Besides looking at students, there were also studies conducted to examine textbooks and teachers' practice. Matsumoto and Okamoto (2003) have done research examining three sociolinguistic aspects used in Japanese language textbooks in the United States: 1) Styles in Japanese conversation (e.g: politeness, indirectness, and self-effacement); 2) Formal and informal speech; and 3) Standard Japanese and dialect. Matsumoto and Okamoto (2003) analysed five widely used textbooks in the United States and the results showed that the textbooks used tend to simplify these three sociolinguistic aspects which might lead to misleading information about the authentic use of Japanese.

Siegal and Okamoto (2003) studied on current perspectives in teaching gendered language in Japanese. The study was done by analyzing popular textbooks used in United States and also by conducting a small scale survey on Japanese language teachers at college level. Eleven teachers (mixed gender of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers) were selected to explore their views regarding teaching gendered language. The textbooks analysis showed that most textbooks have a tendency to portray stereotypical images of Japanese men and women. However, the survey found a variety of views regarding the teaching of gendered language, for example, some teacher participants believed that gendered language should be taught as it is part of

Japanese culture and some believed that learning a language is learning the identity of the language which in the Japanese case includes learning gendered speech styles. There were some teachers that believed that gendered language has disappeared and as a result they do not teach gender distinction.

So, in summary, many of the studies in Japanese as foreign language have been done in the area of language discourse and language learning. The studies presented in this section looked at the variety of language discourses in Japanese language in relation to students learning ability. There were also studies that look at textbooks and teachers' practice in Japanese language classrooms. In the next section, a selection of studies examining teachers' views, perceptions and attitudes will be described.

Teachers' Views, Perceptions and Attitudes

Besides research in the areas of language discourse and language teaching, research has also been done regarding teachers' attitudes and perceptions of language teaching. One such study is by Shimizu and Green (2002) who explored 251 teachers' attitudes towards kanji and how these attitudes affected their choices of strategies in teaching kanji. The study was conducted using interview and survey methods. The results showed that teachers who appreciated cultural tradition in kanji were more likely to use memory and contextual strategies in teaching kanji. However, results also showed that rote learning was the most used strategy in teaching and learning kanji.

Hobbs, Matsuo and Payne (2010) examined how classroom language differs from one teacher to another. The study investigated the differences between native and non-native teachers' use of target language in the English secondary school system. The study involved three Japanese language teachers, one British and two Japanese nationals. The participants were interviewed twice, once before observation and once after the observation. The study showed that the usage of the target language in classroom depended on teachers' belief of how language is learned. For example, one of the teachers during the interview said that she found it a waste of time to give instruction in the target language if students do not understand. The study also found that there was no significant relation between length of teaching experience of teachers and the amount of target language used in classroom.

In the next section, a selection of studies examining the attitudes, motivation and anxiety in foreign language learning will be described.

Attitudes, Motivation and Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning

Other research concerning the teaching and learning of Japanese language that has been done in the United States is in the area of learning motivation, anxiety and learners' attitudes towards learning Japanese as foreign language. Matsumoto (2007) looked at the factors affecting students' peak learning experiences. The study investigated students' motivation for learning Japanese in the United States and it also studied the changes of students' motivation over an academic year. One hundred and twenty eight students who were studying intermediate Japanese at

American colleges and universities were selected for the research. These students were selected from five different universities and colleges located on the Pacific Coast. The participants were given a questionnaire on their previous language experiences. The study found that classroom activities that involve students in real conversation with native speakers, wide use of authentic material, and making use of popular culture elements in teaching promote positive peak learning experiences, and motivate students intrinsically to further study the Japanese language. Machida (2010), on the other hand, conducted a study of the characteristics of foreign language anxiety among 18 undergraduate Illinois University students that learned Japanese language at intermediate level. The participants answered some questions regarding anxiety that related to the Japanese orthographic system. The results showed that the differences in orthographic system between English and Japanese did not affect participants' level of anxiety, but speaking Japanese accurately in front of others did.

Matsumoto and Obana (2001) examined the factors that motivate learners to move forward in their Japanese language study using a survey at three Australian universities. Participants were selected from beginners and intermediate levels. The study showed that learners with little experience in language study tended to give up easily and stop coming to the class. They explain that this is due to the lack of previous experience which creates a gap among learners. The bigger the gap, the more frustrated the learners will feel which will lead to their losing interest, feeling de-motivated, and quitting the study as a solution. Matsumoto and

Obana's (2001) study showed that only learners with a deep interest in Japan and its language continued their study. The study also showed that the learners' interest in the cultural aspects grew stronger after learning Japanese for some time. The growth of interest in cultural aspects had a positive impact on the learners' motivation rates. The study indicates that as learning progressed, learners' appreciation and interest in the Japanese language and other aspects related to it grew and this affected the changes in motivation forces among learners from external to internal factors.

Thus, around the world quite a few studies have been conducted relating to the learning and teaching of Japanese as foreign language. From the studies surveyed in this section, we can see that most studies are focused in the area of language discourse, language learning, teachers' perspectives, views and attitudes, learning motivation, students' attitudes and anxiety. No studies could be found specifically concerning Japanese language curriculum or syllabus. The same applies to studies done in Malaysia and New Zealand which will be presented in the next section.

2.5.2 Studies in Malaysia and New Zealand

There have been only a very limited number of studies done to date regarding the teaching and learning of Japanese as a foreign language in both Malaysian and New Zealand secondary schools, let alone studies that investigate Japanese Language Curriculum or syllabus specifically. It seems that a lot of research is focused on the studies of foreign language

learning or second language acquisition as a whole in which Japanese language is discussed briefly as a part of foreign or second language education.

In the following sections, I will firstly give an overview of research done in the Malaysian context concerning Japanese language and secondly, I will then summarise research concerning Japanese language teaching in the New Zealand context.

Studies in Malaysia

The range of studies regarding Japanese language education in Malaysian secondary schools is very limited. Ang (2003) examined the old textbook '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989). This study looked at the weaknesses of '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) from the teachers', students' and communicative language learning perspectives. Other studies of Japanese language have focused more on the teaching and learning of the target language in tertiary or higher level. For example, Zubairi and Hj. Sarudin (2009) conducted a study examining the motivation of students at two Malaysian universities in learning foreign languages. About 500 students from two universities who studied foreign languages and 18 foreign language teachers participated in the study. The study was conducted using three forms of data: questionnaire, group discussion, and document analysis, and found that students were motivated, intrinsically and extrinsically, in learning foreign language. Hew

and Ohki (2001) studied the effectiveness and usefulness of animated graphical annotation in helping Malaysian students of Japanese language acquire listening skills in the target language. One hundred and twelve students at tertiary level were involved in an experiment which aimed to prove the effectiveness of this technology in Japanese language learning. However, the findings showed that although it helped improve students' listening skills, this technology was less effective in improving pronunciation skills.

Wei and Sulaiman (2009) conducted a study with Malaysian tertiary level Japanese language students. They investigated the beginner level students' multiple intelligences and how the awareness of multiple intelligences could assist Japanese language learning. This study found that the students who were smart in logical-mathematical intelligence performed well in learning Japanese language. Wei and Sulaiman (2009) suggest this is because grammar is kind of logical arrangement and the ability to analyse the sentence systematically is essential in forming correct sentences. Tai and Teh (2005), on the other hand, investigated teacher trainees' perception of international or foreign language learning at the Foreign Language Teacher Training Institute, also known as Institut Perguruan Bahasa Antarabangsa (IPBA). Their study also examined the topics that captured the interest of the trainees in learning the Japanese language. One hundred and nineteen student teachers participated in the questionnaire and the findings show that the student teachers were motivated in learning foreign language because of intrinsic interest. And,

according to the study, the topics that captured the students' interest were greetings, number, food and money.

Ang and Embi (2010) also conducted a study on the teacher trainees at IPBA regarding their efforts to raise learning awareness and ability to monitor their own learning in order to achieve desired learning outcomes. The participants for this study were required to show evidence of their learning in the form of a portfolio. Participants were asked to provide a minimum of five entries concerning learning issues that they encountered during the course. The result shows that the portfolio helped the students in self-directed learning. The portfolio helped students analyse their own problems, changed their approach to learning, and also, changed the way they thought when facing learning problems.

Other studies that have been done in Malaysia concerning language teaching and learning are more focused on English as a second language or ESL. Awang Hashim and Syed Sahil (1994), for example, have examined types of language learning strategies used by English language students at tertiary level. They tried to find out whether sex, race and program of study affect students' language learning strategies. Their findings are discussed based on ESL learning context. Likewise, Wong (2005) studied English language learning strategies, but, she also explored the relationship between language learning strategies and language self-efficacy among 74 ESL pre-service teachers.

Overall, the studies in Malaysia were focused on learning Japanese as a foreign language at tertiary level. There are very limited studies done

at secondary schools level and none of these were about Japanese language curriculum and syllabus. Many studies on language teaching and learning were focused on English as a second language. This is in contrast with New Zealand where there are quite a number of studies done concerning Japanese language teaching and learning at secondary schools. I will present these in the next section.

Studies in New Zealand

Research done in New Zealand regarding Japanese language education in secondary schools appear to focus on language teaching and learning, teachers' professional development programs, and their experiences as a Japanese language teacher. Jacques (2008), for example, has done a case study of nine Year 9 students' Japanese language learning experiences in a mixed-level classroom. She used a group interview to investigate the students' experiences and discuss issues that they faced during the learning of the Japanese language, such as how they coped learning in a mixed-level classroom, why is learning other language important to them and so on. Her results regarding learning language in a mixed-level classroom showed that students with language experience enjoyed being in class with less able students as they can be the expert and help the others learn. Bracefield (2009) conducted a study of 13 gifted and talented Japanese language students. The study was based on her professional development workshops, readings, experiences, observations and a survey done of gifted and talented students of Year 12 and 13. This study focused on looking for the answers to why it is important to give special attention to the gifted and

talented students of Japanese language and how to recognize them in language classroom. It discusses the needs of the gifted and talented students and gives teachers knowledge about how to cater these students' needs. This study also explored the views of these gifted and talented students about their success. Her results showed that one of the reasons the gifted and talented students learned Japanese was because they thought Japanese was easier than French and one of the things that help them succeed in language at NCEA level was a good language teacher and a good language programme.

Okamura (2008), on the other hand, has investigated Japanese native-speaker teachers in New Zealand. Her study tried to explore these teachers' experiences in teaching Japanese in secondary schools in New Zealand. She interviewed 25 native-speaker teachers and participants also completed a written survey. The aim of the study was to examine whether one's background influenced career decision making, differences in the teachers' expectations, realities in teaching in New Zealand, difficulties that they faced in schools, adjustments and adaptation strategies that they made to work or teach effectively in New Zealand, and their perceptions of working well as a Japanese language teacher in New Zealand. The findings indicate that the participants had experienced real life shock and felt isolated as a new teacher. The participants went through a process of learning to become a teacher in a foreign land where they experienced changes as a result of being in contact with other cultures and peoples.

Other studies on Japanese language have been done under the bigger perspective of second or foreign language learning in New Zealand, for example, Guthrie (2005) investigated secondary schools' language programs and their teachers. She conducted a demographic survey of foreign language teachers in New Zealand and a questionnaire for principals to uncover information about the foreign language taught in their schools and issues they faced in appointing language teachers. The study showed that the number of languages offered in schools varied from none to five as it is depending on the type and size of school. The findings also indicate that most principals faced troubles in hiring good foreign language teachers because of the low numbers of applicants.

Kim and Elder (2005) studied the alternation between English and the target language in foreign language classrooms among native-speaker teachers of Japanese, Korean, German and French in New Zealand secondary schools. The findings indicate that the amount of target language used differed from one teacher to another. The results also show that there was a tendency for most teachers to avoid complex interactions in the target language. Insley and Thomson (2008) have also examined on teachers of foreign language in New Zealand, focusing on a teachers' professional development program to increase the quality and quantity of the use of target language by students in the classrooms. Results showed that by using Teacher Professional Development in Languages (TPDL) programme the use of target language by teachers and students in the study did increase, and both teachers and students developed a rich collection of formulaic expressions.

Scott and Butler (2008) conducted a study on student perceptions about their language learning in order to uncover the teachers' strategies in motivating their students. A questionnaire was given to teacher participants, their students, their principals, and the professional development facilitators. The participating teachers were still new to the target language and learning themselves. The students chosen for this study included a beginner student of French, German, Japanese and Spanish. Findings showed that teachers who are still in the learning process of the target language tended to show good language learning behaviour which in a way motivated their students' learning too. These teachers also understood the difficulties in learning new languages and were very helpful to the students in creating a classroom environment that motivated students learning.

In recent studies, Scott (2011) conducted research looking at teachers teaching Japanese language at pre-secondary level. She investigated the relationship between teacher's qualification, language proficiency, and professional development needs with what the teachers thought about teaching Japanese. The study was done in two stages where the first stage was carried out through a national online language teachers' survey and from this survey 20 pre-secondary teachers were identified for the next stage. These 20 teachers were interviewed and the findings showed that pre-secondary Japanese language teachers can be categorized into three groups: 1) those with little or no Japanese language knowledge; 2) those with some Japanese language knowledge; and 3) qualified Japanese language speakers. The results also showed that

teachers that were forced into teaching Japanese, have less confidence and understanding of what is considered good second language pedagogy.

Wang and Erlam (2011) investigated Year 7 Japanese language students' willingness to communicate in Japanese in the classroom. Four were students involved in this study and they were required to follow a series of task-based lessons. Data were collected through observation, learning records, and interviews. The results showed that the four students started using Japanese when engaging in a task. This indicated that task-based learning promotes willingness to communicate in Japanese among students in classrooms. The findings also showed that students find that task-based learning is fun, and being in small group gives them a feeling of security which contributes to willingness to communicate.

In summary, many of the studies regarding Japanese language teaching and learning in New Zealand were done at secondary school level. However, the studies were focused more on the language teaching and learning, and teachers' professional development programs and their experiences as a Japanese language teacher. No studies could be located in the area of Japanese language curriculum or syllabus.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter began by clarifying and discussing the terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' used in this thesis. In the United States, the terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' tend to be used interchangeably while in Britain, curriculum and syllabus are two different things with syllabus being

categorized as a part of curriculum. In Britain, curriculum is referred to as a broader concept of what to be learned and how it is to be learned, whilst syllabus on the other hand, refers to the content of a course or the subjects of a series of lectures. This is the definition used in the thesis.

Language syllabi can be divided into two categories which are known as Synthetic and Analytic (Wilkins, 1976) or, Type A and B (White, 1988). A Synthetic or type A syllabus is described as a product-oriented syllabus. It emphasizes the product and is assumed to be dependent on the learners' ability to learn the target language in separate parts, and their ability to generate the learning parts and pieces to form meaningful phrases for interaction purposes. By contrast, Analytic or type B syllabus is a process-oriented syllabus which focuses on the process of language learning and skills acquisition by learners.

Developments in the field of language research were also briefly addressed in this chapter. These developments have produced many theories about language learning which have resulted in a range of language syllabi such as Structural, Situational, Topical, Skills, Outcomes and Notional/Functional. These developments also influence trends in language syllabi around the world. Over the years, second or foreign language learning has undergone many changes in the teaching and learning approaches to suit new learning theories. It started off with Grammar Translation approach in the early years and has focused on more communicative skills in recent years. Recently, it is a trend in language curriculum all around the world to give more attention to instilling meaningful communication skills, fulfilling learners' needs, giving more

autonomy to students and providing teachers more freedom to decide and design their own language learning programs.

Lastly, this chapter outlined a selection of the range of research which has been done concerning Japanese as a Foreign Language around the world especially in language discourse and language teaching. Studies in the areas of students' anxiety and motivation in learning Japanese and some on teachers' use of language, attitudes, and perceptions of teaching the Japanese language were presented. However, it was noted that there are very few studies done regarding the teaching and learning of Japanese as a foreign language in Malaysian and New Zealand. In Malaysia, studies regarding Japanese as foreign language are done mostly at tertiary or higher level only. Furthermore, studies in Malaysia concerning language teaching and learning are more often focused on English language learning. By contrast, in New Zealand, studies regarding Japanese language have been done but usually as part of the studies of foreign language learning or second language acquisition as a whole.

2.7 Justification of Present Study

Regarding the previous studies that have done around the world as presented in 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, we can see that there are quite a number of studies which have been done in the area of Japanese as a second or a foreign language. However, the studies done are more focused in the aspect of language discourse, language teaching, motivation, anxiety and

teachers' perceptions. No research could be found in the area of Japanese Language Curriculum, let alone research that compares one country's Japanese Language Curriculum to another. As for the research done in either Malaysia and New Zealand, we can conclude that not many studies have been conducted in the area of Japanese as a foreign language in both countries, particularly studies that explore Japanese Language Curriculum development and syllabus design. The research which does exist especially in Malaysia is more focused on the learning and teaching of Japanese language at tertiary level; little research has been done regarding Japanese language in secondary schools. No literature has been found which describes the history of the Japanese language syllabus in New Zealand or Malaysia, nor can published literature be located of comparisons between the Japanese syllabuses of different countries. Additionally, no studies have been found that have been done in either Malaysia or New Zealand examining the basis or the approach to language learning that underpins secondary schools' Japanese language syllabus content. Thus, I feel there is a need for the study proposed in this thesis. The proposed research will contribute to knowledge for the future use in Japanese Language Curriculum development or syllabus design. For this reason the study described in this thesis will examine the following research questions:

Research Question 1:

What is the recent history of Japanese language being taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

Research Question 2:

How is Japanese currently taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

- 2.1 How do teachers teach Japanese language in Malaysian/ New Zealand classrooms?
- 2.2 What type of textbooks and materials are used?
- 2.3 What kind of assessment are given to students?
- 2.4 What is the curriculum and who involves in curriculum designing?
- 2.5 What are the qualifications to be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia/New Zealand?

Research Question 3:

What are the major differences between the Japanese Language Curricula in Malaysia and New Zealand?

Research Question 4:

What are the major differences between Japanese Language Syllabi in Malaysia and New Zealand?

In Chapter 3 I will outline the methodology used to answer the questions above.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter is a presentation of the methodology used in carrying out the research presented in this thesis. The purpose of the research was to uncover the recent history and the development of Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand. The study also examined and compared the approach to Japanese language learning and teaching underlying both curricula. This study employed three methods: semi-structured interview, autoethnography and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 as stated below. For this particular data collection, I infused autoethnography as one of the methods as it allows the researcher to contribute, drawing on her substantial experience as a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia. Thus, besides interviewing the selected participants, I also participated in answering the interview questions.

