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INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES: COHERENCE, CONSISTENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

by

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VOLUME ONE

ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this research is to provide an up-to-date survey and critical evaluation of aspects of the teaching and learning of international languages other than English in secondary schools and, to a more limited extent, in universities in New Zealand.

The *Introduction* summarizes the aims and objectives of the research and outlines the research methods.

Chapter 1 introduces the context in which language teaching and learning in New Zealand is conducted, focusing on population size and density, the cultural and linguistic profile of New Zealanders and the structure of New Zealand education.

In *Chapter 2*, a number of landmark publications and reports on language education in New Zealand are examined in the light of the extent to which their recommendations have been adopted.

Chapter 3 examines language learning in New Zealand secondary schools and universities in terms of the types of course available and the take-up and retention rates.

In Chapter 4, New Zealand *Ministry of Education* documents relating to international languages (syllabuses, curriculum statements and curriculum guidelines) are introduced and compared together with an overview of the language offerings of New Zealand universities.

Chapter 5 critically reviews New Zealand *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents in the context of international literature relating to the teaching and learning of languages and examines the extent to which university language courses focus on language proficiency development.

In *Chapter 6,* national educational awards (particularly *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship*) for international languages are critiqued and the planned introduction of a *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* is discussed. *Chapter 6* also critiques a number of university language examination papers.

Chapter 7 reports the results of a questionnaire-based survey of language teachers in New Zealand schools. This report relates primarily to the professional background and training of these teachers, their attitudes towards national language resources and examinations, and their assessment of their own language proficiency achievements and those of their students.

Chapter 8 reports the results of a study that mimics an earlier United Kingdom-based study. This involved students of German in New Zealand universities taking a German C-Test and/or completing a questionnaire relating primarily to their reasons for learning the language and their attitudes towards German culture.

Chapter 9 provides an over-view of the project, identifies areas of weakness, outlines the primary findings and recommendations and makes suggestions for future research.

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Particular thanks are due to a number of colleagues in secondary schools who allowed their students to be involved in this project in a number of ways. While issues of privacy do not allow me to identify them by name, their contribution has been enormous and I am grateful for their collegiality and on-going interest in this work.

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INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this research is to provide an up-to-date survey and critical evaluation of the teaching and learning of international languages other than English in schools (with particular reference to secondary schools) and, to a more limited extent, in universities in New Zealand.

The teaching and learning of international languages in New Zealand schools and tertiary institutions is of considerable importance in relation to the country's future. New Zealand is a country with a fragile economy and a comparatively small, and largely monolingual population. It is geographically isolated. It is no longer able to depend as heavily as it did in the past on Britain as a primary export outlet and has consequently had to focus on initiating and developing trading links throughout the world. As the need for political and economic alliances has grown, so also has the need for language expertise. Unfortunately, however, such evidence as there is suggests that the learning of international languages in New Zealand is not a growth area. Waite, for example, has reported that there were fewer degree completions with an international language as a main subject in New Zealand universities in 1990 than there were in 1970 (Waite, 1992, p. 71).

In 1994, James Coleman (1994, p. 220) observed that although there was at that time a substantial number of students of international languages in the UK whose successful learning was of national importance, there was little research on "why they [were] there, what they [hoped] to gain from the experience, what their linguistic purposes and needs [were], and whether they [were] learning efficiently and being reliably assessed". Furthermore, although there has been a considerable amount of research on language acquisition and language assessment over the past fifty years, there is, according to Coleman (1995, p. 2) "a widespread perception that there remains a high level of ignorance of the relevant literature among university language teachers [in the U.K]" and questions are being asked about "the persistent adherence, especially in traditional

universities, to methods which have been seen for two decades as methodologically unsound". Attempts are now being made to address these issues (see, for example, Coleman, 1992; 1994a and 1994b; 1995a, 1995b, 1995c and 1995d; 1996a and 1996b; 1998a and 1998b; 1999).

There are considerably fewer students of international languages in New Zealand schools and tertiary institutions than there are in the UK. Arguably, therefore, the language learning activities of these students are of even more importance to New Zealand than are the language learning activities of students in the UK. After all, the UK has available to it a rich linguistic resource in terms of its location in relation to the rest of Europe and in terms of the considerable number of plurilingual migrants in its population. Even so, very little substantive information is available about New Zealand students of modern languages, about their teachers, the programmes they follow and the extent to which their learning can be regarded as successful.

The overall aim of this research is to seek as much information about these matters as possible. It was clear from the outset, however, that a very wide range of issues needed to be addressed and that it would be impossible to provide useful information about more than a few of them. In determining which issues to focus on, two factors were considered to be particularly significant. The first was the extent to which the information sought could be gathered and analysed in the time available. This meant that the focus needed to be on areas in which documentation and data (such as, for example, national curriculum statements and enrolment statistics in school language programmes) were readily available and/or areas in which it seemed most likely that the cooperation of those who could facilitate the research could be secured. Additionally, in order that there should be a real possibility of the research findings influencing current practices in ways that might advantage language education, it seemed important to focus on those areas that were most likely to be amenable to change. In the event, this meant that the major focus of attention would be on the teaching and learning of international languages in New Zealand schools. In some areas of the research, attention has also been paid to the teaching and learning of international languages in New Zealand universities. In other areas, however,

this is not the case. Furthermore, no attempt has been made to examine the situation relating to the learning of international languages in institutions other than secondary schools and universities.

Teachers of modern languages in New Zealand schools have set up a number of active professional associations and have also been active in seeking to influence government policy in relation to the teaching and learning of modern languages. They have, furthermore, established annual regional and national conferences at which issues of theoretical and practical significance are discussed. Many of them have also been directly involved in Ministry of Education initiatives in relation to modern language teaching and learning. Furthermore, a survey of 244 language teachers and 100 secondary school principals in 1991 (conducted as part of a longitudinal comparative study of languages policy in New Zealand and Victoria (Australia)) achieved a 95% response rate (Peddie, 1991, p. 10). It seemed, therefore, likely that these teachers would welcome any research activity that was motivated by a desire to see modern languages thrive in New Zealand. It also seemed likely that, overall, they would feel less threatened by research that focussed on language teaching and learning than would language staff in tertiary institutions.

Many of the staff involved in the teaching of modern languages in New Zealand tertiary institutions appear not to be specifically trained in the area of language acquisition. Nor do they appear, in terms of their publications, to have any particular interest in the area. This is not the case in general in New Zealand schools. Most teachers of modern languages in New Zealand secondary schools have been trained in the teaching and learning of modern languages and many of them have also been involved in in-service courses in the area. If, therefore, this research were to reveal areas in which further development might be useful, it seemed likely that these teachers would, in general, welcome the information and be willing, time permitting, to address the development issues that were identified. Furthermore, development issues could be addressed without major difficulty in the secondary school context: New Zealand has a number of full-time language advisers (national and regional) who are involved in providing a range of in-

service courses for teachers of modern languages in schools. It might, therefore, be possible to work with these advisers in planning new teaching resources and/or in-service courses.

It was decided, therefore, that the primary focus of this research should be the teaching and learning of international languages in New Zealand secondary schools. This, however, would not be adequate in itself. On completion of their schooling, New Zealand students who wish to continue learning a language are likely to seek entry to a university. Furthermore, a number of students are now studying modern languages from beginner level in New Zealand universities. It seemed, therefore, important to explore, so far as possible, the options available for the learning of modern languages in New Zealand universities even though information about these options is less readily available than it is in the case of schools. It was recognised that this aspect of the study would be more likely to be indicative than conclusive. Nevertheless, it was felt that it might usefully point to research areas that required further attention in the future. Thus, for example, although it was initially decided that a detailed questionnaire would be circulated to language teachers in New Zealand schools and that a parallel questionnaire would be circulated to language staff in New Zealand tertiary institutions, the tertiary aspect of this part of the research plan was abandoned. The fact that there was a very low response rate to requests to conduct language tests in tertiary institutions suggested that responses to detailed questionnaires might be equally low. Given the small number of modern language specialists in New Zealand tertiary institutions, a low response rate in this area would have invalidated the procedure. It was therefore decided to make use of the limited time and financial resources available in another area. This meant that it was possible to introduce a new dimension to the research: a comparative study of the tuition time available to beginning language students in different tertiary institutions to achieve the same benchmarks (*School Certificate* and *Bursary* equivalents) in the same languages (see *Chapter 5* here).

The overall aim of this research is, then, to provide an up-to-date survey and critique of the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools (with particular reference to

secondary schools) and, to a more limited extent, in universities in New Zealand. The primary focus is:

. the range of modern languages available;
. the numbers of students involved in the study of these languages;
. the content of the language programmes that are available; and
. the approaches to assessment adopted.

A number of other issues are, however, addressed. These are:

. the education, training, attitudes and approaches of language teachers in New Zealand schools;
. the proficiency levels achieved by a sample of New Zealand language learners in comparison with recorded proficiency levels of a sample of learners in the U.K. at the same stages of their language education;
. the attitudes towards, and motivation for, language learning as recorded by a sample of language students at different stages of their language education.

The research began with a number of questions that seemed central to any attempt to provide a reasonably comprehensive over-view and critique of the situation regarding the teaching and learning of modern languages in New Zealand. These questions were:

. What is the form and content of the modern language syllabuses and curriculum statements issued by the New Zealand Ministry of Education?

. How do these syllabuses and curriculum statements relate to prescriptions for national language examinations and to the actual form and content of these examinations?

. How do these syllabuses and curriculum statements relate to the prescriptions for modern language courses produced by universities in New

Zealand?

. In terms of self-reported approaches and methods, to what extent does modern language teaching and learning in New Zealand reflect contemporary research on language acquisition?

. How do teachers and learners of modern languages in New Zealand view their roles, their educational opportunities, the contexts in which they work and their achievements?

. How do modern language students in New Zealand perform in externally-referenced tests at different stages in their educational careers and what factors appear to contribute to their performance?

. What steps could be taken to increase the numbers of students studying modern languages in New Zealand and to improve their chances of success?

In seeking to investigate these issues and to address these questions, it was necessary to design a research programme that would provide as much coverage, in as much detail, as possible, one which would involve both qualitative and quantitative investigations, and one that was designed to make a constructive contribution to the debate on modern language teaching and learning in New Zealand.

The first task was to attempt to discover exactly what modern language learning opportunities are currently available in New Zealand schools and universities, how many students take advantage of these opportunities and how far they proceed with their language learning. So far as secondary schools are concerned, this involved abstracting from national statistical records figures relating to language courses and language examination submissions and analysing these records in terms of significant trends. So far as tertiary institutions are concerned, the statistical data publicly available are very limited. For this reason, both the New Zealand Ministry of Education and the institutions

themselves were approached for information. Although the Ministry of Education was able to supply some relevant information (relating to degree completions), only one of the tertiary institutions approached for statistical data responded to the request. The results of the analysis of the data collected are provided in *Chapter 2* here.

The second task was to examine as much as possible of the context in which modern language teaching and learning takes place. In the case of secondary schools, this involved examining and comparing, in the context of the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* and in the light of research on language teaching and learning, the syllabuses and curriculum statements currently available for modern languages, as well as the curriculum guidelines that are currently in preparation. In the case of universities, it meant providing a critical examination of published details relating to modern language courses and course prescriptions (see *Chapters 4 and 5* here).

Syllabuses, curriculum statements, curriculum guidelines and course prescriptions provide information that is relevant to assessment and need to be taken into account in reviewing the assessment procedures that are in place. Consequently, the critique of approaches to modern language assessment in New Zealand schools and tertiary institutions provided here is related not only to international research on the assessment of modern languages, but also to the extent to which course and programme assessment is consistent with the stated aims and objectives of these courses and programmes (see *Chapter 6* here).

The next task was to discover as much as possible about the teaching of modern languages in New Zealand. It was decided that the most economical approach in this area (in terms of time and financial resources) was to conduct a questionnaire-based survey. Consequently, a questionnaire was designed and trialled. This questionnaire was then distributed to all secondary schools in New Zealand known to be involved in the teaching of modern languages. The aim of this survey was:

. to determine the professional background and training of teachers of

languages in New Zealand schools;

. to determine to what extent language teachers in New Zealand schools feel that the curriculum statements and resources provided by the New Zealand Ministry of Education are helpful;

. to determine whether, and to what extent, language teachers in New Zealand had participated in in-service training provision relevant to their language teaching duties and responsibilities and, where they had done so, how useful they believed these courses to have been;

. to determine the extent to which language teachers in New Zealand appear to have the types of knowledge and understanding that are likely to be required to perform a range of duties related to language teaching.

Details of this questionnaire are provided in *Chapter 7* here along with an analysis of the responses.

The next part of the research programme related to the students themselves. A sample of students of one modern language (German) at different stages of their language education programmes was issued with C-Tests that had been successfully trialled and used in another context (see, in particular, Coleman, 1996). The objectives here were to determine (a) how successful these students were in completing this externally-referenced test, (b) whether there were significant overall differences in the results achieved by students at different stages in their language education, and (c) how the results compared with the recorded results of a sample of UK students. An analysis of the results of this experiment is included in *Chapter 8* here.

All of the students who participated in the C-Test referred to above were also issued with questionnaires relating to their language backgrounds and experiences and to their motivation for, and attitudes towards, language learning. These questionnaires were in

most respects the same as questionnaires that had already been trialled elsewhere (see, in particular, Coleman, 1996). There were, however, some adaptations made in order to accommodate the particular circumstances of New Zealand students. The responses to these questionnaires were then analysed and a number of the responses were correlated with the C-Test results (see *Chapter 8*).

The research reports in *Chapters 3 – 8* here are accompanied by a brief introduction to New Zealand and New Zealand education (*Chapter 1* here) and a statement of conclusions and recommendations (*Chapter 9* here). In *Chapter 9*, the limitations of the research are outlined along with conclusions and recommendations. Among the limitations is the fact that the wide-ranging nature of the discussion and analysis is such as to make it impossible to make reference to all of the existing research in each area. For this reason, the focus is on research that has directly informed the current study. That research is reported and critiqued throughout the work at those points where it is considered to be most directly relevant. In addition, one chapter (*Chapter 2* here) outlines the relationships between various aspects of this study and previous research and identifies ways in which the current project represents an attempt to supply information and analysis in response to a range of research questions that have either not hitherto been addressed fully in the research literature or have not been the subject of recent studies.

The term 'international language' is used here to refer to any modern language that is widely used in written and spoken form for a variety of purposes, including trade and commerce, in more than one country. In the context of this research, the English language is not included in the discussion of international languages, the focus being on those international languages that are not used by the majority of New Zealanders on a daily basis.

The term 'modern language' is used here to refer here to any language that is currently used as a vehicle of spoken and/or written communication anywhere in the world. The term 'community language' is used to refer to any modern language that is not an official

language of a particular country (either in law or in fact), but one that is nevertheless used as a vehicle of spoken communication among members of any identifiable group within that country.

The terms 'foreign language' and 'modern foreign language' are used to refer to languages that are not official languages of a particular country (in law or in fact) whether or not they are used as community languages within that country. Thus, in the New Zealand context, Samoan is both a modern foreign language and a community language. In general, the terms 'foreign language' and 'modern foreign language' are used here only when referring to works in which they appear.

The term 'second language' is used here only when making reference to literature in which that term appears. Its interpretation in particular instances therefore depends on the sense in which it is used in the source literature to which reference is made. Within the New Zealand teaching and learning context, it is, however, generally used to refer to a language other than the language of instruction (Curriculum Update, 1997).

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE SCENE 1: NEW ZEALAND AND THE NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction

Aotearoa/New Zealand is a small country in the Southern Pacific Ocean. It is three and a half hours flying time from Australia to the west, fourteen hours flying time from South America to the east, and a considerable distance from each of the Pacific Islands and Pacific Island states that dot the Pacific Ocean to the north. Only Antarctica lies to the South.

The early settlement of New Zealand links the fortunes of the Polynesian people who migrated from the land of Hawaiki prior to 1300 with those of explorers and settlers from a variety of European origins, explorers who arrived in the Southern Pacific Ocean after 1642 and began to settle in the country from the early 1700s. In 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Queen Victoria of the British Isles and representatives of Mäori tribal groups in New Zealand. This treaty made the country a British colony and established the strong ties with the United Kingdom that exist even today in spite of New Zealand's current status as an independent nation.

By international standards, New Zealand is a relatively young country. However, it has an economic, social and educational infrastructure sufficiently well developed to secure it a place as one of the twenty-nine member nations of the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* and to allow it to play an active role in the *World Bank*, the *Asian Development Bank* and the *World Trade Organisation.*

Aotearoa/New Zealand is a young country that participates fully in a variety of significant international alliances.

1.2 A geographical snapshot

New Zealand has two main islands and a number of smaller ones. It is approximately 1,600 kilometres long and, at its widest part, is no more than 450 kilometres wide. The combined landmass of 270,500 square kilometres makes its size comparable to that of Japan or the British Isles. The country has several geothermal areas and a number of active volcanoes. Earthquakes are not uncommon. The *New Zealand Yearbook on the Web* (1999) describes the landscape as varied "with 50 percent of the land classifiable as steep, 20 percent as moderately hilly, and 30 percent as rolling or flat. The natural vegetation ranges from kauri forest to subalpine scrub, and from tussock grassland to broadleaf forest" (*New Zealand Yearbook on the Web,* 1999, Section 1.2).

New Zealand is a small, island nation that is geographically diverse.

1.3 A profile of the population

There are currently an estimated 3.8 million people living in New Zealand. (Statistics New Zealand: available <http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pas/pascs96.nsf/>: visited 9 June 2000). Many of these people have migrated to the country in the last fifty years. In 1908, the population reached one million. By 1952, the population had risen to two million. It was not until 1973 that the three million population mark was reached. Over its short history, New Zealand has had periods of relatively steep immigration and population growth interspersed with periods of high migration. Demographic data relating to the New Zealand population indicate a high degree of mobility. Even within the country, there is a tendency for people to change location frequently during their lives. Currently there is ongoing migration from the south to the north of the country and from rural areas to urban centres.

The population of New Zealand is mobile and becoming increasingly urbanised.

1.4 Immigration

New Zealand has traditionally had a large migrant population. As a result of an open immigration policy for United Kingdom citizens, the United Kingdom was the most common source of migrants prior to 1974. During periods when skilled labour was in short supply (particularly, for example, after the Second World War), migrants were attracted from the United Kingdom by a range of assisted passage and/or relocation schemes.

New legislation introduced in 1974 replaced unrestricted immigration from the United Kingdom and Ireland with a system involving the assessment of most potential immigrants in terms of a range of criteria on the basis of which entry was granted or denied. This legislative change has had a significant impact on the overall population profile of New Zealand. Free movement between Australia and New Zealand has not changed. Nor have the unrestricted entry rights of Cook Island, Niue and Tokelau Islands people (who are treated for a number of purposes as New Zealand citizens). There are, however, fewer migrants from the United Kingdom and there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants from South Africa and Asia (Taiwan, Korea and northern China in particular) (*New Zealand Yearbook on the Web* (1999, Section 5.8).

The migrant population of New Zealand is becoming more varied.

1.5 Refugee migration

Refugees from Europe first arrived in New Zealand in the 1930s, the number increasing during the Second World War. The migration of refugees intensified after World War II when 6,000 refugees from Poland were resettled in New Zealand. Conflict in Indo-China during and following the Vietnam War has led to approximately 7,000 Indo-Chinese refugees being resettled in New Zealand since 1975. Further groups of refugees from this part of the world continue to arrive under the terms of an immigration policy that

currently supports family reunification. In addition to Indo-Chinese refugees, small numbers of Chilean, Russian, East European, Assyrian, Ethiopian, Middle Eastern, Bosnian and Somali refugees have also been received at different times under the annual quota system.

A small quota of refugees is accepted into New Zealand each year from a range of sources.

1.6 Future population trend predictions

Population trend predictions suggest that New Zealand's population is likely to grow from 3.8 million in the year 2000 to 4.49 million by the year 2051. Even should this happen, the population of the entire country will still be equivalent only to that of a medium-sized European city. Thus:

> While the cultural diversity of New Zealand is — for the greater part — Eurocentric, the range of cultural norms present in New Zealand that have come from non-European sources, along with the existing Mäori culture, suggest that New Zealand will proceed into the next century possessing a wide range of different ethnic and cultural values (*New Zealand Year Book on the Web* 1999, Section 5.4).

New Zealand is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic.

1.7 A profile of languages and language use in New Zealand

In this section, the linguistic composition of New Zealand's population is discussed.

1.7.1 The Mäori language

The coexistence of two main groups of people with different linguistic heritages has been a feature of life in New Zealand for a considerable period of time. Educational practices in the country immediately following the early waves of European migration allowed for a bilingual approach to education. However, with introduction of the *1867 Education Act,* an English-only school language policy was adopted. The use of Mäori in schools was prohibited, and children were punished, even beaten, for communicating in Mäori:

> Teachers were explicitly discouraged from learning to speak Mäori themselves on the grounds that it would lessen their efficiency. The Department of Education declared total war on the Maori language (Biggs, 1968, p. 74).

This 'declaration of war' has had a detrimental effect on relationships among New Zealanders and has resulted in serious difficulties in relation to recent attempts to preserve the Mäori language. Relatively few New Zealanders of Mäori ethnicity now speak Mäori. *Table 1.1* below gives data collected from the 1996 census (Statistics New Zealand available: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pas/pascs96.nsf/>: visited 9 June 2000).

Table 1.1: *Population Resident in New Zealand - Official Languages Spoken*

	Male	**Female**	**Total**
English but no Mãori	1542654	1607145	3149796
Mãori but no English	6603	6180	12783
Both English and Mãori	67728	73158	140886
Neither English nor Mãori	26319	31605	57924
No language	48339	43119	91458
Not applicable	555	507	1059
Not specified	85266	79125	164391
Total	**1777461**	**1840839**	**3618303**

At best, 140,886 inhabitants (approximately 3.9% of the total population) speak both English and Mãori. Many of these are speakers of Mäori as a second language. Many do not have a high level of proficiency in the language. The *New Zealand Council for Educational Research Survey of Maori Speakers* (1986) identified that there were, in 1986, 52,500 fluent speakers of Mäori. Nicholson (1997) suggests that this number may already have declined to 10,000 by 1995.

A range of initiatives has been put in place to facilitate the revitalisation of the Mäori language. This includes the establishment of Mäori pre-school centres, Mäori immersion schools and Mäori medium radio. Attempts to establish and maintain a Mäori-medium television channel have been largely unsuccessful. There have been a range of short-term initiatives such as, for example, *Mäori language week* and *Mäori language year* aimed at raising awareness of Mäori language issues and promoting wider and more accurate use of Mäori. In 1987, the *Mäori Language Act* made Mäori the only legislated official language of the country. However, English continues to be, *de facto*, the main official language of the country. While Mäori people are generally supportive of initiatives relating to revitalisation of the language, others are less so. Nicholson and Garland (1991) identify the general public reaction to Mäori language promotion as one of passive tolerance. Even so, revitalisation strategies are promoted in Mäori communities and most New Zealand universities include Mäori language in their course offerings.

Fishman (1989, p. 395) maintains that "intergenerational ethnolinguistic continuity" has more impact on the revitalisation and preservation of languages than any other factor. In the absence of inter-generational transmission, many other language maintenance strategies are likely to be significantly less effective (Garland and Nicholson, 1991). It is in this context that Fishman points out the dangers of engaging in activities that divert energy from the most important central task and succeed in little more than creating "atmospheric effects" (Fishman 1991, p. 245). Many of those engaged in serious revitalisation work fear that their efforts may be too little too late. Indeed, Waite, in

discussing a range of revitalisation initiatives, comments that "despite these positive moves, the language cannot be yet considered out of danger" (Waite, 1993b, p. 30).

New Zealand is a country with an official language in danger of being lost.

1.7.2 A predominantly monolingual society

Kaplan, commenting on language issues in the New Zealand context, refers to "a residual racism in society" and goes on to say that there exists in the country "the mistaken belief that English is the only language necessary for New Zealand's development" (Kaplan 1992, in Kaplan 1993, p. 3). This is borne out in further statistical data provided by the 1996 Census. *Table 1.2* outlines the number of languages spoken by residents of New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand available: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pas/pascs96.nsf/>: visited 9 June 2000):

***Table 1.2**: Number of Languages Spoken for the Population Resident in New Zealand*

	Male	Female	Total
One	1419600	1473081	2892681
Two	189891	209313	399204
Three	25509	27870	53379
Four	5925	5799	11724
Five	1731	1602	3330
Six or more	651	423	1077
None	48339	43119	91458
Not applicable	555	504	1059
Not specified	85266	79125	164391
Total	**1777461**	**1840839**	**3618303**

The definition of 'spoken' included in the census question requires of the respondent the capacity to have a normal conversation with a native speaker. From the point of view of

this definition, almost 80% of the population reported speaking, in 1996, only one language. In the majority of cases that language was English.

New Zealand can be characterised as a predominantly monolingual society.

1.7.3 Other language groups in New Zealand

The range of different ethnic groups now migrating to New Zealand has begun, in a very small way, to create a population with greater linguistic diversity. For the first time in any New Zealand census, the 1996 census asked questions about language knowledge and language use.

Where a person reported speaking more than one language, he or she was counted under each applicable language.

There are 55 specific languages recorded as being spoken in New Zealand. Taking into account the "other, pidgin and creoles, and unidentifiable" categories, that number is, however, likely to be much higher.

The following *Table* (*Table 1.3*) summarizes the data represented in *Table 9* of the National Summary of Statistics of the 1996 census.

Table 1.3: *Languages spoken by New Zealand residents 1996*

Language	No.	Language	No.	Language	No.
English	3152868	Bengali	1353	Tokelauan	2592
German	31983	Fiji Hindi	597	Tuvaluan	555
Dutch	27471	Oth Indo-Aryan	3306	Oth Central Pacific	1071
Afrikaans	5106	Welsh	843	Tagalog	5604
Danish	2121	Other Celtic	1170	Malaysian	5292
Swedish	1782	Persian	1581	Bahasa-Indonesian	2814
Norwegian	912	Oth Iranian	354	Oth West Malayo-Poly	852
Oth Germanic	2220	Somali	816	Khmer	3993

(continued over)

Table 1.3: Languages spoken by New Zealand residents 1996(continued)

Language	No.	Language	No.	Language	No.
French	45216	Oth Afro-Asiatic	3	Vietnamese	3099
Spanish	10692	Arabic	4128	Oth Austro-Asiatic	42
Italian	6291	Assyrian	981	Korean	11154
Portugese	1281	Hebrew	840	Oth Altaic	519
Romanian	324	Oth Semitic	324	Thai	3141
Oth romance	615	Yue (Cantonese)	33579	Lao	1356
Serbo-croatian	5436	Northern Chinese	18483	Other Tai	30
Greek	3591	Min	5474	Hungarian	1227
Russian	3429	Hakka	708	Oth Uralic	534
Polish	2514	Oth Sinitic	13131	Tamil	2370
Oth Balto-Sla	3129	Māori	153669	Telugu	552
Hindi	12879	Samoan	70878	Oth Dravidian	435
Gujurati	8760	Tongan	19113	Swahili	816
Panjabi	2937	Cook Is Māori	8568	Oth Niger-Congo	843
Sinhala	2004	Niuean	5835	Japanese	18756
Urdu	1503	Fijian	3159	Pidgins and Creole	1950
Oth langs	1017	None	91830	Do Not Speak English	70707
NZ Sign Lang	26592	Unidentifiable	19101	Speakers of 2+ Langs	468771
Oth Sign Langs	852	Not specified	164271		

In a very small percentage of the New Zealand population a wide variety of languages are spoken.

1.7.4 The language use of New Zealand children

English is the main language spoken by children in New Zealand although a number of children were recorded in the 1996 Census as speaking other languages. The most common of these were Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Cantonese and Northern Chinese. The proportion of children who could speak two or more languages increased with age, from 12.5% of those aged 5 to 9 years to 15.6% of 10 to 14 year-olds. The *Statistics New*

Zealand summary of the 1996 Census presents the following information relating to language use:

- Children born overseas were more than three times more likely to speak two or more languages than New Zealand-born children;
- A total of 34.1% of children born outside New Zealand could speak more than one language compared with 11.1%of those born in New Zealand;
- Nearly half (49.4%) of all Asian children and just over 4 out of every 10 (43.1%) Pacific Islands children could speak two or more languages;
- A similar proportion (43.0%) of children who identified as belonging to ethnic groups other than the four main groups, speak another language;
- While 1 out of every 5 (21.7%) Mäori children could speak more than one language, this was true for only 3.3% of European children (*Statistics New Zealand*: available <http://www.stats.govt.nz>: visited 9 June 2000)

Only a small percentage of New Zealand children of European origin are multilingual.

1.8 The New Zealand education system: an overview

Nationally provided education is free and secular in New Zealand from ages 5-19 and compulsory from age 6-16. The majority of children start their education at age 5 although they need not do so until age 6.

1.8.1 Key educational agencies

There are a number of educational agencies that have responsibility for aspects of the educational system. These major agencies are independent bodies that report to the Minister of Education. The three key agencies are:

Ministry of Education: Te Tähuhu o te Mätauranga

The Ministry of Education is responsible for educational policy writing and for overseeing the development and delivery of the national curriculum as expressed in the National Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education,1993). The Ministry oversees the equitable funding and resourcing of schools to ensure consistent and comparable delivery of the curriculum at each level of schooling and in each school.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority: Mana Tohu Mätauranga o Aotearoa

The main function of the Qualifications Authority is to develop policy and procedures that ensure the integrity of all forms of national educational assessment, tests and examinations and to oversee their administration. It also has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the New National Certificate in Educational Achievement, due to be introduced in 2002. This initiative is discussed in more detail below.