Research Question 1:

What is the recent history of Japanese language being taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

Research Question 2:

How is Japanese currently taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

- 2.1 How do teachers teach Japanese language in Malaysian/New Zealand classrooms?
- 2.2 What type of textbooks and materials are used?
- 2.3 What kind of assessment are given to students?
- 2.4 What is the curriculum and who involves in curriculum designing?
- 2.5 What are the qualifications to be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia/New Zealand?

Document analysis was used to answer Research Questions 3 and 4 concerning the Japanese Language Curriculum and syllabus documents of the two countries, Malaysia and New Zealand:

Research Question 3:

What are the major differences between the Japanese Language Curricula in Malaysia and New Zealand?

Research Question 4:

What are the major differences between Japanese Language Syllabi in Malaysia and New Zealand?

This chapter will describe how the study was conducted, including a description of the methods used, the process of data collection, samples,

ethical consideration, and analysis of data. In 3.2 – 3.5, I will discuss the methods chose for this research starting with the semi-structured interview, followed by autoethnography and then, document analysis. In the 3.6, I will explain the samples, discuss ethical considerations (3.7) and provide information on analysis of data (3.8). As an opening to the chapter, I will discuss the research paradigm for this research.

3.2 Research Paradigm for This Study

In educational research, there are several types of research paradigms. A paradigm represents “a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). In the current research, I have selected an interpretive approach as my research paradigm. Interpretive study relies on the participants’ views on the subject being studied (Creswell, 2003) and its data is based on the individual’s experience and perceptions influenced by the context of the situation and the social environment they are living in. These are in line with the direction of my research where I am studying the experience and knowledge of the Japanese language teachers regarding the current history and the Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand.

The methodology used in this research is qualitative. I have chosen to do qualitative research by way of semi-structured interviews and autoethnography because the nature of my study is based on the reality of

participants' life and experience as teachers of Japanese language in their respective countries. Furthermore, for this research I have incorporated document analysis which is also a qualitative research method. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the qualitative researcher believes in the assumption that the world they live in is constructed socially which moves around the interaction between individuals and life surrounding them. Likewise, Ashworth (1997) notes that the social world in the eyes of qualitative researcher is multi-faceted and there is no such thing as singular universal truth. Qualitative research is concerned with describing, interpreting and understanding the meanings behind social occurrences or circumstances from the perspectives and experience of the participants (Ashworth, 1997; Cohen et al., 2007).

In the following subsections I will outline details of the methods of data collection used: semi-structured interviews, autoethnography and document analysis.

3.3 Interview

An interview is “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [*sic*] on the content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (Cannell and Kahn as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p.351). According to Fontana and Frey (2005), interview is a common method used in research as it as one of the most effective way to perceive and comprehend other humans’

thoughts and views. Furthermore, according to Cohen et al. (2007) “interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard (p.349). There are three types of interview – 1) Structured interview where all questions are predetermined and covered in a fixed sequence; 2) Unstructured interview where researcher only sets the theme or area to talk about and lets the discussion flows; and 3) Semi-structured interview where some questions are prepared prior to the interview and during the interview the researcher can probe to gain more in-depth information (Hinds, 2000).

3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview method used in the present study was the semi-structured interview. This type of interview method was chosen for this research because it encouraged discussion about participants’ interpretations (Cohen et al., 2007) of the Japanese Language Curriculum they use in their daily teaching practice. And, most important of all, semi structured interview was chosen for this study as it allows the researcher to probe if necessary in order to discover more information (Gillham, 2005).

The purpose of conducting semi-structured interviews for this study was to find out the recent history and the progress of Japanese Language Curriculum and teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand. The interviews give the researcher firsthand information about the participants’ knowledge and experience of Japanese language teaching in their respective countries. In this study, participants were involved in a semi structured

interview with some open-ended questions (see Appendix D1 and D2 for the set of questions used).

3.3.2 Interview Process

The interviews were conducted in two different contexts. The participant in Malaysia was interviewed via Skype because of finance constraints on travel. The participants in New Zealand were interviewed face-to-face at a place set by the participants. Prior to interview the participants were given information about the purpose of the study, what their participation would involve, and how their data would be used (see information sheet in Appendix A1, A2 & A3). The participants were also given ample time to clarify any questions before they agreed to participate. During the interview, the participants were asked to complete a biodata sheet (see Appendix C). The biodata sheet was important in order to gather the information about the participants that could be significant during the data analysis process. Each interview was audio-recorded with consent from the participants. The recorded data were transcribed into word files and these were sent to the participants by e-mail for them to make any amendments. They were asked to return the transcript within two weeks.

3.4 Autoethnography

Doing research on Japanese Language Curriculum made me find myself in an “insider” position. This is because, as described in Chapter 1,

before I was the researcher, I was (and still am) a Japanese language teacher. Hence, I felt that it would be appropriate for me to become one of the participants and incorporate autoethnography as a method in this research. Autoethnography is one of up and coming methods in qualitative research (Wall, 2006). McIlveen (2008), notes that “autoethnography is a reflexive means by which the researcher-practitioner consciously embeds himself or herself amidst theory and practice” (p.1). Furthermore, according to Anderson (2006), autoethnography is a form of personal narrative research approach that explores the writer's experience of life and allows the researcher to write in “a highly personalized style” (Wall, 2006, p.1).

Adopting autoethnography for this research permitted my experiences to play a valid role in the study and it also allowed me to add my views, knowledge and experiences to enrich the data collection for the thesis. Thus, besides interviewing the selected participants, I also took part in answering the interview. I answered the same questions I asked my fellow colleague in Malaysia. I did not do any recording for my interview as I answered all the interview questions in written form.

3.5 Document Analysis

“Document analysis is the analysis of documents in order to gather facts” (Caulley, 1983, p.20). A document analysis that is supported with concrete ideas, questions or hypothesis will guide the researchers in their analysis and bring them to the answers they are looking for (Ariav, 1986, Caulley, 1983). This method has been used extensively in educational

research, for example, to look at specific area in curriculum or to compare curriculum within the country or among the countries in the world (Chin et al., 2010).

There are a few types of document analysis in educational research and for this research, I have chosen to do content analysis. Content analysis is one of document analysis techniques and it is used in producing “replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). According Krippendorff (2004), the analyzing of content analysis data depends largely on how one looks at the content and in what context it is examined as particular texts only make sense in certain contexts or situations, discourses and purposes. Furthermore, analyzing the content in its context is important because it reflects “how the text came to be, what they mean, what they can tell or do” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.24).

The aim of the study was to investigate and compare Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language education, in terms of its recent history, the way it is taught, and its curriculum. The purposes of conducting curriculum document analysis for this study was to look at the content of both countries’ Japanese Language Curricula and Syllabi (e.g: achievement objectives, suggested structures and grammatical items) and to investigate its underpinning approach to language teaching. The analysis of the curriculum and syllabus documents also helped to analyze the similarities and differences between Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language teaching.

3.5.1 Document Analysis Process

The analysis of the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum and Syllabus was based respectively on the 2004 Japanese Language Curriculum, 2009 Syllabus Specifications for Form 1 to Form 4, and 2011 Syllabus Specification for Form 5 documents produced by the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia. These documents comprise the General Curriculum Statement and the Curriculum Specification which consists of five syllabuses of Japanese language from Form One to Form Five. For New Zealand's Japanese Language Curriculum and Syllabus, the analysis was based respectively on the 2007 New Zealand Curriculum Framework (MoE, 2007) and also the Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998), including the online version found on the Te Kete Ipurangi webpage (<http://learning-languages-guides.tki.org.nz/Japanese>). The Japanese Language Curriculum in New Zealand comprises eight levels that cover from Year 7 or Year 9 (depends on the schools) to Year 12.

The documents that were analyzed were: 1) The General Statement of Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum; 2) The Learning Languages learning area in 2007 New Zealand Curriculum Framework; 3) The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum Specification – Form One to Form 5; and 4) The Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum (both versions: printed and online) – Level 1 to Level 8.

The document analysis for the General Statement of the Curriculum (General Statement of Japanese Language Curriculum for Malaysia and

Learning Languages learning area for New Zealand) used by Japanese language teachers in both countries were carried out first. Then, an analysis was conducted on the content of the Syllabus Specifications – Form One to 5 for Malaysian and Level 1 to 8 for New Zealand Curriculum.

3.6 Participants

In the next paragraphs, I will outline the criteria used for selection of participants (3.6.1), recruitment (3.6.2) and participants (3.6.3).

3.6.1 Criteria for Selection of Participants

Certain criteria were used in choosing participants for this study. The first criteria was years of experience in Japanese language teaching. The participants from each country were to be very experienced and also must be somebody who has served in the field for quite some time and/or was somehow involved in the curriculum making. They also had to have experience in teaching Japanese language in secondary schools at all levels and be familiar with the content of the Japanese Language Curriculum in their country. These criteria were created in order to ensure that the participants are equipped with the knowledge of the syllabus for Form 1 to Form 5 (Malaysia) and Level 1 to Level 8 (New Zealand). They were also to ensure that the participants selected for this research were fully aware of recent history behind the establishment of the Japanese language education, and the changes in curriculum, textbook and teaching

method over the years. These criteria were important to ensure reliable and valid data for the research.

3.6.2 Recruitment

Five participants were involved in the interviews in total, two from Malaysia and three from New Zealand. The participants from Malaysia were selected through the Malaysian Japanese language teachers' network of which the researcher is a member and has access to. Participants in New Zealand, were selected through the Japanese language teacher network that the researcher's supervisor had access to. The participants were first contacted through e-mail in which they were informed about the content of the study in detail. The interested participants were given a consent form and information sheet prior to making any final decision regarding their participation in the study (see Appendix A1, A2, A3 and B). The participants who agreed to participate in the research were again contacted through e-mails and phone calls to set the date and place for interviews.

3.6.3 Participants

The study all together involved five participants, included myself as the fifth participant. The participants selected for the interviews were three very experienced Japanese language teachers from New Zealand and two, including myself, from Malaysia. The reason why I have interviewed three New Zealand teachers against two from Malaysia is that a few possible participants from Malaysia that I have contacted have internet problem.

They only use school's internet service and to interview them during school hour is not possible as they are very busy.

As the purpose of the interview was to explore the historical changes and the development of Japanese Language Curriculum and teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand, the participants were chosen from a group of teachers who are experienced and knowledgeable in their field. Two teachers (P1 and P3), one from each country, selected for the interviews were currently involved in Teacher Education, in charge of training student teachers to be Japanese (Malaysia) or language teachers (New Zealand). These participants also had Japanese language teaching experience in secondary schools in their country. Both participants were also involved in creating and writing the Japanese Language Curriculum, and in designing and producing teaching materials to be used in teaching and learning Japanese in secondary schools in their respective countries.

The other three participants (P2, P4 and P5) were teachers of Japanese language in secondary schools in Malaysia (one) and New Zealand (two). The two teachers from New Zealand were currently teaching Japanese in high schools in their city and had been for almost thirty years, in fact one of them was responsible for opening the first Japanese language teaching class in his city. These two participants had witnessed and experienced many changes in the New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum over the thirty years that they have served in the profession. The Japanese language teacher participant from Malaysia is myself as I felt that it was appropriate for me to share my knowledge and experiences as a Japanese language teacher of eight years' experience.

These three participants are regular Japanese language teachers and have never been involved in writing curriculum or creating and producing teaching materials at national level. Table 1 provides complete information about the participants.

Table 1: Participants information

Name	Country	Age			Gender	Years of experience
		30-40	41-50	51-60		
P. 1	M'sia		✓		F	7 years – teaching Japanese at Residential School. 6 years – training teachers to be Japanese language teachers. Involved in designing Japanese Language Curriculum and teaching materials.
P. 2	M'sia	✓			F	2 years – residential school. 6 years – normal secondary school.
P. 3	NZ		✓		F	6 years – teaching Japanese at High School. 17 years – training language teachers. Involved in designing Japanese Language Curriculum and teaching materials.
P. 4	NZ			✓	M	29 years – teaching Japanese at High School.
P. 5	NZ			✓	F	29 years – teaching Japanese at High School.

*M'sia = Malaysia; *NZ = New Zealand; *P = Participant; *F = Female; *M = Male

3.7 Ethical Consideration

There were a few ethical issues considered for this study as I chose to conduct interviews for one of my data collection methods. According to Fontana and Frey (2005), when doing interviews, ethical issues will usually revolve around getting informed consent, ensuring participants' confidentiality and protection from harm as the subject involved are human. The first issue was, that because the participants knew the researcher and her supervisor, thus, it is possible that the participants may feel that they were obliged to take part in this research. In order to avoid this situation, the participants were told in detail about the content of the research and were free to ask any questions regarding the research. They were also told about their right to decide whether to participate or not and were told they should not feel obligated to participate. The participants were asked to read through the informed consent and the information sheet, and make their own decision freely.

The second issue was about the confidentiality of the participants. It was possible that during the interview the participants may at times offer unsolicited negative evaluative comments about the curriculum, the language education system, the Ministry of Education or the government in general. Thus, it was made clear to the participants that their comments during the interview would be treated confidentially. The participants were also given ample time to read through the transcription of their interviews and edit them to remove any comments they did not wish to be included in the analysis. The participants would remain anonymous throughout the study. Their names and the institutions where they currently worked at

would not be mentioned in the thesis. The participants were given code names as to ensure their anonymity. The tapes from the interview were also labeled with these code names.

The final issue was about cultural differences that should be taken into consideration by the researcher. As the researcher is Malaysian, it was anticipated that interviewing the Malaysian Japanese language teachers would not raise any ethical issue regarding cultural conflict as the researcher is well aware of Malaysian culture. However, the researcher equipped herself with some cultural information about what should be done and should not be done when interviewing the New Zealand participants because of the different language and cultural backgrounds.

3.8 Data Analysis

In this section, I will explain how the data for this research was collected and analyzed. First, I will present the data analysis for the interview (3.8.1) and then, the document analysis (3.8.2).

3.8.1 Data Analysis for Interview

The analysis of data was conducted after the transcription of the interviews was completed and had been approved by participants. The transcription of the interviews was done carefully so as to ensure that the data obtained from the interviews were correct and valid. There were four interviews and one set of autoethnography data to analyze for this particular section. The transcriptions of each interview including

autoethnography were first written independently. The identities of the interviewees were kept anonymous in the presentation of the result by giving them a code name. Participants were only known as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5. The data obtained from the participants, including myself, were written in forms of narrative essays. The data gained from each country's participants was joined together and presented in selected sub topics. The subtopics were decided based on the themes that emerged from the interview questions. The complete data, was then analyzed to investigate and compare its similarities and differences.

3.8.2 Curriculum Document Data Analysis

The data analysis for curriculum document analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage was analyzing the general statement of the curricula – Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Center, 2004) document for Malaysia and Learning Languages for New Zealand (MoE, 2007). The analysis of these curriculum statements was presented in the form of description to examine the content and expectation of the curriculum as a whole. Then, the data gathered from the descriptions were critically examined and compared.

The second stage of curriculum document analysis was to analyze the content of syllabus specification for both curricula. For the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum, the analysis was done for five separate syllabus specifications used by Form 1 to Form 5. For New Zealand, the analysis was done on the whole content stated in Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum. The description of the New Zealand Japanese

Language Syllabus Specification was carried out in accordance with the four levels prescribed in the New Zealand Curriculum framework (MOE, 2007). The analysis for the Japanese Language Syllabus Specification was done one country at a time. The data was presented in the form of description in order to give clear understanding and to make it easier for comparison.

3.9 SUMMARY

Interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodology were chosen for this study because they are in line with the direction of my research where I am studying the experience and knowledge of the Japanese language teachers regarding the current history and the Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand. In this research, three methods were used to collect data for this research: a semi-structured interview, autoethnography, and document analysis. Interviews for the New Zealand participants were conducted face-to-face, whilst interview with one Malaysian participant was carried out via Skype. The researcher became a second Malaysian participant using autoethnography. Altogether, there were five participants, two from Malaysia and three from New Zealand. In document analysis, four documents were analyzed, two documents for each country. For Malaysia, the documents were: 1) The General Statement of Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004), and 2) The Japanese Language Curriculum Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d & 2011).

While for New Zealand, the documents were: 1) Learning Languages learning area in 2007 New Zealand Curriculum Framework (MoE, 2007), and 2) Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE,1998; Te Kete Ipurangi, 2011). In the next chapter, I will present the data from the interviews and my personal autoethnography, and lay out the findings of the document analysis, in relation to the four Research Questions.

Chapter 4: RESULT

4.1 Overview

This chapter is a presentation of my research findings. The purpose of the research was to document and compare the recent history of Japanese language education in both Malaysia and New Zealand. The research also investigated and compared how Japanese language is taught in Malaysia and New Zealand, and the approach to language teaching reflected in each country's curriculum.

This chapter has been divided into two parts: In sections 4.2 – 4.6, I will first present results from the semi structured interviews and autoethnography relating to Research Questions 1 and 2, examining the recent history of Japanese language teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand, and describing how Japanese is taught. And in section 4.7 – 4.10, I will outline the results from the document analysis for Research Questions 3 and 4, comparing the Japanese Language Curricula and syllabi in Malaysia and New Zealand.

4.2 Overview of Interview and Autoethnography

Results

The interview results will be presented in two main sections. The first section will be the findings for Malaysian participants' interviews (4.3) and the second section will present findings from the interviews involving New Zealand participants (4.4). These data are to answer my first and second research questions which are as follows:

Research Question 1:

What is the recent history of Japanese language being taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

Research Question 2:

How is Japanese currently taught in Malaysian and New Zealand schools?

- 2.1 How do teachers teach Japanese language in Malaysian/New Zealand classrooms?
- 2.2 What type of textbooks and materials are used?
- 2.3 What kind of assessment are given to students?
- 2.4 What is the curriculum and who involves in curriculum designing?
- 2.5 What are the qualifications to be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysian/New Zealand?