The Education Review Office: Te Tari Arotake Mätauranga

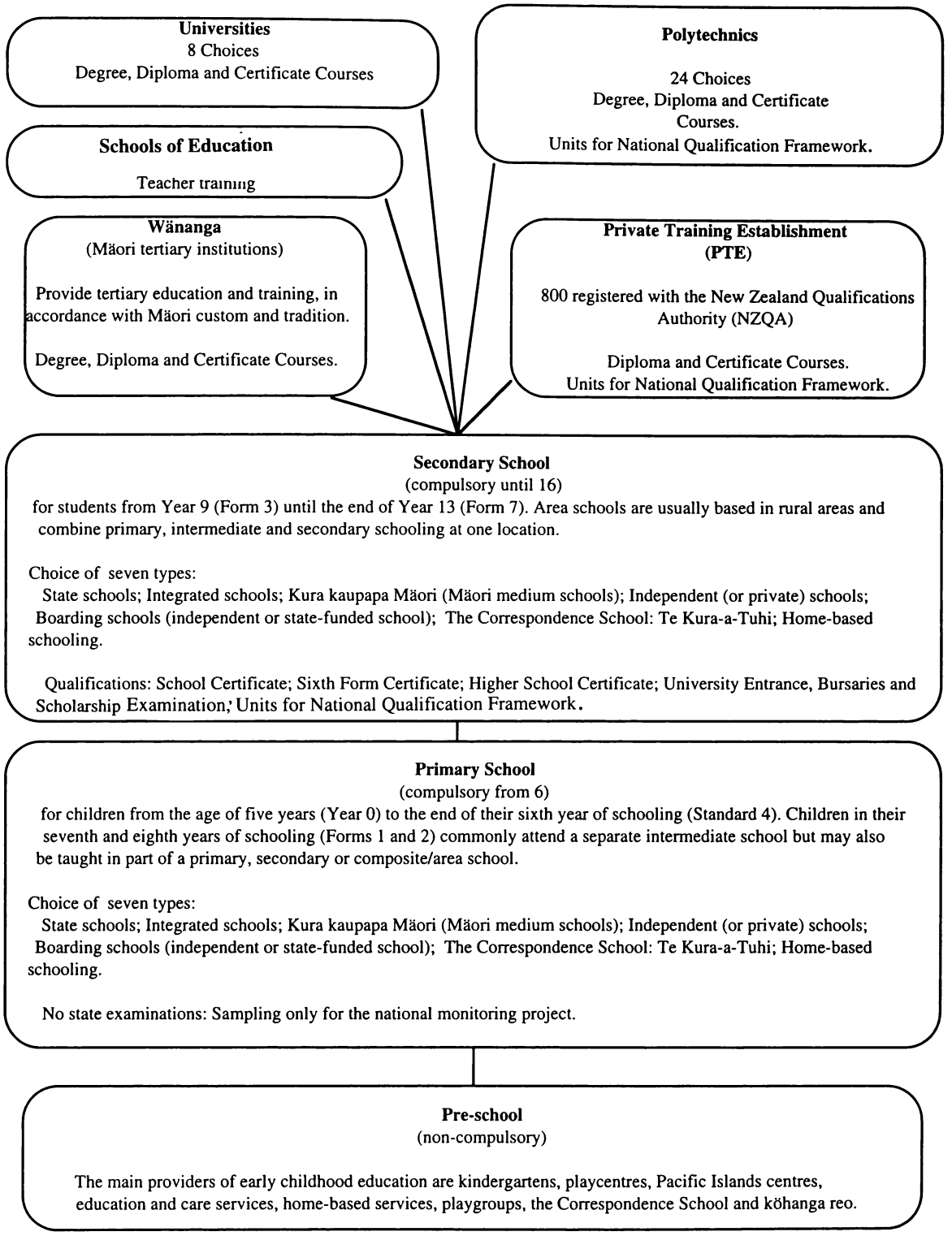
The main function of the *Education Review Office* (ERO) is to report publicly on the quality of education in all New Zealand schools and early childhood centres. Review processes involve evaluation of the quality of teaching, the quality of students' learning and the role of management and elected school trustees.

All three agencies are independent and report directly to the Minister of Education.

1.8.2 Education at a glance

The following Figure (*Figure 1*) summarizes compulsory and non-compulsory educational options. The choices available at each stage and the national testing options available at each level of study are indicated. The non-compulsory post-secondary education sector is largely deregulated although private training establishments are monitored by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority.*

Figure 1.1: *The New Zealand Education System: an outline*



The New Zealand Education system is characterised by wide choice.

1.8.3 The New Zealand national curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993) describes in broad terms those things that are considered to be fundamental to learning and teaching in New Zealand schools. It sets out the principles that underpin and give direction to all teaching and learning, as well as outlining the essential learning areas and the essential skills, attitudes and values to be developed at each stage. Each school is charged with offering a balanced curriculum made up from the seven essential learning areas at a level and stage appropriate to the students in the school. Some subjects are compulsory, others are optional. The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* is supported by a series of national curriculum statements (for compulsory subjects) and national curriculum guidelines (for non-compulsory subjects). The curriculum framework applies to both primary and secondary education.

The New Zealand national curriculum offers many options within a unified framework.

1.8.4 The New Zealand National Certificate in Educational Achievement

New Zealand will be moving, over the next few years, to implement a *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* (NCEA). This will, in general, replace the *National Qualifications Framework* developed in 1991 although some elements of the 1991 *Framework* (Unit Standards for vocational subjects) are expected to become part of the new *Certificate*. The *Certificate* is intended to cater for a broad range of teaching and learning styles and to take into account a considerable variety of achievement levels. The following summary has been offered by the NZQA:

> There has been endless debate about the role of exams and Unit Standards in our qualifications system. The new approach will cope better with both ends of the achievement spectrum. The best features of all forms of assessment have been unified so that students, no matter what their preferred learning

style or choice of studies, will have opportunity to display their abilities and register their achievements. This will be better for low achieving students because they will get credit for what they have achieved to that point rather than have to be assessed on work that they have not yet mastered (New Zealand Qualifications Authority: available: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Schools/Quals/QandA.htm>: visited 9 June 2000).

For the new NCEA, vocational subjects will be assessed using Unit Standards and non-vocational subjects will be assessed using Achievement Standards. The composition of achievement standards will vary among subjects.

New Zealand is moving towards an all-encompassing national qualifications framework.

1.8.5 Teacher education

There is a range of options available for teacher education. Courses are designed to prepare teachers for a specific stage or type of education such as, for example, pre-school, primary, secondary, special education.

Primary teachers generally train over a period of three years, followed by two years of teaching in a state primary school and must satisfy a range of professional criteria in order to gain registration. Training courses may be shortened to one or two years for trainees who are university graduates, are part way through degree courses, or are mature trainees with relevant work experience.

There are two options available to those who wish to train as secondary school teachers. For graduates and those with other approved advanced qualifications, there is a one-year training course available. People without advanced qualifications but who have suitable school leaving grades may be accepted into a programme involving up to four years

consecutive or concurrent study in a specific curriculum area. Secondary teachers, like primary teachers, must teach for a minimum of two years in a state secondary school and satisfy certain professional criteria to gain registration.

Tertiary teachers do not have to have a specific teacher training although some universities, polytechnics and schools of education are now offering training courses in adult and tertiary education.

Training for teachers in New Zealand is offered by a number of organisations and in a variety of styles.

1.8.6 International languages in the New Zealand education system

The current *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* places the study of an international language within the essential learning area labelled *language and languages*. While the study of English or Mäori language is compulsory, the study of an international language is optional.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education has curriculum statements for Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Samoan and Spanish. Each of these languages is examined nationally at some level. In addition, some schools, in constructing their programmes, nominate a language as a compulsory subject for a specific time. This is a local arrangement only and it can change from year to year. Other schools give students a 'taster' of languages through a series of short-term, language electives from which students can choose, or not, a language for continued study. A number of schools offer no opportunity at all for the learning of an international language.

The study of international languages generally begins at secondary school although some primary and intermediate schools are now offering courses in a range of languages other than English and/or Mäori.

There are a number of innovative language initiatives taking place around the country under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education. These initiatives generally involve some exploration of the use of technology in the delivery of second language programmes with a view to making these programmes available to students who would not otherwise have an opportunity to learn a language (Peddie, 1999). These initiatives are, however, taking place in only a few pockets around the country and any impact they may have on declining numbers of language learners is still not possible to predict.

Although in 1994 the *Education Review Office* predicted a continuing small rise in the numbers of students studying international languages up to the turn of the century (Report Number 6, 1994), recent statistical releases indicate that the numbers of students studying modern languages at secondary school level are declining. Detailed statistical evidence about student numbers learning modern languages in universities is not readily available. It appears, however, that the number of students learning modern languages is also declining at tertiary level.

The number of students studying international languages in New Zealand is declining.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE SCENE 2: LOCATING THE RESEARCH IN RELATION TO SOME LANDMARK PUBLICATIONS

2.1 Introduction

Writing in 1992, Robert Kaplan made the following observation about language education in New Zealand:

> [Language] education is not adequately provided for in New Zealand, . . . the language situation is essentially not well understood, . . . an element of chaos exists in the various sectors that deal with language and . . . language rights - indeed, the very existence of some languages - are threatened by the failure to deal systematically with language matters. These concerns have, to some degree, been offset by a residual racism in society, by the mistaken belief that English is the only language necessary for New Zealand's development, and by the disturbing absence of real data regarding the language situation (Kaplan 1992, reported in Kaplan, 1993, p. 3).

2.2 Establishing the agenda

There appear to be relatively few documents that specifically investigate the learning and teaching of international languages in the New Zealand context. Those that do, report very similar findings, reach very similar conclusions and make very similar recommendations. Many of these recommendations have been largely ignored. This may be, in part, because recommendations, even those contained in official reports, are rarely accompanied by detailed supporting information and/or by an analysis of costs and benefits.

The *Thomas Report* (Department of Education 1942/ 1959) has a great deal to say about the value of learning modern languages, but very little to say about how New Zealand could, or should, optimize language learning opportunities. The primary advantages of learning languages other than English are seen as being related to first language awareness, intellectual development and cultural awareness and, finally, reducing isolation and coping and competing in the international arena. Thus, "language study leads to an increased appreciation of your own language, its sound values and its word associations, and an increased facility in its use" (p. 65). Learning another language "introduces us to other ways of life and modes of thought than our own" and "helps towards an appreciation and understanding of other peoples", something that is seen as a "corrective to that racially complacent self-centred attitude into which we might fall" (p. 64). Furthermore:

> If, as seems likely, we are to be left no longer to ourselves, but are to be drawn into the main stream of international affairs, we need to make every effort to overcome the initial disability that is ours through lack of racial contact (p. 64).

Readers are advised that "no amount of understanding, however slight, is to be neglected" even though "the result for the individual may be small" (p.65). Thus, modern language learning is seen in the *Thomas Report* as offering considerable social and cultural benefits for the nation. For the individual, however, it might result in little personal gain other than that which can be derived from an improved understanding and use of English. The emphasis on international trade that was to dominate later documents is absent: New Zealand could still rely on the UK in trading matters.

In 1976, the New Zealand Department of Education reported on a review of possible developments in, and guidelines for, secondary education in New Zealand. In that report, *Towards Partnership* (Department of Education, 1976a), there is no detailed and comprehensive statement on the future of languages in New Zealand. Instead, readers are advised simply that "the study of native and foreign languages contributes to an

understanding of other cultures" (p. 42). However, 1976 also saw the publication of the *Marshall Report* (Department of Education, 1976b). This was the report of a working party set up in 1975 to make recommendations in relation to second language learning in New Zealand. The extract below appears near the beginning of that report:

> To . . . have recourse to policy decisions based on the attitude of 'English is sufficient', is merely to tighten the straps of the strait-jacket of monolingual smugness and self-sufficiency, thus reinforcing our insularity and isolationist attitudes rather than making a positive contribution to internationalism, and to preparing our country for the needs of the future (p. 7).

The rhetoric here is similar to that of the *Thomas Report*. In 1942, however, New Zealanders were advised that they were in danger of falling into a "racially complacent self-centred attitude"; in 1976, they are presented as having already done so.

There is, in the *Marshall Report*, a considerable volume of rhetoric similar in nature to that found in the *Thomas Report*. The focus, however, is different. The emphasis has by now shifted towards the functional value of language learning and readers are advised that "there are ever-growing numbers of people in the community whose functions will be seriously limited if they are unable to comprehend the spoken language of a particular nation" (p.7). Language learning is seen as having "obvious uses, ranging from the acquisition of a few phrases for holiday and travel to the highest level of competency needed by diplomatic personnel and senior overseas executives (p. 7).

The emphasis in the *Marshall Report* is on schooling, particularly secondary schooling and it is noted that "there has been a most alarming decline in the study of languages in secondary schools over the past ten years" (Prologue). The government is urged to take "decisive action . . . over the whole gamut of second language learning" (p. 3), focusing primarily, however, on secondary schooling because "by far the greatest amount of language teaching in New Zealand takes place in the secondary schools, and it is here that we must be absolutely sure that priorities are right and aims are appropriate" (p. 15). For

the first time, the relationship between various sectors of language provision is seen as crucial. There should be "consistency in approach and method, avoiding fragmentation and overlap at the articulation points" and thus "consultation on language teaching between teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary branches should be held regularly, and experience pooled" (p. 42).

It is noted in the *Marshall Report* that an earlier survey by the *New Zealand Centre for Educational Research* had found that 8% of secondary schools taught no second language at all. Of those that did, 99% offered French, 50% offered German, 30% offered Latin; 30% offered Mäori and 10% offered Japanese. In addition, "statistically insignificant numbers offered Russian, Italian, English as a second language, Spanish, Greek, Indonesian, Malay, Vietnamese, Swahili and Welsh" (pp. 39 – 40). Information of this type is, however, scarce. The commissioning of the *Marshall Report* provided an opportunity for the collection of relevant statistical information and the provision of additional statistical information. That opportunity was largely missed. The *Marshall Report* contains very little statistical data to support its arguments and recommendations although we are, for example, advised that "the data for the present study suggest that the primary factor in the attainment of proficiency in French (and, presumably, any foreign language) is the amount of instructional time provided" (p. 17).

The recommendations made in the *Marshall Report* are, in many cases, very general in nature. They appear, nevertheless, to be sound. They include a call for more research on language teaching and language teacher training (p. 8) and for more professional training for language teachers (p. 19). The report calls for the remedying of a situation in which candidates studying a foreign language may have considerably fewer hours of tuition than are available in many other subjects (pp. 20 – 21), and observes that " careful consideration should . . . be given to a policy whereby our foreign language teachers . . . attend study courses in the country whose language they teach" (p.20), recommending that "the Department of Education make finance available to enable selected New Zealand teachers to participate in overseas courses" (p. 56). In spite of this, there continues to be comparatively little New Zealand-based research on second language

learning and teaching and what research there is continues to take place in the absence of any coherent national language research planning. Very few teachers of international languages in New Zealand have an opportunity to undertake regular language maintenance and development programmes overseas and language teachers continue to bemoan the fact that students may have far fewer hours of tuition in modern languages prior to sitting national examinations than do students of many other subjects (see *Chapter 7* here).

The *Marshall Report* refers to the *Thomas Report* in the following terms:

> It is clear to us when we re-read the statement on foreign languages in the Thomas Report, and still hear glowing testimony to the views expressed therein, that, in most respects, had these views been implemented and the substance of them observed rather than the mere shadow, we would not now find ourselves in the position of formulating an apologia (p. 28).

In fact, although some of the recommendations in the *Marshall Report* have been acted upon, many have not. In this respect, the fate of these two reports has been similar. Language teachers in New Zealand continue to have great difficulty in securing funding for language maintenance in spite of the fact that language competence rates as the most essential characteristic of a good language teacher, and language learners in schools continue to be disadvantaged in terms of the number of hours of tuition they receive in spite of the fact that, unsurprisingly, studies show that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time devoted to language study and the language proficiency that the students attain (Curtain and Pesola, 1988). As indicated in *Chapter 8,* it appears that New Zealand students of German enter university with a lower average proficiency level in the language than do their UK counterparts. In view of the circumstances in which New Zealand language teachers operate, it is likely that this is also the case in relation to other languages.

In 1974, the *New Zealand Association of Language Teachers* requested the *New Zealand Council for Educational Research* to sponsor an investigation into the general situation of, and attitudes towards, second language learning in New Zealand. The Council established a project team under the general direction of Professor David Bancroft, then Head of Department of French at the University of Canterbury. The *New Zealand Department of Education* then agreed to assist with the project sponsorship. The Report relating to that study appeared some years later (Bancroft, 1980) entitled *Second Languages in New Zealand Education.* It is noted in that report that between 1967 and 1974 the percentage decline in foreign language enrolments in New Zealand secondary schools over the total number of enrolments averaged 1.7% annually. In 1974, the total secondary school foreign language enrolments were 36.4% of the total secondary school enrolments (pp. 8 –9). That report also records the results of detailed surveys of language teachers and students in New Zealand schools (see *Chapters 7* and *8* here for reports of a similar study).

In 1984, the then Minister of Education set up a committee to review the curriculum for schools. That committee reported in 1987 (Department of Education, 1987). It recommends that there be provision for adequate study and/or refresher leave for language teachers (p. 18) and looks forward to the time when most New Zealand children can handle two or more languages with ease (p. 65), observing that "knowledge of several languages has always been seen as a strength in countries less isolated than ours. It should be in New Zealand too" (p. 83). Above all, from our perspective, it calls for the development of a national policy on languages, "embracing Mäori, English, Pacific Island languages, foreign languages, English as a second language; and including first language learning" (p. 41).

In 1986, a longitudinal comparative study of languages policy development and implementation in New Zealand and Victoria (Australia) began. In 1991, an interim report was produced (Peddie, 1991). That report was intended to "clarify the nature of issues in the development of a comprehensive national languages policy for New Zealand" (p. 76). It points out that to date:

> In education, the main source of policy in language has arguably been through controls offered by national examinations and in reviews of the school curriculum (p. 9).

It also notes the efforts that had been made over the past twenty years by a number of individuals and agencies to promote the need for a New Zealand national languages policy (pp. 16 & 17).

The main points argued in relation to a New Zealand national languages policy are summarised as follows:

1. The policy should be substantive, not symbolic.
2. Any policy has considerable political implications, and requires careful managing of publicity and promotion.
3. The policy should include an action plan. The plan should specify immediate action, medium-term objectives and long-term (ten years) goals.
4. Inter-party agreement should be sought on a national languages policy.
5. A very important part of planning involves planning for quality teacher preparation and supply.
6. It should be accepted that a national languages policy may be costly, but that economic and social benefits will be returned if the policy is a sound one (Peddie 1991, pp. 56 – 57).

In relation to languages other than English and Mäori (LOTEM), the recommendations include the identification of language priorities following an analysis of the needs of trade and tourism. It is also recommended that these priorities be regularly reviewed. Other recommendations include ensuring that language teaching resources are not lost "by halting classes in French or German because Japanese is felt to be more 'important'" (p. 68) and conducting an immediate audit of qualified languages teachers followed by a

planned programme to recruit and prepare teachers in those languages considered as national priorities (p. 73). A system of overseas leave should be instituted in key languages of tourism and trade (p. 74). An immediate priority is considered to be the setting up of a high level committee to monitor language policy implementation and to advise on any need for policy change, that committee being linked to a centre or institute charged with promoting and monitoring research, assisting with curriculum development and publicising language issues along the lines of the *National Languages Institute of Australia* (p. 72).

In 1991, the New Zealand Ministry of Education commissioned a report on the language situation in the country and the factors that would need to be taken into account in the establishment of a national language policy. That report, *Aoteareo: speaking for ourselves* was produced in 1992 (Waite 1992a & b). In common with earlier reports, Waite makes reference to the intellectual and cultural advantages associated with language learning. Thus, international languages are said to offer us the opportunity to "broaden our intellectual horizons" (Waite 1992b, 6) and to "extend our understanding of others" and "improve our general language skills" (1993b, p. 62). The emphasis, however, is on the economic value of languages:

> New Zealand needs to foster the knowledge and use of languages other than English and Mäori, in order to enhance our competitiveness on the international scene. To raise our international standing, to improve our understanding of other peoples and their way of life, to facilitate the access of new settlers to a range of social services . . .
>
> New Zealand needs people who can communicate effectively in a range of international languages, and move comfortably in a range of international cultures, in order to improve its diplomatic and economic relations with the world" (Waite, 1992a, p. 6).

In the project overview, Waite lists the following as priorites:

. revitalisation of the Mäori language;
. second-chance adult literacy;
. children's ESL and first language maintenance;
. adult ESL;
. national capabilities in international languages;
. provision of services in languages other than English.

In relation to the penultimate item, he makes the following observations:

> In the areas of international relations, security, trade and in-bound tourism, New Zealand requires people with language skills in specific international languages, namely the languages of the countries with whom we deal. Some are needed in the public sector, in the Ministry of External Relations and Trade and in the Trade Development Board, but most are required in the private sector. Our international language requirements will change over time, most notably in line with our trading patterns; any forward planning in the area of language capabilities must therefore attempt to anticipate these changing trends.
>
> When combined with business and technical skills, a knowledge of the appropriate international language can add a much-needed competitive edge to a company's performance. Any programme designed to promote international language skills must include a package aimed at pointing out to exporting companies the benefits of employing multi-skilled bilingual people (Waite, 1992a, p. 21).

There is, in Waite's report, a considerable volume of useful statistical data in several areas. There is statistical information about residence visas from 1987 – 1991 (p. 25), about the language backgrounds of migrants (p. 25), about speakers of Mäori (p. 310),

about Kohänga Reo (Mäori medium pre-schools) (p. 35), about Mäori-medium and immersion schooling (p. 35), about ethnic community languages (p. 55), about the languages of New Zealand's trade partners (pp. 63 & 64), about tourism (pp. 65 & 66), and about international subject enrolments in schools (pp. 68 - 70), There is, however, very little information about languages in universities with the exception of a section reporting on the completion of degrees involving a language major at five year intervals over a twenty year period (p. 71). This is, no doubt, because information about university language enrolments is, in common with some other types of information about tertiary education courses, difficult to find.

The editorial of the September 1995 issue of *New Zealand Language Teacher* asks how the tertiary sector can improve its contributions and goes on to observe that "some of the polytechnics and universities have introduced innovative courses over the last few years – if you can find anything out about them, which is not necessarily easy"(p. 6). In spite of the fact that some information about tertiary courses is now available on the internet, there continues to be a need for more detailed course descriptions. What is also needed is more information about the different subject groupings available to prospective students who wish to include one or more languages in their programmes, more information about the career destinations of students who include languages in their degrees and more information about trends in language study at tertiary level in New Zealand.

Waite's report was preceded and followed by debate about the issues involved throughout many sectors of New Zealand society. However, in spite of a number of detailed responses to the Ministry of Education's initiative in commissioning that report (see for example Kaplan, 1992 (reported in Kaplan, 1993)); Crombie and Paltridge, 1993; Peddie, 1993), no follow up action was taken by the New Zealand government. Although the report itself does not attempt to estimate implementation costs or to examine the probable political impact of some of its recommendations, it became evident even before it was released that certain of its recommendations, such as, for example prioritizing Mäori language revitalisation, would be resisted strenuously in some quarters and that that resistance had the potential to be dangerously socially divisive. It also became clear

that the report would need to be supplemented by a more detailed study that attempted to quantify language needs (social and economic) more precisely and to set specific targets in relation to costs and benefits. This, in turn, would require the involvement of a number of government agencies. National language policy and planning inevitably impacts not only on education, but also on health, immigration, justice, business and many other key areas of society. For this reason, Kaplan recommended that planning should be "separated as soon as possible from the Ministry of Education" so that others could be "empowered to move policy implementation discussions toward a genuine national policy" (Kaplan, 1992 (reported in Kaplan, 1993, p. 3).

Kaplan made a number of recommendations in relation to the establishment of a national language policy in New Zealand. These included:

. establishing a timetable for the articulation of a substantive National Languages Policy;

. establishing a National Languages and Literacy Institute empowered to pursue languages policy implementation in cooperation with a range of agencies and organizations in New Zealand (Kaplan, 1992 (reported in Kaplan, 1993, p. 3)).

In addition, Peddie (1993, pp. 7 & 8), in his official final report to the New Zealand Ministry of Education on a longitudinal comparative study of languages policy in New Zealand and Victoria (Australia), included the following among a list of recommendations:

. That the New Zealand government . . . develop a comprehensive national languages polity.

. That the New Zealand government set up as quickly as possible a new Zealand National Languages and Literacy Institute.

. That the New Zealand government initiate immediate research into language learning, language use and language needs, including needs for international languages of tourism and trade.

. That the New Zealand government begin immediately a publicity campaign to educate all New Zealanders about the importance of languages, t he nature of language learning, and the cultural, social and economic value of languages in New Zealand society.

. That all developments in languages policy take into account the important place of te reo Mäori, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi.

None of these recommendations has been implemented and the absence of real data regarding the language situation is as disturbing now as it was then. There is widespread concern among language professionals about this issue.

Following the release of Waite's report, there were a number of lobbying initiatives by professional associations. Thus, for example, within the framework of TESOLANZ (*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand*), a Wellington group established the *Languages Policy Steering Group 2000* which was committed to the idea of lobbying for a national languages policy as a coalition of interested parties (Hoffmann, 1995, p.45) and as a way of bringing together and extending the initiatives, particularly in the area of Asian languages, that were then being developed by the Ministry of Education as reported by Benton (1995). Once again, the focus was on the need for information:

> What contribution can research on second language acquisition and maintenance make to the delivery of language programmes in the formal education sector and in the wider community?

Are current initiatives based on such research? (Hoffmann, 1995, p.50).

As Hoffmann observed in 1995:

> We [still] have no comprehensive knowledge of the available language expertise at various levels within the community, nor do we know, in a comprehensive fashion, particularly outside the education sector, the precise needs for language expertise throughout the community (p. 47).

One of the things that is urgently needed, according to Hoffmann is "a closer dialogue between researchers and practitioners to establish whether a closer fit between research and practice might yield enhancements to language competence" (p. 50).

The hunger for comprehensive and coherent language policy has led the *New Zealand Association of Language Teachers* to produce its own policy document on language teaching and learning in secondary schools (*New Zealand Association of Language Teachers* (NZALT) 1995). The following observations are included in that policy statement:

> It is highly desirable that all New Zealanders should be proficient in LOTEM (a language other than English or Mäori);
>
> Secondary school students should have the opportunity to study a language other than their first language;
>
> Each level of education must be aware and take account of the programmes at earlier levels so as to ensure continuity and coherence in learners' language development throughout their formal education (p. 7).

There is also support for the establishment of a nationally recognised basis for stating language proficiency:

> There must be a nationally practised and nationally recognised basis for stating language proficiency, developed in consultation with NZALT, which can be used, inter alia, to provide comparability between all formal assessment systems (p. 8).

The situation in relation to the study of modern languages in New Zealand schools is starkly illustrated by the sorts of issues that are treated in the NZALT symbolic policy statement which seeks to promote fairness in terms of the time available in class for language learning, discourages the practice of combining classes of different levels and recommends class sizes of no more than 24, decreasing to 20 at senior levels (p. 8).

As Ingram (1989) observes, professional associations of language teachers and applied linguists can have an effect on language planning "by lobbying, encouragement of public debate, information gathering and dissemination, and by encouraging on-going training of their members, the policy makers and administrators" (Ingram, 1989, p. 64). Language teachers in New Zealand schools have recognised this and have made considerable efforts to support ongoing professional development and to influence public opinion. Although there are notable exceptions, and although a number of interesting initiatives have taken place in individual institutions, there is much less evidence that university language staff have been proactive in this area. Certainly, there is little evidence of a coherent and united approach to the issues. This is unfortunate in view of the fact that, as Ingram observes:

> Major educational institutions such as universities can have an important effect on language education policy, indirectly through their research and advisory activities and directly through their use of entry requirements (Ingram, 1989, p. 64).

In Australia the abolition of foreign language entry requirements in the 1960s contributed to the decline in language enrolments in the schools in the 1970s while their re-introduction in some universities in the United States in the 1980s is helping to reinstate language enrolments for feeder schools (Ingram, 1989, p. 63). In Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Community have become powerful agents for language-in-education planning. They have done this by developing policies that strongly encourage member nations to (a) require their children to develop skills in at least one of the languages of their partner nations, (b) make provision for migrant workers to learn the language of the host country, and (c) provide opportunities for the children of migrant workers to maintain their own language (Ingram, 1989, p. 64). In New Zealand, evidence of proficiency in a modern language is not a requirement for entry to university. Nor is the study of a modern language compulsory at any level of New Zealand schooling. Even those students who do opt to study a modern language at school may, in terms of the tuition time available, be disadvantaged in relation to their peers who opt to study other subjects.

In 1994, an education evaluation report on second language learning in New Zealand schools was produced by the *Education Review Office* (Education Review Office 1994; <www.ero.govt.nz/Publications/eers 1994noghl.htm#>: site visited June 1999). In that report, Ministry of Education statistics over the period from 1987 to 1992 were analysed to determine changing patters of student enrolment and retention rates within second language courses in schools. The report demonstrates that the percentage of the total secondary school population studying one or more languages had risen in the period from 1987 to 1992 from 22% to 26% and predicts that the total number of students studying a second language would rise to no more than 32% by the year 2000 should that pattern of gradual increase continue. In the event, the situation in 1999 (see *Chapter 3* here) shows even that modest prediction to have been an optimistic one.

The 1994 *Education Review Office* report also looks at retention rates for French, German and Japanese, noting that only 45% of those who enrolled in third form French courses in 1987 continued their study into the fourth form and only 10% were still studying French at Bursary examination level. For German, 15% of the students who enrolled in third form German in 1987 were still continuing their study of German at seventh form level. Of those who enrolled in third form Japanese in 1987, 23% were still studying at Bursary examination level. Retention rates (see *Chapter 3* here) continue to represent a serious problem in New Zealand schools.

The attitudes to second language learning of 247 students in seven secondary schools (four large urban coeducational schools; 2 girls' schools and 1 boys' school) were also surveyed by the *Education Review Office*. Students were asked about their reasons for beginning the study of a second language and about their reasons for continuing with, or discontinuing their study of that language. Among the most frequently cited reasons for beginning the study of a language were (in order of commonality):

. a desire to travel;
. a belief that the language itself would be interesting;
. a desire to learn about the target language and culture;
. parental encouragement;
. a desire to communicate with native speakers of the language;
. a desire to be with friends in class.

Most common among the many reasons given for continuing a second language were (in order of frequency):

. they enjoyed the study and found it stimulating and challenging;
. they believed it would be important for their careers;
. they intended to visit the country.

Over a third of those who decided not to continue with the study of the language reported that they had made that decision because they were no longer interested in the course. A quarter of those who had discontinued said that they had done so because there was no room in their timetable once they had taken the subjects they needed for their particular career path. A number of students expressed frustration at having had to do so. However, 16% felt that the course of study in the language had become too difficult and 15% recorded feeling dissatisfied with the teaching.

Students who had not elected to study a language gave a variety of reasons for their decision. The most common reason was that languages were for 'bright students' only. The second most common reason (clearly associated with the first) was that languages were 'difficult' and they believed that students could score higher marks in other subjects. The next most frequently cited reason was that languages were not useful in gaining employment.

Interviews with those students who were continuing with the study of a second language to senior levels revealed that those who were studying a European language were likely to have parents with a university education, most often in the arts and humanities. All of those studying Japanese at senior levels had parents with tertiary education qualifications in areas other than arts and humanities, or had parents who were in professional or managerial positions in the public or private sector.

One problem in relation to the *Education Review Office* report on student attitudes is that the sample was a small one. In addition, readers are not told how the responses were elicited, coded and grouped or how many of the questions were open-ended. Even so, it provides information that is potentially very valuable.

In terms of the number of hours of instruction available to second language students, the 1994 *Education Review Office* report is revealing:

> In secondary schools the length of second language courses at third form varies widely. Among the schools investigated which were offering a study of French in the third form, the length of the courses varied from 24 hours to a maximum of 160 hours per year, with 13 other variations of length in between.
>
> In no two of the 34 secondary schools that provided information . . . would any student entering School Certificate examination in French be subject to the same number of hours of instruction before sitting the examination. The hours of instruction of the courses leading up to the School Certificate examination varied from 231 to 480.
>
> Similar patters emerge for the other languages. Students entering School Certificate in Japanese could, for example, receive instruction of between 269 and 400 hours during their three years of secondary schooling.

This is in spite of the fact that:

> In a guide to language learning table produced by the department of Foreign Affairs in Australia, languages are divided into four groups, according to the average length of time taken to acquire a particular level of fluency. According to this classification system Group Four Languages, which include Chinese and Japanese, require twice the amount of study to arrive at the same point of fluency as Group Two Languages such as French, German or Spanish.