4.3 Japanese Language Education in Malaysia

In this section, I will present the findings of the interview with participant P1 and also my personal autoethnography regarding the recent history and the progress of Japanese language education in Malaysian secondary schools. Participant P1 is a senior teacher of Japanese. She is very experienced in her work and has been involved in writing the Japanese language curriculum and training selected in-service teachers to be Japanese language teachers. And, as a Japanese language teacher myself, and with eight years' experience in teaching Japanese in both Residential School and Normal Secondary School, I also include my knowledge and experience to complement the findings of the first interview. The data is presented under several headings in order to give organized information about the Japanese language education in Malaysia. The areas covered include Japanese Language Teaching History (4.3.1); Current Status of Japanese Language (4.3.2); Japanese Language Teaching Approach (4.3.3); Japanese Language Resources (4.3.4); Japanese Language Assessment (4.3.5); Japanese Language Curriculum (4.3.6); and Japanese Language Teacher Qualification (4.3.7).

4.3.1 Japanese Language Teaching History in Malaysia

Japanese language teaching was first introduced to the Malaysian educational system in the early 1980s. According to P1 and my own understanding, Japanese language was initially introduced to Malaysia in year 1984 under the 'Look East Policy' which was initiated by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed in 1982 with the

intention to learn from the Japanese people their secret to economic success. P1 says that, according to her knowledge, three teachers from Japan under the Japanese Overseas Volunteer Cooperation (JOVC) were brought to Malaysia by the government to set up Japanese language education in Malaysian secondary schools. P1 reported that at the initial stage of its implementation, there was a misunderstanding on the Malaysian side. The government at first thought that by the end of Form Five, students who had taken Japanese language at secondary schools could have direct entry to universities in Japan. This misunderstanding resulted in the delay of the setup of Japanese language in Malaysia by two years.

Finally, according to P1, in 1984, six JOCV teachers were brought to Malaysia and Japanese language education in Malaysia was officially established. However, at the time only students at six schools in Malaysia had the privilege to study the language. According to P1, the selected schools were all Residential Schools. At the initial stage, Japanese language was taught from Form One (age 13) to Form Five (age 17). P1 says that this happened for two to three years. The government then revised because it was believed that it was too much for Form Five students at the time as they had to focus on the Malaysia Certificate of Examination. However, according to P1, with the establishment of the new curriculum in 2004, Japanese language is once again being taught in Malaysia until Form Five (age 17).

In my experience, for many years Japanese language in Malaysia was like an 'elite' or a controlled subject as not all secondary schools in

Malaysia could offer the subject. Since it started in the early 1980s until the end of 2004, Japanese was only offered in Residential Schools. However, in early 2005 the government opened foreign language subjects to selected Normal Secondary Schools. I think the reason for this is that the government wanted to provide opportunities to all Malaysian students to learn foreign language as it is the government's vision to have a multilingual society (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). At first, 13 Normal Secondary Schools offered Japanese and a few other languages such as French and German in 2005. In 2005, the MOE announced that there would be one Japanese teacher per school to ensure that there are enough teachers to run the Japanese language programmes in the selected Normal Secondary Schools. Many of the teachers in the Residential Schools were transferred to open language classes in those schools and I was one of them.

As I have mentioned above, Japanese language is not available at all schools in Malaysia. Even though the government wants to introduce it to the Normal Secondary Schools, not every school can offer it. The schools that offer Japanese currently are selected by the Ministry of Education and these schools are selected because of their prestigious status. If we look at the status of the chosen Normal Secondary Schools at present, we can clearly see that the selected schools are all top schools academically in each state and often the students that get to go to this kind of schools are selected by the State Education Department. However, the vision to spread the learning of Japanese and other international languages to the Normal Secondary Schools stopped in the same year it

was introduced (2005). I believe this is primarily due to lack of teachers and timetable problems.

In summary, Japanese language was introduced to Malaysia in year 1984 under the 'Look East Policy' which was initiated by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed in 1982. At the initial stage only students at six Residential Schools had the privilege to study the language, but, over the years the number of Residential Schools offering Japanese had increased to over fifty schools. In 2005, the government opened foreign language subjects to selected Normal Secondary Schools.

4.3.2 Current Status of Japanese Language in Malaysia

As discussed in the previous section, according to P1 and my own experience, historically Japanese language was learned by students who studied at Residential Schools. In 2005, students at some selected Normal Secondary Schools had the opportunity to learn the language. According to P1, Japanese language is an elective subject, thus, the students can choose whether to study or not to study the language. However, P1 adds that in Residential Schools foreign language subject is made compulsory. Therefore, students have to choose one language that they want to study. According to P1, students who choose to do Japanese are typically fans of Japanese anime/manga and Japanese pop culture. Nevertheless, P1 reports that there are students who do not want to learn Japanese who end up studying the language anyway because Japanese language is the only foreign language offered in that particular school. According to P1,

this situation could not be avoided as in Residential Schools, taking one foreign language class is compulsory and not all Residential Schools can offer more than one foreign language subject. In addition, P1 reported that in Residential Schools, the allocation of students for each foreign language subject also depends on the principal and school's policy regarding language learning. P1 added that there are schools that accept whatever the students' language choices are, even though the number of students do not balance among all languages. And, there are other schools that give authority to language teachers to divide the students evenly among language classes regardless of the students' language choice. Furthermore, according to P1, there are also schools that give some kind of placement or entrance test to students as a precondition to enter Japanese language classes. According to P1, this is because those teachers believe that Japanese is more difficult than other languages due to its orthography.

In Normal Secondary Schools, learning a foreign language is not compulsory. In some schools only some assigned classes will learn a foreign language. In some cases, for example in my school, the subject had to be taught outside of the school timetable. This is because many of Normal Secondary Schools have two schooling sessions – morning session (7.30 am – 1.15 pm) for students aged 15 to 17 (Form 3 to Form 5) and afternoon session (1.30 pm to 6.45 pm) for students aged 13 to 14 (Form One and 2). In my school, morning session students who chose to do Japanese had to stay back after class for the lesson and the afternoon session students have to come in the morning for their Japanese class. In

my experience, teachers that are teaching Japanese language in Normal Secondary Schools have problems concerning organization within the school to facilitate Japanese language teaching, for example, when I was transferred to a normal school, the administrator did not even know that I came to the school to open Japanese classes there.

Currently in Malaysia, Japanese and other foreign languages are classified as an elective subject. However, in Residential Schools foreign language subject is made compulsory. Therefore, students in these schools have to choose one language to study. In Normal Secondary Schools, the subject is not compulsory and students are free to choose whether to learn it or not.

4.3.3 Japanese Language Teaching Approach in Malaysia

Regarding the teaching of Japanese language in Malaysian secondary schools' classrooms, P1 reported that it is mainly textbook based and that is vocabulary and grammar focused. She notes that this way of teaching Japanese is unavoidable as she said:

...The whole history starts with very textbook based...(P1)

When JOCV teachers first set up the Japanese language classes in secondary schools in 1984, there were no suitable materials available. These teachers had used a textbook from Japan called '*Nihongo Shoho*' (Suzuki & Kawase, 1981) which was totally grammatically focused. According to P1, this was how Japanese language was taught at the

beginning and this way of teaching continued as Malaysia's first Japanese language textbook '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) was also created based on '*Nihongo Shoho*' (Suzuki & Kawase, 1981). P1 noted that Malaysia actually never had any Japanese language curriculum or syllabus prior to 2004.

...all this while we do not have the syllabus...all we have was the textbook – '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) and from the textbook we created the curriculum...I mean the kind of semester plan...the scheme of work...(P1)

She said that what Japanese language teachers had used until 2008 was actually not the official syllabus. It was a teacher guideline to teaching Japanese taken from the textbook '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989). P1 explained that '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) which was used as the unofficial syllabus for teachers of Japanese in Malaysia since 1986 was basically grammatically based, thus, it gave teachers no choice but to focus on structures, grammar and vocabulary in their teaching. According to some research done by P1, the teachers she interviewed expressed their desire to teach the students to use Japanese language and speak fluently in Japanese but because they were dependent on the textbook

'Nihongo Konnichiwa' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989), they ended up teaching *about* the language not about how to *use* the language.

When talking about the changes in the teaching of Japanese language over the years, P1 expressed her concern about the new development in schools regarding the usage of the new syllabus published in 2004. She pointed out that the new syllabus is supposed to change the old way of Grammatical-Based teaching to a Communicative Language Teaching approach which is learner centered. But, from P1 observation, it seems that teachers do not know how to use the syllabus and many of them are still doing the same textbook teaching in classroom. She felt that Japanese language teaching in Malaysia is too textbook-based. According to her observation and knowledge, Japanese language teachers in Malaysia prefer to refer to the textbook rather than the syllabus when writing their lesson planning. P1 strongly felt that teachers of Japanese language in Malaysia should first be trained to interpret the syllabus before they can utilize it effectively and only then, the visions, aims and objectives stated in this new syllabus can be achieved. P1 says that even though all teachers are using the same textbook at the moment, there is no standardization in what is being taught; teachers in schools are doing their own things. However, she added that once the new assessment system is determined, she hopes teachers will have a clear picture of how to teach, what approach to use, and what kind of textbook and materials to choose.

From my experience and my knowledge, many teachers teach Japanese according to what is inside the textbook which is provided to us as noted by P1. The first textbook that all Japanese language teachers had for teaching Japanese language in Malaysia was '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989), and this textbook basically focused on grammar and vocabulary. As much as we want to expose students to more communicative experience in the classroom, we tend to pay more attention to vocabulary and grammar structures. Many of us do lots of drilling in class, whether it is grammar or vocabulary. This may be because our educational system is so focused on academic achievement and exam results. And, maybe another reason for this is teachers' beliefs about language learning. I think many of Japanese language teachers in Malaysia believe that in order to be able to express freely in a language, one must understand the vocabulary and master the structures. This focus on vocabulary and grammar does not mean that there is little emphasis on communication in Japanese language classes in Malaysia. There are many teachers, including myself, who put a lot of effort in teaching Japanese and try to make their students use the language communicatively as much as possible through classroom activities such as speeches, role playing, cultural exchange programmes and so on.

In summary, P1 reported that the teaching of Japanese in Malaysian secondary schools is vocabulary and grammar focused. She notes that this is unavoidable as this way of teaching was inherited. When the JOCV teachers taught the Japanese language, they used a textbook

'Nihongo Shoho' (Suzuki & Kawase, 1981) which was totally grammatically focused and this was how Japanese language was taught at the beginning. Malaysia's first Japanese language textbook *'Nihongo Konnichiwa'* (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) was also created based on this book. So, the Grammatical-Based teaching continues until now even though the new syllabus is supposed to change to a Communicative Language Teaching approach.

4.3.4 Japanese Language Resources in Malaysia

P1 reported that Malaysia created its own Japanese language textbooks and currently, the Curriculum Development Division (CDC), Ministry of Education (MOE) is in the process of producing five new textbooks to cater for the Form One to Form Five. At the moment, according to P1, only the Form One textbook *'Nihongo Daisuki'* (Chin et al., 2010) is finished while the rest are still pending. Regarding textbook use in the classrooms, P1 says that teachers now use *'Nihongo Daisuki'* (Chin et al., 2010) for Form One and many teachers use it until Form 2 as the content of this textbook is too much to be covered for one year. And, according to this participant, there are teachers that still use *'Nihongo Konnichiwa'* (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989), the first Malaysian Japanese language textbook. These teachers are in their comfort zone and do not want to change as for them *'Nihongo Konnichiwa'* (Malaysian Residential Schools

Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989) is easier to use than '*Nihongo Daisuki*' (Chin et al., 2010).

...'*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' compared to now '*Nihongo Daisuki*' is more structured, it is more systematic, it is user friendly....you cannot blame the teacher for not letting it go...(P1)

P1 adds that teachers also use other textbooks in the market, for example, '*Minna no Nihongo*' (3A Corporation, 1998). In addition, teachers also get their materials from online resources and many of them create their own materials to suit students' needs, interests and ability.

From my experience, finding Japanese language teaching materials in Malaysia is very hard. If you are teaching in an old school that has taught Japanese for quite some times, you will probably have some materials that were originally provided by the Japan Foundation in schools. But if you are in a new school and you are the first Japanese teacher in the school, you have to be creative to create or find your own materials. The Japan Foundation will help new schools with materials through their donation programmes, but the teachers must take the initiative to apply. However, teachers now are very lucky as there are many materials for teaching Japanese language which can be found on the internet. Many teachers I know incorporate technology when teaching, especially those teaching in well-equipped schools. They also use songs, dramas, slides and clips from Youtube to encourage learning.

In summary, the Malaysian MOE is currently in the process of producing five new textbooks for Japanese language teaching in secondary schools to cater for the Form One to Form Five. At the moment, only the Form One textbook '*Nihongo Daisuki*' (Chin et al., 2010) is finished and as its content is too much many teachers use it until Form 2. There are also teachers that still use '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989). Finding Japanese language teaching materials is very hard, but the Japan Foundation usually helps with materials through their donation programmes, and teachers also get their materials from the internet.

4.3.5 Japanese Language Assessment in Malaysia

According to P1, historically, when JOCV teachers were teaching Japanese in Malaysian schools, there was one common Japanese language examination at each end of the year for Japanese language for Form One to Form Four. However, P1 reports that in the year 2001 or 2002, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) gave authority to the University of Malaya to handle the Form Four examination (Japanese Language Certificate Examination) while the teachers at the zone level³ were to handle the examinations for Form One to Form Three. At the time, according to P1, teachers at every zone even had established a 'question bank' to keep past examination questions. However, when JOVC teachers returned to Japan, the zone level exam practice stopped as many Malaysian teachers thought that the preparation for it was too burdensome.

³ Zone level is a centre for schools in Malaysia (north, south, east and west) to meet and work together for certain event or programmes.

Therefore, from then on, schools carried out tests and examinations on their own. According to P1, generally teachers do written tests which usually focus on comprehension and grammar. Listening tests are usually done during the Japanese Language Certificate Exam at Form Four only. According to P1, teachers administer very few oral tests. P1 adds that the new 2004 curriculum demands a lot of formative test such as folios, oral tests and so on. Regarding the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), P1 says that many teachers use it as a motivation for students to focus on while learning the language. This is because, according to P1, there is a belief that students in Malaysia can only be serious in learning if there is an exam at the end of the course that will certify their ability in the form of an academic certificate. According to P1, teachers in Malaysia encourage their students to sit for JLPT and many of these teachers do extra classes to help their students prepare for this.

From my experience, Japanese language teachers in Malaysia give two exams, one at mid-term and the other one at final term. The exam questions are usually divided in parts to test students' understanding of the language use. The students are usually tested on reading and comprehension, and writing. We seldom test speaking and listening. From my knowledge, many teachers do not do listening tests. I presume this is because it is hard to get the materials. In my experience, if you want to do a listening test, you have to do your own recording. I did my own recording, recording my own voice, did the dialogues myself and acted out the dialogues in different voices. However, there are many teachers that do oral tests only for our record of students' progress. There is no specific

training given to the teachers about how they should do their exams, tests or assessment question. Most of us create our own test materials.

Besides, mid-term and final exams, we also have formative tests which vary according to schools. We also have vocabulary tests which are on-going in classrooms. Some teachers give grades for formative tests according to students' participation in class and some through teachers' observations. Many of the teachers that I know, including myself, also encourage students to sit for the JLPT test. We try our best to equip students for the level required to sit for JLPT test. Some teachers even prepare transportation for students to go to the nearest test location. In Malaysia, we have one national examination for students who study Japanese. The students have to sit for this exam at their fourth year of the Japanese language course which is when they are in Form 4 (age 16). The students will get a certificate for the exam.

In summary, there are usually two exams given by Japanese language teachers in Malaysia, one at mid-term and the other one at final term. The students are usually tested on reading and comprehension, and writing, seldom on speaking and listening. Students of Japanese in Malaysia sit for the Japanese Language Certificate Exam at Form 4. Students are also encouraged to sit for JLPT by teachers.

4.3.6 Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia

According to P1, a review done by the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur (JFKL) inspired the formation of new curriculum in 2004. JFKL administered a questionnaire for teachers which revealed many criticisms

about the first Japanese textbook '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989). P1 said that teachers reported that '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' was boring, no colour, and the content was limited and outdated. Therefore, the planning and the designing of a new syllabus started in 2002. According to P1, the new syllabus is communication-based and learner-centered. P1 adds that the new syllabus gives teachers the freedom to interpret what they need to look at when planning lesson objectives. P1 explained that the new syllabus is done based on a needs-analysis that was carried out at selected schools around Malaysia for school administrators, teachers, and students. And, according to P1, the English language syllabus is used as the main reference for the new Japanese syllabus format and style. The new syllabus also takes language proficiency into consideration. According to P1, the curriculum panel at the time thought that the new syllabus should be able to produce students that are marketable which means that their Japanese language proficiency level should be above Level Four and near Level Three in accordance with the Japanese Language Proficiency Level set by the Mombusho or Ministry of Education, Japan.

As far as I know, the people involved in deciding what goes inside the curriculum were selected Japanese language teachers and a Japanese language lecturer at the Teacher Education Institute with supervision from the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur and officers at Ministry of Education Curriculum Development Centre. The Japanese Language Curriculum has changed from content that is focused on topical/situational and grammar structure to being more skill or outcomes

based. The new curriculum does not fix any specific topics which mean that teachers have the freedom to choose their own topic. The curriculum only gives themes for teachers to follow when deciding what topic to choose. I think in a way, this new curriculum is trying to give teachers more authority and creativity in planning their language programmes. However, to date, no professional development programmes have been delivered to assist teachers in using new curriculum.

In Summary, the planning and the designing of a new syllabus started in 2002. The new syllabus is communication based and learner-centered, and it gives teachers the freedom to interpret what they need to look at when planning lesson objectives. The format and style of the new Japanese syllabus are based on the syllabus of English language. The new syllabus is aimed to produce students that are marketable which means that their Japanese language proficiency level should be above Level Four and near Level Three according to Japanese language proficiency set by the Mombusho or Ministry of Education, Japan.

4.3.7 Japanese Language Teacher Qualification in Malaysia

According to P1, to be a Japanese language teacher, one must be an in-service teacher for at least three years at any school. This means that one must acquire a degree in Education and have taught for three years. According to P1, a scholarship programme for Japanese Language Teacher courses in Japan organized by JPA which ran between the early 1980s to the end of the 1990s has ended. To be a Japanese language

teacher now, one does not have to go to Japan anymore. P1 says that in-service teachers that are interested in being a Japanese language teacher can apply to enter the one year Japanese language course at the Teacher Institute in Kuala Lumpur. However, P1 feels that the programme has limitations. According to P1, this is because many of the teachers that apply to this programme are not really interested in being a Japanese language teacher. P1 adds, many of the teachers use the programme as stepping stone for them to get re-posted to a school they like. P1 says that many of these teachers are not serious about learning Japanese language and they attend the course just to be away from teaching.