In over half of the schools where numbers had declined at the higher levels, students were encouraged to continue their studies through the New Zealand Correspondence School. In all of the forty-two schools surveyed, second languages were taught by staff with teaching and language qualifications and four of these schools had one or more teachers with qualifications to teach a second language who were not currently doing so.

The report ends with a number of observations based on the findings. One of these is:

> Learning a second language takes time, particularly if this learning is restricted to school hours. The reality in secondary schools is that the compression of second language instruction into courses varying from 120 to 480 hours in length prior to entry for School Certificate makes second language learning more accessible to students of higher ability.

In spite of the useful information provided in this 1994 report, many of the problems identified have not been addressed (see *Chapter 7* here). There have, however, been areas in which progress has been made. From July 1995 – June 1998, the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* funded a second language learning project whose aim was to increase the quality and quantity of second language learning by younger students (Years 7 – 10) in schools. The evaluation of that project, in which 29 schools or clusters of schools participated, by the University of Auckland (Peddie, Gunn and Lewis, 1999) was sufficiently positive for the Ministry of Education to proceed with a second project (1999 and 2000) in which 54 schools or clusters of schools are participating. Funds are available to improve teachers' language teaching skills, to purchase resource materials and to improve networking between language teachers and schools teaching languages (Ministry of Education – Languages – Second Language Learning <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Curriculum/language/secondll/part1.html>: visited February 2000).

In common with other areas of language-related study, those studies that have examined the use of foreign languages in New Zealand businesses appear to have had little direct effect on policy and planning at a national level. This is in spite of Waite's observations about the need for people competent in international languages and about the relationship between language competence and trade (Waite, 1992a, p. 6) and in spite of repeated calls (see, for example, Crocombe, Enright and Porter, 1991) for better and more widespread learning of modern foreign languages. Even so, changes are taking place. In 1991, Peddie (1991, p. 22) noted that "languages such as Mandarin and Indonesian are

not widely taught, while Korean and Indonesian barely figure at all" and estimated that "fewer than 5% of students might be enrolled in language courses at university". In fact, however, the situation in respect of the languages taught in New Zealand schools has changed over the last ten years (see *Chapter 3* here).

A study carried out in 1966 (Dunmore and Rollason, 1967) indicated that French was then the most commonly used modern foreign language in promotional materials in the New Zealand export sector followed by Chinese, German, Spanish, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Portuguese, Thai and Fijian in that order. However, a similar study carried out in 1976 (Dunmore and Brooker, 1976) indicated that although French continued to be the most commonly used modern foreign language in that context, German had taken over as the second most commonly used language with Japanese as the third. Whereas in the earlier study, it was revealed that only 10% of responding firms made an effort to communicate in the languages of their clients, that had risen to 51% by 1976.

A 1986 study conducted amongst 1,063 firms (Watts, 1987) looked at the modern foreign languages used in printed promotional materials in monolingual, bilingual and multilingual formats. That study indicated that Japanese had moved into second place with Arabic in third place. French continued, however, to be the modern foreign language most frequently used in these contexts. A comparison of the ranking of languages in these three studies as presented by Watts (1992) is included as *Table 2.1* following. What this indicates is the importance of anticipating export trends in planning for modern language education:

Table 2.1: Foreign Languages Most Frequently Used in Promotional Materials (1986 Survey)

Rank	1986	1976	1966
1	French	French	French
2	Japanese	German	*Chinese
3	Arabic	Japanese	German
4	German	Arabic	Spanish
5	Spanish	Spanish	Hindi
6	*Chinese	Hindi	Japanese
7	Dutch	*Chinese	Malay
8	Italian	Fijian	Portuguese
9	Korean	Samoan	Thai
10	Swedish	Indonesian	Fijian
* Chinese includes Cantonese, Taiwanese and Mandarin			

In terms of the use of modern foreign languages used by exporters in spoken communication situations, the ranking in the 1986 survey was as indicated in *Table 2.2* following (Watts, 1992).

Table 2.2: Foreign Languages Most Frequently Used in Spoken Communication (1986 Survey)

Rank	Language
1	French
2	Japanese
3	German
4	Chinese
5	Spanish
6	Arabic
7	Italian
8	Dutch
9	Indonesian
10	Malay

Determining that there is a need, a need that changes over time in relation to social, political and economic circumstances, is not, however, all that matters. It is also important to determine the level of proficiency required by employers and potential employers operating in different sectors. In 1992, a survey was conducted in which a postal questionnaire relating to the use of French in exporting was distributed to 61 companies and producer boards. Thirty eight of these firms (62%), employing among

them 25,742 New Zealand staff, responded. Of these, 9% were not currently exporting to French-speaking countries. Almost half of these companies (44%) reported that they considered the use of French to be 'very important' in developing trade. A further 36% considered it to be 'quite important' and 20% reported considering it to be unimportant. The companies were also asked to indicate, on a five point scale (see *Table 2.3* below), the levels of proficiency in French that they believed staff should have in order to carry out their duties effectively.

Table 2.3: *Proficiency Scale Included in 1992 Questionnaire Distributed to 61 New Zealand Firms (1992 Survey)*

Level 1	Able to pronounce the names of French clients reasonably correctly; able to pick out certain key words in a document (e.g. passport details).
Level 2	Able to give common greetings and understand simple phrases in French.
Level 3	Able to ask simple questions, give basic instructions; able to read and write reasonably straightforward sentences.
Level 4	Able to use the language with some confidence in predictable work-related situations.
Level 5	High proficiency which comes close to that of mother tongue users of the language.

Of the respondents, 63% indicated that overseas agents should have *Level 5* proficiency in French , 60% indicated that a *Level 3* proficiency should be a pre-requisite for certain staff positions, 76% indicated that general staff members required a minimum of *Level 2* proficiency and 76% indicated that the minimum proficiency level for management should be *Level 2*. However, the respondents reported that less than 19% of their employees (excluding overseas agents and staff based in French-speaking countries) had *Level 2* proficiency or better (Watts, 1992, pp. 12 & 13). Furthermore, they indicated that on visits to French-speaking countries, members of their staff would most likely use English (40%) or either use a local staff member as an interpreter or a privately-hired interpreter (36%). Only 24% would use French. Even so, according to the respondents, French-speaking visitors to New Zealand are likely to use English (73%). In spite of all of this, in 63% of cases, proficiency in French was not considered as part of the staff recruitment process (pp. 14 & 15).

A survey of organizations and companies involved in travel and tourism in New Zealand was also conducted (Watts, 1992). These organizations and companies included international and domestic airlines, large hotels in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Rotorua and Queenstown, tourist operators (travel agencies, tour organizers), duty free shops at international points of departure and information centres in the main tourist areas. Questionnaires were sent to 96 companies and organizations of which 59 (employing a total of 27,764 staff) responded. There was, among the respondents, overwhelming support for the statement that foreign languages were either 'very important' or 'quite important' in promoting tourism (see Table 2.4 following).

Table 2.4: *Respondents' Views on the Importance of Foreign Languages in Promoting Tourism (1992 Survey)*

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
Tourist Operators	74%	21%	5%
Airlines	73%	27%	0%
Hotels	65%	35%	0%
Information Centres	50%	25%	25%
Duty Free Shops	40%	40%	20%

The languages that were considered by respondents to be very important (cited more than 20 times) were Japanese, German, French, Chinese and Spanish. In the category of important (cited between 5 and 19 times) were Italian and Korean. Those that were considered fairly important (cited between 1 and 4 times) were Indonesian, Thai, Dutch, Portuguese, Malay, Russian, Danish, Finnish and Swedish (p. 17).

Respondents were asked to assess the desired proficiency levels for certain positions. The results (p. 18) are as indicated in *Table 2.5* following.

Table 2.5: *Respondents' Estimates of Required Levels of Language Proficiency in Certain Positions (1992 Survey)*

For Overseas Agents	For Management	For General staff	For Particular staff positions
65% indicated a *Level 5* proficiency was desirable	94% indicated a minimum of *Level 2* proficiency was desirable	79% indicated that a minimum of *Level 2* proficiency was desirable	71% indicated that a minimum of *Level 4* proficiency was desirable for staff who had direct dealings with people from non-English speaking backgrounds and 52% indicated that there were company positions (e.g. front desk staff in hotels) that required *Level 5* proficiency.

In spite of this, the percentage of staff who were reported as having a functional proficiency in foreign languages of *Level 2* or above was low (see *Table 2.6* following).

Table 2.6: *Respondents' Estimates of Percentage of Staff in Various Areas of the Tourist Trade who have a Foreign Language Proficiency of Level 2 or above (1992 Survey)*

Duty Free Shops	Between 40 – 59%
Airlines	Between 20 – 39%
Hotels	Less than 19%
Information Centres	Less than 19%
Tourist Operators	Less than 19%

In certain specific categories (a small group) where the main function of staff was to assist visitors from non-English speaking backgrounds, the percentage rose to 80 – 100% with proficiency estimated as being at *Level 4* or *5* (p. 19).

A common complaint among respondents from firms involved in the exporting industry is that they have major difficulty in recruiting staff with language proficiency (specifically, in this case, proficiency in French). Thus, there was a limited pool of staff

who had qualifications in export-related fields and who also had a high level of language proficiency (Watts 1992, 15). Firms involved in tourism reported that a problem in relation to recruitment was the lack of New Zealanders with the high level of language skills required (p. 22). Even so, there is clearly a rich linguistic resource among migrants to New Zealand (Watts 1998; Watts and Trlin, 1999; Watts and Trlin, 2000).

In a study of foreign languages in international businesses in New Zealand, Enderwick and Gray (Enderwick and Gray, 1992, pp. 49 - 68) found that although responding companies appeared to have a good appreciation of the benefits of conducting international business in the clients' native language, most companies reported that employees with foreign language ability represented fewer than five per cent of recruits over the preceding four years. However, since language skills were more likely to be used at the upper levels of an organization, it is suggested that there might be a greater demand for language education amongst experienced business people than undergraduates. Whatever the employment practices of the majority of New Zealand firms involved in exporting, there is some indication that there is a positive correlation between export success and the employment of staff with foreign language expertise and that the international operations of New Zealand companies can be enhanced by the employment of staff who combine language and business expertise (Akoorie, Enderwick and Barber, 1991; Akoorie and Enderwick, 1992; Enderwick and Akoorie, 1993).

What appears to be needed is a regular government initiated review of the languages used in various categories of business in New Zealand and of the recruitment practices and perceived staffing needs of these firms. What also appears to be needed is an annual statistical report on the number of New Zealanders who graduate with one or more modern languages as a major or minor subject in their degrees and a follow-up study on the career patterns of these graduates and the extent to which they have (a) used their language expertise, and (b) maintained and developed it. As Peddie (1991, p. 24) notes "there are students studying to quite high levels in some languages of economic importance, but it is unclear whether they actually use their language skills in trade or tourism". This type of information will, however, be less useful if it is not accompanied

by reliable information about the language proficiency of graduates. It may be, for example, that the level of proficiency achieved at graduation is inadequate in terms of the ability to function effectively in a range of professional contexts. However, even if this is not the case, both how best to achieve and how best to maintain proficiency are issues that need to be addressed in both the business and education sectors. There is little point in producing graduates with a language specialism as a main or subsidiary part of their degrees unless we can ensure that these graduates will be able to function effectively in a range of employment contexts. For example, although it is known that residence abroad is generally very effective in improving language proficiency (Coleman, 1996, pp. 59 – 90) and that work abroad programmes are likely to increase employability (Zemke, 1994, p. 95), the majority of New Zealand students who study languages in New Zealand universities (see *Chapters 5* and *6* here) have no opportunity to pursue study abroad programmes.

2.3 Looking for direction: modern languages in Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom

2.3.1 Australia

New Zealand, as Peddie (1993, p. 1) notes "currently does not have a comprehensive national languages policy. Australia, on the other hand, has had two national policies and most states also have their own state-wide policies". In a preliminary report relating to what New Zealand could learn from Victoria, Australia about language policy, Peddie (1991, p. 47)makes the following point:

> A common observation made to the researcher in both Australia and New Zealand was that provisions for all language needs in Victoria were much more extensive because there were far more migrants in that state. While that may be true, the proportion of non-Anglo-Celtic people in New Zealand is comparable to Victoria. Those Victorians working in language were also frequently critical of what they

saw as a paucity of government provision, yet many New Zealanders would see what exists across the Tasman as a distant dream.

During 1982 – 84, a Senate committee enquiry into languages policy in Australia was conducted and a report was produced in 1984 (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984). Following this report, Lo Bianco was commissioned to write a national language policy and produced a draft report (Lo Bianco, 1987) which was passed through Commonwealth Parliament and Senate in 1987. The policy established an advisory body, an *Asian Studies Council* and the *National Languages Institute of Australia* (NLIA). In December 1990, the Commonwealth released a policy discussion paper relating to language and literacy (Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, 1990) and in August 1991, the Australian government released a new policy document entitled *Australia's Language: the Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, 1991). Central to that policy are four national goals: effective spoken and written English for all, expansion and improvement of the learning of languages other than English, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and expansion and improvement of language services. This included assistance and encouragement for priority languages selected by each state from a list of fourteen, further promotion of curriculum and teaching development and of teacher education in languages other than English. There was increased funding for the (renamed) *National Language and Literacy Institute of Australia* and the establishment of an *Australian Language and Literacy Council* and an *Asia in Australia Council* (to replace the *Asian Studies Council*).

In Australia, there have been very considerable advances over the last twenty years in the area of language policy, language curriculum design and language testing and "language policies at Federal level have been shaped by the multi-cultural social context of the country and the increasing importance of Asia in geo-political and trade terms" (Giovanazzi, 1997, p. 10). Key languages have been identified in relation to community bilingualism and economic and international relations (Arabic, Chinese, French, German,

Modern Greek, Indonesian/Malay, Japanese and Spanish). Even so, there is a considerable problem in relation to drop-out rates from language courses in schools (pp. 10 & 11). This may be, in part at least, because policy changes in Australia have sometimes tended to follow "only certain personal and societal needs" rather than "the real nature of the society" (Ingam, 1989, p. 67) whereas "language-in-education planning . . . should . . . entail quite specific statements about desirable proficiency levels to be sought at various stages of the education system and how such requirements as the supply of teachers and materials can be met" (p. 69).

In fact, there has been a great deal of work in the area of language proficiency testing in Australia. However, that research has sometimes been marked by a lack of co-ordination and confusion as, for example, in the case of the simultaneous operation of two different scales relating to English as a second language in schools which produced "a strong sense of confusion" among teachers (McKay, 1994, p. 19). Nevertheless, a significant difference between the Australian and New Zealand situation over the last two decades has been the fact that whereas Australia has devoted very considerable energy to language proficiency test development, particularly in the context of schooling, New Zealand has devoted very little. This, no doubt, relates to the difference between the two countries in terms of language planning. As Ingram observes:

> One . . . influence on language-in-education planning . . . is language testing as one part of the research that is needed to inform the planning process. Language testing plays a part in language-in-education planning at the initial stage of determining the nature and level of the language skills in the society (or needed by the society) and in the final stage of evaluation of the implementation of the policy (Ingram, 1989, p. 60).

2.3.2 The United States of America

In the United States of America barely one third of high school students take a foreign language and only 8% of colleges and universities require a foreign language for admission. In 1996, only 9% of undergraduates were in foreign language classes (Johnston Jr. and Edelstein, 1996). Even so, major educational institutions such a universities can have an important effect on language education policy (Ingram,1989, 64). Thus, whereas, in Australia the abolition of foreign language entry requirements in the 1960s contributed to the decline in language enrolments in the schools, their re-introduction in some universities in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s is helping to reinstate language enrolments for feeder schools (p. 63).

In 1991, the US Department of Education published *America 2000: An Educational Strategy* (US Department of Education, 1991). That strategy was designed to accomplish six national educational goals. One of the principal mandates is to improve language instruction at all levels and to facilitate sequential learning. One of the outcomes of this was the publication, in 1996, of *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (Standards, 1996) in which it is acknowledged that the United States "must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad", an imperative which "envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language" (Standards, 1996, p. 7).

2.3.3 The United Kingdom

The late 1980s saw the introduction in the UK of a requirement that students should learn a language as a compulsory element of their secondary school curriculum up to the age of sixteen. Further, the UK section of *the Association Internationale d'Etudiants en Sciences Economiques at Commerciales* has defined language skills as a prerequisite for

the global manager and called for a greater place for languages in all university courses (Giovanazzi, 1997, p. 9). However, there is in the UK no foreign language requirement for admission or graduation in any university and 1993 figures show that full-time language undergraduates then represented less than 7% of the university cohort (p. 14). Making foreign language study compulsory at any stage of the educational process is, however, a complex matter:

> British educational history and current USA experiences suggest that language study imposed for . . . academic purposes becomes diluted to the point of maximum passing and abandoned at the earliest fulfilment of the obligation. If, on the other hand, it is to be taught for practical competence then it has to be continued to the point where that competence comes into use. There is little point in a government decreeing that languages should be taught for practical competence only up to age 16 and then exhort businesses to learn languages some years later (p. 38).

The British experience indicates that there are major problems to overcome if those who operate in countries that are primarily English-speaking are to recognise the value of being able to communicate effectively in languages other than English and to become competent in doing so. These problems cannot be resolved simply by requiring that all secondary school students should learn at least one modern foreign language or that a foreign language entry requirement should be imposed by universities.

In 1942, when the *Thomas Report* was released, there was a foreign language requirement for entrance to university in New Zealand. The report indicates that there were problems associated with this requirement

> As a result of the compulsory language requirement for University Entrance many pupils are struggling with linguistic studies for which they have neither aptitude nor inclination. . . . The removal of this compulsion will almost certainly bring

about an immediate drop in the number of those wishing to study a foreign language. This should be a gain to both teacher and taught, and it will be interesting to see whether there will be a subsequent increase again in numbers, following an increased vitality and keenness in language classes (Department of Education 1942/1959, p. 65).

The *Thomas Report* goes further, recommending that "only pupils of good average ability, and definite linguistic aptitudes" should be encouraged to study foreign languages, although "pupils of only fair average ability should not be debarred from learning a foreign language should they show a strong and sincere desire to attempt it" (p. 66). This report can be contrasted in this respect with a UNESCO Report (1955) that appeared only thirteeen years later, a report that notes that every student in general education needs to receive training in one or more foreign languages.

In spite of the fact that the UK now requires the study of a language at secondary school up to the age of sixteen and in spite also of the fact that, in schools at least, more proficiency-centred approaches have generally been adopted, "there is [in the UK] dissatisfaction on the business side . . . [in that there is} difficulty in hiring employees who can use a language for their work" (Giovanazzi, 1997, p. 1).

If the learning of foreign languages in schools is to make a genuine contribution to international trade, that learning needs to be continued at tertiary level. Furthermore, both students and employers need to have some clear indication of what might be expected, in terms of proficiency, at various stages of language education. A common assumption, for example, is that standards of qualifications across universities are equal. In fact, they are not (Coleman, 1994a). Nor is it a straightforward matter to determine precisely what students of languages achieve in their studies since "level of study nearly always equates to year of study" (Coleman, 1995). It is, however, important that students should have an appreciation of the extent of their progress in view of the fact that some studies have identified success in language learning as an important contributing factor to motivation to continue language study (McDonough, 1986, pp. 155 & 159). In fact,

however, there are many other significant factors relating to motivation, factors that appear to vary from country to country and to change to some extent as students proceed through their studies. In commenting on a 1993 cross-sectional study of over 3,000 learners of 5 different languages, Coleman (1995, p. 11) notes that "success in learning the foreign language, often asserted as a key factor, if not *the* key factor in language learner motivation" and "is mentioned by only 20% of Austrians, 30-40% of Germans, [and] around 53% of UK students". The fact that motivation appears to differ in different contexts indicates that New Zealanders should not rely on overseas studies. The study of motivational factors of secondary school students conducted by the New Zealand *Educational Review Office* (reported above) represents a start. However, this sort of study needs to be extended to university students and to those who use languages in the workplace. A small-scale study of students of German at different stages in their study of the language in the New Zealand context is reported in *Chapter 8* here.

Coleman observes that "in UK universities, with their treasured automomy, there has never been a national curriculum as such" (Coleman, 1999, p. 324). The same is true in New Zealand. However, although New Zealand does have a national curriculum for schools and national curriculum statements relating to language learning in schools, there is no reason to assume that this will necessarily affect the quality of language provision positively. Consequently, there is a need to examine carefully those curriculum statements that are in use in New Zealand schools and to attempt to determine the extent to which they relate to national assessment and affect language provision in New Zealand universities (see *Chapters 4* and *5* here) as well as the extent to which New Zealand teachers are satisfied with these curriculum statements and with the way in which they relate to the national awards system (see *Chapter 7* here).

The proportion of students studying single honours language degrees in the UK has been dropping while the proportion of those studying joint or combined courses has been rising (Thomas, 1993; Coleman, 1999). However, although "'languages and related disciplines' remain the fourth most popular subject group for university applicants (after social studies, business and administrative studies, and education), applications fell by 20 per cent between1994 and 1996" (Colemen, 1999, p.332). Some aspects of this situation

may be echoed in New Zealand universities. There are, however, likely to be differences also. In the UK, university teaching of languages has been influenced by a number of factors that have not influenced New Zealand universities. Thus, for example, there has, in the UK, been a move to Institution-Wide Language Programmes, involving languages having a fixed timetable slot across the whole institution (p. 325). Furthermore, almost all courses with a substantial language component . . . include an extended period of residence abroad" (pp. 327 – 28). Coleman notes that fears that "universities could offer, and hard up students take up, 'economy' language degrees with little or no residence abroad" are unlikely to be realised because "many students opt for languages *because of* the year abroad; and the enhanced employability of graduates who have lived and worked abroad is now well documented and widely recognised" (p. 328). In the light of this, it is, perhaps, surprising to find that many students of modern languages in New Zealand universities have no opportunity to study or work abroad during their programmes.

Like language teaching, language examinations in universities, "have been defined by tradition . . . and devised and administered by staff with no particular expertise in language testing" (Coleman, 1999, p. 335). This may be changing. However, the limited study conducted here (see *Chapter 6* here) suggests that the rate of change may be considerably slower than it is in the school sector.

A major influence in the UK over the next few years will undoubtedly be the report of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry whose terms of reference were to determine:

> . what capability in languages . . . [would be needed] in the next twenty years if it [the UK] is to fulfil its economic, strategic, social, and cultural aims and responsibilities, and the aspirations of its citizens;
>
> . to what extent . . . present policies and arrangements meet these needs; and

> what strategic planning and initiatives [would] be required in the light of the present position (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry: http://www.nuffield.org/language/index/html: visited 12 June 2000).

One important finding of the *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* is that attitudes to languages in the UK appear to be changing. In an opinion poll conducted early in 1999, 81% of respondents reported that they believed that more needed to be done to promote the learning of major foreign languages in the UK, while 86% stated that 'having at least some knowledge of a foreign language is useful' was closest to their view. This compared to only 14% who preferred the alternative, that is, that English is enough because of the number of others learning it (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry: http://www.nuffield.org/language/index/html: visited 12 June 2000).

A summary of the findings and recommendations of the *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* was made available on the internet on 10 May 2000. Some of these are reproduced here because of their potential significance for New Zealand where social and educational developments have so often in the past followed patterns of social and educational development in the UK Some of the major findings are:

> Capability in other languages - a much broader range than hitherto and in greater depth - is crucially important for a flourishing UK. . . . At the moment, by any reliable measure we are doing badly. . . . There is enthusiasm for languages but it is patchy. Educational provision is fragmented, achievement poorly measured, continuity not very evident. In the language of our time, there is a lack of joined-up thinking.
>
> We need to aim higher and deliver better. In practical terms, this demands a coherent national languages strategy, reflected (and earning its place) in our changing educational curriculum and driven with determination.

The UK workforce suffers from a chronic shortage of people at all levels with usable language skills. Companies increasingly need personnel with technical or professional skills plus another language, and often their only option is to recruit native speakers of other languages.

Curricular, financial and staffing pressures mean that we teach a narrowing range of languages, at a time when we should be doing the opposite.

Government has no coherent approach to languages. There are many positive developments relating to languages in education and other areas of government, but the scene remains a patchwork of often unrelated initiatives. There is no rational path of learning from primary school to university and beyond, and investments in one sector are rarely exploited in another.

In spite of parental demand, there is still no UK-wide agenda for children to start languages early. There is a widespread public perception, backed by research, that learning another language needs to start earlier if the next generation is to achieve higher standards.

Secondary school pupils lack motivation or direction. While more pupils now learn a language to age 16 thaŋever before, too few leave school with an adequate level of operational competence.

Nine out of ten children stop learning languages at 16. . . . Young people are faced with the harsh choice at 16 between specialising in languages or giving them up.

University language departments are closing, leaving the sector in deep crisis. Higher Education is trying to run an ambitious 21st century programme for languages but is hamstrung by outdated funding and management structures which mainly reward specialism and traditional areas of research. Provision is uncoordinated nationally with little regard for long-term consequences.

> Adults are keen to learn languages but are badly served by an impoverished system.
>
> The UK desperately needs more language teachers. The shortage of teachers . . . is creating a vicious circle of inadequate supply. Meanwhile, university departments which train language teachers are threatened with closure.

The following are among the primary recommendations:

> Languages, by virtue of their direct contribution to economic competitiveness, intercultural tolerance and social cohesion, should have the status of a key skill alongside literacy, numeracy and ICT.
>
> The government should establish a national strategy for developing capability in languages in the UK and a system capable of supporting such a strategy.
>
> A languages supremo [should be appointed whose] task would be to work at the highest level with government departments, national agencies, employers and the general public to ensure successful implementation of the national strategy for languages. To be effective, the supremo should be attached to the Cabinet Office and have direct access to the Prime Minister.
>
> The government should arrange for a sustained campaign to promote positive attitudes towards languages, raise awareness of their potential and foster a culture where using more than one language is seen as an attainable goal for the majority.
>
> The government should declare a firm commitment to early language learning for all children and invest in the long-term policies necessary for pupils to learn a new language from age 7.

> Language learning in the secondary school sector should be uprated to provide a wider range of languages, a more flexible menu to cater better for different needs, abilities and interests, and more use of information technology
>
> A language should be a requirement for university entry and for designated vocational qualifications.
>
> A national agenda for languages in higher education should be agreed as a matter of urgency to ensure a sufficient supply of language specialists nationally and the entitlement of all students to learn a language as part of their degree course.
>
> The government should take strategic responsibility for lifelong language learning in order to ensure the investment, collaboration and consultation needed to respond to the demand and drive up standards.
>
> The minister responsible for the recruitment of teachers should implement a series of radical short-term measures to attract more language teachers, alongside the long-term solution of making post-16 language study a requirement for entry to higher education and therefore to initial teacher training.
>
> A national standards framework for describing and accrediting language competence [should be established] (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry: <http://www.nuffield.org/language/index/html>: visited 18 May 2000).

These findings and recommendations are very similar to the findings and recommendations that have emerged from a number of New Zealand studies over the past two decades. Were an inquiry similar to the *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* to be conducted in New Zealand now, it is likely that a very similar set of findings and recommendations would emerge. It seems unlikely, however, that there will be such an inquiry in New Zealand. Even if there were, past experience suggests that it would be very unlikely to lead to a coordinated and coherent programme of change. Nevertheless, the findings and recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry will, at the very least, give some

hope to those in New Zealand who are struggling to increase the profile of modern languages and will provide them with information and support that may prove useful in the context of their own situation.

2.4 A way forward?

In 1942, it was observed in the *Thomas Report* that foreign language teaching in New Zealand stood at a crossroads and that it was impossible to see, far less plan for, the way ahead. It appears that this view has been shared by successive administrations. There has been very little attempt to foresee, or to plan adequately for the future in the area of language education in New Zealand. In fact, the structure of the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education 1993) is such as to ensure that the learning of international languages other than English is likely to remain a minority activity in New Zealand schools. There are seven essential learning areas in the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* as follows: language and languages, mathematics, science, technology, social sciences and health and physical well-being. Schools must include all of these essential learning areas in their curricula. However, the inclusion of English and/or Mäori (which is essential) is sufficient to meet the requirement of the 'language and languages' area. It follows, therefore, that New Zealand schools need not offer their students the opportunity of learning an international language other than English. Those who decide to do so will not necessarily provide the same number of tuition hours as are available in other subjects. Consequently, students of international languages are often seriously disadvantaged in relation to students of many other subjects. That this would be an almost inevitable consequence of the way in which the essential learning areas are treated in the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* was made clear at an early stage (Peddie, 1991). Nothing has ever been done to remedy the situation in spite of the fact that a discussion document released by the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* in 1993, *Education for the 21st. Century* (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 27), recommends that by the year 2000 at least 50% of students in New Zealand schools should by the end of the second year of secondary school be able to "converse with and

write to a native speaker of a language other than English or Mäori about simple, everyday matters".

From 1990 – 1993, Peddie (1994) carried out a longitudinal study of short option courses in the third and fourth forms of New Zealand secondary schools, looking in particular at (a) the placing of languages in short option courses of half a year or less, and (b) the provision of appropriate timetabling for languages. Although he concluded that "the outcome of short courses for languages cannot be summed up in a simple judgment", he also noted that "in general, language teachers' concerns for continuity and extended learning time appear to be justified by the data emerging from [the] study" (p. 132) and recommended that "schools seek wherever possible to enable language courses in the junior school to run over the whole year, and in frequent short blocks of time" (p. 133).

Teachers of international languages in New Zealand schools are under constant pressure, as are their students and this inevitably has an effect on the learning of languages in New Zealand universities. In this context, it is difficult to be optimistic about the future of international language learning within the New Zealand education system. Even so, teachers of international languages in New Zealand have demonstrated their commitment to the future by forming professional associations, attending language education conferences and being enthusiastic participants in professional development courses (see *Chapter 7* here). If they continue in these activities, and continue also to lobby successive governments and to seek to influence public opinion, they may eventually succeed in ensuring that there is better provision for international languages in the future in New Zealand than there has been in the past. There is increasing awareness in other primarily English-speaking countries of the dangers of neglecting foreign languages. That, too, must eventually have an impact on New Zealand's "strait-jacket of monolingual smugness and self-sufficiency" (Department of Education, 1976b).

CHAPTER 3

A Profile of the Learning of Languages in New Zealand Schools and Universities

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, overall trends in relation to the learning of modern languages in New Zealand secondary schools and universities will be examined and a number of conclusions will be drawn.

A review of official data relating to modern languages in New Zealand secondary schools produced over the last few years suggests that the teaching and learning of modern languages in New Zealand is an at-risk activity. The situation so far as the study of languages in universities is concerned is less clear-cut. Statistical data relating to the learning of individual modern languages in New Zealand schools are readily available. However, the annual educational statistical reports produced by the New Zealand Ministry of Education do not record either (a) the number of students taking courses in individual modern languages in tertiary institutions each year, or (b) the number of students completing tertiary qualifications that include a minor study in one or more modern languages. Attempts to collect this information directly from tertiary institutions themselves were largely unsuccessful. However, it was possible to piece together some information about enrolments in languages in universities that is indicative if not conclusive.

3.2 Numbers of students taking courses in modern languages in New Zealand schools at secondary level (Year 9 and above)

Information is provided in the Tables below about the study of modern languages in New Zealand schools from Years 9 – 13+. The data used in constructing these tables are drawn from New Zealand Ministry of Education statistical reports for 1990 and beyond (Ministry of Education, 1991ff.). Each annual statistical report gives figures as at 1 July of the previous year. At the time of writing, the full statistical report for 1999 was not yet available. However, some of the relevant data were recorded in a statistical summary provided on the New Zealand Ministry of Education website (<www.moe.govt.nz>) which was consulted on May 31, 2000; some were communicated by the Ministry of Education in an email attachment dated May 31, 2000. In some cases, data are available from 1986, in others this is not the case. References below to European languages are intended to indicate language origin and thus include Spanish although, so far as many New Zealand students are concerned, the primary significance of Spanish is its status as a language used widely in South America.

In the Tables that follow, the source of information, unless otherwise indicated, is the *Education Statistics of New Zealand* (Ministry of Education). The statistical data for each year is included in the volume dated for the following year. Thus, data for 1995 are included in *Education Statistics of New Zealand 1996.*

The first Table (*Table 3.1* below) indicates the number of students enrolled in Year 9 and above in New Zealand schools from 1995 – 1999.

Table 3.1: Number of Students in Years 9 – 15 of New Zealand Schooling from 1995 – 1999.

Year of Schooling	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Year 9	53148	53362	54214	54986	55469
Year 10	53278	53086	53472	53877	54122
Year 11	53064	54319	53812	54276	53958
Year 12	44066	44646	45674	46793	46797
Year 13	29909	30140	31079	32814	33429
Year 14	2689	2090	1904	2226	2143
Year 15	493	461	262	343	295
Total	**236647**	**238104**	**240417**	**245315**	**246213**

Course entries for New Zealand Mäori are not included in *Table 3.2* (following) which provides information about course enrolments in languages other than New Zealand Mäori from 1990 – 1999(data supplied to the researcher by the New Zealand Ministry of Education). It should be noted that it is not possible to determine from the statistical data available exactly how many students are involved in the study of more than one language.

***Table 3.2:** Course Entries for Students Studying Modern Languages (excluding New Zealand Mäori) in New Zealand Schools in Forms 3 and above (Years 9 – 13+) in Each Year from 1990 – 1999*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Chinese	2	64	180	395	1138	664	1048	948	988	1021
French	28964	27720	26409	26057	25551	24511	22815	21166	21676	23705
German	9008	9009	9395	9196	8538	9365	9102	8550	7912	7762
Indonesian	150	151	140	154	139	120	104	142	130	232
Japanese	12442	15921	19738	21991	25615	26486	27039	25399	22376	22155
Pacific Island Languages	192	606	Not Available	648	614	894	790	619	498	728
Russian	177	191	207	118	39	22	123	8	59	-
Spanish	268	256	856	980	1028	1343	2370	2158	2580	3318

Table 3.3 shows the percentage variance in student numbers in these courses for 1996 – 1997, 1997 – 1998 and 1998 – 1999.

Table 3.3: Course Entries for Students Studying Modern Languages (excluding New Zealand Mäori) in New Zealand Schools in Form 3 and above (Years 9 – 13+): percentage variance from 1996 – 1999

	1996 - 1997	1997 – 1998	1998 – 1999
Chinese	-9.5%	+4.2%	+3.3%
French	-7.2%	+2.4%	+9.4%
German	-6.1%	-7.5%	-1.9%
Indonesian	+36.5%	-8.5%	+78.5%
Japanese	-6.1%	-11.9%	-1%
Pacific Island languages	-21.6%	-19.5	+46.2%
Russian	-93.5%	+637.5%	-
Spanish	-8.9%	+19.6%	+28.6%

Data for students studying Pacific Island languages (including New Zealand Mäori) as a subject at secondary school (Years 9 – 13+) in New Zealand are provided in *Table 3.4* (data provided to the researcher by New Zealand Ministry of Education).

Table 3.4: Course Entries for Students Studying Pacific Island Languages (including New Zealand Mäori) as a Subject at Secondary Level (Year 9 and above) in New Zealand Schools from 1993 – 1999

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
NZ Mäori	22657	23154	25134	25278	22325	21462	20189
Cook Island Mäori	108	105	219	174	51	26	38
Niuean	30	45	21	16	13	9	24
Samoan	369	411	490	573	475	432	649
Tokelauan	111	0	130	11	-	14	-
Tongan	30	53	34	16	80	17	17

Table 3.5 gives the numbers of students studying modern languages other than New Zealand Mäori and Pacific Island languages in Years 9 – 13+ of schooling in 1995 – 1999 as a percentage of the total Year 9 – 13+ school population. The overall number of Year 9+ students in each year from 1995 – 1999 was as follows:

1995: 236, 647; **1996**: 238, 104; **1997**: 240, 417; **1998**: 245, 315; **1999**: 246, 213

Table 3.5: Overall Percentage of Students (Year 9+) Taking Modern Language Courses (excluding New Zealand Mäori and Pacific Island languages) in New Zealand Schools from 1995 – 1998 : indicative only (multiple course entries unavailable)

	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999	
	Lang. total	*% of year total*	*Lang. total*	*% of year total*	*Lang. total*	*% of year total*	*Lang. total*	*% of year total*	*Lang. total*	*% of year total*
Chinese	*664*	*0.28*	*1048*	*0.44*	*948*	*0.39*	*988*	*0.40*	*1021*	*0.41*
French	*24511*	*10.36*	*22815*	*9.58*	*21166*	*8.80*	*21676*	*8.84*	*23705*	*9.63*
German	*9365*	*3.96*	*9102*	*3.82*	*8550*	*3.56*	*7912*	*3.23*	*7762*	*3.15*
Indonesian	*120*	*0.05*	*104*	*0.04*	*142*	*0.06*	*130*	*0.05*	*232*	*0.09*
Japanese	*26486*	*11.19*	*27039*	*11.36*	*25399*	*10.56*	*22376*	*9.12*	*22155*	*9.00*
Russian	*22*	*0.009*	*123*	*0.05*	*8*	*0.003*	*59*	*0.02*	-	
Spanish	*1343*	*0.57*	*2370*	*1.00*	*2158*	*0.90*	*2580*	*1.05*	*3318*	*1.35*
TOTAL	62511	26.41	62601	26.29	58371	24.28	55721	22.71	58193	22.635

Table 3.6 gives the numbers of students studying a Pacific Island language (including New Zealand Mäori) in Years 9 – 13+ of schooling in 1995 – 1999 as a percentage of the total Year 9 – 13+ school population.

***Table 3.6:** Overall Percentage of Students (Year 9+) Taking Courses in Pacific Island Languages (treated here as a single group) and New Zealand Mäori at New Zealand Schools from 1995 – 1998 : indicative only (multiple course entries unavailable)*

	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999	
	Lang. total	**% of year total**	**Lang. total**	**% of year total**	**Lang. total**	**% of year total**	**Lang. total**	**% of year total**	**Lang. total**	**% of year total**
NZ Mäori	25134	10.62	25278	10.62	22325	9.285	21462	8.75	20189	8.20
Other Pacific Island Languages	894	0.38	790	0.33	619	0.26	498	0.20	728	0.295
TOTAL	25983	10.98	26068	10.95	22944	9.54	21960	8.95	20917	8.495

Table 3.7 tracks the three most popular languages in 1999 (French, German and Japanese) from 1990 – 1999 in relation to entry numbers in each year from Year 9. *Table 3.8* gives the number of schools offering each of the modern languages recorded from 1986 – 1999.

Table 3.7: Number of Students in Years 9 – 13+ of New Zealand Schools Studying French, German and Japanese from 1990 – 1999

	Form/ Year of schooling	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
French	F3/Y9	15554	14071	12964	13039	13376	12542	11785	11077	11397	12994
	F4/Y10	6778	6659	6703	6505	6169	6135	5270	4958	5166	5493
	F5/Y11	3818	3610	3785	3695	3477	3313	3118	2693	2825	2837
	F6/Y12	1734	1760	1723	1746	1475	1525	1526	1441	1328	1426
	F7/Y13+	1080	1620	1234	1072	1054	996	1116	997	960	955
	Total	**28964**	**27720**	**26409**	**26057**	**25551**	**24511**	**22815**	**21166**	**21676**	**23705**
German	F3/Y9	3883	3609	3929	3769	3694	4099	4262	3532	3415	3547
	F4/Y10	2427	2435	2641	2596	2186	2375	2071	2148	1968	1936
	F5/Y11	1391	1581	1473	1518	1444	1575	1420	1426	1304	1108
	F6/Y12	867	796	856	795	759	751	793	846	684	699
	F7/Y13+	440	588	496	518	455	565	556	598	541	472
	Total	**9008**	**9009**	**9395**	**9196**	**8538**	**9365**	**9102**	**8550**	**7912**	**8762**
Japanese	F3/Y9	6186	8069	9566	10339	12597	12253	11936	11290	9565	10423
	F4/Y10	3298	3947	5130	5559	6361	6799	7211	6410	5515	5113
	F5/Y11	1454	1965	2571	3276	3649	3967	4046	3677	3564	3105
	F6/Y12	1090	1336	1763	1861	1971	2157	2403	2435	2180	2111
	F7/Y13+	414	604	708	956	1037	1310	1443	1587	1552	1403
	Total	**12442**	**15921**	**19738**	**21991**	**25615**	**26486**	**27039**	**25399**	**22376**	**22155**

Table 3.8: Number of Secondary Schools in New Zealand Offering Each Modern Language from 1986 – 1999

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Chinese	-	-	-	4	1	4	5	11	21	24	37	34	30	32
French	321	317	304	292	296	281	284	283	276	277	265	257	255	262
German	155	148	143	139	135	135	131	127	127	126	117	139	132	114
Indonesian	2	2	6	3	3	2	5	6	6	10	3	6	5	6
Japanese	73	82	100	109	145	172	204	214	236	252	264	275	278	264
New Zealand Mäori	217	226	239	222	233	242	268	281	293	303	309	315	314	299
Pacific Island Languages	-	-	-	8	3	12		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Cook Island Mäori								3	5	6	2	3	1	3
Niuean								3	3	2	1	1	1	-
Samoan								12	16	20	17	15	14	18
Tokelauan								1	-	1	1	0	1	-
Tongan								2	3	3	2	3	1	1
Russian	4	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	2	1	7	1	2	-
Spanish	9	4	7	15	9	11	23	23	34	37	46	55	58	68

The number of students at secondary level (Year 9 and above) in New Zealand schools rose by 9,566 between 1995 and 1999 (see *Table 1*). Thus, there were 4.04% more students attending New Zealand secondary schools in Year 9 and above in 1999 than there were in 1995. However, the number of course entries for modern languages (excluding New Zealand Mäori and other Pacific Island languages) fell by 4,318 during that period (from 62,511 in 1995 to 58,193 in 1999). In 1995, approximately 26.1% of the Year 9 and above New Zealand school cohort were studying a modern language other than New Zealand Mäori or another Pacific Island language. In 1999, this had fallen to approximately 22.6% (see *Table 5*). Over that same period (1995 – 1999), the number of New Zealand secondary schools offering each of the European and Asian languages available as school subjects in New Zealand has varied (see *Table 8*). There was an overall reduction in 1999 compared with 1995 in the number of schools offering French (from 277 to 262), German (from 126 to 114), Indonesian (from 10 to 6) and Russian (from 1 to 0). On the other hand, again comparing the situation in 1999 with that in 1995, there was an overall rise in the number of schools offering Japanese (from 252 to 264), Spanish (from 37 to 68) and Chinese (from 24 to 32). Overall, there were more modern language course offerings in schools in 1999 than there were in 1995. However, fewer students presented themselves overall for these courses. What is evident is that although student numbers in secondary schools rose overall between 1995 (236,647) and 1999 (246,213), fewer students opted to study a modern Asian or European language in 1999 (58, 193) than did so in 1995 (62,511) (see *Table 5*). At the same time, more modern Asian and European language courses were offered overall in more schools (see *Table 8*) so that the net result was more language course offerings competing for a diminishing pool of students wishing to study an Asian or European language.

So far as overall trends for each Asian and European language are concerned, these are, no doubt, related, in part, to political circumstances. Thus, following the decision of the United Kingdom to join the European Common Market, there was a growing appreciation of the need for New Zealand to increase trade with Asian countries. Equally, when Asian economies suffered a setback, New Zealanders began to appreciate the dangers of too great an emphasis on trading with Asia. Political and social trends

have led to curriculum changes and curriculum developments in New Zealand. However, curriculum changes and developments inevitably take time and so a new curriculum statement may sometimes appear in social and political circumstances that are very different from those that motivated the planning for its introduction. Even so, the appearance of a curriculum statement for a language that has not previously had one (along with the opportunity to sit national examinations in that language) can lead to a rise in students presenting themselves for that language and this, in turn, has an effect on figures for that language for several years as students progress through their schooling. Thus, for example, the number of New Zealand secondary schools offering Spanish rose substantially following the introduction of a curriculum statement for Spanish in 1995 (Ministry of Education, 1995a). In 1994, there were 34 New Zealand secondary schools offering courses in Spanish. That number had risen to 68 in 1999 (see *Table 8*). Prior to planning for the introduction of a curriculum statement for Spanish, the number of schools offering Spanish had varied from year to year (from a low of 4 in 1987 to a high of 11 in 1991). Since 1992, however, there has been a steady upward trend in the number of New Zealand secondary schools offering Spanish. In 1995 when the new curriculum statement was introduced, there were 37 schools offering Spanish. That number has risen steadily each year: 1996 (46), 1997 (55), 1998 (58), 1999 (68). So far as numbers of students taking Spanish in New Zealand secondary schools are concerned, there was a steady rise from 1991 (256) to 1996 (2,370). Following a drop in numbers in 1997 (to 2,158), the upward trend continued in 1998 (2,580) and 1999 (3,318).

A new curriculum statement for Chinese was also produced in 1995 (Ministry of Education, 1995b). Once again, prior to the planning for that curriculum statement, the number of schools offering Chinese varied (from a low of 1 in 1990 to a high of 11 in 1993). In the year prior to the introduction of the Chinese curriculum statement, 21 schools offered Chinese. That number rose to 24 in the year the curriculum statement was introduced (1995) and to 37 in the following year. However, there has not been a steady upward trend since that time. In 1997, the number of New Zealand secondary schools offering Chinese dropped to 34; in 1998, it dropped further to 30. There was, however, a rise (to 32) in 1999 (see *Table 8*). So far as the number of students presenting

themselves for courses in Chinese in New Zealand secondary schools is concerned, the picture is rather different from the one that emerges from an examination of the number of schools offering the language. There was a steady rise in the number of students studying Chinese from 1990 to 1994 (see *Table 2*). However, numbers fell dramatically between 1994 (1,138) and 1995 (664), rising again in 1996 (1,048). In 1997, numbers fell again (to 948) but rose in 1998 (to 1,201). Nevertheless, the number of New Zealand secondary students studying Chinese in 1999 was lower than it was in 1994.

In the case of Japanese, the effect of the introduction of a curriculum statement in 1998 (Ministry of Education, 1998a) is more difficult to determine. The number of New Zealand secondary schools offering Japanese rose steadily from 1986 (when there were 73) to 1998 (when there were 278). However, in 1999, the number of schools offering Japanese dropped for the first time (from 278 in 1998 to 264 in 1999 (see *Table 8*)). Tracking the number of students presenting themselves for courses in Japanese reveals a downward trend since 1997. Thus, numbers rose steadily from 1990 – 1996 (see *Table 2*). In 1996, there were 27, 039 New Zealand secondary school students studying Japanese. That number fell to 25,399 in 1997, to 22,376 in 1998 and to 22,155 in 1999.

There was a gradual downward trend in the number of schools offering German between 1986 (when there were 155) and 1996 (when there were 117) (see *Table 8*). This trend appeared to have been halted in 1997 (with a rise to 139). However, numbers fell again in 1998 (to 132) and 1999 (to 114). Student numbers in German classes in New Zealand secondary schools varied between 1990 (when there were 9,008) and 1995 (when there were 9,365). However, since 1995, there has been a steady downward trend. In 1995, there were 9,365 students studying German. That number fell to 7,762 in 1999.

The number of schools offering French fell gradually from 1986 (when there were 321) to 1989 (when there were 292). Numbers varied between 1989 and 1992. However, between 1992 (when there were 284 New Zealand secondary schools offering French), and 1998 (when the number had dropped to 255), the trend was downwards (although there were slight rises in 1990 and 1992). In 1999, there was another slight rise (from

255 in 1998 to 262 in 1999). Overall, however, there were 59 fewer secondary schools offering French in 1999 than there were in 1986. Looking at student numbers in French classes in New Zealand secondary schools reveals a more optimistic picture. Although numbers fell gradually between 1990 (when there were 28,964) and 1997 (when there were 21,166), there was a rise of 510 between 1997 and 1998 and a rise of 2,029 between 1998 and 1999.

From *Table 3.7*, it is possible to retrieve some information relevant to retention rates for French, Japanese and German. This information cannot be regarded as wholly accurate because there are likely to have been some students who joined language classes after Year 9. However, a general picture emerges when Year 9 entrants from 1990 to 1995 are tracked through 1991 – 1999 as indicated in *Tables 3.9 – 3.14* below:

Table 3.9: *Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1990*

	1990 entrants: French	**% retention rate from 1990**	**1990 entrants: Japanese**	**% retention rate from 1990**	**1990 entrants: German**	**% retention rate from 1990**
1990	15554		6168		3883	
1991	6659	42.8	3947	64	2435	62.7
1992	3785	24.3	2571	41.7	1473	37.9
1993	1746	11.2	1861	22	856	22
1994	1054	6.8	1037	16.8	496	12.8

Table 3.10: *Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1991*

	1991 entrants: French	**% retention rate from 1991**	**1991 entrants: Japanese**	**% retention rate from 1991**	**1991 entrants: German**	**% retention rate from 1991**
1991	14071		8069		3609	
1992	6703	47.6	5130	63.6	2641	73.2
1993	3695	26.25	3276	40.6	1518	42.1
1994	1475	10.5	1971	24.4	759	21
1995	996	7.1	1310	16.2	565	15.65

Table 3.11: *Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1992*

	1992 entrants: French	**% retention rate from 1992**	**1992 entrants: Japanese**	**% retention rate from 1992**	**1992 entrants: German**	**% retention rate from 1992**
1992	12964		9566		3929	
1993	6505	50.2	5559	58	2596	66.1
1994	3477	26.8	3649	38.1	1444	36.75
1995	1525	11.8	2157	22.5	751	19.1
1996	1116	8.6	1443	15.1	556	14.15

Table 3.12: *Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1993*

	1993 entrants: French	**% retention rate from 1993**	**1993 entrants: Japanese**	**% retention rate from 1993**	**1993 entrants: German**	**% retention rate from 1993**
1993	13039		10339		3769	
1994	6169	47.3	6361	61.5	2186	58
1995	3313	25.4	3967	38.4	1575	41.8
1996	1526	11.7	2403	23.2	793	21
1997	997	7.6	1587	15.3	598	15.9

Table 3.13: *Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1994*

	1994 entrants: French	**% retention rate from 1994**	**1994 entrants: Japanese**	**% retention rate from 1994**	**1994 entrants: German**	**% retention rate from 1994**
1994	13376		12597		3694	
1995	6135	45.9	6799	54	2375	64.3
1996	3118	23.3	4046	32.1	1420	38.4
1997	1441	10.8	2435	19.3	846	23
1998	960	7.2	1552	12.1	541	14.6

Table 3.14: Percentage Retention Rates of Students Entering French, Japanese and German Classes in New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1995

	1995 entrants: French	% retention rate from 1995	1995 entrants: Japanese	% retention rate from 1995	1995 entrants: German	% retention rate from 1995
1995	12542		12253		4099	
1996	5270	42	7211	58.85	2071	50.5
1997	2693	21.5	3677	30	1426	34.8
1998	1328	10.6	2180	17.8	684	16.7
1999	955	7.6	1403	11.45	472	11.5

In the period surveyed, retention rates for French varied from 6.8% to 8.6 % between Year 9 – Year 13+ (with an average retention rate over that period of 7.5%. In the same period, the retention rate for Japanese varied from 11.45% to 15.65% (with an average retention rate of 14.5%). For German, the retention rate over the period surveyed varied from 11.5% to 15.9% (with an average retention rate of 14%). Thus, the average retention rates for Japanese and German were considerably higher than that for French over the period surveyed. However, it is worth noting that the average retention rate for Japanese has fallen each year over the period surveyed and that the retention rates for both Japanese and German were at their lowest in the last period surveyed, whereas the retention rate for French was at its second highest in the last period surveyed.

From 1996 – 1997, numbers fell for Chinese (9.5%), German (6.1%), Japanese (6.1%0 and Spanish (8.9%). In the periods from 1997 – 1998 and 1998 – 1999, they continued to fall for German (7.5%; 1,9%) and Japanese (11.9%; 1%). However, over these two time periods, numbers began to rise again for Chinese (4.2%; 3.3%), French (2.4%; 9,4%) and Spanish (19.6%; 28.6%) (see *Table 5*). However, in terms of percentage of total number of students in each cohort, the overall rise for Chinese was only 0.01% in each of the periods from 1997 – 1998 and 1998 – 1999. For French, the cohort percentage rise over the same two time periods was 0.04% and 0.79% respectively. For Spanish, it was much more significant at 0.15% and 0.3% respectively.

Whatever the data for different modern languages indicate, there has been a marked overall downwards trend in the take-up of international languages in the 1995 – 1999 period as indicated in *Table 3.15* following:

Table 3.15: *Percentage of New Zealand Secondary School Cohort Studying a European and/ or Asian Language in Each Year from 1995 – 1999*

	1995	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
% of cohort studying an ASIAN language	11.52	11.84	11.01	9.57	9.50
% of cohort studying a EUROPEAN language	14.9	14.45	13.26	13.14	14.13
% of cohort studying ASIAN AND/OR EUROPEAN languages	26.41	26.29	24.28	22.71	22.64

3.3 Modern language examinations for New Zealand secondary school students: entry numbers and grades

At the end of each academic year (i.e. November), the majority of students in New Zealand who are in their eleventh year of schooling (Year 11) sit what is referred to as the *School Certificate* examination. Some students sit *School Certificate* examinations earlier than their eleventh year of schooling; some do so later. In what is generally the final year of schooling (Year 13), students may sit *New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations. Once again, there are students who sit for these examinations earlier than their thirteenth year of schooling and others who do so later. The data provided in the following tables were supplied to the researcher by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority.*

Table 3.16 provides information about students sitting School Certificate examinations in French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish each year from 1994 – 1999.

Table 3.16: *Number of New Zealand Students Sitting School Certificate Examinations in International Languages from 1994 – 1999*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
French	3326	3326	2822	2534	2560	2607
German	1458	1458	1293	1233	1185	973
Indonesian	26	26	20	25	23	14
Japanese	3451	3451	3651	3457	3303	2944
Russian	4	4	5	0	0	0
Spanish	241	241	272	308	351	489

Table 3.17 provides information about the number of students sitting *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations in Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish each year from 1994 – 1999.

Table 3.17: *Number of New Zealand Students sitting University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Modern Language Examinations from 1994 – 1999*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	122
French	1014	858	817	827	784	731
German	452	467	398	445	410	339
Indonesian	68	75	56	79	34	37
Japanese	1021	1129	1139	1292	1234	1101
Russian	15	2	2	5	5	-
Spanish	77	136	145	196	166	189

So far as *School Certificate* examinations are concerned, there were fewer candidates in 1999 as against 1994 for each of the following languages: French (719 fewer), German (485 fewer), Indonesian (12 fewer), Japanese (507 fewer) and Russian (4 fewer). Thus, the 1999 figures represent the following percentages of 1994 figures: French (78%); German (66.7%), Indonesian (53.8%), Japanese (85%) . The only language in which there was an increase in the number of candidates in 1999 over 1994 was Spanish. In the case of Chinese, there was no *School Certificate* examination. So far as Spanish is concerned, the overall increase in candidates in 1999 as against 1994 numbers was 248. Thus, over twice the number of candidates sat for *School Certificate* Spanish in 1999 as did so in 1994.

So far as *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations are concerned, the picture is rather different. For French, German and Indonesian, there was a drop in the number of candidates in 1999 as compared with 1994 as follows: French – 283 fewer candidates, German – 113 fewer candidates. Indonesian – 31 fewer candidates. The 1999 figures for these languages represent the following percentages of 1994 figures: French (72%), German (75%), Indonesian (54.4%). Numbers for Japanese rose by 80 as compared with the 1994 figures. Thus, in 1999, there were 7.3% more candidates for *School Certificate* Japanese than there were in 1994. Numbers for Spanish in 1999 as compared with 1994 numbers were 112 higher.

Tables 3.18 and *3.19* (data supplied to the researcher by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority*) give the percentage of candidates entering for *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations in each year from 1994 to 1999 who scored *A, B, C, D* and *E* grades.

Table 3.18: *Percentage of Candidates Scoring A, B, C, D and E Grades in School Certificate Examinations in Modern Languages in Each Year from 1994 to 1999*

French					
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	20.2	29.3	27.1	18.7	4.8
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	20.7	31.5	26.1	16.8	5.0
1997	22.7	30.1	25.8	16.6	4.7
1998	21.6	32.2	26.4	15.5	4.3
1999	18.6	29.0	25.8	20.6	6.0

German					
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	11.2	25.2	35.1	25.7	2.8
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	17.7	33.5	32.1	14.5	2.2
1997	19.1	27.7	27.2	20.1	5.8
1998	17.6	26.3	29.3	21.1	5.7
1999	21.3	34.6	27.5	13.2	3.4

Indonesian					
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	15.4	30.8	26.9	23.1	3.8
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	20.0	25.0	30.0	10.0	5.0
1997	16.0	40.0	24.0	16.0	4.0
1998	34.8	30.4	26.1	8.7	0.0
1999	35.7	28.6	21.4	14.3	0.0

Table 3.18: *Percentage of Candidates Scoring A, B, C, D and E Grades in School Certificate Examinations in Modern Languages in Each Year from 1994 to 1999 (continued)*

	Japanese				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	10.5	30.2	32.8	19.2	7.2
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	14.9	24.4	27.9	23.4	9.4
1997	18.8	21.6	22.9	24.4	12.2
1998	17.9	28.4	28.1	19.0	6.7
1999	17.0	23.8	24.9	24.6	9.6

	Russian				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	60.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
1997/1998/1999	NO CANDIDATES				

	Spanish				
	A	**B**	**B**	**D**	**E**
1994	27.4	28.6	22.4	13.7	7.9
1995	NOT AVAILABLE				
1996	28.3	30.5	24.6	14.0	2.6
1997	25.3	31.8	24.7	10.7	7.5
1998	25.1	32.2	21.1	13.1	8.5
1999	25.6	35.6	23.5	11.2	4.1

Table 3.19: *Percentage of candidates entering for University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Examinations in Modern Languages in Each Year from 1994 to 1999 who Achieved Scholarship Passes and A, B, C, D and E Grades*

	French					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	3.7	27.0	28.2	27.2	12.5	1.3
1995	5.0	23.0	33.1	26.8	11.0	1.2
1996	5.5	22.3	30.1	25.8	14.3	2.0
1997	3.9	28.7	24.5	30.7	10.9	1.3
1998	4.2	25.9	29.3	26.4	12.4	1.8
1999	4.5	25.7	27.8	29.7	10.3	2.1

	German					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	4.1	30.4	27.1	23.3	13.0	2.1
1995	5.8	22.1	27.9	29.2	12.4	2.7
1996	5.0	24.4	31.4	25.1	12.8	1.3
1997	4.7	24.7	27.4	29.7	12.6	0.9
1998	3.4	22.9	31.0	25.9	14.6	2.2
1999	4.1	30.4	27.1	23.3	13.0	2.1

Table 3.19: *Percentage of candidates entering for University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Examinations in Modern Languages in Each Year from 1994 to 1999 who Achieved Scholarship Passes and A, B, C, D and E Grades (continued)*

	Indonesian					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	5.9	17.6	23.5	32.4	13.2	7.4
1995	2.7	16.0	22.7	29.3	22.7	6.7
1996	3.6	14.3	8.9	39.3	25.0	8.9
1997	3.8	6.3	24.1	34.2	25.3	6.3
1998	2.9	5.9	20.6	44.1	23.5	2.9
1999	2.7	13.5	18.9	35.1	21.6	8.1

	Japanese					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	5.1	19.0	23.1	30.4	18.8	3.6
1995	4.9	17.6	27.4	31.3	17.3	1.6
1996	4.5	19.5	27.5	29.1	17.6	1.9
1997	4.7	24.6	25.5	27.9	15.1	2.2
1998	3.4	24.1	26.2	29.3	14.7	2.4
1999	3.3	22.1	26.2	29.6	14.6	3.2

	Spanish					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1994	2.6	36.4	20.8	20.8	15.6	3.9
1995	0.7	33.8	25.7	22.1	14.0	3.7
1996	4.1	28.3	26.2	25.5	13.1	2.8
1997	4.6	25.0	21.4	31.1	14.3	3.6
1998	3.6	24.1	28.9	28.3	13.3	1.8
1999	3.2	22.2	27.0	28.0	16.4	3.2

	Chinese					
	Scholarship	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
1999	1.6	42.6	19.7	23.8	10.7	1.6

The nature of moderation of *School Certificate* examinations (see *Chapter 6*) is such as to reduce any major differences among grades for different examinations. Even so, some differences are detectable. Omitting 1995 where no figures for grades are available, the average percentage of A grades from 1994 – 1999 in *School Certificate* Spanish was 26.34. Over the same period, the average percentage of A grades in French, German and Japanese was as follows: French, 20.75%; German, 17.38%; Japanese 15.82%. There was, therefore, a considerably higher chance of achieving an A grade in Spanish than there was in, for example, Japanese. Averaging grades A and B together over the same period reveals that, once again, there was a greater chance of achieving an A or B grade in Spanish (29.04%) than there was in French (25.58%), German (23.42%) or Japanese (20.75%).

3.4 New Zealand Ministry of Education initiatives in relation to the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools

The problems associated with establishing and maintaining a range of international languages in schools are not unique to New Zealand, However, certain aspects of New Zealand's situation, including the need to ensure that as many as possible of its young people are given an opportunity to learn Mäori, converge to make these problems particularly acute in its case. Even so, some progress has been made. In June 1995, the New Zealand government allocated $4.8 million for an exploratory study in second language learning for students in Years 7 to 10 of schooling (the Second Language Learning Project: SLLP).