From my experience, to be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia, one must be an in-service teacher. In the 1980s and 1990s, these in-service teachers were sent to learn the Japanese language in Japan for five years. I was one of the teachers that had the privilege to receive this scholarship and study in Japan from 1998 to 2003. As the Malaysian government tried to spread the teaching of Japanese language in more secondary schools, more teachers were needed. Therefore, the government established a Japanese language teaching course for one year at the Teachers Institute of Foreign Language in Kuala Lumpur. This course targets in-service teachers that have a bachelor degree in any major. In other words, to be a Japanese teacher in Malaysia, one must be an in-service teacher with at least one year experience in studying Japanese at an institute recognized by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

In summary, to be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia, one must acquire a degree in Education and have taught for three years. In the 1980s and 1990s, the in-service teachers were sent to learn the Japanese language in Japan for five years, but recently, in-service teachers that are interested in being a Japanese language teacher can apply to enter the one year Japanese language course at the Teacher Institute in Kuala Lumpur.

4.4 Summary

Results from the semi structured interview with P1 and autoethnography have revealed the following information about the teaching and learning of Japanese language in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, Japanese language was introduced as a subject in schools in line with 'The Look East Policy' where the government wanted to emulate the Japanese outstanding work ethics, believed to play an important role in bringing Japan to its economic success in such a short time. Initially, the learners of Japanese language in Malaysia were students in Residential Schools. The subject was introduced in the selected Normal Secondary Schools only recently, in the year 2005. Japanese language is an elective subject and not compulsory. It is apparent that in Malaysia, the teaching of Japanese language is largely based on the textbook and influenced by exams.

In Malaysia, schools that offered Japanese language subject will be provided with a textbook published by the Ministry of Education called

'Nihongo Daisuki' (Chin et al., 2010). Malaysia is now in the process of producing the textbooks for Form 2, 3, 4 and 5. The subject has at least two main examinations which usually take place at the end of first semester and another one at the end of second semester or the end of the year. Besides these examinations, there are also formative tests, spelling and vocabulary tests and others. Malaysia also has a Japanese Language Certificate Exam that is conducted in Form 4 to acknowledge the students' achievement in Japanese language.

Malaysian Japanese language curriculum only underwent changes recently. In fact, according to one of the Malaysian participants, the curriculum that has been used since 1984 is actually not an official curriculum. It was a sort of a semester plan or a content guideline to teaching Japanese which was taken from the previous textbook *'Nihongo Konnichiwa'* (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989). The new Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum published in 2004 has changed to a more Communicative Language Teaching approach. The new curriculum has adopted a Skills and Outcomes-based style of curriculum where the focus is given to equip students with the four skills of language which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Malaysia, to be a Japanese language teacher, one must be an in-service teacher and has at least undergone a one year Japanese language course offered at the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Language Teacher Institute.

4.5 Japanese Language Education in New Zealand

This section will present the findings of the interviews conducted with selected Japanese language teachers in New Zealand. The three participants selected for the interviews are very experienced in their work as Japanese language teachers and can be considered as seniors in their field. In fact, two of the teachers (P4 and P5) have been teaching Japanese for nearly thirty years and the other teacher (P3), besides training selected in-service teachers to be Japanese language teachers, was also involved in writing the Japanese language curriculum. P4 and P5 were interviewed together in one session, while P3 was interviewed in separate session. The findings that I am going to write in the next paragraphs are based on the knowledge and experiences of these teachers in the Japanese language education in New Zealand, and will address the same areas as for the Malaysian teachers: Japanese Language Teaching History (4.5.1); Current Status of Japanese Language (4.5.2); Japanese Language Teaching Approach (4.5.3); Japanese Language Resources (4.5.4); Japanese Language Assessment (4.5.5); Japanese Language Curriculum (4.5.6); and Japanese Language Teacher Qualification (4.5.7).

4.5.1 Japanese Language History in New Zealand

According to P4 and P5, Japanese language was first introduced as a subject in schools in their city around 1981. In fact, P4 was the pioneer. He was the one responsible for opening an early Japanese language class in a New Zealand the school. P4 said that the subject started off as a

business opportunity and it was originally taught to Year 9. P5 added that Japanese language started as a trend:

...It was a trend that started in Australia and then it was sort of...it was picked up by New Zealand you know people or New Zealand government...(P5)

According to P3, Japanese language was first introduced in New Zealand high schools in 1980s. She cannot remember exactly the year but according to her, the first teacher who opened a Japanese language class was at Wanganui. According to P3, the Japanese language became a very popular subject in New Zealand schools in the 1990s. The Japanese language exceeded the popularity of French language lessons and according to P3, this was due to the rapid growing of business and trade relationships between New Zealand and the Japanese government:

... And then Japanese became incredibly popular especially because the government was having...ermmm...Japan was number one or two trading partner and so, Japanese numbers just went up this...went really high...(P3)

According to P3, in the early days of Japanese language teaching in New Zealand, a typical high school allowed students to choose their own language subject and historically language learning in the New

Zealand educational system started at Year 9 (age 13) with two to three hours of instruction a week. At that time, there were two to three language classes a week for the whole year. At Year 11 (age 15), students would sit for the national exam called School Certificate examination. According to P3, students who were going to sit for this examination had had 300 hours of language learning. However, this kind of regulation is not applied in the current National Certificate Of Educational Achievement (NCEA). P3 says that now the situation is changed and compared to before, the students nowadays have fewer hours in learning languages:

...if they had sixty or fifty minutes a week times three...that would be maximum of 120 but of course....you never get that much because of interruptions...school sport...trips...exam week...all of that kind of things. So, they'll be very very lucky to get 100 hours a year....of languages...(P3)

P3 also added that now, as New Zealand schools are self-managing, the government does not want to interfere with the schools' administration. Furthermore, according to P3, starting in the 1980s and 1990s, schools had more new subjects to offer such as ICT, Technology and so on, thus, it has become difficult for language subjects to be offered in the same way as in the old days. And, according to all three participants, nowadays, the Japanese language is also offered to Year 7 (age 11). However, not all schools start Japanese language teaching at Year 7. Only selected

schools have it at Year 7 as it depends on whether or not the schools can find a teacher to teach the subject.

In summary, Japanese language was first introduced in New Zealand high schools in 1980s due to the rapid growing of business and trade relationships between New Zealand and Japan. Historically, language learning in the New Zealand educational system started at Year 9 (age 13) with two to three hours of instruction a week. Recently, the Japanese language is also offered to Year 7 (age 11). However, it is only at selected schools as it depends on whether or not the schools can find a teacher to teach the subject.

4.5.2 Current Status of Japanese Language in New Zealand

According to P4 and P5, in the early years, Japanese language was promoted as a difficult subject and only the very able students took it. Japanese language was and still is an optional subject. However, according to these teachers, when it was first started, the schools indirectly had an influence in deciding who took Japanese.

P3 reported that recently the number of young learners that are interested in learning Japanese language is increasing, especially in the intermediate schools. P3 described that the typical learners of Japanese are female from girl schools or private girl schools, and this is based on the result that came out of a study done in 2004 about the retention of Japanese language at high school level. However, according to P3, in recent years, Japanese language popularity has dropped slightly and now ranks second after French. P3 says that this is most probably due to trade

or another economic reason and it also could be because of public perceptions about Japanese language.

Regarding how the students go about choosing the right language subject for themselves, P3 says that although students make their own decision on what language to learn, the schools' policy of language learning in a way influences the choices of language students make. In some schools' language policy, students might be allowed to choose but the choice is usually dictated by the timetable. According to P3, students have to make wise decisions as they are not only making a decision on language but other subjects too. Furthermore, in some schools, according to P3, students are streamed according to their abilities and the top ten students sometimes are required to take two language subjects. She adds that sometimes, less able students are not required to take language classes. Instead, they are advised to take extra literacy and numeracy classes. In other words, the way in which students choose a language varies according to schools.

According to P3, parents also play a vital role in influencing students' choice of language in schools. She adds that many of the parents are afraid to let their children choose Japanese language as they do not know anything about it and they fear that they cannot assist their children in learning the language. This is because Japanese is not traditionally a familiar language to most New Zealand's parents as many of them learned French in their school days.

In summary, Japanese language popularity has increased in New Zealand recently, especially in intermediate schools (Years 7 and 8), and one participant reported that the typical learners of Japanese are female from girl schools or private girl schools. According to the participants, although students make their own decision on what language to learn, the schools' policy of language learning in a way influences the choices of language students make.

4.5.3 Japanese Language Teaching Approach in New Zealand

P4 and P5 say that it is hard to describe how Japanese language is taught in New Zealand secondary schools as each school has different ways of handling their own teaching. The teaching and learning of Japanese language in schools around New Zealand varies. However, according to both participants, the teaching and learning of Japanese in schools in New Zealand, generally is focuses on the exam. P4 said that:

...I think as a generalized statement the focus is on reading and writing which is examination based...(P4)

Furthermore, he said:

...the other one, the speaking one is usually based on what is the final examination...which is "make a speech". Okay, make a

speech. There you go...memorize it. But not really interactive...(P4)

Both P4 and P5 also explained that even though there are some teachers who try to bring communicative aspects in to their teaching and learning, in the end the students are often asked to memorize so that they can get good grades in reading or speaking. And according to P4, there is a difference in the approach used by the native and non-native teachers. He said teachers who are native speakers would have different amount of communicative skills and experience, and look at the subject in a different way from a non-native speaker. For example, when teaching communicative skills, the native speaker teachers would not have any problem in interacting using correct Japanese, whereas, the non-native teachers may sometimes have trouble when using correct terms for some Japanese words. The non-native teachers also find difficulty in turning to natural and authentic Japanese language conversation on the spot. According to P4, the native speaker teachers “could turn on the conversation just like that” and it is always grammatically correct.

Regarding the number of teachers in schools, both P4 and P5 say that in most schools around New Zealand, there is only one teacher who teaches Japanese language in a school. However, according to the interview, the number of teachers in a school depends on how many students one school has. It also depends on whether or not the school can find suitable staff to teach the language. There are a few schools that have

more than one Japanese language teacher. In these schools, the teachers have to teach other subjects besides Japanese.

Furthermore, from the interview, it was apparent that most of the Japanese language teachers in New Zealand have to teach mixed level students in a combined class. One of the teachers described the situation that he has to face every day:

...It is very difficult...I have got in one class level 13, level 12, level 11 and tourism. So I've got individual students all on the go. And then you got weak students and strong students...(P4)

P3, in her interview, also says that the teaching of Japanese language in recent years varies from school to school. She said that this is because the schools in New Zealand are self-governed. Therefore, schools decide on how the programmes should be offered and, what and how languages should be taught. However, P3 notes that although the status of language learning is still not compulsory, the 2007 New Zealand curriculum has at least stated that the schools should encourage language learning among their students from Year 7 to Year 10. From the interview, it is apparent that language programmes in New Zealand schools are not standardized. The programmes vary; even the hours of teaching are different from school to school. According to P3, there are schools which offer more hours and there are schools that offer fewer hours. P3 said that the highest school so far has 120 classes of about 45 to 50 minutes per class a year. There are no regulations about this as P3 explained that:

...In New Zealand, the schools are self-governing, which means they make their own decision about what they teach and how they teach it. Having said that.....the current situation is that the New Zealand curriculum encourages the teaching of other languages...but it still not compulsory. It encourages the teaching of other languages...particularly at Year 7 to 10 level but it's up to the school to decide which language to teach and how. So, they might choose to offer it...for example, at Year 7 and 8 level, or they might choose to offer it just for six months...or just for half a year or...just for two weeks. And at Year 9 level...at the beginning of high school, they might choose for the students to rotate, so that they get six months of French, six months of Te Reo Maori, six months of Japanese, six months of Spanish or term I should say...not six months and the students decide at the beginning of Year 10 what they would like to study. Or another school might not have that opportunity....they might just say...ok you can study French for a year....it's not compulsory but some school make it compulsory at Year 9 and 10 but.....there's still no regulation about how they do it...(P3)

Talking about the teaching approach used by the teachers of Japanese in their classroom, P3 stated that the new curriculum

encourages teachers to teach language in meaningful context where teachers must think of ways in which to ensure students are able to use language that they have learned to make meaning. According to the interview, language teachers in New Zealand have the freedom to choose and pick any textbooks or resources they like in helping them to teach better. P3 explained that the teaching and learning of languages in New Zealand has changed from grammar and vocabulary-based to more communicative based. According to P3, today, all languages including Japanese are taught based on the ten principles (Ellis, 2005) derived from the summary of the studies done around the world on how languages are best taught in an instructed setting.

The teaching of language in recent years, emphasizes the importance of language input and according to P3, teachers are encouraged to produce more classroom tasks that will provide more opportunities for students to interact. P3 adds that teachers are also urged to use the latest technology in classroom and make use materials on the internet such as Youtube, Skype and others in their daily teaching. However, according to P3, the content of the teaching still in a way based on what will come out in the exam. P3 feels that this situation is inevitable and thinks that in a way it has a positive effect on students' learning as she states that:

...Some people think that it's a negative thing....that assessment drives learning. But, in most positive light if

assessment and learning are working well together, then, it must be good for the students...(P3)

In summary, the teaching and learning of Japanese language in schools around New Zealand varies as each school in New Zealand has different ways of handling their own teaching. Although the new curriculum encourages teachers to teach language in meaningful context and to ensure students are able to use language to make meaning, the content of the teaching still based to some extent on what will come out in the exam.

4.5.4 Japanese Language Resources in New Zealand

In New Zealand, according to P4 and P5, there is one textbook that caters to the teaching and learning, and the Japanese curriculum for secondary schools. However, according to P5, more and more teachers in New Zealand have turned to Australian textbooks in helping them teaching effectively in the classroom. Their reason for doing this is because the content of Australian textbooks is more current and more advanced than those from New Zealand. Besides the textbook, teachers also use their own resources in teaching, creating their own materials in the classroom to suit their students' needs and ability. Both P4 and P5, are very enthusiastic and very passionate about teaching Japanese. They have made many collections of learning materials for teaching Japanese. P3 also says that Japanese language teachers in New Zealand use various textbooks. Some of them may still use some of the old textbooks, for example, 'Active Japanese' (Williams, 1990) and a few others. And, as

mentioned by P4 and P5, P3 also says that many of the teachers use Australian textbooks and teachers also create their own materials. According to P3, New Zealand does not produce any textbook that is compatible for the needs of the new curriculum.

In summary, New Zealand does not produce any textbook for the new Japanese Language Curriculum, thus, teachers use any textbooks or resources they can get. Many teachers turn to Australian textbooks, some create their own and some use the old textbooks.

4.5.5 Japanese Language Assessment in New Zealand

Like any other subject, Japanese language students in New Zealand also have to undergo assessments, test and examinations. P4 and P5 said that these assessments, test and examinations are important for marks or grades and for tracing one's progress. According to P4 and P5, most Japanese language students will have to sit two major school's exam, one in the beginning of the year and another at the end of the year. In addition, there will be internal assessments, formative assessments, and regular vocabulary tests which are usually an on-going process that is done by teachers in classroom. The students also have to sit for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) assessment in Year 11 to 13 (age 16-18).

P3 says that Japanese language assessment in schools varies from school to school, but, she is sure that most teachers separate the assessment according to language skills. They do not usually combine skills when doing tests or assessments. According to P3, vocabulary tests

are done from time to time throughout the year. From the interview it is clear that New Zealand does not have a specific national Japanese Language Certificate to recognize students' achievement in language learning. However, P3 reports that students are encouraged to take JLPT even though many cannot reach a high enough level to sit for it. The students are also encouraged to take the Australian language proficiency test which is known as Japanese Language Certificate.

In summary, besides internal assessments, formative assessments, and regular vocabulary tests which are usually an on-going process that is done by teachers in classroom, most Japanese language students in New Zealand will have to sit two major school's exam. The students also have to sit for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) assessment in Year 11 to 13. There is no Japanese Language Certificate examination in New Zealand, but students are encouraged to sit for Australian Japanese Language Certificate.

4.5.6 Japanese Language Curriculum in New Zealand

As in Malaysia, selected teachers of Japanese in New Zealand are involved in giving ideas, deciding and designing the syllabus. According to P4 and P5, the Japanese language curriculum in New Zealand has undergone tremendous changes over the years. It started with what they called the 'Alfonso'⁴ version of Japanese to a 'mobile phone Japanese' to 'Australian Japanese'. The content, style and vocabulary of Japanese

⁴ Alfonso is the author of the old Japanese language textbook used in Japanese language classrooms in New Zealand.

language being taught in New Zealand have changed over the years to cater the changing interest of young people.

According to P4 and P5, incoming Japanese exchange students to schools around New Zealand also have put pressure on the form of language to be taught in schools. Many issues arose regarding the teaching of “masu” form. “Masu” form is a polite form of Japanese and it is the form of speech that is normally taught to the students of Japanese especially in the beginners classes. But, actually in real life the Japanese people do not use this form when they are communicating with each other unless they are speaking to the elders. As a result, many young students of Japanese want to be taught the “plain” form which often used in casual conversation. Therefore, according to P4, New Zealand teachers of Japanese nowadays teach “plain” form too.

One interesting findings from the interview with P4 and P5 is that the Japanese curriculum in New Zealand has no relation whatsoever with the Japanese Language Proficiency Level set by Mombusho, (Ministry of Education, Japan). The language proficiency mentioned above is a proficiency level used to determine the levels of Japanese one has acquired. These levels are important in pursuing studies in Japanese, especially at the universities in Japan.

P3, who has been involved in writing the Japanese language curriculum, responded to the question about how Japanese language curriculum in New Zealand had changed over the years by presenting detailed information about the changes from Japanese language syllabus in 1986 (MoE, 1986) to the latest one in 2007 (MoE, 2007). According to

P3, the 1986 Japanese language syllabus (MoE, 1986) was only a draft and the content of it was probably influenced by the Alfonso version of Japanese. P3 explains that the 1986 syllabus (MoE, 1986) was more of a topical-based syllabus as it presented the content in a list of fourteen topics. According to P3, the 1986 syllabus (MoE, 1986) stressed the importance of Japanese scripts but stated that students should learn the scripts by the end of fifth form which gave the impression to many teachers at that time that it is alright to use romaji⁵ when teaching Japanese early on. P3 says that it is really disappointing that even now there are still some teachers that use romaji in teaching Japanese. These, according to P3, talks about the Communicative Language Teaching approach in language teaching. However, this document is until Form Five only. Then, came the 1993 (MoE, 1993b) document and according P3, this document was also topic-based with the same 14 topics, vocabulary list and a set of grammatical structures. According to P3, the difference between 1986 (MoE, 1986) and 1993 (MoE, 1993b) document is that the 1993 document has two parts. The second part is created to serve the need of Year 12 and Year 13 students.

According to P3, in 1993, the National Curriculum Framework was introduced for the first time to the schools in New Zealand. In this framework, all foreign languages, including Japanese, were included as part of the English Language Learning Area and it was stated that languages are optional subject, not compulsory. According to P3, as a result of the framework all languages have their own specific supporting

⁵ Romaji refers to roman alphabet.

document and so, the Japanese language document, Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 1998) came out in 1998. This document promotes the use of language for meaningful communication. P3 states that this 1998 document is an Outcomes-Based Syllabus. It stresses function and approach to language learning. According to P3, there are no topics in this document. Teachers are no longer tied up to specific list of topics, instead, teachers are free to use their own topics.

P3 added that the 1993 New Zealand Curriculum Framework (MoE, 1993a) has specified that all language curriculum documents must have eight levels. According to P3, although there are levels, teachers can jump up levels or go to lower levels as long it is appropriate to the needs of the students. However, Level One must be used at the start of language learning which at some schools is at Year 7 and some at Year 9. P3 reported that along with this document, there is also support material and this support material gives strong messages to the teachers: 1) do not fear plain form, 2) do not use romaji, and 3) use language for relevant context.

According to P3, in 2007 another curriculum reform took place in New Zealand. In this curriculum a new learning area called Learning Languages was established. P3 stresses that all additional languages are now united under one area and the content of this new area is generic. According to P3, this new learning area talks about the purposes and the importance of language learning in general without mentioning any specific languages. And again in this latest document, languages are still optional even though there were some attempts to make it compulsory. P3 tells that:

...they [the government] were worried about not having enough quality teachers and if they made languages compulsory...it would be done badly because they don't have quality teachers and programmes wouldn't be sustainable. So that was the government's worry, so, they said no...(P3)

P3 also adds that there were also some people or groups who were against the idea of making languages compulsory in schools. Therefore, instead of making languages compulsory, the schools are encouraged to working towards having languages in their schools. P3 states that the new curriculum is influenced by the Common European Framework which has a generic view at language levels. These language levels represent the ability of a learner at a particular level, just like the Japanese Language Proficiency levels produced by the Mombusho or Ministry of Education, Japan. P3 also stressed that the Japanese language curriculum in New Zealand has no relation to the Japanese language proficiency as prescribed by the Mombusho.

In summary, Japanese language curriculum and syllabus in New Zealand has undergone tremendous changes over the years, and along with it, the content, style and vocabulary of Japanese language have also been changed to cater the changing interest of young people. The new 2007 curriculum is influenced by the Common European Framework which has a generic view at language levels. These language levels represent the ability of a learner at a particular level. However, Japanese language

levels stated in the curriculum have no connection with the Japanese Language Proficiency Levels set by the Mombusho.

4.5.7 Japanese Language Teacher Qualification in New Zealand

According to all three participants in New Zealand, to be a Japanese teacher, all one has to do is be a registered teacher. No specific Japanese language qualification is needed. In fact, according to P4 there is a whole group of teachers of Japanese who have actually got qualification in French or German or Social Sciences or other subjects, but because their wife or girlfriend is Japanese or may be because they have lived in Japan for a year or so, they are entrusted to teach the subject. P3 also says that there is no formal or specific Japanese language qualification needed for one to be a Japanese language teacher. She said:

...A principal in schools can employ anyone who has been ok by Teachers Council and if you haven't got a teacher qualification from New Zealand but you've got approved one from overseas and you tell the principal that you can speak Japanese....he can give you a Japanese class. You don't have to have gone through teachers college in New Zealand with the Japanese curriculum to understand this works...(P3)

In summary, there is no formal or specific Japanese language qualification needed for one to be a Japanese language teacher in New Zealand. One only has to be a registered teacher and be able to speak Japanese. There are cases where one became Japanese language teacher because his or her partner is Japanese or may be because he or she has previously lived in Japan.

4.6 Summary

Japanese language was introduced in New Zealand in secondary schools in 1980s as the government wanted to do business and trade with the Japanese. Many if not most schools in New Zealand offer Japanese language to their students and the earliest age for students to learn Japanese in New Zealand schools is at the age of 11 as some schools offer Japanese at Year 7. In New Zealand schools, students are given freedom to select the language they wanted to learn. But, sometimes, there are cases where schools, teachers and parents play an important role in persuading and influencing the students' choice of language. In New Zealand the teaching of Japanese language is largely influenced by exams. The teachers try their best to include more communication in classrooms, but in the end it is the grade that matters. However, one of the participants felt that the situation of teaching to the exam is unavoidable and it can have a positive effect on students' learning.

New Zealand has not published any textbook for the new curriculum use. According to all New Zealand participants, teachers in

New Zealand use various textbooks that can be found on the market. Many of them use Australian textbooks. The Japanese language subject in New Zealand schools has adopted the same style of assessment system as Malaysia where it has at least two main examinations which usually take place at the end of first semester and another one at the end of second semester or the end of the year. There are also formative tests, spelling and vocabulary tests and others that are carried out as on-going tests to measure the progress of the students in Japanese language. The New Zealand Japanese language curriculum has undergone many reforms over the years since it was first introduced. The content, style and vocabulary of Japanese language have changed over the years to cater to the interest of the young learners. In New Zealand, to be a Japanese language teacher, one does not require any formal qualification in Japanese language.

4.7 Overview of Document Analysis Results

The curriculum and syllabus document analysis will be presented in two main segments. The first part (4.8 and 4.9) will be a description and discussion about the general statement of both countries' curriculum documents and the second part (4.10) will be a description and discussion of each level contained in both syllabus specifications: Form One to Form 5 for the Malaysian Japanese language Curriculum and Level 1 to Level 8 for the Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum.

This analysis of the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum is conducted to answer my third and fourth research questions which are as follows:

Research Question 3:

What are the major differences between the Japanese Language Curricula in Malaysia and New Zealand?

Research Question 4:

What are the major differences between Japanese Language Syllabi in Malaysia and New Zealand?

4.8 Description of Malaysian General Statement

In this section the aims, objectives and curriculum organization of the Malaysian Curriculum documents will be described.

4.8.1 Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum

Aims

According to the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) document, the Japanese language curriculum in Malaysia is tailored specifically to equip students with a basic knowledge of Japanese language that is believed to be very useful in developing students' communicative skills for future social interaction needs (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). The content of

the curriculum is also directed towards giving the students of Japanese language the opportunity to learn and to compare values and cultural differences in a positive way. According to the general statement of the curriculum, it is Malaysia's vision to become a multilingual society and it is believed this can be achieved through mastering the language and understanding the culture of the people that speak the language.

4.8.2 Objectives

The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) outlines seven objectives which should be achieved by the end of the fifth year of the Japanese language course. The objectives of Japanese language learning in Malaysia are to enable students to: 1) identify, pronounce and write Japanese alphabets correctly; 2) listen carefully and answer in simple Japanese; 3) be able to ask, answer, speak and express themselves freely in simple Japanese; 4) read and comprehend a variety of simple Japanese texts; 5) acquire the ability to express ideas verbally and in writing; 6) recognize a subtle difference (verbal or non-verbal) in colour, meaning, tone of the words; and 7) acknowledge, appreciate and respect the intercultural similarities and differences (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004).

4.8.3 Curriculum Organization

The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum is focused on the development of students' four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, which integrates grammar, sound, writing system, and

vocabulary learning. It also emphasizes thinking skills, values and citizenship education in “developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic” as stated in the National Education Philosophy (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004, p.2).

4.8.4 Interpersonal, Informational and Aesthetic

Language Areas

The curriculum is presented in the form of suggested learning outcomes. It is assumed that by the end of a certain stage or level, the students will be able to achieve the learning outcomes suggested in the curriculum. The Learning outcomes are divided into three main language areas: 1) language use for the interpersonal purposes; 2) language use for the informational purposes; and 3) language use for aesthetic purposes. The three areas of language mentioned above are presented in themes as to make it meaningful and relational to students’ interests and experiences. The themes are: 1) oneself; 2) family; 3) friends; 4) school; 5) community; and 6) country. The learning contents for each theme can be about leisure and recreation, culture, technology, environment or social issues. The suggested themes are assumed to be significant in accommodating the language forms that the students are expected to acquire in order to perform effectively in the social contexts. The three main language areas will now be described in detail:

1. Language Use for the Interpersonal Purposes

This area of language refers to forms of language that are essential in making friends and taking part in meaningful conversations. It requires students to actively participate in conversations or social interactions with correct and proper grammatical rules.

2. Language Use for Informational Purposes

The informational language use area provides students with the language and skills to comprehend and to process various types of information, and then present them to a different type of audiences. According to the curriculum, students should be encouraged to find information in the areas that interest them. This is believed to be the best way to develop students' critical learning skills and to expand their skills in seeking information.

3. Language Use for Aesthetic Purposes

The language use for aesthetic purposes refers to the ability to express one's feelings, thoughts, ideas and beliefs about something one had watched, read about, listened to, or heard. This ability is limited to one's level of proficiency.

The curriculum states that in order for students to achieve the suggested learning outcomes and acquire each skill under these three language areas, both orally and in written form, teachers must be ready to expose students to suitable and sufficient tasks. The skills or outcomes prescribed in the document also show that learning progresses in a spiral

motion. The spiral style of learning a language will enable students to embrace, strengthen and expand their language knowledge systematically (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) as it allows a language item to be covered several times with increasing level of difficulty (Nation & Macalister, 2010). The spiral learning system ensures that important part of language item is fully dealt with in order to enable students who left behind to catch up (Nation & Macalister, 2010). The curriculum document also notes that the activities and materials for these three areas should integrate moral and cultural values, and good citizenship education.

4.8.5 Language Content

The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) also specifies the language content that should be incorporated in the teaching as a guide to all of the teachers of Japanese. This language content comprises the sound and the writing system of Japanese, grammar and vocabulary.

In addition, it also includes the educational emphases as stated in National Education Philosophy such as thinking skills, learning skills, values and citizenship education. It takes the students' multiple intelligences and intercultural awareness into consideration. According to the curriculum document the teaching and learning in classroom should promote the usage of real-life topics or issues in order to prepare students for the real life challenges. Teachers of Japanese must be aware of the language content specified in the curriculum to effectively teach the

students. The students are required to master the language content above to enable them to be good Japanese language speakers.

4.8.6 Cultural Content

According to the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) document, exposing students to cultural experiences is very important in building their understanding about language use. By acknowledging the culture of the target language, students will learn about the verbal and non-verbal communication which could help them to be a more effective speaker of the language. There are two aspects of cultural learning that students must acquire. One is the knowledge of intercultural awareness which will help the students to understand, respect and be open minded in learning and accepting other people's values, customs and beliefs. The other one is known as the 'cultural competitive advantage' which means that the knowledge of other people's values and culture could give students an advantage someday in the future.

4.8.7 Educational Emphases

Educational emphases in the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) consist of important aspects that are required in building the young Malaysian generation according to the needs of the nation. The importance of educational emphases is clearly stated in the Malaysian National Education Philosophy. The educational emphases that are incorporated in the

learning outcomes in the curriculum statement are thinking skills, learning how to learn skills, informational and communication technology (ICT) skills, multiple intelligences, values and citizenship education, knowledge acquisition, and preparation for the real world. According to the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum statement, teachers should be aware of these elements and integrate them in the teaching and learning of Japanese language.

4.8.8 Assessment

According to the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum document (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004), assessments should relate to the objectives and outcomes of the curriculum. There are two types of assessment suggested in the curriculum document which are Formative and Summative assessment. Teachers are encouraged to do an on-going formative assessment and an end-of-stage or level assessment. Reports of students' performance must be kept diligently for future reference or use. Teachers can use many ways and strategies in assessing how far the students have grasped the concept of language taught in classroom. Some of the suggested assessment strategies are folios, project works, oral presentation, group works and tests.

4.8.9 Summary

The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) aims to develop students' communicative skills for social interactions and to provide opportunities for students to

learn and understand other people's customs, values and cultural differences. It was established not solely for the students to be able to speak Japanese but also to enable students to embrace the values that had brought Japan to its economic level now.

There are two aspects of culture pointed out by Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum: 1) cultural elements in term of festivals and customs of the people; and 2) the verbal and non-verbal cultural awareness. Another area that is touched on briefly in both documents is intercultural awareness. The curriculum document state that the intercultural awareness allows students to distinguish, comprehend and get familiar with the similarities and differences between the learners' own culture and Japanese culture.

In Malaysia, the content of the curriculum is presented in five levels where each level is designated for one year. Therefore, five levels occupy the five years of secondary schooling in Malaysia. In Malaysia, Japanese language starts at the beginning of Form One (age 13) and finishes at the end of Form Five (age 17).

4.9 Description of New Zealand General Statement

In this section the aims, objectives and curriculum organization of the New Zealand Curriculum documents will be described.

4.9.1 Learning Languages Learning Area

In order to understand the direction and the content of Japanese language learning and teaching in New Zealand, one must understand the aims and purposes of the Learning Languages Learning Area in the New Zealand Curriculum statement (Ministry of Education, 2007). This document is similar to the General Statement in the Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) described in the previous section.

4.9.2 Objectives

In general, Learning Languages in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) provides a definition of language learning for all the foreign languages that are taught in schools throughout the country. First of all, it states that language learning is important as it connects the people in the world and it encourages the students to learn about other people through languages which will indirectly help the students to learn or acknowledge about their own merits and abilities. The purposes of learning other languages have been listed as:

- 1) To enrich one's knowledge about the unknown part of the world.
- 2) To link the countries in the world.
- 3) To get to know of other people's culture which could be an advantage for the students in the future.
- 4) To acknowledge the importance of learning the language through the cultures.
- 5) To encourage students to take part in global interaction.

- 6) To expose students with skills, knowledge and attitude which could help them to face world diversity effectively.
- 7) To acknowledge the power of languages.
- 8) To develop own potential.
- 9) To appreciate one's own language and culture.

(MoE, 2007, p.24).

4.9.3 Curriculum Organization

Language Learning in the New Zealand Curriculum is structured in three strands with communication as the core component, supported by Linguistic Development and Cultural Awareness (MoE, 2007). To promote communication, students are taught to use language meaningfully. And, in order to ensure that the students learning additional languages become an effective speaker in their target language, support from the development of linguistic or Language Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge is seen as vital. According to the Learning Languages learning area in the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), Language Knowledge will expose the students to how a language works. It is stated that knowledge of language will be very useful for the students in order to ensure full understanding of language use and improving their language accuracy. The other strand that supports the Communication Strand is Cultural Knowledge. According to the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), Cultural Knowledge assists students to be more effective language learners as students are exposed to the influences that culture had on the use of language. In the document, it is emphasized that by understanding the relationship between culture and

language, students will be able to understand how a language is used in cultural context. And, it is also stated that Cultural Knowledge will raise intercultural awareness among the students which will lead them to self-awareness through comparing and appreciating the differences of one's belief and cultural practices.

4.9.4 Levels and Strands in Learning Languages

The language learning area as stated in Learning Languages (Ministry of Education, 2007) is divided into eight levels and these levels are grouped in four pairs. Under each pair of levels there is a proficiency statement which is followed by the achievement objectives for each strand (Communication, Language Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge). For the Communication Strand, there are three areas of achievement objectives to be achieved by the students. The three areas are: 1) Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate; 2) Managing self and relating to others; and 3) Participating and contributing in communities (MoE, 2007). The achievement objectives stated in these three areas under the communication strand are supported by the objectives identified in Language Knowledge Strand and Cultural Knowledge strand.

According to Learning Languages learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), the content described above is to be applied for all languages being taught in New Zealand schools such as French, Spanish, Pasifika languages and of course, Japanese.

4.9.5 Summary

In the Learning Languages Learning Area of the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) the Communication Strand is at the centre of the curriculum and through it students are exposed to the knowledge of how language works (Language Knowledge Strand) and are made aware of how acknowledging culture (Culture Knowledge Strand) while learning language will help them be more effective speaker of the language. Japanese language education in New Zealand is focused on equipping its young generation with new knowledge of other countries in the world and giving students awareness about the power of language in connecting people.

The Learning Languages learning area in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) is presented in four levels with two levels for each one. Therefore, there are eight levels. In New Zealand, the first level can either start at Year Seven or Year Nine, depending on the availability of Japanese language classes at particular schools. According to the New Zealand Japanese language Curriculum guidelines, teachers are allowed to enter at any level that they deem appropriate for their students.

4.10 Description of Malaysian and New Zealand

Japanese Language Syllabus Specifications

This section reports the findings for the second part of the document analysis. In section 4.8 and 4.9, I presented a description of the

general statements for the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum. Subsequently, in this section, I will go further into the curriculum specifications for Form One to Form 5 (Malaysia) and Level 1 to Level 8 (New Zealand). In this section, I will describe the syllabus specifications for each country from level to level and for the second part, I will examine the overall content of the specifications, and discuss their similarities and differences.

4.10.1 Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus

Overall Content

The five documents of Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2011) are produced separately for each year of secondary schools. In line with the new Japanese language curriculum, five curriculum specification documents have been produced representing the five years of secondary schooling in Malaysia which are Form 1 (age 13 years), Form 2 (age 14 years), Form 3 (age 15 years), Form 4 (age 16 years) and Form 5 (age 17 years). The content of the curriculum specifications are divided into two important sections, learning outcomes and specification, and language content. These two areas will now be outlined:

1) Learning outcomes and specification

Learning outcomes are the skills to be achieved by Japanese language students by the end of Form 5. The learning outcomes are divided into three areas of language outlined in the section 4.8.4 which are

labelled interpersonal, informational and aesthetic. All five documents are built based on these learning outcomes. What makes each curriculum specification document different from each other is the content of skills specification for each area of language use stated in the learning outcomes. Each document has a set of skills that come under the three areas of language use and these skills should be covered or achieved by the end of each year. The skills listed under each area are divided into three levels (level 1, 2 and 3), representing the complexity and difficulty of the skills. Teaching begins with the basic level of skills which is level 1, then moves to level 2, and finally level 3.