As indicated in a 1997 *Curriculum Development Update (Curriculum Development Update* October 1997, Number 24), there were a number of second language initiatives in the preceding three years, including "the development of curriculum and learning materials, professional development programmes for teachers, and increased access to language learning through satellite, computer, and television technologies" (p.1). Curriculum statements for Samoan, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean were prepared. The Ministry of Education purchased an introductory Japanese CD-ROM programme developed in New South Wales as a support for *Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum.* It also undertook work on the development of television programmes (linked to a professional development programme for teachers) for students of Spanish and Japanese and developed a range of additional language resource materials. The impact of many of these developments will not be fully felt for some time. Eventually, however, they should have some effect on the numbers of students presenting themselves for national examinations. Even so, not all of these initiatives are likely to prove equally effective. There is, for example, a need for further refinement in the running of the Second Language Learning Project referred to above. In their evaluation of that project, a project involving students in Years 7 – 10 of schooling, Peddie, Gunn and Lewis (1999, p. 3) note that "overall, the main concern was that a combination of a limited time for learning and a lack of understanding of good communicative teaching often led to lessons

which were entertaining, often enjoyable, but not always effective" and "in the classrooms observed, the learning process was only rarely made explicit" (p. 43). Where, however, "a clear goal was set in terms of, say, Level One of the national curriculum statements. . . . the tutors were clear about their aims, and often achieved them". Even so, "this regrettably does *not* mean that the students would necessarily be able to begin secondary school in an advanced class" (p. 47). Not all of the teachers involved in the programme were specifically trained to teach language and although the programme made financial resources available for professional development, "just under sixty per cent [of teachers involved] reported that no PD [professional development] took place in their school" (p. 52). Current secondary language teachers were generally much more effective [than others]" (p. 49). There are indications in this report that a number of aspects of this project need to be given careful consideration in relation to subsequent project developments.

3.5 Language learning in New Zealand schools: conclusions

It appears that language teaching and learning in New Zealand schools is an at-risk activity. Some of the problems that beset language learners and teachers in New Zealand are unique to New Zealand. Some are experienced in other countries with small populations that are geographically relatively isolated. Others are experienced almost everywhere.

There are problems for language teachers and learners in New Zealand that relate to sustainability. These are similar to the problems that New Zealand experiences in attempting to sustain a sophisticated health service, to maintain the roads that stretch the length and breadth of the country and to respond to fluctuations in world markets. These are problems relating to population size. There were 246,213 students in Year 9 and above in New Zealand schools in 1999. Many of these schools are relatively small and relatively isolated geographically. In any one school, the numbers of children following

specific secondary school programmes may be small, and the numbers doing so in each year of schooling even smaller.

Studying a modern language (with the exception of English or Mäori) is not compulsory in New Zealand schools and it is sometimes difficult to find language teachers in the more isolated areas. If they are available, the language or languages they are able to offer may not be those that the students are most interested in pursuing. Furthermore, different pupils are likely to have different interests. Some may want to learn Japanese, some may have an interest in French, some may want to study Samoan and Indonesian. It is rarely possible to satisfy everyone. In some cases, the realities of the situation may mean that it is not possible to satisfy anyone. One response to this issue is to enrol students in the *New Zealand Correspondence School.* This is an option that has proved effective in many cases. However, the choice of studying a different subject alongside their school friends or enrolling in a Correspondence School course can be a difficult one for many students and it is not, therefore, surprising that some students opt for the first of these options. It would be interesting to know how many students who choose not to enrol in a Correspondence School course in a language (when this option is available to them) make this choice because they wish to remain with their school friends.

In 1999, the following modern languages were offered for *School Certificate* examination:

> French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Samoan and Spanish.

For *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations, the following modern languages were offered:

> Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish and Te Reo Rangatira (Mäori)

Although a number of other languages were offered locally, they were not available for national examinations, something that is likely to have had an effect on take-up rates. Students who do not have the option of taking national examinations in languages that are available locally may feel that this is unfair. However, the cost of designing curriculum guidelines and of making materials available on a national level is high, as is the cost of administering national examinations.

Clearly, there is a problem in relation to retention rates so far as modern languages in New Zealand schools are concerned. This is to be expected given the non-compulsory nature of modern languages other than English or Mäori in the New Zealand curriculum. This problem can lead to difficulties in sustaining classes at the higher levels of schooling. There are difficulties not only in relation to the more established languages, but also in relation to attempts to introduce additional languages. In 1997, two years after the introduction of the Chinese curriculum statement, the take-up rate for Chinese was only 0.4% of the secondary school population. That represented 948 students spread over five years of schooling in thirty four different schools, an average of fewer than six pupils per school year in each school. We now have a Samoan curriculum for New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 1996). However, in 1999 there were only 649 students studying Samoan from Year 9 of schooling upward. That is, there were 649 students spread over five forms in 18 schools throughout the country. This certainly does not mean that the effort and expense involved in putting the Samoan curriculum in place and in introducing national examinations in Samoan was not justified. What it does mean, however, is that it is going to be extremely difficult to maintain the Samoan language in New Zealand schools, important though it clearly is to do so.

New Zealand is a country whose population is just over half of that of London. It covers an area, however, roughly equivalent to that of the United Kingdom and many of its schools are located in rural areas. New Zealanders are, therefore, constrained by the financial realities of running a country with a relatively large land mass on the income provided by a relatively small number, comparatively, of income generating workers. It is in this context that the financial realities of attempting to design and develop

curriculum statements, materials and national examinations for a range of modern languages must be considered. It is in this context also that the problems associated with attempting to maintain language classes throughout all years of schooling can be appreciated. In this context, any increase in the number of languages made available can represent a threat to the survival of some existing language offerings. In such a context, the fact that the popularity of languages fluctuates in response to a range of social and political circumstances represents a further threat to the capacity of schools to cope. Added to this is the difficulty of motivating students to learn a language at all given New Zealand's geographical isolation from countries in which a language other than English is the main lingua franca.

3.6 The learning of modern languages in New Zealand universities: some indicators of trends

A constraining factor for this part of the research has been the difficulty in obtaining detailed statistical data on which to base in-depth discussion of pertinent issues. Ministry of Education statistical publications do not record tertiary enrolments in language courses as a separate category. There is, however, one useful source of information. In his discussion on the development of a New Zealand languages policy, Waite (1992) records some figures relating to the completion of New Zealand university degrees with international languages as a main subject (Waite 1992, 71). The figures he provides include Latin and Ancient Greek. In *Table 3.20* below, these languages have been removed and the total and percentage calculations have been redone. It should be noted that, as in the case of Waite's table, the figure for degree completions in Chinese recorded for 1970 is actually the 1969 figure. This is because there is an error in the Ministry of Education statistics for 1970.

Table 3.20: New Zealand University Degree Completions with International Languages as the Main Subject in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
French	140	119	104	83	59
German	75	71	71	70	49
Japanese	2	19	25	32	31
Asian languages	0	0	0	0	20
Russian	20	14	16	12	14
Italian	12	10	7	8	10
Chinese	(7)	3	4	4	7
Spanish	1	3	11	10	7
Indonesian	0	6	3	0	3
Hebrew	1	0	2	2	0
Modern languages	0	0	1	5	0
Total	**258**	**245**	**244**	**226**	**200**

In relation to these figures, Waite (1992b, pp. 71-72) observes:

> On the one hand, it is disturbing to witness a decline in the numbers of students studying an international language to an advanced level, at a time when we are being urged to take our place on the international scene, commercially and politically. On the other hand, it is encouraging to see an increasing interest in the Japanese language, given that Japan has become one of our most important trading partners.

In fact, however, the figures supplied by Waite need to be examined in the context of overall numbers of degree completions. *Table 3.21* provides a summary of the overall numbers of New Zealand graduates in the years 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990.

Table 3.21: Summary of New Zealand Graduates in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Doctorate	95	152	181	186	228
Masters	181	229	279	249	1000
Masters/Honours	425	459	452	554	
Bachelors Honours (Postgrad.)	129	163	165	894	743
Bachelors (Postgrad.)	15	6	5	13	20
Diploma (Other)	664	780	819		
Diploma (Postgrad.)	216	459	662	804	1150
Certificate		6	114		
Bachelors (Honours) (First deg.)	275	491	541		
Bachelors (First deg,)	3176	4415	5440	6522	8625
Diploma (Undergrad.)				767	596
Cert. (Undergrad.)				313	282

Removing diploma and certificate qualifications from the table above gives us the actual number of degree completions for each of the years to which reference is made. These are listed in *Table 3.22* alongside the overall number of degree completions in international languages and the percentage of degree completions in international languages. What this Table reveals is that the percentage of degree completions with an international language as the main subject fell from 6% in 1970 to 1.88% in 1990.

Table 3.22: *New Zealand University Degree Completions with International Languages as the Main Subject as a Percentage of Overall Degree Completions in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990*

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Total all international languages	**258**	**245**	**244**	**226**	**200**
Total all degrees	4296	5915	7063	8418	10616
% of all degrees	**6.00**	**4.14**	**3.45**	**2.68**	**1.88**

Ministry of Education statistical data from 1990 – 1996 do not reveal the number of degree completions in which a modern language is a major subject. However, in 1997, the approach to recording changed. *Tables 3.23* and 3.*24* give figures for 1997 and 1998.

Table 3.23: *Completions of Formal Programmes of Study Involving a Modern Language as a Main Subject in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions in 1997*

	1 Doctorate	2 Masters/ Honours	3 Post-Grad. Dip./ Cert.	4 Bachelors/ Adv. Diploma	5 Diploma	6 Certificate	7 Intermediate Certificate	8 Introductory Certificate
Asian languages				11				
Chinese	1	4	3	124				
Cook Island Maori				11				
Dutch				1				
Foreign Languages: "Living"			7	31	69	54	1	14
French		21		125				
German	1	18		65				
Greek				2				
Hebrew			1					
Indonesian				21				
Italian		3		29				
Japanese		19	7	161				
Korean				14				
Mäori language		10	2	199	102	422	117	53
Russian	1	11	3	39				
Samoan				11				
Spanish	1	2		71				
Asian studies		1		3				
European studies				4				
TOTAL(including Maori)	4	89	23	922	171	476	118	67
TOTAL(excl.. NZ Maori)		79	21	723	69	54	1	14
TOTAL(excl. NZ Mäori, Cook Island Mäori & Samoan)	**4**	**79**	**21**	**701**	**69**	**54**	**1**	**14**

Table 3.24: *Completions of Formal Programmes of Study Involving a Modern Language as a Main Subject in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions in 1998*

	1 Doctorate	2 Masters/ Honours	3 Post-Grad. Dip./Cert.	4 Bachelors/ Advanced Diploma	5 Diploma	6 Certificate	7 Intermed. Cert.	8 Intro. Cert..
Asian languages				30				
Chinese		14	6	118				
Cook Island Maori				4				
Dutch				3				
Foreign Languages: "Living"			46	33	124	182		
French		12	2	120	1			
German	2	6	1	67	1			
Greek		2		7				
Hebrew								
Indonesian				15				
Italian		5	1	45				
Japanese	1	14	5	207				
Korean				18				
Mäori language		22	2	230	103	561		
Russian		4		42				
Samoan				20				
Spanish		3	1	75				
Asian studies				5				
European studies				5				
TOTAL (including Maori)	3	82	66	1044	229	743		
TOTAL (excluding NZ Maori)	3	60	64	814	126	182		
TOTAL (excluding NZ Maori, Cook Island Maori & Samoan)	**3**	**60**	**64**	**790**	**126**	**182**		

The overall numbers of completions of formal programmes of study in New Zealand tertiary institutions in 1997 were as indicated in *Table 3.25* (following).

Table 3.25: *Summary of New Zealand Graduates in 1997*

	1997
Doctorate	363
Masters/Honours	4059
Degree	20864
Diploma	6736
Certificate	14892
Introductory Certificate	4976
Intermediate Certificate	771
Subsequent Certificate	168
Postgrad. Diploma/ Certificate	3171

Removing diploma and certificate qualifications from the table above gives us the actual number of degree completions. These are listed in *Table 3.26* (following) alongside the

overall number of degree completions in international languages and the percentage of degree completions that were in international languages. New Zealand Mäori, Cook Island Maori and Samoan are not included in the Table below. However, Asian Studies and European Studies are included although the extent to which languages were included in these degree completions is unclear.

Table 3.26: *New Zealand University Degree Completions with International Languages as the Main Subject as a Percentage of Overall Degree Completions in 1997*

	1997
Total all international languages	805
Total all degrees	25286
% of all degrees	**3.18%**

Thus, the percentage of degree completions involving an international language as a main subject in 1997 was, at 3.18%, lower than in was in 1970, 1975 and 1980, but higher than it was in 1985 and 1990 although the actual number of degree completions involving an international language has risen steadily as indicated in *Table 3.27* (following).

Table 3.27: *Degree completions including a modern language as a main subject in New Zealand tertiary institutions in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1997* and *1998*

1970	**1975**	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1997**	**1998**
258	245	244	226	200	784	853

Table 3.28 indicates the situation in relation to degree completions for French, German, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Indonesian in each of the years: 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1997 and 1998.

Table 3.28: Degree Completions Including a Number of Different Modern Languages as a Main Subject in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1997 and 1998

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1997	1998
French	140	119	104	83	59	146	132
German	75	71	71	70	49	84	75
Japanese	2	19	25	32	31	180	222
Italian	12	10	7	8	10	32	50
Russian	20	14	16	12	14	51	46
Chinese	(7)	3	4	4	7	129	132
Spanish	1	3	11	10	7	74	78
Indonesian	0	6	3	0	3	21	15

Comparing the situation in 1998 with that in 1970, we can see that there were fewer degree completions with French and Russian as a main subject and the same number with German as a main subject. Degree completions with Japanese, Italian, Chinese, Spanish and Indonesian as a main subject were all higher in 1998 as compared with 1970. Of course, what is actually needed is a clear indication of the number of students who include an international language (and to what level) in their degrees, alongside the main subjects of these degrees. This information is not, however, readily available at a national level.

It was felt that individual course enrolments would be more revealing than overall degree completion figures because there appears to have been an increasing tendency over the past ten years for students to study a modern language as a minor component in a degree in another subject. For this reason, all New Zealand universities were requested to supply figures for enrolment in modern language courses from 1990 through 1999. Only one university did so. In order to protect the anonymity of that institution, the exact figures are not reproduced here. However, overall, trends are indicated in terms of percentage reductions and increases in course enrolments over the years from 1990 – 1999. These percentages relate to language course enrolments only: they are not related here to overall enrolment numbers in that institution over the ten year period surveyed. Thus, *Table 3.29* indicates the percentage increase and decrease in enrolments in a number of modern language courses (courses of all types, including culture courses) from year to year from

1990 – 1999. All of the languages for which statistics are provided below are international languages

Table 3.29: Annual Percentage Increase and Decrease in Course Enrolments in Three International Languages *in One New Zealand tertiary Institution from 1990 – 1999*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	% increase or decrease 1990 - 1999
Language X		+16.9	+40.7	-33.6	+10.1	-25.1	-14.42	-9.38	+14.3	+32	+7.5
Language Y		+0.2	+33.5	-27.9	-33.4	+2.7	-18.1	-2.7	+2.1	-2.8	-43.3
Language Z		+10.8	-6.96	+0.43	-8.66	+0.04	+43.19	-11.15	+4.06	+19.2	+57.21

Of those who studied a Level 2 language paper in Languages X, Y and Z in 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997, the number who graduated with a BA with that subject as a major in the following year or with a BA (Honours) with that subject as a major two years later is such as to indicate that over the years surveyed approximately 50% of those who take a Level 2 paper in a language do not eventually graduate with that language as a subject. This pattern may not be the same in other New Zealand universities. All that can be said, therefore, is that it may be that about twice as many students studied an international language to Level 2 in New Zealand universities in the 1990s as the number that graduated with a BA or BA (Hons) with an international language as a major subject.

In preparing *Table 3.30* (following), all of the course enrolments in international languages (including languages other than those referred to as X, Y and Z above) in the institution that provided statistical data were aggregated for each year from 1990 – 1999. The overall numbers annually were then compared in terms of overall percentage increase and decrease. In order to protect the identity of the institution, only the percentage increases and decreases (not the actual numbers) are provided.

Table 3.30: Annual Percentage Increase and Decrease in Course Enrolments in all International Languages Courses in a New Zealand Tertiary Institution from 1990 – 1999

	1990	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**% increase or decrease 1990 - 1999**
All international languages		+8.9	+24.8	-22.7	-12.2	-12.6	+3.0	+1.4	+11.0	+23.4	+18.9

These percentage increases and decreases would be more meaningful if they were placed in the context of the overall increase in student enrolments each year in that institution. However, because to do so might reveal the identity of the institution, these figures are not provided here. What is provided (see *Table 3.31*) is the annual percentage increase and decrease (from 1994 – 1999) within that institution of degree completions (BA, BA(Hons), MA, PhD) in which an international language was the major subject:

***Table 3.31** Annual Percentage increase and Decrease in Degree Completions (BA, BA(Hons), MA, PhD)) with an International Language as the Main Subject in One New Zealand Tertiary Institution from 1994 -1999*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	% increase in 1999 over 1994
All degrees with an international language as the main subject		-21.1	+2.4	-2.4	+24.1	0	+3.2

3.7 Language Learning in New Zealand Universities: conclusions

In 1998 (see *Table 24*), there were over three times as many degree completions with a modern language as the main subject as there were in 1970 and over four times as many

as there were in 1990. Comparing 1998 figures with 1970 figures shows French with six fewer degree completions, German with the same number, Italian with almost four times as many, Russian with over twice as many, Indonesian rising from 0 to 15, Spanish rising from 1 to 78, Chinese rising from 7 to 132 and Japanese rising from 2 to 222. In comparison with the 1990 figures, all of the languages have improved in degree completion numbers. However, what really matters is the percentage of degree completions.

Table 22 indicates that although the actual number of degree completions with an international language as the main subject fell in New Zealand by only 58 in 1990 over 1970, that represents a reduction in percentage of overall degree completions of more than 4%. When the number of degree completions with an international language as a main subject in 1997 (805) is compared with the number in 1990 (200), the situation appears to have improved significantly. However, 1990 represented a particularly low point in terms of percentage of degree completions with an international language as the main subject and, in any case, the percentage increase in 1997 over 1990 was only 1.3%. In 1997, 3.18% of degree completions in New Zealand included a major in an international language; in 1970, 6% of degree completions in New Zealand included a major in an international language. It may be (as is suggested by the data provided by one New Zealand university) that approximately twice the number of students who graduated with an international language as their main degree subject in New Zealand universities in the 1990s actually studied an international language to Level 2. Even if this is the case, the percentage of students graduating from New Zealand universities in the 1990s with an international language to Level 2 may be no greater than 3.6% in 1990 and 6.36% in 1997.

As has been indicated, attempts to collect data about modern language enrolments in universities were largely unsuccessful. There could be a number of reasons for this. One possible reason is that the recruitment and retention of modern language students is a sensitive issue so far as New Zealand universities are concerned, particularly at a time

when there is inter-university rivalry for student numbers and a number-dependent funding formula in place.

Because only a limited amount of data about enrolment in courses in international languages in New Zealand universities were collected, the conclusions that can be drawn from an analysis of this data need to be regarded as no more than indicative. There are, however, other indications that the situation in relation to the learning of international languages is a cause for concern. Recent restructuring activity in some New Zealand universities seems to suggest that questions are being raised about the viability of some languages departments. One example is the situation at Otago University. In mid 1997, as part of a university-wide restructuring process, the Vice-Chancellor announced that changes were to be made to the language departments. In an attempt to counter the restructuring proposals, a member of staff of the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies posted an announcement on one of the web pages of the *American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages* (<http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/~aatseel/endangered-programs/>). This internet site lists all the Slavic and East European language programmes world-wide which are under threat of closure and is a forum where support from colleagues in other departments is sought. That announcement is as follows:

> A set of proposals were announced last week by Vice-Chancellor Dr Graeme Vogelberg *as a cost-cutting measure for the humanities division* (emphasis added). Once they are put into effect, they would see eight or possibly more language and classics department academic staff dismissed. The ten staff currently teaching French, German and Russian are to be reduced to five. Russian is to be discontinued entirely from the end of 1997. French will be taught at undergraduate level only. German will no longer have a major. Spanish will be introduced, but only in the form of some papers in language. If the proposal goes through, three positions will be lost involving Russian staff.

Restructuring at the University of Otago did proceed, and in November 1998, the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies was disbanded with three staff being made redundant. Staff numbers in the French and German Departments were reduced to six and they, along with staff in a number of other disciplines, were combined into a School of Languages, Literature and Performing Arts. To date, no Spanish courses have been introduced.

Restructuring processes involving reducing the numbers of staff involved in teaching languages have also taken place at other universities in New Zealand over the past decade. However, during that time, other languages have, in some cases, been introduced. Currently (July 2000) at least two New Zealand universities are involved in processes that could lead to a reduction in the number of staff teaching languages. The overall picture is difficult to determine. What is clear, however, is that language courses, even those which have been introduced in the past ten years, are vulnerable: the number of students studying international languages at school in New Zealand inevitably impacts on the numbers studying international languages in tertiary institutions. As was indicated (see *Table 5* above), 26.4% of the New Zealand secondary school cohort studies an international language in 1995 whereas 22.6% did so in 1999.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL OUTLINE

4.1 Introduction

In the second and third sections (*4.2 – 4.3.3.4*) of this chapter, New Zealand Ministry of Education documents for international languages are introduced. The main purpose of these sections is to provide, in the context of a discussion of the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993), an outline of these documents and of the relationships among them. In the following two sections (*4.4 - 4.6*), the modern language programmes available in New Zealand universities in 1999 and 2000 are introduced and summarized in terms of the types of courses provided.

In this chapter, the information is presented and contextualized in a way that highlights issues for the teaching, learning and examining of international languages, issues that will be discussed more fully in *Chapters 5* and *6*.

4.2 The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* and modern languages in New Zealand schools

Since the 1940s, the New Zealand education system has provided all students with access to free state schooling at primary and secondary levels. In the 1980s, in response to concerns that school education had not adjusted rapidly enough to changes in society, or to the growing demand for more equitable learning and assessment, comprehensive reviews of curriculum, assessment, and educational administration were carried out. As a result, it was concluded that a curriculum framework was required in order to provide a more integrated and coherent structure. The current *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* was intended to respond to changes in New Zealand society and economy and to draw on the findings of the education reviews of the 1980s.

In the *Foreword* to the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework,* the then Secretary of Education, Dr. Maris O'Rourke, observes that the curriculum "provides the foundation for learning in New Zealand schools for the 1990s and beyond", "identifies the essential learning areas and skills, and defines the national achievement aims and objectives for all students", "sets in place effective assessment procedures", and "promotes new emphases in learning areas which are important to the country's health and growth, such as technology, second language learning, te reo and nga tikanga Mäori, and studies of New Zealand and those regions important to New Zealand, such as Asia and the Pacific" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 1).

The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (*the Curriculum Framework*) states the *principles* that give direction to all teaching and learning, the *seven essential learning areas,* and the *essential skills* to be developed by all students. It gives direction to the more specific *national curriculum statements* and outlines the *policy for assessment* at school and national levels.

The seven *essential learning areas* are: health and physical well-being, the arts, social sciences, technology, science, mathematics, and language and languages. It is noted in the *Curriculum Framework* document that "language is a vital medium for transmitting values and culture" (p.10) and the importance of gaining confidence and proficiency in one's first language is acknowledged. It is observed that "provision will be made for students whose first language is not English" and that "students will have the opportunity to become proficient in Mäori". Furthermore, "students whose mother tongue is a Pacific Islands language or another community language will have the opportunity to develop and use their own language as an integral part of their schooling" (p.10). It is acknowledged that "all students benefit from learning another language" and it is observed that "students will be able to choose from a range of Pacific, Asian, and European languages, all of which are important to New Zealand's regional and international interests" (p.10).

The *essential skills* outlined in the *Curriculum Framework* are: communication skills, numeracy skills, information skills, problem-solving skills, self-management and competitive skills, social and co-operative skills, physical skills, and work and study skills. Under the heading of communication skills, reference is made to "listening, speaking, reading, and writing", and to "different cultural, language, and social contexts" (p.18).

The *principles* include reflection on the multicultural nature of New Zealand, including ensuring "that the experiences, cultural traditions, histories, and languages of all New Zealanders are recognised and valued" (p.7).

The national *Curriculum Statements* (now referred to as 'Curriculum Guidelines' where optional subjects are involved) define in more detail the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values described in the *Curriculum Framework* and specify the learning outcomes for all students. Specific objectives, described as 'achievement objectives' are defined, and set out in a number of levels (usually eight) to indicate progression and continuity throughout schooling from Years 1 - 13. The *Curriculum Statements (*and *Guidelines)* also suggest assessment procedures, provide assessment examples, and include guidelines relating to appropriate approaches to teaching and learning.

Curriculum and assessment policy for all years of schooling is based on the New Zealand curriculum documents. Examinations and assessments for the purpose of awarding secondary school qualifications are the responsibility of the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority*, and standards for such examinations and assessments are "based on the learning outcomes of the national curriculum statements" (p.26).

Students in year 11 (Form 5) are required to undertake study in a minimum of six subjects, three of which are English or Mäori, mathematics and a science subject. They may elect to study both English and Mäori, one as one of the three compulsory subjects, and one as an elective. They may elect to study another language (or languages) as a replacement for, or in addition to, English or Mäori as one of the three non-compulsory subjects. If they do, a range of options is available to them. In 1999, as nationally recognized subjects (subjects leading to national examinations), the following languages are offered:

> Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mäori, Russian, Samoan and Spanish.

A number of other languages were, subject to demand, offered as locally developed subjects not leading to national examinations in various different locations. Among these were:

> Cook Island Mäori, Niuean and Tongan.

There are options available for the study of languages earlier for some children. In particular, the Mäori language is offered in a number of primary and middle schools and there are increasing numbers of primary and middle schools offering other languages at introductory levels. Those language syllabuses that have not been revised since 1995 (i.e. French and German) are currently designed for secondary schools. The others (Samoan, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean) are designed to take into account the current New Zealand Curriculum Framework and are, therefore, designed for secondary, middle and primary schools.

4.3 *New Zealand Ministry of Education* syllabuses, curriculum statements and curriculum guidelines for international languages

The focus of this section is syllabus and curriculum documents for modern languages other than English, Mäori and New Zealand community languages such as Samoan.

In the New Zealand Curriculum Framework, it is noted that "existing syllabuses are to be regarded as national curriculum statements until they are replaced" (Ministry of Education 1993, p. 22 (footnote)). This means that, leaving aside English, te reo Mäori and community languages, there are five New Zealand Ministry of Education documents that are to be regarded as modern language curriculum statements in addition to one draft modern language curriculum statement. This includes the curriculum statements for Spanish and Chinese (which appeared in 1995), the curriculum statement for Japanese and the draft curriculum statement for Korean (both of which appeared in 1998), and the syllabuses for French (published in 1987) and for German (published in 1988).

The syllabuses for French and German are due to be replaced and draft 'curriculum guidelines' (the term now used for curriculum documents relating to non-compulsory subjects) for both of these languages should be available in New Zealand schools in 2001. At this stage, these draft guidelines are not available as official Ministry of Education publications. They are, nevertheless, discussed here and relevant extracts are included in *Appendix 1.*

4.3.1 The French and German syllabuses

In May 1980, a *National French Syllabus Committee* was set up to establish a syllabus for French in secondary schools and a *National German Syllabus Committee* was set up to establish a syllabus for German in secondary schools. These committees not only addressed themselves to syllabus design, but also initiated reviews of the prescriptions for the *School Certificate Examination Board* and the *Universities Entrance Board.* In 1981 and 1982, draft syllabuses were produced and it is an adapted version of these syllabuses that was published in 1987 (for French) and 1988 (for German) as the first syllabuses for these languages and cultures in secondary schools (Department of Education, 1987; Department of Education,1988).

4.3.1.1 The French Syllabus

The French syllabus that was published in 1987 (and first appeared in draft form in 1982) appears to have been informed by the same principles as are articulated in a small monograph entitled *Communicative French Teaching* written by Noel Watts of Massey University and produced by the Department of French at the University of Canterbury (Watts, 1983). That work begins by referring to the work of the *Council of Europe* in the area of language teaching (Council of Europe, 1978) and by noting that it "is clear from the current dissatisfaction with audiolingual and structural methods that whatever the claims that were made, the learners did not become as communicatively competent as had been hoped (Watts, 1983, p.1).

In outlining the background to communicative language teaching, Watts acknowledges the influence of "speech act theory, socio-linguistic studies, and explorations into functional grammars" (p.5). He refers to the work of Hymes who defined the term 'communicative competence' in 1991 in *On Communicative Competence* as including grammatical competence as well as sociolinguistic competence (Hymes, 1991). He also refers to the three main strands of the work of the *Council of Europe* on modern languages at that time: the elaboration of the concept of functional and notional syllabuses (Wilkins, 1976); the specification of threshold level competence (Van Ek, 1975; Van Ek and Alexander, 1977); and the analysis of learner needs (Richterich and Chancerel, 1977). It is noted that whereas the emphasis in the work of Wilkins is on categories of functional, modal and notional

meaning, there is a range of alternatives possible in organizing course content. These include:

1. organization in terms of communicative functions with a cyclic approach involving exposure to greater complexity of linguistic realization;

2. structural progression with units dedicated to communicative use;

3. introductory grammatical focus with later notional and functional orientation;

4. topic-centred and situation-centred units in addition to structures and functions (Littlewood, 1981).

As examples of the ways in which recent syllabuses had attempted to follow a communicative syllabus, Watts examined the Scottish *Tour de France* project. The selection of the *Tour de France* project was not coincidental: the New Zealand syllabus for French was clearly informed by that project. Indeed, the materials that were in use in Scotland were also adopted widely in New Zealand in spite of the fact that these materials were designed largely for students from age eleven upwards, whereas students in New Zealand typically began the study of French at that time at age thirteen upwards.

In 1979, the Scottish Central Committee for Modern Languages published *Communication in Foreign Language Teaching*, a document that looked at the *Tour de France* French course for schools in the light of the committee's views on what constituted a 'communicative syllabus' (Scottish Central Committee for Modern Languages, 1979). This document emphasises the distinction between language used for practice and language used for real communication, acknowledging, however, the importance of the former in consolidating structure and vocabulary and in handling skills. It outlines eight principles of communicative language use in relation to the language classroom as follows:

. French needs to be the main/only language of everyday classroom management;

. Language use in the classroom should relate to the students' own experience and needs;

. Classroom activities should be contextualized and role play and simulation should be regarded as important activities;

. The syllabus should assist learners to achieve certain ends/ perform certain functions (such as complaining politely, expressing pleasure) in a variety of settings and role relationships;

. There should be a balance between student initiation and student response;

. Students should explore authentic language;

. It should be acknowledged that because comprehension exceeds production, students should learn to cope with a flow of language some of which may be beyond their comprehension;

. Whereas in controlled practice, a high level of accuracy may be possible, the criterion for more open-ended language use should be communication of the intended message.

Prior to the preparation of the current French syllabus, the only syllabus guidelines available for New Zealand schools took the form of prescriptions for national examinations.

In preparing the French syllabus, attention was paid to the needs of all learners across the ability range and to functional and communicative criteria (Department of Education, 1987). Functions such as 'giving directions' are central, and cyclic, as are situational settings that move outwards from the immediate experience of learners. In common with, for example, the French syllabus group in England (French 16-19 Study Group, 1979), and in contrast to the *Oxfordshire Modern Language Advisory Committee* (Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee, 1981), the *New Zealand National French Syllabus Committee* opted for an open-ended approach to morphological, syntactic and phonological specification, leaving decisions about content in these areas largely to teachers. They did, however, include basic vocabulary listings for each topic area, together with a list of additional vocabulary and a summary of grammar points at the end of each curriculum level. It is stressed, however, that "the syllabus specifies minimum content only" and that "the order in which the topics and grammatical structures are studied

will vary from school to school, depending on the textbooks used" (Department of Education, 1987, 10).