2) Language content.

The language content for each document outlines grammar, sound system, wordlist, and writing system. For each year, there are different sets of grammar to cover. The list of grammar is based on the items provided under Level 4 and part of Level 3 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) set by Mombusho (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). All five documents state that the grammar or structures for each year should be taught within the context of the three areas of language use. Additionally, the documents also note that grammar and structures for each year should be acquired by students orally and in writing, and should be taught in relevant and meaningful contexts.

Each document also contains a wordlist. The words that are in the list were also taken from Level 4 and part of Level 3 of JLPT wordlist (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). However, the documents note

that teachers are free to choose and add any words to meet the needs of their teaching context. Another aspect emphasized in the documents is the teaching of the correct sound system. The documents state that students should be exposed formally in classrooms to correct accent, rhythm and intonation of words, in order to ensure a clear and understandable speech reproduction. The next aspect covered in the language content section of the documents is the writing system. The documents state that as Japanese writing uses three types of characters – Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji, it is important to teach students correct stroke and stroke order of each letter in each character type.

The specifics of each of the five levels in the Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus will now be outlined.

Form One

The skills outlined in the Form One Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009a) focus on introducing the new language to students. It emphasizes the learning of the writing system and the sound of Japanese language. In terms of structures and grammar, as it is the first stage of learning Japanese, the skills focus on acquiring simple sentences, including greetings, which would be useful in making conversations in Japanese for the first time.

Form Two

The skills outlined in the Form 2 Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009b) focus on strengthening the language learned in Form One. It reinforces learning of

the Japanese writing and sound system. In terms of structures and grammar, the skills target acquisition of various sentence structures among student. The skills listed emphasize the enhancement of students asking and answering question skills, gathering information skills and presenting information skills.

Form Three

The skills outlined in the Form 3 Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009c) focus on reinforcing the acquisition of Japanese language. As students have acquired the basic skills of the language in Form One and 2, the Form 3 curriculum specification aims to enhance students' language skills and communicative competence. At this stage, students are exposed to more communicative skills as they are required to describe, discuss and giving opinions. Students are also taught to scan and extract main ideas from written and spoken texts.

Form Four

The skills outlined in the Form 4 Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009d) focus on empowering the language use of the students. This level promotes tasks that required students to be involved in conversations, sharing ideas, and topic discussions. It also put more weight on reading aloud and writing stories and short essays. In terms of structures and grammar, it is apparent that the skills are getting more and more complex where students are encouraged to be more critical and alert when reading or listening for information. In this particular curriculum specification, students

are taught skills such as to skim, scan, compare and interpret text. The topics of discussion have moved to issues that involve students as youth and a member of community.

Form Five

The skills outlined in the Form 5 Japanese Language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2011) focus on maximizing the language use and the understanding of Japanese culture. As in Form 4, the skills promote reinforcing and sustaining students' communicative competence. Looking at skills, students at this level are not only taught to extract main points from the spoken or printed texts but to go beyond that. Students are required to analyse, compare and identify cause and effect from given information. If we look carefully, the language skills for Form 5 are a continuation of the skills in Form 4 with an extra touch to challenge students' ability to the maximum capacity. At this stage, the suggested topics for discussion include bigger issues regarding the nation and the world. The learning of Japanese culture and literature are also given priority at this level.

4.10.2 New Zealand Japanese Language Syllabus

Overall Content

The Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998) document is shaped to promote continuity and progressive achievement. The content of the statement provides flexibility to the teachers to design and plan their course or programmes. According to the document, the curriculum

guidelines are designed in such a way that they can be applied to student levels. Teachers can start at any level of the curriculum guidelines, as long as it is appropriate with their students' level. The Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998) guidelines promote spiral learning where attention is given to the development of communicative skills with a lot of opportunity for repetition and revision. According to the curriculum guidelines, teachers should develop students' prior knowledge, needs and interests in planning programmes. In the Japanese curriculum guidelines, it is stated that the general aims for language learning are: 1) Promoting learning of extra language at early age possible; 2) Developing students' language abilities and to sharpen their own; 3) Developing students' potential intellectually, socially and culturally; 4) Appreciating other people thoughts and practices; and 5) Building global relations and trade (MoE, 1998). Besides the general aims, the document also lists three achievement aims which are: "1) To develop the skills needed to understand and use spoken and written Japanese; 2) To communicate effectively in Japanese for authentic purposes; and 3) To learn the conventions of communicating in Japanese and develop an understanding of Japanese culture" (MoE, 1998, p.16).

The content of the Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998) represents a process of language learning that moves forward. The differences in each level relate to three factors: 1) the level of complexity which increases as the levels increase; 2) the language use, the range and variety increase as students progress; and 3) the demand for students' independence in language use increase as they move to higher levels.

Under the Learning Languages Learning Area in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), these eight levels are grouped in four language development stages which are called ‘emergent communication’ (level one and two), ‘survival skills’ (level three and four), social competence (level five and six) and ‘personal independence’ (level seven and eight). The writers of the document believe that the natural flow between the stages will help the students to progress smoothly in accomplishing the tasks of every level.

The specifics of each of the four levels in the New Zealand Japanese Language Syllabus will now be outlined.

Level One and Two: Emergent Communication

As stated in the New Zealand Curriculum Learning Languages Learning Area (MoE, 2007), the proficiency descriptor for this group of levels notes that by the end of these two levels, students will be able to recognise and use simple phrases and vocabulary learned in guided conversation settings. Both levels are beginners’ level with the purpose to build students communicating skills.

1) Level One

As this is the first level, the focus is put on introducing the Japanese scripts and the acquisition of simple sentences. Students at this level learn how to greet and introduce themselves, express appreciation and apology, and follow simple classroom instructions in Japanese language. In addition to skills that focus on communicative competency, students are

also exposed to Japanese cultural knowledge where they engage in learning the basic Japanese etiquette used when interacting.

2) Level Two

This level is the continuation of Level One. The level of difficulty of the skills prescribed in this level increases where students are required to identify main ideas in spoken and written materials. Students are also expected to be able to manipulate words and phrases learned and use them in conversations. The students should at this stage be able to write simple sentences in Japanese characters. Students will be exposed to knowledge of the way of life of Japanese students in Japan.

Level Three and Four: Survival Skills

The proficiency descriptor for Level Three and Four, known as survival skills states that students at these levels should be able to use their knowledge about the language and make simple short sentences. At these stages the students are expected to be able to produce, express and respond to simple Japanese.

1) Level Three

In Level Three, students are taught the skills that enable them to extract main points from various types of spoken and written materials. As for communication, students are expected to be able to use words and phrases learned in meaningful conversations. At this point, students are encouraged to talk about people, places and things around them. They are also taught to express feelings in Japanese.

2) Level Four

This level indicates a starting point to a higher mastery of the Japanese language. The content shows the development of skills where at this level, students are taught more advanced skills in understanding Japanese language. The document states that by the end of the level, students will be able to understand the content of various spoken and written texts, and they should be able to take part in short conversations. As for the writing skills, at this level, students are expected to be able to write passages in Japanese characters.

Level Five and Six: Social Competence

The proficiency descriptor for Level Five and Six states that by the end of these two stages, students will be able to handle more complex language use. Students are not only expected to understand the meaning and usage of the language in context, but also they should be able to produce the language.

1) Level Five

The skills at this level promote students to be an effective Japanese language learner and speaker. The skills equip students with the ability to ask and scan information. They also provide students with the skill to give information to others in Japanese. At this level, students are expected to read short texts and write short notes with correct order of event. To increase students' cultural awareness, in this level, students are exposed to the way Japanese interact in different situations of everyday conversations.

2) Level Six

At this level, students are expected to acquire skills to pick up main ideas from a variety of spoken and written texts. Students also should be able to use complex sentences to describe, give reasons and express preferences. They would also have the ability to tell about what they can do and cannot do in Japanese language. At this level, students are exposed to the Japanese values and practice when interacting in a community.

Level Seven and Eight: Personal Independence

The proficiency descriptor notes that at Level Seven and Eight, students are expected to have the ability to utilize the language learned effectively and be able to give ideas and opinions. Students also should be able to interpret language based on their understanding linguistic and cultural knowledge.

1) Level Seven

From the document, it is apparent that this level is a starting point to advanced Japanese language acquisition. It prepares students with skills that could enable them to converse effectively and fluently in the language. Students at this stage will be able to recognize details and summarize them, describe experiences and procedure in sequence, join in unpredictable conversation and sustain engagement, write and present ideas, and master Kanji. Students are also taught to compare and differentiate people, place and things around them and they are equipped with the knowledge and usage of formal and polite forms in Japanese

language. As for cultural knowledge, students are exposed to contemporary Japanese life.

2) Level Eight

This is the most advanced level in the learning of Japanese language in New Zealand. At this stage, students are expected to master the basic language pattern and would be able to converse freely in different situations. Students also should be able to process information gained from spoken and written texts, and make logical conclusions. In this level, students are taught to interpret materials in the media such as newspaper, and report the content. To promote cultural awareness, students are encouraged to talk about mutual interests between New Zealand and Japan.

4.10.3 Summary

The Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specification documents (Curriculum Development Centre 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d & 2011) provide one set of language learning aims and objectives. These aims and objectives are prescribed for the whole five years of secondary schooling. The aims and objectives are stated in the general statement document and are used in all five Syllabus Specification documents. The Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specifications (Curriculum Development Centre 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d & 2011) contain lists of skills or learning outcomes with suggested grammatical items, sentence structures, and possible learning activities to be used as guidance in teaching Japanese language in secondary schools.

The skills in the Syllabus Specifications are outlined in a systematic sequence where they are built and developed in a spiral fashion which grows from the simplest to more complex skills. There is no prescription of specific topics. However, there are some suggestions given in the documents on topics of discussion for certain skills. The skills in the Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specification documents are detailed. Malaysia has divided its learning outcomes into three areas of language use: interpersonal, informational and aesthetic, and under these areas, there is a set of skills to be achieved by the end of Form 5. These skills are used in all five Syllabus Specification documents as the main skills or outcomes to be achieved and under each of these skills, another set of sub skills are listed that are divided in three levels of difficulty.

On the other hand, the New Zealand Japanese Language Syllabus Specification, under the Learning Languages Learning Area (MoE, 2007) has a proficiency descriptor for each one of the four levels which shows students' ability in the target language at that particular level. In addition, the Japanese Language in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998) document also has outlined a different set of achievement objectives for each level of Japanese language learning.

In the next chapter I will present the comparisons of results from the interviews and autoethnography, and document analysis.

Chapter 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

This chapter begins with comparison and discussion of results from both Malaysia and New Zealand. In 5.2, I will present a comparison and discussion of the current Japanese language teaching based on the interview and autoethnography results presented in Chapter 4, and in 5.3, I will provide a comparison and discussion of both countries' curriculum and syllabus documents based on the document analysis results presented in Chapter 4. In the next section (5.4), I will discuss findings from the research in light of existing literature. Finally, the chapter will be closed with discussion of limitations of this study (5.5), and conclusion (5.6).

5.2 Comparison of Current Japanese Language Teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand

In Chapter 4, I presented findings from the three semi-structured interviews and an autoethnography that were conducted to look at the

recent history and the progress of Japanese language teaching in both Malaysian and New Zealand secondary schools. In this section, I will present the comparison of the results which arose from these interviews and autoethnography in terms of seven areas: Japanese Language Teaching History (5.2.1), Current Status of Japanese Language (5.2.2), Japanese Language Teaching Approach (5.2.3), Japanese Language Resources (5.2.4), Japanese Language Assessment (5.2.5), Japanese Language Curriculum (5.2.6), and Japanese Language Teacher Qualification (5.2.7). The discussion in these seven areas serves to answer my Research Question 1, concerning the recent history and the current practice of Japanese language teaching in Malaysia and New Zealand.

5.2.1 Japanese Language Teaching History

It is clear that Japanese language was introduced in both Malaysia and New Zealand in the 1980s. This is probably because Japanese was economically successful at that time, and both countries obviously wanted to have economic and diplomatic ties with Japan. In Malaysia, it was 1984, while the New Zealand participants were not so sure of the year or which school was the first to have Japanese. One of the New Zealand participants said that he was the first to open the Japanese language classes in his school and it was in the year 1981. However, according to Williams (1997), Japanese language started to be taught in New Zealand's schools between the year 1967 to 1971 as a trial program which was taught to Form Six and Seven students. Unfortunately, at that time, it was

established only in a number of schools and it was not until the 1980s that Japanese became popular again (Wevers, 1988).

From the data collected for this thesis, it is clear that Japanese language was introduced in secondary schools in both Malaysia and New Zealand for economic reasons. However, their economic visions were different from each other. In Malaysia, it was introduced in line with the 'Look East Policy' where the government wanted to emulate the Japanese culture of outstanding work ethics, which is believed to play an important role in bringing Japan to its economic success in such a short time (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004). As for New Zealand, Japanese language was introduced in secondary schools around the country as the New Zealand government wanted to make business and trade with the Japanese (Wevers, 1988).

5.2.2 Current Status of Japanese Language

In Malaysia, not all secondary schools have Japanese language available. Initially, the learners of Japanese language were students in Residential Schools. The subject was introduced in the selected Normal Secondary Schools only recently, in the year 2005. In contrast, many if not most schools in New Zealand offer Japanese language to their students. Meanwhile, if we look at the age the students in these two countries start to be taught Japanese language, this also differs. In Malaysia, students at all schools start learning Japanese at the age of 13 when they first entered Form One at the secondary school level. Whilst, in New Zealand the

earliest age for students to learn Japanese in schools is at the age of 11 as some schools in New Zealand offer Japanese at Year 7.

The differences in the starting age of learning Japanese is probably because of the government policy where the New Zealand government encourages the learning of foreign languages as early as Year 7 as to “strengthen the place of languages in full primary, intermediate and secondary school sectors” (Scott & East, 2009, p. 28). While in Malaysia, the government is still in the stage of strengthening the status of foreign language learning in its secondary schools. Furthermore, in the Malaysian educational system, the teaching of Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil are given priority at the early age as they are the languages widely use in Malaysia.

In both countries, Japanese language is an elective subject and not compulsory (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004; MOE, 2007) which means students can choose whether to do it or not. Both in Malaysia and New Zealand secondary schools, students are given freedom to select the language they want to learn. But, sometimes, there are cases where schools, teachers and parents play an important role in persuading and influencing the students’ choice of language. This finding ties in with a New Zealand study of 11 to 13 year old students’ attitudes toward foreign language learning. Shearn (2004) surveyed 821 students, and interviewed 56 teachers and 75 parents. She found that parents’ views and attitudes towards foreign language learning play an important role in their child’s choices of language in schools.

Regarding criteria of typical language learners, one of the participants from Malaysia noted that most Malaysian students that chose to study Japanese language are students who have a deep interest in Japanese pop culture such as anime, manga, and so on. While one of the New Zealand participants in this study indicated that in New Zealand, the typical learners of Japanese are girls from girl schools and this echoed what Shearn (2004) notes in her research about learners' attitudes towards foreign language learning where she mentioned that most foreign language learners in New Zealand are girls. In addition, Shearn (2004) also states that many of language teachers in New Zealand are female. Shearn (2004) suggests that this happened because in many boys' schools foreign language learning is advertised as difficult and available only for the intelligent students.

5.2.3 Japanese Language Teaching Approach

It is apparent that in both countries, the teaching of Japanese language is largely influenced by exams. All participants agree that many teachers of Japanese language in their country focus their teaching on structures and vocabulary so as to ensure that the students can pass the exam. They said, although the teachers tried their best to include more communication in classrooms, in the end it was the exam grade that mattered. One of Malaysian participants also talked about the 'textbook teaching' practised by many of Japanese language teachers in Malaysia which is exam-based. New Zealand participants also raised issues regarding 'teaching to the test' in Japanese language classrooms and how

the teaching of communicative skills became unnatural and artificial for the sake of exams and grades.

However, one of the New Zealand participants said that, this situation is inevitable and in some ways exams may have a positive effect on students' learning. The Malaysian participant also supported this when she said that students in Malaysia need an exam to motivate them to learn. Scott and East (2009) note that 'teaching to the test' is natural if the assessments system itself is built on "the notion that it was important to measure students' language knowledge in ways that, to a large extent, reflected a traditional 'grammar-translation' approach to teaching" (p.28). This echoes the study done by Havnes (2004) on assessment backwash effect which shows that exams impact learning. Havnes's (2004) study of seven students using interview and observation looked at the "assessment-education-learning relationship" (p.159) which examined the effects of assessment not only on learning but also on other aspect of educational process such as teaching, textbooks and resources production, and learning environment. The findings indicated that exams determined both teachers' way of teaching as well as students' way of learning. According to Havnes (2004), "it is the assessment system that defines what is worth learning (p.159). Therefore, in order to enable assessment to help improve learning, teachers as a person in charge need to realize and understand the role of assessment in this process (Watkins et al., 2005).

Compared to Malaysia, the teaching of Japanese language in New Zealand schools varies from one school to another as schools in New

Zealand are self-governed. Even the total teaching hours for Japanese language is not fixed. The schools are given full authority in organizing their own language programmes. In Malaysia, it is different as uniformity is important. Schools that offer Japanese language are provided with fixed teaching hours and textbooks. Malaysian education emphasizes uniformity and centralisation, and one of the reasons that I can think of is examinations. In an 'exam-oriented' educational system such as Malaysia, especially as high stake examinations are dominated by summative kind of assessments, it is important to standardize learning content and materials, so as to ensure every student acquires the same knowledge and skills that are going to be tested. By contrast, in New Zealand, although it has examinations, its decentralisation and school-based management system, and also the focus on more formative assessments, may mean that the need to be uniform is not seen as important.

5.2.4 Japanese Language Resources

In Malaysia, schools that offer Japanese language as a subject are provided with a textbook published by the Ministry of Education. Malaysia is now in the process of producing new textbooks for Form 2, 3, 4 and 5. At the moment, the textbook for Form 1 is completed and has been distributed to the schools. In contrast, New Zealand has not published any textbook for the new curriculum use. According to all New Zealand participants, teachers in New Zealand use various textbooks that can be found on the market and many of them use Australian textbooks.

This difference is probably because schools in New Zealand are self-governed (McGee & Cowie, 2008/2009) and teachers have full autonomy to design and plan their own language programme, including making decisions on textbooks. Furthermore, the numbers of Japanese language students in New Zealand may not be sufficient for the New Zealand publishing houses to see the writing of Japanese language textbooks as economically viable.

5.2.5 Japanese Language Assessment

Malaysian and New Zealand secondary schools have adopted the same style of assessment system. The subject has at least two main examinations in one academic year. Besides these examinations, there are also formative tests, spelling and vocabulary tests and others that are carried out as on-going tests to measure the progress of the students in Japanese language. Students in both countries are also encouraged by teachers to sit for Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). The only difference between Malaysia and New Zealand in the assessment aspect is that Malaysia has a Japanese Language Certificate Exam that is conducted in Form 4 to acknowledge the students' achievement in Japanese language. This is probably because New Zealand government feel that there is no need for national certificate as there is already a JLPT examination to certify their students' level of Japanese. Furthermore, New Zealand has Japanese language examinations at NCEA level. By contrast, in Malaysia Japanese language is not tested in either Lower Secondary Examination (Form 3 National Exam) or Malaysian Certificate of Education

Examination (Form 5 National Exam). Therefore, Malaysia needs a specific exam to recognize or to certify the learning that has been carried out.

5.2.6 Japanese Language Curriculum

As seen in the current curriculum documents, both countries' Japanese language curricula have changed to a more Communicative Language Teaching approach. Both curricula have adopted a Skills and Outcomes-based style of curriculum where the focus is given to equip students with the four skills of language which are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

However, the New Zealand Japanese language curriculum and syllabus, compared to the Malaysian one, has undergone many reforms over the years since it was first introduced. It has been revised at least three times. One of the New Zealand participants said that the content, style and vocabulary of Japanese language have changed over the years to cater to the interest of the young learners. In contrast, Malaysian Japanese language curriculum only underwent changes recently. In fact, according to one of the Malaysian participants, the curriculum that has been used since 1984 is actually not an official curriculum. It was a sort of a semester plan or a content guideline to teaching Japanese which was taken from the previous textbook '*Nihongo Konnichiwa*' (Malaysian Residential Schools Japanese Language Teachers Committee, 1989).

The relatively fewer number of curriculum changes in Malaysian Japanese language curriculum and syllabus may be due to lack of people

available to work in the areas of revising, developing and designing foreign language curriculum and syllabus at ministry level in Malaysia as the people who involved in these areas are regular teachers of Japanese language in schools. These teachers do not have that much time to commit to this kind of extra works as they also have a lot of responsibilities in schools.

5.2.7 Japanese Language Teacher Qualification

In Malaysia, to be a Japanese language teacher, one must be an in-service teacher and at least have undergone a one year Japanese language course offered at the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Language Teacher Institute. Before this one year program was established, to be a Japanese language teacher, the selected in-service teacher was sent to Japan to learn Japanese for five years. By contrast, to be a Japanese language teacher in New Zealand, one is not required to have any formal qualification in Japanese language. There are quite a number of teachers who have qualification in French, German and other subjects who end up teaching Japanese language because their partner is Japanese or because they have lived in Japan for many years. This may be a reflection of a lack of qualified fluent Japanese language speakers in New Zealand, and may also be because the schools in New Zealand are self-governed and there is no centralised control on hiring teachers.

5.2.8 Summary

From the comparison of interviews and autoethnography results, it is apparent that both Malaysia and New Zealand Japanese language education share some similarities in terms of their reasons of establishment, the teaching approach use in classrooms and the syllabus type. Japanese language was introduced in both Malaysia and New Zealand for economic reasons. The teaching of Japanese language in both countries is largely influenced by exams where the teaching is focused on structures and vocabulary. Regarding the curricula, it is clear that both countries have changed to a more communicative curriculum and have adopted a Skills and Outcomes-based style of curriculum.

Besides similarities both countries share, there are also many differences. For example, Japanese language in Malaysia are only taught in selected secondary schools, whereas, most schools in New Zealand offer Japanese language. The starting age that one can learn foreign language in both countries also different as the New Zealand curriculum encourages all language learning at the earliest age possible. The teaching and learning of Japanese language in Malaysia and New Zealand also differs because schools in New Zealand are self-governed and language programmes are designed according to each school's needs.

Another difference in both countries is the qualification of Japanese language. In Malaysia, to be a Japanese language teacher, one must be an in-service teacher and at least have undergone a one year Japanese

language course, while in New Zealand, one is not required to have any formal qualification in Japanese language. Refer to Table 2 for the summary of both countries' Japanese language education.

Table 2: Summary of Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language Education

	Malaysia	New Zealand
First introduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully introduced to Residential Schools in 1984. ▪ Introduced to selected Normal Secondary Schools in 2005. However, this program has stopped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First started from 1967 – 1971 as trial program. ▪ Gained back popularity in 1980s. At the moment, it sits at the second rank behind French as the most popular language in schools.
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For economic reason ▪ To emulate the Japanese people values and work ethics – as the government believes that these are what brought Japan to their economic success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For economic reason ▪ To trade and create more business opportunities with Japan.
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the initial stage – students at Residential Schools. ▪ Starting 2005 – around 13 selected Normal Secondary Schools have offered Japanese. ▪ Typical students – Jpop, anime and manga fans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depending on school – some schools start at Year 7 and some at Year 9. ▪ Typical students – girls from girl schools.
Teaching Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exam oriented and textbook based. ▪ 120 minutes per week. ▪ Textbook is provided by MOE. ▪ Free to use other textbook and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exam based. ▪ The Japanese language program, including hours of teaching in NZ schools vary as they are self-governed schools. ▪ No specific textbook – many used Australian textbook and other resources.
Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills/Outcomes-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills/Outcomes-based
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-service teacher who has at least undergone a one year Japanese language course at Teacher Institute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registered teacher. ▪ No formal Japanese language qualification is needed.

5.3 Comparison of Curriculum Document

Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum and syllabus documents have their own distinctive characteristics and features. In Chapter 4, I have explored and presented the content of both curricula and syllabi. In the next section, I will discuss the results of the document analysis. I will first discuss the findings of the General Statement of both curricula.

5.3.1 General Statement of Curriculum

Aims

Both the Malaysian and New Zealand curriculum state that they aim to develop students' communicative skills for social interactions and to provide opportunities for students to learn and. In the Malaysian context, its curriculum foundation is built on the understanding of how Japanese language is used when one needs to communicate, find or get information, read texts and learn cultural awareness. As for New Zealand, the communication strand is at the centre of the curriculum and through it students are exposed to the knowledge of how language works and how acknowledging culture while learning language will help them be more effective speaker of the language. This similarity is probably because both countries, like other countries in the world, are following the trends of language teaching and learning which now have moved to Communicative Language Teaching (Richards, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Purposes

The Japanese language curriculum in Malaysia was established not solely for the students to be able to speak Japanese but also to enable students to embrace the values that brought Japan to its economic success. This can be seen in the statement made in the Malaysian Japanese language curriculum which quotes that “the policy recognized the importance and needs to emulate Japanese exemplary work ethics, which played a crucial role in propelling Japan into one of the world’s major economic powers and technology giants within a short span of time” (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004, p.3). In contrast, New Zealand language curriculum is more focused on equipping its young generation with new knowledge of other countries in the world and to give students awareness about the power of language in connecting people. In New Zealand, learning language is about developing one’s potential. It is about having the advantages to embrace the diversity and to take part in the global world successfully as the Learning Languages learning area (MOE, 2007) states that “learning a new language extends students’ linguistic and cultural understanding and their ability to interact appropriately with other speakers” (p.24).

This difference is may be because Malaysia wanted to be like Japan, economically successful but still preserving their cultures and values. Malaysia believes that the values embraced by the people of Japan were the reason behind their economic success. Being an Asian country, Japan may have been seen as the best country to look up to for a model. Therefore, that is why the Malaysian Japanese Language

Curriculum and Syllabus are designed to incorporate the Japanese culture of good work ethics and values.

Curricula Content

In the New Zealand Curriculum document (MoE, 2007), the Learning Languages learning area only provides teachers with proficiency description and skills to be achieved by students for each strand. The rest is up to teachers to interpret and deliver to the classrooms. Even the syllabus document used by teachers to support the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 1998), is very simple which leave teachers to interpret freely. Whereas, the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum document (Curriculum development Centre, 2004) outlines its content in more detail, controlling the kind of topics and content teachers can choose or incorporate in their teaching. This may be because Malaysia wanted to centralise and be specific in guiding teachers on what should be taught, whereas New Zealand does not have centralised control over what a school or a teacher should do as schools in New Zealand are self-governed, and schools are given autonomy and freedom to design and decide their own learning programmes based on the designated curriculum document (McGee & Cowie, 2008/2009).

Cultural Content

There are two aspects of culture pointed out by both curricula documents that students need to be taught in order to enable them to be effective speaker and excellent language learners. The two aspects are: 1)

cultural elements in term of festivals and customs of the people; and 2) the verbal and non-verbal cultural awareness. Both curricula advocate that full understanding of the culture associated with a language that one learns, especially the latter, which can help to equip students with appropriate behaviour when communicating in the language. Another aspect of culture that is touched on briefly in both documents is intercultural awareness. Both curricula agree that this element is significant in creating better learners and better citizens. The curricula state that the intercultural awareness allows students to distinguish, comprehend and become familiar with the similarities and differences between the learners' own culture and Japanese culture which in time, will lead to development of intercultural understanding and will indirectly lead the learners to understand and appreciate their own merits and abilities. Byram as cited in Newton et al. (2009) notes that incorporating intercultural awareness in language education is important "in developing tolerance and understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds" (p.10).

Level of Learning

In Malaysia, the content of the curriculum is presented in five levels where each level is designated for one year. Therefore, five levels occupy the five years of secondary schooling in Malaysia. In Malaysia, Japanese language starts at the beginning of Form One (age 13) and finishes at the end of Form Five (age 17). The Syllabus Specification for each level must be finished by the end of each year. For instance, the curriculum for Form One should be taught within one year and the schools usually expect all teachers, not only Japanese language teachers, to finish the syllabus for

the year around the month of August or mid-September. This is because the final examination is usually set in October and all the students are expected to learn everything in the syllabus by then. By contrast, Learning Languages in New Zealand curriculum is presented in four groups with two levels for each one of it. Therefore, the Japanese language in New Zealand curriculum has eight levels. In New Zealand, the first level can either start at Year Seven or Year Nine, depending on the availability of Japanese language classes at particular schools. According to New Zealand Japanese language curriculum guidelines, teachers are allowed to enter at any level that they deem appropriate for their students. This is again is probably because New Zealand's schools are self-governed, and teachers have freedom in deciding and planning language programmes that suit their students (McGee & Cowie, 2008/2009).

Values across Curriculum

In Malaysia, integration of educational emphases in daily teaching is very important as it is a part of the National Education Philosophy (NEP). The NEP is the pillar of Malaysian National Curriculum Framework. The elements that are included in educational emphases are values across curriculum, citizenship education, thinking skills, learning skills, students' multiple intelligences and intercultural awareness. These education emphases are part of the nation's vision to "develop the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic" (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004, p.2). For New Zealand, similar elements are presented in the New Zealand

Curriculum Framework under Key Competencies, not specifically stated in the Learning Language area or in the Japanese language in New Zealand document.

5.3.2 Syllabus Specification

In the next section, I will discuss the findings of Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specification and Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum which have been describe in Chapter Four.

Aims and Objectives Setting

A difference between the Malaysian and New Zealand Syllabus Specifications is that the New Zealand Japanese language Syllabus Specification has a proficiency descriptor for each one of the four levels which shows students' ability in the target language at that particular level. In addition, the Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum document (MOE, 1998) also has outlined a different set of achievement objectives for each level of Japanese language learning, whereas in Malaysian documents, there is only one set of language learning aims and objectives prescribed for the whole five years of secondary schooling. The aims and objectives are stated in the general statement document and are used in all Syllabus Specification documents. This may be due to the natures of New Zealand Japanese language education itself where teachers can start from any level that they think suitable for their students. Hence, every level has a different set of achievement objectives to make it easier for teachers to set their target.

Syllabus Content

The content of the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language Syllabus Specifications has a lot in common. Both countries' Syllabus Specifications contain a list of skills or learning outcomes with suggestions of grammatical items, sentence structures, and possible learning activities to be used as guidance in teaching Japanese language in secondary schools. In both documents the skills are outlined in a systematic sequence where they are built and developed in a spiral fashion which grows from the simplest to more complex skills.

In both documents, there is no prescription of specific topics. However, there are some suggestions given in the documents on topics of discussion for certain skills. For example, in the Form 3 Malaysian Japanese language Syllabus Specification, there is a skill that suggests a discussion on plans and preparation. In the New Zealand document, this type of topic suggestion is also seen, for example, in Level 3 and 4 the skill asked students to talk about future plans. Both Syllabus Specifications suggest that teachers begin the learning of language from things around oneself. The skills outlined in both curricula are designed to be relevant and meaningful to students' context.

Both curricula emphasize the acquisition of the four very important language skills which are listening, writing, reading and speaking. This can be seen clearly especially in the Malaysian Japanese language Syllabus Specification (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004) as the skills listed are more detailed than the New Zealand Syllabus Specification (Japanese in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 1998)). If we look at the types of

syllabus which have been discussed in Chapter Two, we can categorize both syllabi as Skill-Based and Outcome-Based syllabi with a little touch of Functional/Notional-Based and Situational-Based characteristics in them. In the New Zealand document, skills or outcomes are listed out in form of communication function, whilst in Malaysian document, the skills or outcomes to be achieved by students are described under suggested language outcomes. If we examine carefully, the list of skills for both curricula have also taken into consideration the functions and the notions of language. Table 3 below shows the syllabus types that might influence both curricula.

Table 3: Syllabus Types

Japanese language Curriculum	Syllabus Types					
	Structural	Situational	Topical	Notional / Functional	Skills	Out comes
Malaysia	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
New Zealand	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

According to Killen (2000), an Outcomes-Based Syllabus provides teachers with a large degree of freedom which means they have control in selecting content and methods to achieve outcomes. And, from the

document analysis, it is apparent that both curricula promote teachers autonomy in decision-making and designing or planning programs. However, by comparison, the New Zealand curriculum shows more teachers autonomy than the Malaysian curriculum. The 2007 New Zealand Curriculum Framework has stated that schools have autonomy in deciding their own educational programs (McGee & Cowie, 2008/2009). This statement indirectly confirms that teachers' autonomy is practice largely in New Zealand schools. This may also explain why New Zealand's Japanese language Curriculum is designed in a very simple way in order to allow teachers to interpret and to create their own language program, suitable to the needs of their institutions and students.

This is in contrast with Malaysia. The Malaysian syllabus prescribes outcomes and provides each outcome with details of skills to be achieved by students which gives the impression that teachers of Japanese in Malaysia do not have total control in designing and planning their own language program. By prescribing skills in details, the Malaysian Japanese language syllabus tries to ensure that teachers in all schools have more or less the same shapes or styles of Japanese language program. Furthermore, in Malaysia, schools that offer Japanese language are provided with a textbook which confirms that while the Malaysian curriculum tries to give teachers more freedom, it also promotes uniformity in some ways.

Focus of Content

Content of both Syllabus Specifications for Malaysia and New Zealand shows commitment to building students' skills in the area of communicative competence. Although the four skills of language are given equal attention in the documents, it is apparent that communication or speaking skills are at the heart of the curricula. There are also skills that engage students in conversations and discussions about the culture and values of Japanese people in both countries' documents. Students are equipped with knowledge and awareness about cultural differences. This echoes the statement mentioned in both countries' general statement of curricula which indicates that knowledge about culture will help students to be a good and effective speaker of the target language. The integration of intercultural language learning in Communicative Language Teaching in Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum shows that both countries is following the global trends, where according to Newton et al. (2010) this particular aspect of language teaching is the current trend of international language teaching.

Content Organization

One differences between the Malaysian and New Zealand' Syllabus Specifications can be seen in the organization of their content. The skills in Malaysian documents are more detailed compared to the New Zealand curriculum. Malaysia has divided its learning outcomes into three areas of language use – Interpersonal, Informational and Aesthetic, and under these areas, there is a set of skills to be achieved by the end of Form 5. These skills are used in all five Syllabus Specification documents as the

main skills, and under each of these skills, another set of sub skills are listed that are divided in three levels of difficulty. Therefore, from this point of view, we could say that the Malaysian Syllabus Specification documents are more detailed and complex than the one in New Zealand. This, again, reflects the practice of centralisation control in Malaysian education system, in contrast with decentralisation practice in New Zealand.

Syllabus Structure

If we compare the shape and structure of both curricula, we can see that the New Zealand Japanese language Syllabus Specification is simpler with only a statement of an outcome or a skill to be achieved for a specific language item or function. This is in contrast with the Malaysian Syllabus Specification which not only outline the outcomes for each area - Interpersonal, Informational and Aesthetic, but it also lays out for each outcome, three levels of skills to be achieved by students. The lists of skills prescribed in the Malaysian Japanese language Syllabus Specification restrict teachers from total control in interpreting and designing program. Again, as mentioned in last section this is probably because Malaysia practises centralised control, while New Zealand gives schools full autonomy.

5.3.3 Summary

Both the Malaysian and New Zealand curricula aim to develop students' communicative skills with emphasize on understanding of other people's customs, values and cultural differences. This similarity is probably because both countries follow the international trends of

language teaching and learning which now have moved to Communicative Language Teaching. The Japanese language curriculum in Malaysia was established not only for students to be able to speak Japanese but also to embrace the values that brought Japan to its economic success. Malaysia believes that the values embraced by the people of Japan were the reason behind their economic success, and that these values can be embraced by Malaysian who learn to speak Japanese.

The Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum document (Curriculum development Centre, 2004) is outlined in more detail, controlling the kind of topics and content, while in the New Zealand Curriculum document (MoE, 2007), the Learning Languages learning area provides teachers with freedom to interpret its content. Both curricula promote intercultural awareness as both countries think that this element is significant in creating better learners and better citizens. In Malaysia, the content of the curriculum is presented in five levels where each level is designated for one year. By contrast, Learning Languages in the New Zealand curriculum is presented in four levels with two sub levels for each.