At the beginning of the French syllabus, there is a section headed *Communicative Approach* (pp. 6 & 7) in which it is stated that "the main emphasis in a communicative approach is on increasing students' ability to comprehend everyday French and use it" (p.6). Teachers are advised that "context should be of paramount importance at all times, including controlled practice" and that language should be used "in contexts which emphasise its functions as a means of communicating ideas, attitudes, and feelings". Furthermore, "'real-life' situations, involving the students' own life experiences and role play, should be emphasized". It is also noted that "classroom language should be part of the students' communicative repertoire", and that "guided small-group and pair interaction . . . should be encouraged". In addition, there should be "regular feedback (without insisting on correct language at all times) and clearly articulated objectives". Evaluation is to be based on the achievements listed in the syllabus "rather than [judging] . . . performance in relation to each other" (pp. 6 & 7). So far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned, the criterion for selection (*levels 1 to 3*) is "their appropriateness for meeting the listed achievements" (p.10). It is noted that 'the communicative approach' has implications for the evaluation process in that although "there will be a place for the testing of specific language items, as a diagnostic procedure" (p.9), the ultimate goal will be "communicative competence . . . the ability to transmit and receive information", an ability that "will form the major element in evaluation" with "effective communication and the transfer of information" being "the main criterion". The use of "mastery tests" will "often [be] appropriate (particularly in *levels one to three* where specific objectives are listed for each topic" (p.9). Although "the achievements are written mainly in terms of aural-oral skills", "the skills of reading and writing will also be practiced as appropriate" (p.10). Even so, although reference is made to "oral and written testing" (p.9), there is no specific reference to the testing of listening and speaking.

The French syllabus is divided into five levels. Although the levels "do not necessarily correspond to yearly divisions . . . it is expected that students will have completed *level three* by the end of the fifth-form year" (Department of Education, 1987a, p. 10). *Level four* constitutes the syllabus for the *Sixth Form Certificate* examination.

The initial objectives (Department of Education, 1987a, p. 5) are very general and include:

. develop . . . competence in French in a wide range of situations, using the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing;

and

. use French to carry out everyday language functions such as asking for information, expressing likes and dislikes, or describing things, people, and places.

For each of the first three levels (*levels 1 - 3*), general and specific aspects of language learning are outlined. The general aspects include:

. rationale for foreign language learning (particularly the learning of French) in New Zealand;
. objectives for the students;
. an explanation of what is referred to as "a communicative approach".

The specific aspects (*levels 1 - 3)* include:

. topics (around which the programme is organised);
. cultural aspects associated with each topic;
. the achievements to be aimed at;
. vocabulary.

For l*evels 4* and *5*, topics are no longer specified and the syllabus is organised more generally.

At *level 1*, there are just over 250 items in the vocabulary lists for each unit, and just under 50 items in the additional vocabulary list at the end of the unit. The vocabulary lists contain unanalyzed chunks ('comment vous appelez-vous?'; 'ce n'est pas'; 'qu'est-ce que vous désirez?') and centrally syntactic items ('ne...pas'; 'ne...rien'). Thus, for example, at *level 3* (*topic 3g*) 'l'éte' is listed as is 'en éte'. The effect of this, together with the avoidance of explicit listing of, for example, subject-verb agreement, is that the emphasis

appears, at least some of the time, to be on unanalyzed chunks (as is common in phrase books), rather than on generative behaviour.

It is clear from the grammar summary at the end of *level 1* that students have not yet been introduced to any means of expressing past or future events and can communicate using regular verbs only. There are no object pronouns, no plural possessive pronouns, and only four conjunctions introduced at *level 1*. No reference is made to segmental or supra-segmental phonology (with the exception of 'questions by intonation'). At the end of *level 2,* however, students can refer to past time by means of 'avoir'. In this connection, it is relevant to note the following extract from the draft European Framework for modern languages:

> The communicative yield of grammatical categories has to be taken into account, i.e. their role as exponents of general notions. For instance, should learners follow a progression which leaves them unable, after two years' study, to speak of past experience?' (Council of Europe, 1996, 6.7.2.5.2).

There remains, however, at *level 2*, no way of referring to future time (with the exception of projections based on want/desire (vouloir). A single additional conjunction has been added.

By the end of *level 3*, students are able to refer to past, present and future time and to use comparatives and superlatives (of regular adjectives only, however).

It is relevant to look here in more detail at the type of achievement objectives listed in the syllabus, and the way in which these achievement objectives are listed. For example, *level 1, topic 1a*, has the following outcome statements:

> greet people;
> introduce yourself to others;
> introduce someone else;
> ask how people are, and answer when asked;
> ask who someone is.

Clearly, we are concerned here largely with formulaic and semi-formulaic utterances performing a range of basic, stereotypical functions. When, however, we reach *topic 1d*, the situation is different and the outcomes statements are potentially much less specific. It is only after examining the lexical content of the unit that it is possible, for example, to say precisely what is meant by being able to "give information about yourself and your family". By *level 2, topic 2f*, specification has become more general still. Here it is observed that students should be able to "talk about yourself, your friends, and others". Interpretation of this objective is not possible without direct reference to language content: it would, therefore, have been equally possible (and, arguably, less potentially confusing) to express this outcome statement (and many others) in terms of the expected linguistic content.

There is no reference in the syllabus objectives to degrees of ability to perform the outcomes, and no indication of how such discrimination would be effected. This omission becomes more salient at *level 3*, where, for example, students are expected to be able, at the end of one unit of work (*topic 3b*) to "describe an incident" and, at the end of another (*topic 3b*), to "talk about [their] town and country" What this highlights is the type of problem in relation to objectives specification that can accompany attempts to subordinate linguistic considerations to functional specification rather than accommodate the one to the other. What it also illustrates is the type of problem that develops when the term 'function' is used in a very general sense and without reference to different types of functional specification (such as those outlined in the draft framework of reference for the description of language learning and teaching) (Council of Europe, 1996). This will be discussed more fully in *Chapter 5*.

So far as topic listings are concerned, the presumption must be that they are intended to move outwards from a focus on self, towards the immediate environment and, then, to the wider environment. There are seven topics listed at *levels 1* and *3*, and six at *level 2*, as follows:

Level 1
getting acquainted;
looking around the classroom;
telling the time and the date, and describing the weather;
describing yourself and your family;
talking about yourself and other people;

describing your home;
getting around town.

Level 2

going shopping;
eating and drinking at home;
school;
getting about town;
typical day at home;
describing people.

Level 3

holidays;
sport and leisure;
travel;
eating and drinking out;
communications;
health;
one's country.

As an example, two of these topics will be examined here in more detail. *Level 1, Topic 1b* (*Looking around the classroom)* includes in the vocabulary list 22 nouns, of which 9 are masculine and 13 feminine. Of these, 3 begin with vowels (and, therefore, take an abbreviated form of the article) and one exists in the plural only. There are, in addition, 8 verbs (all regular), 5 prepositions, an interrogative word, a positive question form ('qu'est-ce-que c'est?'), and positive and negative response forms ('c'est ça'/'ce n'est pas'). There are, therefore, a range of expectations in relation to morphology, syntax, and intonation.

The 'cultural aspect' is listed as "secondary schools in France". Under the heading of possible content, the following list occurs:

. secondary schools - le lycée, le collège
. no uniforms;
. structure of the school day and week - starting and finishing times;
. length of lunch hour, Wednesday break;

. class names (secondary school starts *en sixième* at age eleven);
. holidays - long summer holidays, short holidays at Christmas and Easter.

In view of the specification in the section dealing with 'a communicative approach' that "the main role of English should be to describe, where necessary, the situation in which the language is going to be used, to clarify symbols or pictures, or to give meaning to words or expressions where other methods appear difficult to implement" (p.6), it seems likely that the intention is that the cultural content will be taught through the medium of French. However, an examination of the list above suggests the need for numbers (cardinals and ordinals), days of the week, parts of the day, times, dates, seasons, names of festivals, and names of countries and of peoples. In addition to points of time, temporal duration is implied. The sentence types presupposed are interrogative and declarative (positive and negative) with the declarative word order being subject, verb phrase, (object/prepositional phrase). At least one pronoun (3rd. person singular subject) is also presupposed, as are the definite and indefinite articles (feminine and masculine). Oddly, however, the vocabulary list for the following topic includes words that would appear to be required at this point. What this suggests is that the expectation is not that cultural aspects will necessarily be treated in French.

Level 4 represents the work to be covered for the award of a *Sixth Form Certificate* in French. The organization here is no longer by topic, but in terms of the following headings:

. Student Achievements;
. Individualised Reading;
. Cultural Aspects;
. Assessment;
. Grammar;
. Vocabulary.

Under the heading, *Student Achievements,* a list is included, and it is noted that students will be able to do the things listed "using the appropriate language skills" (p. 39). The list is made up of a combination of different types of category. It includes some things that could validly be called micro-functions (in terms of the type of specifications provided in *Council of Europe* documentation - see *Chapter 5*) such as *giving directions or*

instructions, making requests, excuses, apologies. It also, however, includes more complex activities (such as describing people, things, places, events and discussing plans, interests, feelings) that necessarily include a range of micro-functions The list is provided below:

.give information;
.ask for information;
.give directions or instructions;
.describe people, things, places, events;
.make comments;
.express opinions;
.make requests, excuses, apologies;
.give reasons and explanations;
.discuss plans, interests, feelings;
.understand other people communicating with them in any of these ways.

In some cases (e.g. giving reasons) what is involved is the ability to link encoded propositions in specific ways. In other words, what we are concerned with is coherence and cohesion, something that is treated in the draft Framework of reference for the description of language learning and teaching produced by the *Council of Europe* under the heading of 'discourse competence' (Council of Europe, 1996). The fact that there is no clear distinction in the French syllabus among various types of competency and/or among different types of function (e.g. micro-functions such as *greetings* and macro-functions such as *description*) creates a number of problems in relation to interpreting the achievement objectives in the French syllabus. This will be discussed in more detail in *Chapter 5.* It should, however, be noted at this stage that whereas 'giving reasons' is included here, expressing conditions, providing examples and making concessions are not. Furthermore, there are, in linguistic terms, a large variety of ways in which reasons may be given. Presumably, student performance can be differentiated in terms of that variety, and in terms also of the extent to which the forms selected are contextually appropriate. When, however, the section dealing with grammar at *level 4* is examined, what is revealed is the fact that there is nothing that can be associated specifically with giving reasons except, perhaps, for the reference to "conjunctions as they appear in the vocabulary lists" (p.42). From this perspective, the achievement objectives as expressed in this syllabus are difficult to interpret in terms of expectations in relation to performance.

Discussing plans, interests and feelings involves, inevitably, an ability to make reference to future time (*level 3*), to control a wide range of collocations and to make use of a varied vocabulary including, in particular, a range of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Which of the possible realization types is actually expected is difficult to determine on the basis of the vocabulary lists and grammatical summaries supplied.

There are, therefore, considerable difficulties in determining what is really expected of students in terms of the linguistic realization of the listed objectives. This represents a problem in the context of a syllabus that is intended to be progressively staged, moving students gradually towards the use of increasingly complex language in increasingly demanding contexts of use. What appears to be a lack of appropriate linguistic specification and discrimination cannot be resolved simply by observing that it is, ultimately, the teachers' responsibility to ensure that the objectives are being met in specific ways. After all, it is noted that evaluation "should be based on achievements listed in the syllabus" (p.9) and it therefore follows that these achievements should be expressed in ways that make appropriate evaluation possible.

Following the section dealing with student achievements (*level 4*), there is a section dealing with individualised reading. Here, the only specification is that students should have available to them "a selection of interesting reading material of varying lengths written at a level which permits the student to read with ease without having to make undue use of a dictionary or word list" (p.39). There is nothing here, or elsewhere, that deals specifically with text type, something that is explicitly included in the *Council of Europe* draft Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 1996). So far as the syllabus section dealing with cultural aspects is concerned, the advice is simply that topics should be "determined by the interests of the students and teacher, and the material available to them" (p.39). The advice regarding assessment is that adequate weighting (at least 20%) should be given to all four skills, and that "the vocabulary and grammar set out in this syllabus should be regarded as a minimum" although "work beyond this minimum may be included for assessment, where appropriate". It is noted that "the extent to which this minimum is exceeded will depend upon many factors, of which the choice of themes and depth to which each is studied will be the most important" (p.40). The grammar is to be seen as an extension of that already covered in *levels one to three*, with certain items being "for recognition only" (p. 40). One point that should be noted about the grammar list

here is that this is, for example, the first time that order of object pronouns in combination has been introduced and the first time that we have encountered demonstrative pronouns.

At *level 5*, there is an attempt, under the heading of *Student Achievements*, to introduce discourse-related features. Students are expected to be able to:

. present arguments for and against;
. discuss problems;
. express themselves imaginatively.

They are also to be encouraged to "listen to and read a wide variety of material, including authentic texts" (p.47), although "the emphasis should not be on acquiring an active mastery of extra vocabulary and grammar, but on developing the skills of:

. selecting and classifying relevant information;
. summarising;
. adapting and re-presenting material" (p.47).

Under the heading of 'individualised reading', reference is made to "authentic material of a more demanding nature, e.g. works of modern French literature, and articles from current periodicals" (p.47). It is noted that the study of cultural aspects will continue and that "a wide variety of topics is possible; for example, la presse, le cinéma". So far as the grammar list is concerned, there is, in fact, very little that is new, and what is new is also very simple, such as, for example, non-agreement of compound adjectives of colour, repetition of prepositions, omission of indefinite article after 'comme'.

4.3.1.2 The German syllabus

The *Foreword* to the German syllabus is almost the same as that of the French syllabus, except for the omission of the paragraph in the French syllabus dealing with general and specific aspects of language. In the *Introduction* to the German syllabus, "certain general principles of language teaching" are set out. These include the observation that "the linguistic experience in a New Zealand classroom must be as authentic as possible" (p.4). Because "a syllabus should cover only as much as students can master in the time available", "this syllabus . . . identifies a minimum core for German language study that

will realise the general aims and assist teachers to develop a useful and effective programme" (p.4).

This syllabus is said to be based on three general principles: "language learning is a cumulative process", "there are two aspects to language learning: development of knowledge of sounds, words and structures, and development of the ability to use this knowledge for communication", and "knowledge of, and understanding of, the cultural background is an integral part of learning a language" (p.5). The approach is described as "student-centred" and it is noted that "recent developments, while accepting the importance of grammatical structures and vocabulary in language learning, add the notion that language performs certain functions, such as exchanging information, expressing attitudes and emotions, and socialising" (p.5). Thus, a "'communicative approach' to language teaching demands a change of emphasis on the part of teachers" and while "study of the grammatical, phonemic, and other systems of German remains important . . . this study is regarded as a tool to achieve communication and not as an end in itself" (p.5).

It appears that the writers of the German syllabus had a rather different focus from that of the writers of the French syllabus: there is here considerably more emphasis on structural considerations. Nevertheless, the basic principles associated with what is referred to as 'the communicative approach' in the French syllabus remain. For example, it is observed that "since speech is the main means of communication, this skill is stressed more strongly than in the past" and "the desire to minimise [errors] must take second place to the need for communication to take place"(pp. 5 & 6).

The syllabus objectives are listed here under the heading of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and are expressed in very general terms. Thus, for example, under the leading of *'Listening'*, students are expected to "grasp the general meaning of simple German spoken clearly at moderate speed, and to understand the specific meaning of shorter utterances, for example, descriptions of people, places, and activities, simple dialogues and narratives, as well as commands and instructions, and simple directions" (p.6). Under the heading of *'Recommended Teaching Approaches'*, reference is made to cooperative planning, the need to explain achievable goals, to build confidence, to bring communication to life, to teach appropriate structures and vocabulary, and to provide teaching material which reflects teenage interests (p.8). In terms of other aspects of the

recommended teaching approach, the differences from the French syllabus include reference to the need to:

(a) provide materials for comprehension beyond the scope of the class course book (p.9);

(b) choose materials for grammatical and structural drills with a definite communicative target in mind, "so that students will see clearly the connection between formal training and the practical use of language for communication" (p.10); and

(c) encourage students to become interested in the German language and culture outside of the classroom and involve them in a regular review of their course and their progress (p.11).

Under the heading of *'Assessment'*, we find, once again, a different emphasis from that of the French syllabus. Thus, it is noted that whereas "formal accuracy is another criterion", it "should not be treated as an end in itself" although "it must be recognised as a factor that affects students' ability to communicate clearly" (pp. 12 & 13).

Unlike the French syllabus, the German syllabus is not divided into three levels prior to *Sixth Form Certificate*. There are, simply, eight topics (with suggested additional topics (see p.28)), with associated sections covering language, cultural background, and vocabulary. In the language section, activities for students are suggested "through which the structures and vocabulary can be taught" (p. 130). Although "the background sections list items, including vocabulary, understanding of which is needed to gain insight into the way of life and cultural background of German-speaking countries", it is observed that "much of this can be taught in English" (p. 13). Thus, the problem noted earlier in respect of the linguistic presuppositions of the cultural content section of the French syllabus are resolved.

The eight topics specified in this syllabus are:

. the individual;
. the family and home;

. the school and education;
. social life and occasions;
. city and town;
. sport and recreation;
. travel and holidays;
. geography.

In place of the general objectives statements that precede each unit of the French syllabus, there is here a statement of objectives that is headed *'Language'*. The type of specification here is very similar to that in the French syllabus, including, for example (*Topic One*), "give general descriptions of a person"; "talk about health and sickness, including visiting the doctor or dentist" (p.14).

Excluding background vocabulary (just over 100 items), the amount of vocabulary in the pre-*Sixth Form Certificate* part of the syllabus is just over one thousand items. What actually qualifies to go into the vocabulary lists is much clearer than it is in the lists provided in the French syllabus and, in fact, the principles of selection are explained in a special section on vocabulary (pp. 29 & 30).

The first part of the syllabus is followed by a section headed *'Grammatical Structures'* (p. 39ff.) which distinguishes between productive and receptive uses. Although it is for teachers to decide when specific grammar and vocabulary will be introduced, the assumption is that by the end of this section students will have been presented with:

. present, past, perfect and pluperfect tenses;
. imperatives, infinitives and participles;
. some uses of the subjunctive;
. impersonal construction;
. nominative, accusative and dative forms of personal pronouns;
. reflexive and reciprocal pronouns;
. demonstratives, indefinites, interrogatives;
. relative pronouns, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns;
. adjectives (including comparative and superlative forms and agreement);
. adverbs and adverbial expressions of time;

. cardinal and ordinal numbers;
. an extensive list of prepositions and conjunctions;
. rules governing word order.

In this context, it is much easier than it is in the case of the French syllabus to make sense of how students are actually intended to meet the specified objectives.

At *Form Six level* (preparation for *Sixth form Certificate*), the German syllabus is organised into:

Objectives;
Assessment;
Approach;
Vocabulary;
Grammatical Structures.

Under the heading of *'Listening'*, reference is made to the need to develop listening skills in "obtaining specific information" and "understanding the gist of spoken and recorded material" (p.49). Under the heading of *'Speaking'*, it is specified that there should be further development of "the ability to hold a conversation", the aim being to encourage "the use of a wider range of constructions and the expression of more complex ideas" (p.49). It is noted that "a carefully graded reading programme should be prepared" which will include:

. reading for personal enjoyment;
. reading to gain information;
. intensive study of more difficult material during which students will be taught how to use a dictionary (p.50)

Although there is very little reference to text types or to discourse features, it is, nevertheless, specified that students should become familiar with "descriptive and narrative writing", "situational dialogues", "letters conveying prescribed information", and "written answers to comprehension questions from printed or taped messages" (p. 50). No explicit reference is made here, or in the French syllabus, to coherence, cohesion, text structure or discourse organization.

At this level (*Form 6*), it is noted that "the teachers' programme should continue the thematic approach" (p.51). There are two vocabulary lists: one containing words taken from the background vocabulary lists for the eight topics in the first part of the syllabus; the other containing words of a general nature not included in previous sections of the syllabus. In this second list, there are approximately one hundred and fifty items. The list of grammatical structures is again divided into productive and receptive uses. This list includes:

. conjugation of weak, strong and irregular verbs in present and past tense;
. conjugation of weak and strong verbs in perfect tense and pluperfect tense;
. idiomatic use of subjunctive in main clauses;
. past participles in compound tenses;
. uses of the infinitive.

Among the receptive uses are:

.future tense, passive voice, imperfect tense.

The final part of the syllabus is the *Form Seven* component. Although it is noted that "the theme based approach is again recommended", "no specific themes are prescribed" (p.64). The objectives are listed under *Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing,* and *Life and Customs*, and there are sections dealing with vocabulary and grammatical structures. No specific vocabulary is listed, although reference is made to the value of a specific work published in 1966: *Grundwortschatz Deutsch* by Oehler.

So far as grammatical structures are concerned, productive uses cover: modal verbs with infinitive in perfect tense; conjugation of all forms of weak and strong verbs with pluperfect, future tense, imperfect subjunctive; compound tenses; use of *würde* and conditional sentences.

One of the most significant sections here is the section dealing with skills in which objectives are recorded. These 'objectives' appear however to be articulated
rather than as objectives in that it is impossible to determine how some of them could be assessed. They are set out below:

Listening

Students should be able to understand spoken German with increased confidence.

Students should be able to:

Understand specific information in extended passages of spoken German;
Gain impressions of character and personality from live or recorded conversations;
Be gripped by an exciting story;
Appreciate poetry or songs;
Follow Hörspiele;
Participate in classroom conversations.

Speaking

Students should be able to speak with greater confidence on everyday topics and on the special themes they have studied.

While perfection will not be attained, more complex structures should be used to express more complex ideas.

Reading

Students should be able to read a variety of German with ease.

Reading includes:

Extensive reading of simple German for pleasure;
Exploring authentic German of moderate difficulty for information;
The intensive study of more difficult theme-related texts, sometimes with the help of a dictionary and other reference books;
Translation from German into English with some emphasis on English expression.

The texts chosen should be used to:

Expand the range of students' vocabulary;

Enable students to acquire varied forms of expression;
Consolidate students' knowledge of the structure of the language.

Reading "may include short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, detective stories, prepared texts, plays, and even simple novels" (p.65).

Writing
Students should be able to further develop their writing skills.

"Although writing will be practiced mainly as a means of clarifying and reinforcing linguistic knowledge, rather than as an end in itself, students should however acquire the writing skills to be able to maintain an interesting contact with a German-speaking correspondent and to convey a specific message or piece of information" (p. 65).

"Regular practice in a variety of written exercises and activities is recommended. Dictation, guided essay writing, and Nacherzählung are valid forms of practice" (p. 65).

4.3.2 The curriculum statements for international languages

In this section, the curriculum statements for international languages are discussed. The first of these, the curriculum statement for Spanish, appeared in 1995. This was followed in the same year by the curriculum statement for Chinese. In 1998, the curriculum statement for Japanese, and the draft curriculum statement for Korean appeared.

4.3.2.1 The Spanish curriculum statement

The Spanish curriculum statement is the result of a 1992 initiative by the then Minister of Education whose aim was to extend language learning opportunities in New Zealand. In line with the *National Curriculum Framework*, it specifies learning goals at "eight progressive levels, defined by a series of achievement objectives" and includes a range of teaching and learning examples and assessment procedures (Ministry of Education, 1995a, p. 12). The statement "is based on modern standard Spanish and avoids using examples that are regionally specific" (p.7). It provides the basis for Spanish language programmes

in schools for *Forms 1 and 2*, secondary classes and interested primary schools. It is observed that "the curriculum statement is not a classroom programme in itself, nor does it provide the specific detail which would be included in a teachers' programme planning guide" (p.5). Furthermore, "the structures and vocabulary are only suggested, not prescribed, and teachers should feel free to modify and expand these to match the resources available, and meet their students' needs" (p.16). Third form classes might, for example, cover *levels 1 to 3* in a year. For the purposes of national awards, *levels 5, 6, and 7* relate to levels *1, 2 and 3* of the *Qualifications Framework.*

Because the Spanish curriculum statement is the first of those that were designed with the New Zealand Curriculum Framework in mind, and because many of its features are shared by later statements, considerable detail is given here in order to provide a basis for comparison with later curriculum statements.

Overall, the approach in this curriculum statement is to provide "achievement objectives at eight levels . . . organised in terms of communication functions and divided into the strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing" (p. 5). "These strands", it is claimed, "indicate the language necessary for students to perform the various communication functions as they progress in learning the Spanish language" (p. 5). The curriculum statement "includes ideas for learning, teaching, and assessment and also for possible cultural experiences, as well as suggested structures and vocabulary" although these "are not exhaustive lists of ideas - they are intended only as examples, to suggest possible directions for teachers in their planning" (p. 5).

The rationale provided for learning Spanish includes references to tourism and trade and it is observed that there are over 350 million native speakers of Spanish in twenty-two countries. In terms of approach, it is noted that the "communicative approach to language learning is . . . fundamental to the design" (p.7). In this case, "cultural aspects . . . are fully integrated with the teaching of the language rather than isolated and treated separately" (p. 7). With reference to the *'Essential Skills'*, reference is made to communication skills, information skills, problem-solving skills, social and co-operative skills, self-management skills, work and study skills, numeracy skills and physical skills. There is a section headed *'Learning-how-to-learn Partnership'*. Here reference is made to the fact that "language competence increases as responsibility for learning is transferred

progressively from teacher to learner" (p.9). Once again, as in the French and German syllabuses, it is claimed that emphasis is placed on setting clear, achievable goals.

It is noted in the Spanish curriculum statement that 'the communicative approach':

> . . . encourages learners of a language to use that language as much as possible, for real, purposeful communication, in real life or in other relevant situations, such as role-playing. Learners are expected to become competent communicators in the language, able to convey meaning to others. The communicative approach is activity based, interactive, and learner centred (p. 10).

The goals of the communicative approach are to enable learners to:

. use language appropriately in a range of social and cultural contexts;

. understand and convey meaning through interaction with other speakers of the language" (p.10).

The main features of the communicative approach are said to be:

. the dominant language of the classroom is Spanish;

. communication involves using appropriate language for real purposes;

. communication will often have some personal importance or meaning for the students;

. communication will often be unrehearsed and may be unpredictable;

. developing listening skills is recognised a an essential part of learning;

. students learn appropriate grammar when they need it to comprehend or convey messages in Spanish;

. classroom organization encourages interaction, allowing pairing and grouping of students;

. when assessing, teachers and students place emphasis on communicative abilities (p.10).

In the section headed *'The Process of Teaching and Learning'*, it is noted that "the focus is on purposeful communication in Spanish, with English playing only a minimal role" (p.11).

About language structures, it is said that "language structures are learned best when they are used to fulfil communication functions. The simple structures are generally learned first, for each function. However, more complex structures may be introduced early if they occur frequently or are of high interest value" (p. 11). In relation to responding to error, it is noted that "teachers need to find a productive balance between encouraging spontaneous communication and correcting errors.... Increasingly, they [students] will become aware that accuracy is needed for really effective communication" (p.11).

The learning framework is as follows:

aims
(including general aims and achievement aims)

language development descriptors
(general statements about language development)

achievement objectives
(which include communication functions and language level indicators which describe the language students will use to perform the functions at each level for each of the four *strands,* listening, speaking, reading, and writing)

suggested socio-cultural aspects
(which identify historical and social content specific to the language)

suggested structures and vocabulary
(which indicate the linguistic content expected and, when used in conjunction with the communication functions and the language level indicators, suggest the level of difficulty expected for each level)

suggested learning activities
(ways of using and reinforcing Spanish in realistic, communicative language learning contexts)

suggested assessment activities
(measure progress in realistic communicative situations through self assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment).

Themes and topics are not specified although possible areas of experience and related topics are indicated in the suggested socio-cultural aspects which are provided at each level.

In relation to the levels, some attention has been paid to differentiation, and it is claimed that differentiation is built through:

. the increasing complexity of the learning activities;
. the increasing range and variety of the language used;
. the expectation of increasing learner independence.

There are 4 language *descriptors,* each spanning two levels:

. *emergent communication: levels 1 and 2*
Learners can understand language that contains well-rehearsed sentence patterns and familiar vocabulary, and can interact in predictable exchanges. They can read and write straightforward versions of what they have learned to say. They are aware of and understand the typical cultural conventions that operate in interpersonal communication. Although they may be enthusiastic participants in class, learners may still be reticent about speaking Spanish outside the classroom.

. *survival skills: levels 3 and 4*

Learners can cope with a variety of routine situations when visiting Spanish speaking countries or when dealing with Spanish speakers in New Zealand. They can use familiar language with some flexibility and pick up some new language from its context. They can read and write simple notes and short letters, and fill out most parts of official forms. They can understand and make use of many of the customs and beliefs of Spanish-speaking cultures. Although their confidence is growing, they may still be hesitant about talking to native speakers in some situations.

. *social competence: levels 5 and 6*

Learners are confident enough to seek out opportunities to use Spanish. They can initiate and sustain a conversation with a sympathetic native speaker, and speak at some length if required. They can interact flexibly in familiar social situations and cope with some less familiar ones. They can use basic language patterns spontaneously. They show a willingness to experiment with new language and to read independently. They can write extended passages, long personal letters, and simple formal letters. Their behaviour is culturally appropriate in most social situations, and they are sensitive to the values held by people from Spanish-speaking countries.

. *personal independence: levels 7 and 8*

Learners can take part in general conversation with native speakers, understanding most of what is said, and contributing relevant comments. They can explain and debate about many of their own ideas and opinions, and use language imaginatively. They can read a variety of authentic materials on non-specialised topics, and write expressively for a variety of purposes. They are comfortable interacting with native speakers, especially those of their own age, and social situations.

The achievement objectives have two interrelated parts: communication functions, and language level indicators.

In relation to assessment, the Spanish curriculum statement has more in common with the German syllabus than with the French one:

"Assessment should be based on activities which measure skills in communicative contexts. . . . Assessment tasks should reflect the situations, the expected language content, and the purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations. Assessment should measure both communicative competence and linguistic accuracy, and should allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content" (p. 17).

There is a clear account of programme planning (pp. 18 & 19).

The achievement objectives are accompanied by *examples*, *language level indicators* (specified in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing), *suggested socio-cultural aspects, suggested structures, suggested vocabulary, suggested learning activities,* and *suggested assessment activities.* The *achievement objectives* are specified in functional terms. For *level 1*, they are set out below:

. greet, farewell, and thank people;
. introduce themselves and others;
. recognise and respond to greetings, farewells, introductions, and thanks;
. recognise and respond to simple classroom instructions;
. understand and express dates and time.

The examples consist of simple words (such as 'hóla') and expressions which are stereotypically associated with the listed functions/objectives. The *language level indicators* for *level 1* are:

In personal and familiar contexts, students should be able to:

Listening
. understand and respond appropriately (in words or actions) to simple words and phrases;
. get the gist of phrases and short sentences;
. recognise and understand key words in simple phrases.