A difference between the Malaysian and New Zealand Syllabus Specifications is that the New Zealand Japanese language Syllabus Specification has proficiency descriptor for each one of the four levels, whereas, in Malaysian documents, there is only one set of language learning aims and objectives prescribed for the whole five years of secondary schooling. The Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language Syllabus Specifications have no topics, contain only a list of skills or learning outcomes with suggestions of grammatical items,

sentence structures, and possible learning activities. And, both curricula emphasize the four very important language skills: listening, writing, reading and speaking. Both syllabi can be categorized as Skill-Based and Outcome-Based syllabi with a little touch of Functional/Notional-Based and Situational-Based characteristics in them.

From the document analysis, it is apparent that both curricula promote teachers autonomy in decision-making and designing or planning programs. However, by comparison, the New Zealand curriculum shows more teacher autonomy than the Malaysian curriculum. The Malaysian syllabus prescribes outcomes with details of skills which give the impression that teachers of Japanese in Malaysia must follow a centralised prescription.

5.4 Discussion of Current Findings in the Light of the Literature Review

The findings of the research presented in this thesis have brought the current study to two conclusions. Firstly that the Japanese Language Curriculum and Syllabus in both countries reflect each nation's aims and vision, and secondly that the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum and Syllabus also follows world trends in language teaching and learning. These two aspects will now be discussed in detail.

1. Curriculum Reflects Nation's Aims and Visions

Both Malaysia and New Zealand introduced Japanese language in their education system in the 1980s. In Malaysia, it was 1984, while in New Zealand, according to historical fact, Japanese has been in the educational system between the year 1967 to 1971. However, it was not until the 1980s that Japanese became popular again (Wevers, 1988). This shows that both countries started their Japanese language learning in schools at about the same time, which is in the 1980s. In 1980s, Japan economic status was at its peak (Wevers, 1988) and many countries around the world wanted to have diplomatic and business ties with Japan, including Malaysia and New Zealand.

From here we can see that Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand was implemented for economic reasons, however, their economic aims and visions were slightly different. The aims and objectives of both Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curricula show that each country has a different economic agenda for encouraging their young generation to learn Japanese. It is clear that the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum was not established merely for learning to speak the language but also to enable students to recognize and embrace the values that had brought Japan to its economic success. Malaysia wants to be successful as Japan. In other words, Malaysia wants “to emulate Japanese exemplary work ethics and be economically successful like Japan” (Curriculum Development Centre, 2004, p.3).

Japanese language was introduced under the 'Look East Policy' where Malaysian government tried to instill interest in young generation to learn Japanese language. The students who learn Japanese were taught not only the language but also the values embraced by Japanese. This can be seen clearly in the Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus Specification where there is a specific language area (Aesthetic Language Area) that caters for the teaching and learning of Japanese values, customs, and culture. This shows that Malaysia wants the young generation who learns Japanese not only to speak Japanese but also to embrace the Japanese values.

In addition to learning Japanese language in secondary schools, many Malaysian students are also sent to Japanese universities to study in all sorts of fields in order to learn the secret of economic success from Japan. From my experience in Japan, many Malaysian government scholarship students who majoring in Engineering were encouraged by the government to work after they graduated for at least two years in Japan as to learn the Japanese work ethics.

This is in contrast with New Zealand. If we look at the history of Japanese language education in New Zealand, it started because of the government's desire to trade and do business with Japan, a new economic power at the time (Wever, 1988). In order to do business with the Japanese people, New Zealand needed to produce a young generation that could converse fluently in Japanese and at the same time know about Japan, its society and culture as Levett and Adams (1987) claim that one needs to know more than language to interact with

Japanese people. Levett and Adams (1987) also note that improving Japan-related skills, especially language would give a bigger advantage to New Zealand to trade and gain opportunities in economic and other relations with Japan.

Therefore, we can see that the language curriculum in New Zealand is more focused on the power of language and how language connects people, in the case of Japanese, in order to improve economic relations. But the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) also acknowledges broader goals in Learning Languages as it is stated that language learning in New Zealand is about developing one's potential in language acquisition, and about understanding global diversity and being part of world globalization successfully. This can be seen in the purposes of learning other languages stated in Learning Languages learning area in New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) where it says that by learning foreign languages students will come to know other people's culture which could be an advantage when taking part in global interaction.

In conclusion, this comparison of Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum shows clearly how curricula can reflect a nation's aims and visions for the future of its nation and people. Yates and Grumet (2011) claim that a curriculum is exclusive to a nation. In this study, although both Malaysia and New Zealand introduced Japanese in their educational system for economic reasons, their economic aims and visions were different and this difference shows in the aims and objectives of their curricula. Yates and Grumet (2011) note that curriculum tells a story about "the nation and its relation to other parts of the world; and

about the sense of its citizens, their diversity, religion, values and relationships it tries to build” (p.8) and every curriculum is built for a reason. The reason can be politically influenced such as to unify people by infusing national identity and encouraging people to be good and loyal individual citizen who will help the country to progress, participate and compete in global society (Meyer, 2007). Or, it can be about economic reasons, for example, in the era of K-economy, knowledge is seen as power where economic development is dependent on the building of intellectual human capital (Robertson, 2005). In the present study it has been shown that the Japanese Language Curricula of Malaysia and New Zealand have to some extent been shaped to provide skills suitable for occupational market demand for future workforce (Fiala, 2007; Mustapha & Abdullah, 2004).

2. *World Trends Influenced Curriculum*

The present study has also shown that the Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curricula reflect global trends in language teaching and learning theory. These trends are determined by research and theories done around the world. In the era of technology and globalization, information travels fast from country to country which allows people around the world to share and exchange information, experience, knowledge and expertise. As a result, we can see both Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curricula shared many similarities in terms of their types of syllabus, language learning aims, and language areas focused in the curricula content. In the General Statement of both

curriculum documents, we can see clearly that both Malaysia and New Zealand follow the Communicative Language Teaching approach and put 'communication for meaningful and relevant context' as their main focus. And, in order to be able to communicate effectively, both curricula also bring in the learning and understanding of different customs, values and cultures in the curricula content. These features in both curricula indicate that Malaysia and New Zealand, like other countries in the world, are not exceptional in following the trends of language teaching. Their curricula are shaped to encourage the teaching and learning of Japanese language communicatively by considering the roles of speakers and how language is used appropriately in variety of settings and situations (Richards, 2001). Richards and Rodgers (2001) note that many language curricula in the world in the twentieth century, make communicative competence the core of their curricula and develop this core by incorporating the four language skills – listening, speaking, writing and reading, as is apparent in the Malaysian and the New Zealand Japanese language curricula.

Both curricula also encourage teachers to select and teach from things that are known and familiar to students to things that are new and foreign which show that both curricula take into account the students' societal background and needs in designing language courses or programs in schools. This is, as pointed by Richards (2001), a trend adopted in a Communicative Language Teaching approach where language programs are made more relevant to the students to promote meaningful and purposeful language learning. Globalization also affects the communicative trend in recent language curricula of the world. This is

because in global world communicative competence in second or foreign languages is a need to answer the demand of global market as according to Block and Cameron (2002), the acquisition of second or foreign language is considered as an advantage and important in order to take part in global economy.

Both countries' Japanese Language Curricula also integrate the intercultural language learning aspect. It is stated in both curricula documents that students should be equipped with knowledge and awareness about cultural differences as these knowledge will help students to be a good and effective speaker of the target language. According to Newton et al. (2010) the integration of intercultural language learning in language curricula and syllabi is the current trend of international language teaching.

5.5 Limitations of Study

This study has looked at the recent history and current practice of Japanese language teaching, and the differences between the Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia and New Zealand. It has adopted three types of data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, autoethnography and document analysis. Although the methods used have helped in answering all the research questions, there were still limitations to this study.

One of the limitations of this study is that the interviews were done based on teachers' personal knowledge and experiences in teaching

Japanese language. Thus, the results gave personal perspectives on New Zealand's and Malaysia's Japanese language education. Interviewing more participants would have increased the range of perspectives presented. Also, observations in classrooms would have allowed me to see any aspects of how Japanese language teaching occurs in both countries which were perhaps not noticed or reported by participants.

In addition to the interviews, this research examined the Japanese language curriculum documents in both countries. Document analysis limits the researcher to the interpretation of the documents. Document analysis leaves the researcher to interpret and all the data is based on what is written in the documents, thus, the researcher may not get a clear indication of what is happening in schools. Once again, observations in Japanese Language Teaching classrooms would be a useful tool in future studies to overcome this limitation. However, the use of interviews did overcome this limitation to some extent.

5.6 Conclusion

This thesis describes a study in which three semi-structured interviews, an autoethnography, and document analysis were conducted to answer questions about the recent history and current practice of Japanese language teaching, and the differences between Japanese Language Curriculum in Malaysia and New Zealand.

Research Questions 1 and 2 explored the recent history of Japanese language and how it is currently taught in Malaysian and New

Zealand's schools. Both Research Questions were answered through three semi-structured interviews and an autoethnography. The areas that were covered to answer these two questions are: 1) the teaching approach used by teachers; 2) type of textbooks and resources used; 3) type of assessments given; 4) curriculum designing and its recent history; and 5) teacher qualification.

Meanwhile, Research Questions 3 and 4 investigated the major differences between the Japanese Language Curricula and Japanese Language Syllabi in Malaysia and New Zealand. These questions were answered using document analysis method. The areas focused in the curricula and syllabi document analysis are: 1) the aims and objectives; 2) the curricula/syllabi's content, and 3) the organization of curricula/syllabi's content. The similarities and differences found through document analysis have been described in Chapter 4.

From the results, it is apparent that both countries have adopted the same types of syllabi (Skills and Outcomes Based Syllabi) with weight given to communicative competence. The results also showed that New Zealand allocates their teachers with more autonomy than Malaysia. The 2007 New Zealand Curriculum Framework has stated that schools have autonomy in deciding their own educational programmes (McGee & Cowie, 2008/2009). This indirectly confirms that teachers' autonomy is practice largely in New Zealand.

Another aspect of New Zealand Japanese language teaching which differs from that in Malaysia is that every school in New Zealand has a

different Japanese language programme which has been developed for each context. This is in contrast with Malaysia. The teachers of Japanese in Malaysia do not have total control in designing and planning their own language programme. This can be seen in the way the syllabus is designed. The Malaysian Japanese Language Syllabus is designed in detail which leads to the conclusion that this is done intentionally to ensure teachers in all schools around Malaysia are teaching the same skills. In other words, the syllabus is used by the Ministry of Education as a way to centralise the teaching and learning of the Japanese language. Furthermore, in Malaysia, schools that offer Japanese language are provided with textbooks. This is another indicator that the Malaysian Japanese Language Curriculum promotes uniformity.

From the comparison of Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese Language Curriculum, we can conclude that curriculum is tailored to suit the aims and ambitions of each nation. Japanese language education in Malaysia and New Zealand was implemented for economic reasons; however, their economic aims and visions were slightly different. Malaysia wanted to emulate Japanese exemplary work ethics and be economically successful like Japan, while New Zealand wanted to trade and do business with Japan, a new economic power at the time. However, the two Japanese language curricula also reflect international trends in the educational world, in this case both curricula give prominence to Communicative Language Teaching and Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching. Therefore, although Malaysia and New Zealand are two different countries with totally different aims and visions, their

curriculum design also have some similarities based on international language learning trends.

From this comparison of the Japanese language history, current practice and curriculum in Malaysia and New Zealand research, I have gathered much valuable knowledge that I believe can help both countries in improving their Japanese language teaching and learning. For example, Malaysia can learn from New Zealand's experience in implementing school-based management system in schools and the practice of teacher autonomy especially in organizing and designing one's own language programme that suitable for each school's need and context. And, New Zealand may be able to learn from Malaysia in the aspect of Japanese language teacher qualification as to bring more quality to the Japanese language education in New Zealand. This research is to my knowledge, also the first detailed description of Japanese language teaching (both practice and curriculum) in Malaysia and New Zealand, and so the findings can be used as a benchmark in describing Japanese language education in both countries. It is hoped that in the future this research can be a starting point of more similar research for benchmarking and curriculum development purposes.

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Appendices

Appendix A 1

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

My name is Sazlina Abdul Jabbar and I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. I am currently planning a research project examining the differences between Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum. The research will be focusing on the language outcomes of the curriculum. The purpose of this form is to invite you to participate in this research, and to tell you about how the research will proceed and how the information will be used.

Your participation in this research would involve an interview of about 30 minutes to one hour which would be conducted either face to face (if possible) or by skype. This interview would focus on discussing Japanese language education in New Zealand – the recent history, the curriculum and the teaching of Japanese language in New Zealand’s public schools. The interview session will be recorded and the details of the conversation will be transcribed and e-mailed to you for your amendments and further comments.

The information gathered will be used for writing my Masters thesis and may also be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. My thesis will also be stored electronically in the university ‘Research Commons’ at <http://www.researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz>. In the writing and discussion you will be given a pseudonym or a code name.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Waikato. Any concerns you have regarding this research which you would prefer not to discuss with me can be forwarded to my supervisor:

Dr Nicola Daly
Senior Lecturer
Department of Arts and Language Education
Faculty of Education, University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105 Hamilton
e-mail: nicolad@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: (07) 838 4298

You are free to withdraw from participation in this research at any time without giving a reason up until two weeks after the interview.

If you have any queries about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me at sa169@waikato.ac.nz or (07) 8582454. If you are willing to participate in my research, please contact me so we can arrange a time for our interview.

Sazlina Abdul Jabbar
Arts and Language Education
sa169@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix A 2
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JAPANESE
LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

My name is Sazlina Abdul Jabbar and I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. I am currently planning a research project examining the differences between Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum. The research will be focusing on the language outcomes of the curriculum. The purpose of this form is to invite you to participate in this research, and to tell you about how the research will proceed and how the information will be used.

Your participation in this research would involve an interview of about 30 minutes to one hour which would be conducted by skype. This interview would focus on discussing Japanese language education in Malaysia – the recent history, the curriculum and the teaching of Japanese language in New Zealand's public schools. The interview session will be recorded and the details of the conversation will be transcribed and e-mailed to you for your amendments and further comments.

The information gathered will be used for writing my Masters thesis and may also be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. My thesis will also be stored electronically in the university 'Research Commons' at <http://www.researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz>. In the writing and discussion you will be given a pseudonym or a code name.

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Sazlina Abdul Jabbar
Arts and Language Education
sa169@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix A 3
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JAPANESE
LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

My name is Sazlina Abdul Jabbar and I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. I am currently planning a research project examining the differences between Malaysian and New Zealand Japanese language curriculum. The research will be focusing on the language outcomes of the curriculum. The purpose of this form is to invite you to participate in this research, and to tell you about how the research will proceed and how the information will be used.

Your participation in this research would involve face to face interview for about 30 minutes to one hour. This interview would focus on discussing your views as a Japanese language teacher about the foreign language education and Japanese language curriculum in New Zealand. The interview session will be recorded and the details of the conversation will be transcribed and e-mailed to you for your responses.

The interview will take place in a venue yet to be decided, but it could be a room at the University of Waikato, or alternatively at another venue suitable for you.

The information gathered will be used for writing my Masters thesis and may also be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. My thesis will also be stored electronically in the university 'Research Commons' at <http://www.researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz>. In the writing and discussion you will be given a pseudonym or a code name.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Waikato. Any concerns you have regarding this research which you would prefer not to discuss with me can be forwarded to my supervisor:

Dr Nicola Daly
Senior Lecturer
Department of Arts and Language Education
Faculty of Education, University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105 Hamilton
e-mail: nicolad@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: (07) 838 4298

You are free to withdraw from participation in this research at any time without giving a reason up until two weeks after the interview.

If you have any queries about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me at sa169@waikato.ac.nz or (07) 8582454. If you are willing to participate in my research, please contact me so we can arrange a time for our interview.

Sazlina Abdul Jabbar
Arts and Language Education
sa169@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix B
Consent Form for Participants

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
OUTCOMES

Investigator:
Sazlina Abdul Jabbar
Arts and Language Education
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
e-mail: sa169@waikato.ac.nz
phone: (07) 8582454

Name (Please print clearly) _____

I understand the purpose of this research project and what will be required of me as a participant, and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time up until the transcription checking phase without having to give an explanation by informing the investigator whose details are given above.

I understand that if I have any concerns regarding this research which I would prefer not to discuss with the researcher, I can contact:

Dr Nicola Daly
Senior Lecturer
Department of Arts and Language Education
Faculty of Education, University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105 Hamilton
e-mail: nicolad@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: (07) 838 4298

I agree to take part in this research.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please include a postal address here if you would like a summary of the study to be sent to you.

Appendix C
Participant Biodata sheet

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
OUTCOMES

Please fill in the details below:

Participant code	<i>*(to be filled out by researcher)</i>
Gender	
Qualifications	
Years of learning Japanese language and name of the institution(s)	
Years of teaching Japanese language	
Age Band (18-29 or 30-39 or 40-49 or 50-59 or 60-69 or 70-79)	
Ethnicity	
Any other details you would like to add	

Appendix D 1

Interview Questions

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

Suggested interview questions:

1. Do you know when was Japanese language first introduced in Malaysian schools? Could you tell the history of Japanese language education in Malaysian educational system?
2. From your experience as a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia, in general who learns Japanese language?
3. From your experience and from what you know of other Japanese language teacher, how is Japanese language is taught in Malaysian schools?
4. What kind of textbook and workbook used in Japanese language classroom?
5. What kind of assessments, tests or examinations given to the students throughout their learning?
6. Who decides what goes in the curriculum?
7. In your teaching career has the Malaysian Japanese language curriculum changed? If so, how?
8. Can you tell me about the latest curriculum? What inspires the changes?
9. Who can be a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia? Is there a standard qualification?

Appendix D 2

Interview Questions

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

Suggested interview questions:

1. Do you know when was Japanese language first introduced in New Zealand schools? Could you tell the history of Japanese language education in New Zealand educational system?
2. From your experience as a Japanese language teacher in New Zealand, in general who learns Japanese language?
3. From your experience and from what you know of other Japanese language teacher, how is Japanese language is taught in New Zealand schools?
4. What kind of textbook and workbook used in Japanese language classroom?
5. What kind of assessments, tests or examinations given to the students throughout their learning?
6. Who decides what goes in the curriculum?
7. In your teaching career has the New Zealand Japanese language curriculum changed? If so, how?
8. Can you tell me about the latest curriculum? What inspires the changes?
9. Who can be a Japanese language teacher in New Zealand? Is there a standard qualification?