Reading
.identify letters of the alphabet, combinations of letters, accents, and punctuation,

and their associated sounds;
.recognise and understand simple words and phrases;

Speaking

.approximate pronunciation and intonation by imitating sounds, simple words, names, and phrases;
.respond appropriately to simple set phrases, questions, or visual stimuli.

Writing

. write alphabet letters, names, and simple words and phrases, using accents and punctuation.

The *suggested vocabulary* for *level 1* includes nationalities, occupations, place names, directions, numbers (1 - 31), telephone numbers, gender nouns, months and days. The *suggested structure list* includes subject pronouns, interrogatives, gender and number, definite and indefinite articles, conjunctions, prepositions, negation, and sentence structure. It also includes time, dates, greetings and farewells, classroom instructions, and punctuation. The suggested *learning activities* include listening to and singing simple songs, playing number games, and making a chain drill, and the suggested *assessment activities* include, in general terms, self assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment, and, in more specific terms, activities such as marking times on pictures of clocks. Among the suggested *socio-cultural aspects* are formal and informal address, body language, common perceptions and cultural stereotypes, different accents and vocabulary in different parts of the Spanish-speaking world. These specifications rely heavily on adverbial expressions to distinguish levels and although reference is made to 'a wide range of genres', there is no clear indication of how teachers are expected to cope with genre or with discourse structure.

4.3.2.2 The Chinese curriculum statement

It is observed in the introductory section of the Chinese curriculum statement that "the many languages referred to as 'Chinese' are spoken by nearly a quarter of the world's population", but that, for the purpose of teaching Chinese as an international language in New Zealand schools, the variety of Chinese referred to as Modern Standard Chinese, or "Mandarin" will be used (New Zealand Ministry of Education 1995b, pp. 5 & 6).

The section on 'the communicative approach' (p. 12) is the same as that in the Spanish statement, as are the following introductory sections:

The Roles of Teachers and Students;
The Process of Teaching and Learning;
Language Structures;
Responding to Error;
The Learning Framework.

The outline of aims, language development descriptors, and achievement objectives (p.15) is also the same as is the remainder of the introductory section up to the end of the section dealing with suggested assessment activities (pp. 19 & 20). There follows a section dealing with characters in which we are advised that:

> "At level 1, for example, students can be expected to recognise up to 35 characters and write up to 20 from memory. By level 5, they should read approximately 280 characters and write up to 170 from memory. At level 8, they should read up to 600 and write up to 350 Chinese characters" (p.21).

> "It is important at every stage that both teachers and students see Pinyin as a tool, one which is useful for learning but which should be set aside whenever possible in favour of the characters" (p.21).

We then move to sections dealing with programme planning and the national qualifications framework. These are the same as those in the Spanish curriculum statement. However, the language development descriptor headed *'Emergent Communication'* differs in that "use numbers 1 to 10" replaces "understand and express dates and time" in the Spanish curriculum. With this exception, the descriptors (*emergent communication, survival skills, social competence,* and *personal independence*) are essentially the same as those for Spanish. Although the descriptors are essentially the same and are applied to the same curriculum levels which are, in turn, associated with levels in the National Qualifications Framework in the same way, it is acknowledged that the majority of New Zealand students will make slower progress in a language such as Chinese than in those European languages that are available to the students.

So far as *language level indicators* are concerned, the *level 1* statement for *listening* in Chinese is the same as that for Spanish as it is for *speaking,* except for the addition of reference to tones. The statements for *reading* and *speaking* are compared below:

Reading : Spanish

.identify letters of the alphabet, combinations of letters, accents, and punctuation, and their associated sounds;

.recognise and understand simple words and phrases.

Reading :Chinese

.identify the Pinyin alphabet, combinations of Pinyin letters, accents, tone marks and their associated sounds, and some radicals and characters;

.recognise and respond to simple words and phrases in personal and familiar contexts.

Writing: Spanish

. write alphabet letters, names, and simple words and phrases, using accents and punctuation.

Writing: Chinese

. write Pinyin letters, tone marks, some radicals, and simple characters;

. write up to 20 Chinese characters.

So far as structures and vocabulary are concerned, the division we find in the Spanish curriculum statement into '*suggested structures*' and '*suggested vocabulary*' is retained. However, these sections are essentially different, being largely exemplificatory rather than classificatory. Under the heading '*suggested structures and vocabulary*' is a list of functional labels followed by listed examples. For *level 1*, the functions are:

greetings; saying goodbye; saying sorry; thanking and responding; introducing themselves and others; asking for and giving personal details; identifying people, things, and some animals; using numbers; calling the roll; using simple classroom instructions.

In the case of functions which are associated with stereotypical encodings, this does not necessarily constitute a problem. However, bearing in mind the fact that functions are defined largely in contextual terms and may in most cases be associated with a wide range of encoding-types, there is a very real danger associated with this type of presentation, a danger that arises out of the possibility that students will fail to appreciate the generative properties of structures and simply associate specific expressions with specific encodings. The relationship between the achievement objectives at *level 2* in the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements is outlined in *Table 4.1* below:

Table 4.1: *Comparison of the Achievement Objectives at Level 2 in the Spanish and Chinese Curriculum Statements*

Spanish curriculum statement	Chinese curriculum statement
Level 2: Emergent Communication	Level 2: emergent communication
Communicative functions	Communicative functions
Students should be able to:	Students should be able to:
. ask about and respond to personal information about themselves and others	. ask about and respond to personal information about themselves and others
. describe themselves and others; . recognise descriptions of themselves and others	
. describe places, animals and things; . recognise descriptions of places, animals and things	
. point out and/or identify people, places and things	. identify places and things
. recognise, express, and enquire about physical states (hot, cold, hunger, thirst, age)	
. recognise, express, and enquire about the relationships between people and the ownership of things	. recognise, express, and enquire about the relationships between people and the ownership of things
	. state the location of people and things
	. give simple descriptions of the weather
	. use numbers 0 - 100
	. use time, days of the week, months and years

The list of what are referred to as 'functions' in the Chinese curriculum statement includes items ('use numbers 0 - 100', 'use time, days of the week, months, and years') that would not normally be treated under a functional heading. This raises the question of what the term 'communicative function' is intended to convey in the context of the New Zealand syllabuses and curriculum statements, something that will be discussed in detail in *Chapter 5.*

So far as the *'language level indicators'* are concerned, the list in the Chinese curriculum statement at *level 2* is the same as that in the Spanish curriculum statement, except for the following additions:

Reading:
. recognise up to 75 Chinese characters

Writing:
. write up to 50 simple Chinese characters with correct stroke order.

Under the heading of *suggested structures and vocabulary,* there is, once again, a functional presentation with associated examples. The outline is as follows:

Suggested Structures and Vocabulary

. asking about age and nationality;
Examples . . .

. asking about occupation;
Examples . . .

. asking about possessions;
Examples . . .

. identifying people, things, and places;
Examples . . .

. naming parts of the body;
Examples . . .

. identifying colours;
Examples . . .

. identifying places;
Examples . . .

. asking where; using time words and expressions;
Examples . . .

. taking about weather;
Examples . . .

What this seems to suggest is some confusion about the distinction between 'notions' and 'functions' as, for example, defined by Wilkins (1976). What appears to be lacking is any of the categorial refinement found in more recent *Council of Europe* presentations such as, for example, the draft Framework of reference for the description of language learning and teaching (Council of Europe, 1996). In the draft Framework, a distinction is made between 'general competences' and 'communicative language competences', the latter including 'linguistic skills and knowledge', 'sociolinguistic skills and knowledge' and 'pragmatic skills and knowledge'. The last of these includes 'discourse competence', 'design competence' and 'functional competence'. 'Functional competence' includes 'micro-functions' ("categories for the functional use of single (usually short) utterances, usually as turns in interaction" (Council of Europe, 1996, 4.7.2.3.2)) and 'macro-functions' ("the use of spoken discourse and written text for particular functional purposes" (4.7.2.3.2)). Furthermore, in the *Council of Europe* draft Framework, the 'notional' categories (i.e. semantico-grammatical categories) referred to by Wilkins (1976) are abandoned in favour of an approach in which phonology, orthography, vocabulary, morphology, syntax and semantics are all listed separately under the heading of 'linguistic skills and knowledge'. This greater refinement of categorization has the potential to remove the apparent categorial confusions we see exhibited under the general heading of 'functions' in some of the New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents.

Turning to *level 8* of the Chinese curriculum statement, we see that, once again, the *'communication functions'* and *'language level indicators'* are very similar to those in the Spanish curriculum statement. Even so, there must be some doubt about whether the linguistic range available to Chinese students who have completed courses based on the curriculum statement to this point is, indeed, equivalent to that available to students in a similar position in relation to Spanish. If there are significant differences, the validity of the way in which the language development descriptor statements are used must be called into question.

Many of the similarities between the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements (in terms, in particular, of the application of language development descriptors and the formulation and placement of the achievement objectives), appear to be based on what might be described an 'incestuous' relationship between the documents rather than to be motivated by a careful consideration of the needs of the system as a whole. Thus, for example, in spite of the acknowledgment that the majority of New Zealand students are likely to take longer to achieve high levels of proficiency in some languages than in others, we have seen that the distribution of language development descriptors is the same in the case of both the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements. Similarly, certain things that are omitted from the achievement objectives in the Spanish curriculum statement are also omitted in the case of the Chinese curriculum statement. For example, nowhere in either of these curriculum statements do we find 'expressing concessive meaning'. Nor do we find, for example, 'making reference to events that overlap in time' or 'stating the means by which a particular result may be achieved'.

4.3.2.3 The Japanese curriculum statement

The Japanese and Korean curriculum statements were both produced in 1998. The Japanese statement is very similar to the Spanish one in many ways. Interestingly, however, there is no specific section dealing with a 'communicative approach'. Instead, the statement "affirms the importance of using language for communicative purposes" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1998a, p.6). The term 'communicative' is used in relation to 'activities'. Thus, "effective, stimulating, and varied communicative activities should form the basis of the teaching and learning programme" (p.6). It is noted that "a Japanese programme with communication as its main goal" will have a number of features. These features are listed. Of the eleven items on the list, 9 are almost the same as those in the list provided in the Spanish statement under the heading of *Communicative Approach*. The two additional items in the list are:

. Japanese culture . . . is stressed as an integral part of language learning; and

. aspects of Japanese culture are compared with equivalent aspects in other cultures, including the students' own.

These two items are, in fact, covered under the heading of *'suggested socio-cultural aspects'* in the Spanish curriculum statement (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.16). The section dealing with the role of grammatical structures in the Japanese curriculum statement (p. 10) may be directly compared with the section dealing with language structures in the Spanish curriculum statement (p. 11). One significant difference, however, is that whereas in the Spanish curriculum statement, we are told that "as students internalise language patterns, they acquire the ability and confidence to use more complex structures and become independent communicators" (p.11), the Japanese curriculum statement advises teachers to "avoid burdening learners with exceptions" (p.10). It is, however, noted in the Japanese curriculum statement that although, in general, "simple structures will be learned first . . . more complex structures may be introduced early if they are of high frequency or high interest value" (p.6).

The *language development descriptors* appear once again in this curriculum statement and are, once again, essentially the same as for the Spanish curriculum statement. However, it is noted that "New Zealanders learning Japanese as a second or subsequent language are unlikely to reach the stage of personal independence at secondary school levels". This, however, does not resolve the central problem relating to the use of the descriptors (see *Chapter 5*).

Although in the case of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements, curriculum levels *5, 6 and 7* are said to equate to *levels 1 - 3 of National Qualifications Framework*, it is noted in the Japanese curriculum statement that the qualification levels in the *National Qualifications Framework* "equate to levels 6, 7 and 8 of the New Zealand Curriculum" (p. 24). The relationship between curriculum levels and language development descriptors in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements, and between these and levels of the National Qualifications framework is indicated in *Tables 4.2* and *4.3* below where EC = Emergent Communication; SS = Survival Skills; SC = Social Competence; PI = Personal Independence and QF = Qualifications Framework.

Table 4.2: The Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements: Relationship between Curriculum Levels and Language Development Descriptors

	EC	EC & SS	S S	SS & SC	S C	PI
Spanish: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Chinese: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Japanese: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 - 3	Level 4	Levels 5 & 6	Level 7	Level 8	

Table 4.3: The Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements: Relationship between Curriculum Levels and Levels of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

	QF level 1	QF level 2	QF level 3
Spanish: Curriculum levels	**Level 5** (Social Competence)	**Level 6** (Social Competence)	**Level 7** (Personal Independence)
Chinese: Curriculum levels	**Level 5** (Social Competence)	**Level 6** (Social Competence)	**Level 7** (Personal Independence)
Japanese: Curriculum levels	**Level 6** (Survival Skills)	**Level 7** (Survival Skills & Social Competence)	**Level 8** (Social Competence)

In relation to this, it may be instructive to consider a specific *language development descriptor* and the curriculum levels relating to it alongside a consideration of the achievement objectives associated with these levels in different curriculum statements (for more detail, see *Chapter 5*). When we do so, we find that although the language development descriptors are essentially the same in the case of all of the curriculum statements, there are some interesting differences in terms of the achievement objectives associated with them. Thus, for example, the achievement objective 'understand and describe how to do or use something' which occurs in the Spanish curriculum statement at *level 6* (descriptor: *social competence)* and, in a slightly different form, in the Chinese curriculum statement also at *level 6* (descriptor: *social competence*), occurs at *level 7* (descriptor: *personal independence)* in the Japanese curriculum statement.

The *'language level indicators'* that occur in the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements can be compared directly (see *Chapter 5*). It is not, however, possible to make a direct comparison in this area in relation to the Japanese curriculum statement. This is

because language level indicators are no longer included under the heading of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Instead, under the heading *'strands and achievement objectives'*, the 'communication functions' are essentially repeated under the heading of *language skills* and *communication functions*. *Japanese culture* appears as a separate heading (see *Table 4.4* below).

Table 4.4: *Extracts from the Japanese Curriculum Statement: Levels 5 and 6*

Communication functions	**Language skills**	**Japanese culture**
. recognise and express amounts and qualities . ask for, give and decline permission . recognise, ask about and express wishes . recognise and use expressions that relate to giving and receiving . recognise, express and ask about feelings in relation to events, actions and other people . recognise, ask about and say when events occur . compare and contrast people, places and things . ask for, give and respond to directions . recognise, ask about and express intentions . ask or direct others to do something or not to do it . recognise and respond to descriptions of activities and events . describe activities and events using complex sentences . recognise, ask for and give reasons for or against a proposed activity . recognise, ask about and express abilities and inabilities . recognise, ask about and express likes and dislikes	. seek and give information through conversation in a range of everyday situations .read and write notes and short letters in which sentences are linked and ideas are logically ordered . write *hiragana, katakana*, and some *kanji* accurately and fluently . comprehend detail and summarise meaning in written and spoken Japanese	. demonstrate knowledge about the conventions that are used when interacting with people in the wider community in Japan, for example, when travelling on public transport and for events . demonstrate their understanding of contemporary Japanese life and show an awareness of current attitudes and values . initiate and maintain a conversation that may have some unpredictable content .write extended passages, presenting ideas logically and demonstrating their expanding knowledge of *kanji*

4.3.2.4 The draft Korean curriculum statement

In the draft Korean curriculum statement, it is observed that "students should learn Korean naturally, through real communication" (Ministry of Education, 1998b, p.7). The emphasis is on skills. Thus, "communication skills, which are fundamental to the language classroom, are reflected specifically in the communication functions in this draft curriculum

statement" (p. 10). There are, as in the case of the Japanese curriculum statement, three strands: *communication functions, Korean culture* and *language skills. Achievement objectives* are listed for each of the three strands at each level. It is noted that "although different communication functions are described for each level, teachers can return to functions at any level, increasing the complexity of the language for more advanced students" (p. 16). *Specific learning outcomes* that relate to the *achievement objectives*, and indicate increasing range and variety of the Korean expected, are suggested at each level under *'topic headings', 'suggested expressions',* and *'suggested grammar'*. However, although the *language skills* relate directly (as in the case of the Japanese curriculum statement) to the appropriate *language development descriptor*, the communication functions listed under the heading of *'strands and achievement objectives'* do not directly match the *specific outcomes* within the core of the curriculum statement, but, instead, summarize them. Thus, for example, at curriculum *level 1*, the following *'communication functions'* appear:

. follow classroom instructions;

. talk about what they have and what they need;

. meet and talk to someone about themselves, for example, their name, their age, where they live, their pets and their likes and dislikes.

It is difficult to determine on what basis the second and third of these is described as a 'communication function'. Specifications of this type are followed (under the heading of *'suggested topics and specific outcomes'*) by more specific outcomes statements, some of which could be described as micro-functional (e.g. 'greet people'; 'thank people). However, some of the specific outcomes statements appear simply to be instructions to use very specific language:

. invite people to come in (*level 1*);
. ask people when their birthdays are (*level 1*):

In spite of the difference in labelling, the *specific outcomes* statements are in the same form (and often have the same type of content) as statements relating to *communication functions* in other curriculum statements.

Table 4.5 below lists for *level 1* of the Korean curriculum statement the *specific outcomes* alongside the listed *communication functions* which make up one of the three components of the *strands and achievement objectives* (the other two being *Korean culture* and *language skills).*

Table 4.5: *Extract from the Korean Curriculum Statement - Level 1: Specific Outcomes and Communication Functions*

Communication functions	**Specific outcomes**
Students can: .follow classroom instructions; .talk about what they have and what they need; . meet and talk to someone about themselves, for example, their name, their age, where they live, their pets, and their likes and dislikes.	*Students can:* . greet people . say how they are . say they're pleased to meet someone . invite people to come in . say goodbye . thank people . say what their own name is . introduce others . say what their own age is . say where they come from . say what they like and dislike . say what pets they have . say what they have . ask for something . understand classroom instructions

In the draft Korean curriculum statement, the expressions listed are not suggestions, but required minima. Thus, "specific Korean words, phrases, questions, and statements are listed at each level to indicate the increasing range and variety of language that students are expected to acquire. . . . The expressions listed are a suggested minimum only. Teachers should feel free to add words that match their students' interests and abilities" (p. 19). The emphasis has, thus, with the draft Korean curriculum statement, moved further in the direction of specific types of encoding. The implications of this changing focus will be discussed in *Chapter 5.*

Underlying the draft Korean curriculum statement appears to be the fear that providing teachers with guidance in relation to language coverage has the potential to lead to a situation in which they will be tempted to teach about language rather than to teach language. Thus, it is noted that although "at every level, the structures and grammar appropriate to the specific learning outcomes for that level are listed", "teachers should remember that 'knowing grammar' is more important than 'knowing about grammar'" and "constructing sentences by a process that focuses on rules and tables is not the best way to communicate; it is better for students to focus on getting meaning across by using particular structures" and "the more they practice communicating, the more accurate their language is likely to become" (p. 19). However, "once students can use a grammatical structure to communicate, it can be useful for them to examine how that structure works, especially when they are encouraged to discover patterns and 'rules' for themselves" (p.19).

This fear that learning the target language may be subordinated to learning about the target language may account for the fact that there appears to be considerable reluctance among the writers of the curriculum statements to make clear what expectations they have in relation to the language that students will use in realising the achievement objectives at different curriculum levels. Certainly, to be too prescriptive would be to fail to acknowledge that language acquisition is inevitably an uneven process: students will learn to use language that is not specifically included in lesson objectives and fail to learn to use language that is included in lesson objectives. Thus, at approximately the same level of proficiency in the target language, students will present rather different profiles in terms of language use. At the same time, the concept of proficiency is related to levels of achievement. Assignment of a student to one proficiency level rather than another on the basis of performance is inevitably associated with a range of expectations in relation to the type of language that will be used and understood at that level. There should, therefore, be no reason why these expectations should not be made explicit, particularly in the context of the establishment of achievement objectives which will apply in a national context. It should be possible, therefore, to specify expectations for language use at different levels at the same time as noting that (a) even the most successful students are unlikely to perform with equal ease in all areas, and (b) using and/or understanding language in which certain vocabulary or structures occur in appropriate contexts is not the same thing as being able to explain that usage. In other words, the fact that a range of linguistic expectations is inevitably associated with different proficiency levels means that these expectations need to be clearly articulated. However, it also needs to be clearly stated that two students who

exhibit different language strengths may, nevertheless, be equally successful overall in relation to (a) proficiency level, and (b) meeting the specified achievement objectives.

In the Korean curriculum statement there is implicit acknowledgment of the fact that there are problems of comparability associated with the language development descriptors. Levels *1, 2, 3 and 4* of the curriculum are associated with *emergent communication; levels 5, 6, 7 and 8* of the curriculum are associated with *survival skills*, although it is noted that "it is expected that most New Zealand students working within *level eight* of the Korean curriculum will be at the *survival skills* stage, with some advancing into the *social competence* stage" (p.15). This raises problems (discussed more fully in *Chapter 5*) about the relationship between the eight levels of attainment, the language development descriptors, and the *National Qualifications Framework*. For the moment, it is useful simply to look again (see *Table 4.6* below) at the relationship between curriculum levels and language development descriptors in the different curriculum statements. In the following Table, EC = Emergent Communication; SS = Survival Skills; SC = Social Competence;
PI = Personal Independence.

Table 4.6: *The Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean Curriculum Statements: Relationship between Curriculum Levels and Language Development Descriptors*

	EC	**EC & SS**	**S S**	**SS & SC**	**S C**	**PI**
Spanish: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Chinese: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Japanese: Curriculum levels	Levels 1 - 3	Level 4	Levels 5 & 6	Level 7	Level 8	
Korean curriculum levels	Levels 1, 2, 3 & 4		Levels 5, 6, 7 & 8			

The overall format of the draft Korean curriculum statement is similar to that of the Japanese curriculum statement. There are, however, very considerable differences in terms of detail. For example, the concept of 'communication function' has been even further extended so that topics of conversation, such as 'talk about their house or flat and what

they do there', are now classified as communication functions. A certain unease with the exact nature of the term 'communication function' (see *Chapter 5*) is detectable throughout the curriculum statements; in the draft curriculum statement for Korean, that unease is most in evidence and the gradual movement towards more detailed linguistic specification most clearly marked.

4.3.3 The draft curriculum guidelines for French and German

In 1999, work on draft curriculum guidelines for French and German (as replacements for the French and German syllabuses) began. These draft guidelines were submitted to the *New Zealand Ministry of Education* in July 2000. They are to be printed in standard Ministry of Education format and circulated to schools in the final round of the consultation process. Relevant sections of the draft guidelines are included in *Appendix 1.*

4.3.3.1 The draft curriculum guidelines: overall direction and format

The curriculum guidelines for French and German were designed by a single group and are, therefore, very similar in terms of overall direction and format. An attempt has been made to retain as much as possible of the format of earlier curriculum statements and the initial sections (prior to the specification of achievement objectives for the eight curriculum levels) have similar headings to those in the Spanish curriculum statement. There are, however, differences. Throughout the documents, the importance of aiming towards acccurate (as well as fluent and appropriate) use of the target language is emphasised: using language interactively in meaningful contexts is presented as being fundamental to the development of accuracy as well as fluency. The section headed *'The Communicative Approach'* in the curriculum statement for Spanish is replaced by a section headed *'Using French/German for Meaningful Communication'*. Under this general heading, there are sub-headings as follows:

> *Using French/German for Meaningful Communication: The Roles of Teachers and Students*
>
> *Using French/German for Meaningful Communication: The Process of Teaching and Learning*
>
> *Using French/German for Meaningful Communication: Responding to Error*

The following extracts from '*Using French/German for Meaningful Communication*' (common to both the French and German draft guidelines), indicate that there is a different emphasis from that found in the Spanish curriculum statement. The first extract makes reference to the importance, in the context of New Zealand schooling, of the development of reading and writing skills as well as listening and speaking skills:

> Learning a modern language involves learning to communicate meaningfully in that language. Developing listening and speaking skills is essential. In a world in which much of our communication involves the written word, reading and writing skills are likely also to be important for the majority of students and can play a role in helping them to process their learning effectively. However, students who are encouraged to focus on reading and writing at the expense of listening and speaking are less likely to make good progress than those who are given significant opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills (*French in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (July 2000), p. 13; *German in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (July 2000), p. 13).

In the second extract below the emphasis in earlier curriculum statements on the development of listening and speaking skills in meaningful, interactive contexts is balanced by an emphasis on the need for time and reflection:

> It is important that all students should be actively engaged in communication. It is also important that this communication should not be threatening and that those students, often very effective learners, who prefer to listen for a while before speaking are not forced to speak before they are ready. Effective written communication often requires time and thought and so there will be occasions when students are given time for quiet reflection and individual work in the classroom. This is something that many students appreciate, particularly those who may not have much time for quiet thought outside of the classroom (*French in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 12; *German in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 14).

The importance of paying attention to accuracy as well as to fluency and appropriate use of language is also emphasised:

> The ultimate goal of a modern language programme is to enable learners to use the target language as appropriately and accurately as possible in a range of social and cultural contexts. This, however, is the ultimate goal, and teachers need to recognize that inappropriate and inaccurate language behaviour is an inevitable part of language learning. Because creativity and experimentation are important aspects of language learning and because effective communication is fluent as well as accurate, it is important not to inhibit learners by correcting every error they make on each occasion. This is particularly important in view of the fact that language learning progresses in stages and learners may need developmental time before they are able to correct certain errors in their production (*French in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 12; *German in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 13).

Although readers are cautioned about error correction, they are also encouraged to see it as an important aspect of language teaching and learning:

> In general, students should not be constrained by constant corrections during fluency practice. There should, however, be occasions when errors of various types, including grammatical errors, are corrected. Sometimes, the focus will be on significant errors only; on other occasions, less significant errors can be attended to in order to avoid error fossilization. Teacher judgment is paramount here. Although too much emphasis on error correction, particularly where students are not yet ready to assimilate new structures, will be demotivating, too little error correction can impede development, particularly where there are few opportunities outside of the classroom to observe, and interact with, good models of the language (*French in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 14; *German in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 15).

4.3.3.2 The draft curriculum guidelines: proficiency target statements

The Spanish curriculum statement includes language development descriptors. These are replaced in the draft guidelines for French and German by overall achievement objectives for each curriculum level in the form of proficiency target statements. Whereas there were four language development descriptors in the curriculum statements (one for two levels taken together), the draft guidelines include eight overall achievement objectives (proficiency target statements), one for each of the eight curriculum levels. The labels used in earlier curriculum statements have been retained to the extent possible. Thus, for example, *Emergent Communication* is replaced by *Emergent Commun ication 1* and *Emergent Communication 2*. However, in an attempt to signal the relationship between these statements and international proficiency benchmarks, the writers have also supplied alternative labels for these statements as indicated in *Table 4.7* below:

Table 4.7: *Proficieny Target Statement Labelling in the Draft French and German Curriculum Guidelines (June 2000)*

Curriculum Level 1	Emergent Communication 1	Beginning French/ German
Curriculum Level 2	Emergent Communication 2	Pre-elementary French/ German
Curriculum Level 3	Survival Skills 1	Elementary French/ German A
Curriculum Level 4	Survival Skills 2	Elementary French/ German B
Curriculum Level 5	Social Competence 1	Post-Elementary French/ German A
Curriculum Level 6	Social Competence 2	Post-Elementary French/ German B
Curriculum Level 7	Personal Independence 1	Intermediate French/ German
Curriculum Level 8	Personal Independence 2	Upper Intermediate French/ German

4.3.3.3 The draft curriculum guidelines: the nature of the achievement objectives

In the draft French and German curriculum guidelines, there is, at each curriculum level, a general achievement objective (proficiency target statement) (*see above*) as well as more specific achievement objectives. The achievement objectives in the draft curriculum guidelines documents for French and German are the same in both cases so that, in each case, students are introduced to ways of expressing similar meanings. It does not follow from this, however, that the same type of linguistic encoding will necessarily be associated with the same achievement objective at the same level. Although *location of things* is initially introduced in both the French and German curriculum statements at the same level (*level 1*), it is associated with locative prepositions at this level only in the case of French.

In the French and German curriculum guidelines documents, there are several different types of achievement objective which relate to different aspects of communicative language competence as outlined, for example, in *Council of Europe* documentation (Council of Europe 1996). In the early stages, some of the achievement objectives express micro-functions which are formulaic in character. Thus, for example, the first achievement objective at curriculum *level 1* is:

. greet, farewell and thank people and respond to greetings and thanks

However, also at curriculum *level 1* is the following achievement objective, an achievement objective which is, in terms of Wilkins' formulation, notional. That is, it relates to a semantico-grammatical category (Wilkins, 1976, pp. 25 - 37):

. understand, express and enquire about location

In terms of the more recent *Council of Europe* formulation, an achievement objective such as this would not be referred to as notional, but would come within the domain of 'linguistic skills and knowledge' (Council of Europe, 1996, 4.7.2.1). In the French curriculum guidelines, it is associated with the following suggested structures and examples which include simple locational prepositions (see *Table 4.8* below):

Table 4.8: *Suggested Structures and Examples Associated with Achievement Objective 1.5 in the French Draft Curriculum Guidelines*

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED STRUCTURES	EXAMPLES
4.6 Recognise, express and enquire about **location**. **(Recycle at Levels 2 and 3)**	*simple locational prepositions* (sur, sous, devant, derrière, dans, à, entre.)	Le livre est **sur** la table.
	definite articles	le, la, les.
	question form with où	**Où** est le stylo?

In the German curriculum guidelines, the suggested structures and suggested examples with which it is associated (see *Table 4.9* below) do not include locational prepositions

which, because of the German case system, may have been considered to be too complex at this level:

Table 4.9: *Suggested Structures and Examples Associated with Achievement Objective 1.5 in the German Draft Curriculum Guidelines*

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED STRUCTURES	EXAMPLES
1.5 Recognise, express and enquire about **location. (Recycle at Levels 2 & 5)**	*location* - hier, dort, da *definite articles* – der, die, das	Wo ist das Buch? Hier.

In both cases, this achievement objective is recycled. In the French curriculum document, it occurs again at curriculum *levels 2* and *3*; in the German curriculum document, it recurs at curriculum *levels 2* and *5*.

Another example of an achievement objective which is concerned with semantico-grammatical categories is the achievement objective below which occurs at curriculum *level 7*:

. understand, express and enquire about past actions/ events in relation to actions/ events that preceded them.

Some of the achievement objectives refer to modal meanings (see the first example below), others to aspectual meanings (see the second example below):

.understand, express and enquire about people's willingness and unwillingness to do and say certain things, providing reasons and explanations where appropriate

. understand, express, enquire about and compare and contrast habits and routines

Some of the achievement objectives which are functional in character (and, therefore, come within the domain of pragmatic skills and knowledge), refer to micro-functions; others, such as the example below from curriculum *level 8* refer to macro-functions:

. understand, express, enquire about and evaluate problems and responses/

solutions in a range of text-types

In a number of cases, different types of relational meaning (e.g. contrast, concession, reason) are signalled within the context of achievement objectives which also focus on other aspects of meaning. Thus, in the first objective below (which occurs at curriculum *level 4*), modal meaning occurs in the context of comparison and contrast; in the second example below (which occurs at curriculum *level 6*), modal meaning occurs in the context of reason:

.understand, express, enquire about and compare and contrast your obligations and responsibilities and those of others

.understand, express and enquire about people's willingness and unwillingness to do and say certain things, providing reasons and explanations where appropriate.

It appears, therefore, that an effort has been made to (a) avoid expressing achievement objectives as meanings which are essentially decontextualised, and (b) relate achievement objectives to different types of linguistic skills and knowledge.

4.3.3.4 The draft curriculum guidelines: the curriculum levels and the question of recycling

Explicit reference is made to recycling in both the French and the German draft curriculum guidelines. In each case, it is noted that the fact that some achievement objectives are recycled within the framework provided relates directly to the desirability of avoiding introducing too much linguistic complexity at any one time. It is also noted, however, that in the more general sense of ensuring that there is adequate provision for revision as well as extension, it is assumed that teachers will recycle all of the objectives from time to time.

It was noted above that the same achievement objectives occur initially at the same levels in the French and German draft curriculum guidelines. It was also noted, however, that this does not necessarily mean that the same type of linguistic realisation will be recommended in both cases. The achievement objective *understand, express and enquire about location* is associated at curriculum *level 1* with locative prepositions in the case of French, but not in the case of German. In both cases, this objective is recycled. In the French document, it

is recycled at curriculum *levels 2* and *3*; in the German document, it is recycled at curriculum *levels 2* and *5*. The recycling for French and German is outlined below (see *Tables 4.10, 4.11, 4.12* and *4.13):*

Table 4.10: *Achievement Objective 1.5 recycled at Curriculum Level 2 in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for French*

RECYCLED ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED STRUCTURES	EXAMPLES
1.5 Recognise, express and enquire about **location**.	*à w ith definite article for location* à + la = à la à + le = au à + l' = à l' à + les = aux *question form with où*	Il est **au** cinéma. **Où** est Jean ?

Table 4.11: *Achievement Objective 1.5 Recycled at Curriculum Level 3 in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for French*

RECYCLED ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED STRUCTURES	EXAMPLES
1.5 Recognise, express and enquire about **location**.	*prepositional phrases involving 'de' + article* de + le = du de + l' = de l' de + la = de la de + les = des	Le cinéma est près **du** supermarché.

Table 4.12: *Achievement Objective 1.5 Recycled at Curriculum Level 2 in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for German*

RECYCLED ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED FORM FOCUS	EXAMPLES
1.5 Recognise, express and enquire about **location**.	*location* - locative prepositions **(only with dative singular of the definite article)** *where you live* – wohnen (in)	Wo ist das Buch? Unter dem Tisch. Wo wohnst du? Ich wohne in Auckland.

Table 4.13: *Achievement Objective 1.5 Recycled at Curriculum Level 5 in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for German*

RECYCLED ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED STRUCTURES	EXAMPLES
1.5 Recognise express and enquire about **location**	*prepositions which take accusative and dative* - an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen *dative prepositions* - aus, bei, von, zu, gegenüber *reflexive verbs*- sich befinden	Der Bahnhof ist hinter der Klinik. Die Schule ist neben dem Park. Ich gehe in die Schule. Sie geht zum Bahnhof.

Thus, students of both French and German are introduced to ways of expressing the location of things at curriculum *level 1*. By curriculum *level 5* (prior to those curriculum levels that equate to levels in the *Qualifications Framework*), students of both languages have been introduced to a variety of different ways of realising this achievement objective which, in both cases, involves locative prepositions.

The draft curriculum guidelines for French and German include considerably more detail in relation to possible realisation of the achievement objectives than is the case in the curriculum guidelines for Spanish, Chinese and Japanese and the draft curriculum statement for Korean. This has the advantage of assisting teachers in the interpretation of the guidelines and in programme planning. It could be argued, however, that this attention to detail is potentially misleading in that some teachers might interpret the suggestions as prescriptions and feel obliged, irrespective of the capacities of their own students, to attempt to include all of the suggestions in their programmes. Of particular concern here is the possibility that, in following these suggestions, teachers will fail to introduce language that their own students need, want and can cope with until that language is included in the suggestions. Thus, for example, with the exception of a footnote at curriculum *level 1* relating to the use of past reference in transactional classroom language, there is no reference to future or past in either of the curriculum guidelines documents until future plans are introduced at curriculum *level 3* and past and present states and activities are introduced at curriculum *level 4*. Even so, there is a clear statement about the nature of these suggestions at the beginning of each of the draft curriculum guidelines:

> The achievement objectives are central to the guidelines. They are accompanied by suggestions of various types, suggestions that are intended to be illustrative rather

than prescriptive. Thus, each achievement objective is accompanied by suggested structures and examples and by suggested learning and assessment activities. For each curriculum level, there are also suggested topics, suggested text-types and suggested socio-cultural aspects as well as some suggested vocabulary. These suggestions will not necessarily always be equally appropriate in all circumstances. Depending on the context in which they are working, teachers may wish, for example, to select a range of topics that are different from the ones suggested in the guidelines. They may wish to include some of the suggested vocabulary, but may introduce it at a different level from the one indicated in the guidelines (*French in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 2; *German in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft Curriculum Guidelines* (June 2000), p. 2).

4.4 Modern languages in New Zealand universities: introduction

An overview is provided here of modern language offerings in New Zealand universities in the year 2000. Until the beginning of the year 2000, there were seven established universities in New Zealand, six of which offered a variety of modern language and modern language-related papers. At the beginning of 2000, the former *Auckland Institute of Technology* (one of the then 25 polytechnics in New Zealand) was granted university status and became the eighth national university. *The Auckland University of Technology* (AUT), as it is now named, is included in the outline below.

In total, papers in 18 modern languages (including New Zealand Mäori) were offered by New Zealand universities in the year 2000. The majority of these languages could be studied as a major for an undergraduate degree and could also be studied at post-graduate level. Some were offered only as Certificate or Diploma programmes.

Some language and culture papers were made available through special external funding arrangements. The Polish language and culture papers offered at the University of Auckland, for example, were made available through the financial support of the local Polish community, and other offshore sources. The following table (*Table 4.14*) provides a summary of languages offered at each of the seven New Zealand Universities that offered languages in the year 2000. The information in *Table 4.14* was extracted from a range of

university web sites (visited May 2000) and university calendars as outlined in detail in *Appendix 2* where details of all of the courses offered are provided along with summaries indicating the percentage of each type of course included in each language programme offering.

Table 4.14: *Languages Offered by New Zealand Universities in the Year 2000*

	Auckland	Waikato	Massey	Victoria	Canterbury	Otago	AUT
Chinese	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cook Island Mäori	*			*			
Croatian	*						
Dutch	*						
French	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
German	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indonesian/ Mayal	*			*			
Italian	*			*			*
Japanese	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Korean	*	*					
New Zealand Mäori	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NZ sign							*
Polish	*						
Russian	*			*	*		
Samoan	*			*			
Spanish	*	*	*	*			*
Swedish	*						
Tongan	*						

All of the New Zealand universities that offered modern languages in the year 2000 included four of the languages for which *Ministry of Education* syllabuses/ curriculum statements are available: French, German, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese. Spanish and Korean were offered only in North Island universities, as were Cook Island Maori, Dutch,

Tongan, Samoan, Polish, Italian and Russian. New Zealand Mäori was offered in all seven of the institutions listed above.

4.5 Modern languages other than New Zealand Mäori in New Zealand universities: overview

Programmes that are specified as modern language programmes include papers of various types. Some of them are language acquisition/ language development papers (referred to below as *language acquisition courses*); some are papers relating to literature and culture (referred to below as *culture courses*); some, such as, for example, papers in interpreting and translation, or in language teaching methods, can be described as 'applied' in the sense that they involve the development of skills and knowledge that can be applied in the context of language development and language use (referred to below as *applied courses*). These generally come within the domain of linguistics, applied linguistics or education. Papers in linguistics and history of the language are described below as *linguistics/ language history courses*. All papers involving study overseas are classified here as study abroad courses. In some cases (e.g. special topics, theses and dissertations), it is not possible to classify the content of papers. In such cases, the term *non-specifiable* is used here. Where papers span two areas, one of which appears to come within the domain of language acquisition, the paper is categorised as a language acquisition course. Where there is doubt as to classification and where it seems possible that papers have a language acquisition/ development focus, the paper is assigned here to the language acquisition/ development category. Thus, categorization is as follows:

. language acquisition courses;
. study abroad courses;
. culture courses;
. applied courses;
. linguistics/ language history courses;
. non-specifiable courses.

Classification into types in this way can be useful in that it can help provide a snapshot of the way in which modern language programmes are structured. It should be noted, however, that (a) not all of the language acquisition/ development courses listed below are

available to all students, (b) classification into types is not always a straightforward matter, and (c) courses whose primary focus is something other than language acquisition/ development will, if they are taught in the target language and/or involve reading and/or writing and/or listening and/or speaking in the target language, inevitably make a contribution to language development.

The Tables below (*Tables 4.15 - 4.35)* summarize modern language programme offerings at six of the universities featuring in *Table 4.14* above in terms of the distribution of types of paper at different stages/ levels of study. Because modern language programmes offered by *The Auckland University of Technology* in the year 2000 were very differently structured from those offered in other universities, they are not included here. At *The Auckland University of Technology* in the year 2000 Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and Spanish were all available. However, these languages were offered for Certificate and Diploma qualifications only. Chinese and Japanese were offered as major subjects in a BA programme. Each was taught in modules and the primary focus in each case was language acquisition/ development. In the case of Chinese, "optional Modules [could] be chosen from other degree programmes which include business, tourism, teacher training and Japanese. Core Modules include communication, computer and research skills. In the final year, there is a Co-operative Education Practicum in a relevant organization, to apply and develop knowledge and skill gained throughout the degree programme" (available: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/depts/languages/>: visited May 2000). The Japanese programme is described as being designed to "ensure that graduates achieve fluency in all areas of language required for daily communication and the workplace". It is also noted that students "develop in awareness of cultural, social and business differences between New Zealand and Japan" (available: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/depts/languages/>: visited 20 July 2000).

4.5.1 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at the University of Auckland in the year 2000

Table 4.15: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Auckland in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Graduate
Language	46	39	30	18
Culture	31	40	43	99
Study abroad	1	23	23	0
Language history and linguistics	2	5	6	9
Applied	0	1	7	23
Non-specifiable	0	8	11	50
Total papers	**80**	**116**	**120**	**199**

Table 4.16: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Auckland in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	115	18	133
Culture	114	99	213
Study abroad	47	0	47
Language history and linguistics	13	9	22
Applied	8	23	31
Non-specifiable	19	50	69
Total papers	**316**	**199**	**515**

Table 4.17: Language and Language-related Papers Available at the University of Auckland in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	36.4%	9.0%%	25.8%
Culture	36.1%	49.7%	41.3%
Study abroad	14.9%	0%	9.1%
Language history and linguistics	4.1%	4.5%	4.3%
Applied	2.5%	11.5%	6.0%
Non-specifiable	6.0%	25.0%	13.3%

4.5.2 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at the University of Waikato in the year 2000

Table 4.18: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Waikato in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

WAIKATO UNIVERSITY	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Graduate
Language	17	15	12	3	5
Culture	9	15	12	1	11
Study abroad	0	0	1	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	4	2	0	2
Applied	0	0	3	0	11
Non-specifiable	0	0	3	0	16
Total papers	**26**	**34**	**33**	**4**	**45**

Table 4.19: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Waikato in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

WAIKATO UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	47	5	52
Culture	37	11	48
Study abroad	1	0	1
Language history and linguistics	6	2	8
Applied	3	11	14
Non-specifiable	3	16	19
Total papers	**97**	**45**	**142**

Table 4.20: Language and Language-related Papers Available at the University of Waikato in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

WAIKATO UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	48.5%	11.1%	36.6%
Culture	38.1%	24.4%	33.8%
Study abroad	1.0%	0%	0.7%
Language history and linguistics	6.2%	4.4%	5.6%
Applied	3.1%	24.4%	9.9%
Non-specifiable	3.1%	35.6%	13.4%

4.5.3 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at Massey University in the year 2000

Note that actual numbers and percentages are the same in Tables 4.22 and 4.23. This is because there are 100 courses.

Table 4.21: Language and Language-related Papers at Massey University in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

MASSSEY UNIVERSITY	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Graduate
Language	14	10	8	3
Culture	17	11	8	4
Study abroad	0	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	0	1	0
Applied	0	0	3	5
Non-specifiable	0	2	6	8
Total papers	**31**	**23**	**26**	**20**

Table 4.22: Language and Language-related Papers at Massey University in the Year 200: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

MASSEY UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	32	3	35
Culture	36	4	40
Study abroad	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	1	0	1
Applied	3	5	8
Non-specifiable	8	8	16
Total papers	**80**	**20**	**100**

Table 4.23: Language and Language-related Papers Available at Massey University in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

MASSEY UNIVERSITY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	40.0%	15.0%	35.0%
Culture	45.0%	20.0%	40.0%
Study abroad	0%	0%	0%
Language history and linguistics	1.3%	0%	1.0%
Applied	3.8%	25.0%	8.0%
Non-specifiable	10.0%	40.0%	16.0%

4.5.4 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at Victoria University of Wellington in the year 2000

Table 4.24: Language and Language-related Papers at Victoria University of Wellington in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Graduate
Language	22	16	12	5
Culture	10	16	15	24
Study abroad	0	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	1	0	2
Applied	0	0	1	3
Non-specifiable	0	0	1	15
Total papers	**32**	**33**	**29**	**49**

Table 4.25: Language and Language-related Papers at Victoria University of Wellington in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate and Graduate Combined
Language	50	5	55
Culture	41	24	65
Study abroad	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	1	2	3
Applied	1	3	4
Non-specifiable	1	15	16
Total papers	**94**	**49**	**143**

Table 4.26: Language and Language-related Papers Available at Victoria University of Wellington in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	53.2%	10.2%	38.5%
Culture	43.6%	49.0%	45.5%
Study abroad	0%	0%	0%
Language history and linguistics	1.1%	4.1%	2.1%
Applied	1.1%	6.1%	2.8%
Non-specifiable	1.1%	30.6%	11.2%

4.5.5 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at the University of Canterbury in the year 2000

Table 4.27: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Canterbury in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Graduate
Language	11	8	6	4
Culture	12	14	7	37
Study abroad	0	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	2	0	4
Applied	0	0	1	2
Non-specifiable	0	0	0	5
Total papers	**23**	**24**	**14**	**52**

Table 4.28: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Canterbury in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	25	4	29
Culture	33	37	70
Study abroad	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	2	4	6
Applied	1	2	3
Non-specifiable	0	5	5
Total papers	**61**	**52**	**113**

Table 4.29: Language and Language-related Papers Available at the University of Canterbury in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	41.0%	7.7%	25.7%
Culture	54.1%	71.2%	62.0%
Study abroad	0%	0%	0%
Language history and linguistics	3.3%	7.7%	5.3%
Applied	1.6%	3.8%	2.7%
Non-specifiable	0%	9.6%	4.4%

4.5.6 Language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori at the University of Otago in the year 2000

Table 4.30: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Otago in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Graduate
Language	14	8	9	5
Culture	4	8	9	2
Study abroad	0	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	0	0	0
Applied	0	0	0	0
Non-specifiable	0	2	2	7
Total papers	**18**	**18**	**20**	**14**

Table 4.31: Language and Language-related Papers at the University of Otago in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	31	5	36
Culture	21	2	23
Study abroad	0	0	0
Language history and linguistics	0	0	0
Applied	0	0	0
Non-specifiable	4	7	11
Total papers	**56**	**14**	**70**

Table 4.32: Language and Language-related Papers Available at the University of Otago in the Year 200O: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	55.4%	35.7%	51.4%
Culture	37.5%	14.3%	32.9%
Study abroad	0%	0%	0%
Language history and linguistics	0%	0%	0%
Applied	0%	0%	0%
Non-specifiable	7.1%	50%	15.7%

4.5.7 Summary of language and language-related papers other than papers in New Zealand Mäori in six New Zealand universities in the year 2000

Table 4.33: Language and Language-related Papers at Six New Zealand Universities in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Stages 1 – 3 and Graduate

AUCKLAND, WAIKATO, MASSEY, VICTORIA, CANTERBURY & OTAGO UNIVERSITIES	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Graduate
Language	124	96	77	3	40
Culture	83	96	94	1	177
Study abroad	1	23	24	0	0
Language history and linguistics	2	12	9	0	17
Applied	0	1	15	0	44
Non-specifiable	0	12	23	0	101
Total papers	**210**	**240**	**242**	**4**	**379**

Table 4.34: Language and Language-related Papers at Six New Zealand Universities in the Year 2000: Distribution by Type over Undergraduate, Graduate and Undergraduate and Graduate Combined

AUCKLAND, WAIKATO, MASSEY, VICTORIA, CANTERBURY & OTAGO UNIVERSITIES	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	300	40	340
Culture	274	177	451
Study abroad	48	0	48
Language history and linguistics	23	17	40
Applied	16	44	60
Non-specifiable	35	101	136
Total papers	**696**	**379**	**1075**

Table 4.35: Language and Language-related Papers Available at Six New Zealand Universities in the Year 2000: Percentage of Course Types at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels and at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels Combined

AUCKLAND, WAIKATO, MASSEY, VICTORIA, CANTERBURY & OTAGO UNIVERSITIES	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate & Graduate Combined
Language	43.1%	10.6%	31.6%
Culture	39.4%	46.7%	42.0%
Study abroad	6.9%	0%	4.5%
Language history and linguistics	3.3%	4.5%	3.7%
Applied	2.3%	11.6%	5.6%
Non-specifiable	5.0%	26.6%	12.7%

4.6 Modern languages in New Zealand universities: the question of proficiency levels

It is difficult to abstract from the information publicly available about university language courses any information relating directly to proficiency levels. However, it is clear from the information available about French at the University of Waikato that certain papers are intended to be equivalent to *Bursary*. Thus, students who chose to study French at the University of Waikato in the year 2000 were offered choices according to their prior learning and experience. Students who wished to major in French were required to include the following papers in their study programmes:

> 0207.101 (*French Language 1*) (or 0207.231 (*French Language Intermediate*);
> 0207.201 (*French Language 2*); and
> 0207.301 (*French Language 3*).

Students who had no previous experience of French were advised to enrol in 0207.131 (*French for Beginners 1*), and 0207.132 (*French for Beginners 2*) which are described as being intensive papers designed to take students up to *Bursary* level. Normally, both of these papers are taken in a single year and neither can count towards a major. Students who had *School Certificate* French or had what is described as "a little experience with French" (p. 366) were advised to start with course 0207.132 (*French for Beginners 2*). Students who had *Bursary French* or what is described as "a good *Sixth Form Certificate* grade in French" (p. 366) were advised to enrol in 0207.101 (*French Language 1*) and 0207.193 (*French Cultural Studies 1*) or 0285.104 (*Introduction to Contemporary Europe).*

Students intending to study German at the University of Waikato in the year 2000 were also offered a range of choices according to their past learning and experience. Students who wished to major in German were required to include the following papers in their study programme:

> 0204.101 (*German Language Studies: Written and Oral (Part 1)*) or 0204.231(Intermediate German I), 0204.201 (*German Language Studies: Written and Oral (Part 2)*);
> 0204.202 (*The Major Epochs of German Literature*);

0204.301 (*German Language Studies: Written and Oral (Part 3)*); and
0204.302 (*The Major Epochs of German Literature from the Middle Ages to the 20th. Century*).

Students "with little or no previous experience in German" (p. 373) were advised to take 0204.131 and 0204.132. These papers could not count towards a major, but could count towards German as a supporting subject. Students "who have studied German for at least two years" (p. 373) were advised that they would normally enrol in 0204.101, while students "with an extensive background in German" (The University of Waikato Calendar 2000, p. 373) may be admitted into 0204.*201 (German Language Studies, Written and Oral (Part 2)*).

Students intending to study Japanese at the University of Waikato in the year 2000 and who already had *Bursary* level Japanese were advised to take the following language courses:

0265.101 (*Basic Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.102 (*Basic Japanese: Part B*);
0265.201 (*Intermediate Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.202 (*Intermediate Japanese: Part B*);
0265.301 (*Advanced Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.302 (*Advanced Japanese: Part B*).

Students who were "beginners or who had a lesser qualification in Japanese than *Bursary*" (University of Waikato Calendar 2000, p. 386) were advised to take the following courses:

0265.131 (*Japanese for Beginners 1: Part A*) (which could be waived for students with some knowledge of Japanese), and 0265.132 (*Japanese for Beginners 1: Part B*);
0265.231 (*Advanced Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.232 (*Japanese for Beginners 2: Part B*);
0265.201 (*Intermediate Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.202 (*Intermediate Japanese: Part B*);
0265.301 (*Advanced Japanese: Part A*) and 0265.302 (*Advanced Japanese: Part B*).

A student who intended to major in Spanish at the University of Waikato in the year 2000 was required to include the following papers in his/her programme:

> 0205.110 (*Spanish Language Studies I*) or 0205.231(*Intermediate Spanish*);
> 0205.210 (*Spanish Language Studies 2*);
> 0205.310 (*Spanish Language Studies 3*).

Beginners were advised to enrol in 0205.131 (*Spanish for Beginners 1*) and 0205.132 (*Spanish for Beginners 2*). Students "with prior experience of Spanish" (p. 519) could enrol in course 0205.110 (*Spanish Language Studies 1*).

The Department of French at the University of Canterbury offered a range of entry points for students wishing to enrol in the year 2000. These are specified in the course information available on the world wide web (<http://www.fren.canterbury.ac.nz/>: visited May 2000) as follows:

> *TO MAJOR IN FRENCH FROM 7th FORM*
> If you've done 7th-form French, we recommend that you take FREN 106 (*French Studies 1: 'Femmes, Films, Fictions'*) and FREN 124 (*French Language 1*) in your first year. In subsequent years you should take FREN 201 (*French Language 2*) and FREN 301 (*French Language 3*), plus a selection of other French courses, to make a least 30 points of French.
>
> *TO MAJOR IN FRENCH FROM SCRATCH*
> This can now be done in three years, with intensive language work. You would have to take the six language courses in sequence, one for each semester: 121 (*Beginners' French A*), 122 (*Beginners' French B*), 123 (*Intermediate French*), 124 (*French Language 1*), 201 (*French Language 2*) and 301 (*French Language 3*). In your second or third year, you should also take courses like 106 (*French Studies 1: 'Femmes, Films, Fictions'*), 208 (*French Studies 2: Word and image in 19th. Century France*), 304 (*French Studies 3: Literature in the 17th and 18th centuries*) or 305 (*French Studies in Translation*).

Students intending to enrol in Japanese at the University of Canterbury in the year 2000 were advised of different entry points as follows:

> Students who have passed *Bursary* Japanese (or equivalent*) should enrol for JAPA 105 (*Japanese Language 1*). Failure to do this could mean that you will be ineligible to "major" in Japanese.
>
> *Even if you have not passed Bursary Japanese, you may be eligible to enter JAPA 105 by special permission of the Head of the Department of Asian Languages. For this purpose, "or equivalent" means, for example, that you have recently completed a year's education at a high school in Japan. Should you wish to enrol in JAPA 105 under these entry requirements, it is essential that you present evidence of your experience of the study of Japanese in a written application addressed to the Head of the Department of Asian Languages before the due date for pre-enrolment in the University." (<http://www.asia.canterbury.ac.nz/Japanese.html>)

So far as German at the University of Otago is concerned, students intending to enrol in the year 2000 were advised that "[they] will be placed in GERM language papers appropriate to their knowledge of German" (University of Otago Calendar 2000, p. 620).

The question of proficiency levels will, in addition to other matters, be addressed more fully in *Chapter 5*.

CHAPTER 5

THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: A CRITIQUE

5.1 General Introduction

In *Chapter 4*, New Zealand curriculum statements and prescriptions for international languages were outlined. Here, a discussion of the communicative movement in language teaching and learning (see (5.2) below) which is intended to provide a context for the remainder of the discussion is followed by a comparison and critique of New Zealand *Ministry of Education* syllabus and curriculum documents (see (5.3) below), particular attention being paid to areas in which problems and potential problems are detectable. This discussion will then be extended (see (5.4) below) to include a comparative critique of modern language acquisition papers offered by New Zealand universities.

5.2 The communicative movement in language teaching and learning in relation to *New Zealand Ministry of Education* curriculum documents

5.2.1 Introduction

All of the language syllabuses and curriculum documents that have been released by the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* (formerly, Department of Education) from 1987 onwards claim to be communicative in orientation. However, the sense in which the word 'communicative' is used is different in different cases. In order, therefore, to provide a context in which these syllabus and curriculum documents can be more meaningfully discussed, some central features of what has come to be termed 'the communicative movement' in language teaching and learning are discussed below.

5.2.2 Communicative language teaching

It is acknowledged within what has come to be termed 'the communicative movement' in language teaching and learning that language learning involves more than control of language systems. It involves, in addition, pragmatic and discourse-based understanding, control not only of rules, but also of strategies and procedures. It involves listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. Recognition of the range of factors involved entails acceptance of the fact that it is unrealistic to expect error-free production at all times. Thus, what is emphasized is the use of language for genuine communicative purposes, an aim that, in so far as it is stated in New Zealand curriculum documents for languages, must also be reflected throughout the system: in the syllabuses, in the materials, in the methodologies and in the approaches to assessment that are employed.

At the core of the communicative movement is the concept of 'communicative competence', a concept that is essentially different from the concept of 'linguistic competence' as outlined by Chomsky (1957), one that includes some of those factors that Chomsky assigned to the area of performance (i.e. the language system put to use). In spite of the fact that it was this challenge to Chomsky's notion of communicative competence that effectively launched the communicative movement in language teaching and learning, and in spite also of the fact that Chomsky himself had, and has, little interest in second and foreign language learning, his research, and that of a number of his colleagues, did have a significant effect on language teaching: it involved an implied challenge to the behaviourist orientation of audio-lingual habit theory. In response to Chomsky's innatist hypothesis and to his emphasis on language as involving rule-governed creativity, audio-lingualism gradually gave way to cognitive code learning theory, a theory that stressed the importance of the internalization of understood rules as opposed to memorization and repetition of examples. This change affected methodology more than it did language syllabus design. In fact, the rule-governed approach to language syllabus design that reflected the structuralist emphasis in linguistics was actually reinforced by cognitive code-learning theory. However, with the challenge to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence also came a challenge to the primacy of syntactic rules in language syllabus construction.

The challenge to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence came in the formalization of the notion of communicative competence by, among others, Campbell and Wales (1970) and Hymes (1972), a challenge that reflected increasing interest within linguistics in pragmatics and discourse analysis. In his outline of communicative competence, Hymes

included four central areas: knowledge of rules (formal possibility), understanding of the constraints on the application of these rules in particular contexts (implementational feasibility), appreciation of contextual appropriacy, and understanding of the performative role of utterances (i.e. the illocutionary component of speech acts). Thus, formal accuracy was seen as one aspect only of communicative competence. The fact is, however, that it continues to be a significant aspect of communicative competence. Thus, although Hymes stressed rules of use, Carroll noted that "there are rules of grammar without which the rules of use would be inoperable" (Carroll, 1980, p. 8). It is important that this is emphasized. After all, as Widdowson (1998, p. 331) notes:

> Learners of a foreign language should be made aware of . . . cultural conditions on real communication. . . . But the explicit teaching of communicative abilities which measure up to those of the communities whose language they are learning is quite a different matter.
>
> I believe that an attempt to do so is to set an impossible and pointless goal whose only outcome is likely to be frustration. . . . It is the business of pedagogy to decide on what can be feasibly and effectively taught . . . so as to activate a learning investment for future use. Talk of real world communication is all too often a distraction.

There have been a number of attempts to outline a pedagogically-motivated framework for communicative language teaching. One of the more recent (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1997) represents a refinement and extension of the model proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) and divides communicative competence into five major components: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence. This framework was intended to serve as a content base for syllabus design and methodological development.

The concept of communicative language teaching has been subject to criticism, criticism that has led to some fundamental changes in orientation. Thus, for example, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997, p. 143) argue that "the lack of firm linguistic guidelines led to a diversity of communicative approaches that shared only a very general common objective, namely, to prepare learners for real-life communication rather than emphasizing structural accuracy". Given, however, that there is an increasing interest in reintegrating structural accuracy into communicative language teaching, it could be argued that the concept of

communicative language teaching is itself now a dated one. Certainly, the ways in which applied linguists now typically recommend that structure should be treated are rather different from the ways in which it tended to be treated in the 1960s and early 1970s. Nevertheless, the changes that have taken place in recommendations about tutored language learning could be seen as representing a change in emphasis rather than a change in kind.

Kumaravadilevu (1994) has argued that communicative language teaching has arrived at what he refers to as 'a postmethod condition' which requires a reexamination of its metaphors. In the light of this, it may be that its retention as a term has less to do with theory and more to do with practicality than is sometimes acknowledged. The fact is that "many teachers and teacher trainers now feel comfortable with the goals and terms of CLT" (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1997, p. 149), and use of the term has the advantage of highlighting the fact that "the primary goal of language instruction [is] to go beyond the teaching of the discrete elements . . . and to develop the learners' ability to take part in spontaneous and meaningful communication in different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes" (p. 149). This goal is by no means a recent invention. Even so, the ways in which many teachers in New Zealand and elsewhere now characteristically approach this goal may be different from the ways in which they characteristically approached it in the past.

Some changes in the way in which language teaching and learning are approached are almost inevitable in view of the developments that have taken place in linguistics and applied linguistics. Thus, for example, discourse studies, including the study of genres, have increased awareness of the fact that the creation of coherent discourse is not simply a matter of understanding and applying syntactic rules in the context of lexical development. Changes are also almost inevitable in response to the growing understanding within applied linguistics of the role that formulaic language use, and, therefore, memory play in acquisition (see, for example, Skehan, 1998). What is not immediately obvious is the fact that these advances in understanding, and the diverse methodological recommendations that have accompanied them, constitute, in themselves, a sufficient reason to argue in favour of an approach that is fundamentally different *in kind* from earlier approaches.

There is, of course, a strong and a weak representation of communicative language teaching (Howatt, 1984), the strong version involving the belief that "form can best be learned when the learner's attention is focused on meaning" (Beretta, 1998, p. 233), the weak version involving explicit practice. In fact, it is, in practice, extremely difficult, if not

impossible, to operate in terms of the strong version on a day-to-day basis in the majority of language classrooms, particularly in language classrooms in schools which are, necessarily, constrained by objectives setting and assessment. After all, "the lack of clear-cut content specifications in CLT" has led to problems associated with "the testing of learning outcomes" and "any language teaching approach must be accompanied by language tests that adequately measure the learning outcomes promoted" (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1997, p. 143).

There are those who regard teacher resistance to some aspects of communicative language teaching, particularly the strong version, as reprehensible (see, for example, Thornbury, 1998). However, the fact remains that many of the recommendations associated with all representations of communicative language teaching (particularly the strong version) are currently unsupported by empirical evidence. Quite simply, there is an insufficient number of convincing longitudinal studies. In view of this, it is unfortunate that there are those who chastise language teachers for their caution, claiming that what it offers them is "order, security, and power" (p. 112). In fact, the issue as to what combination of teaching strategies will optimize second language acquisition for young L2 learners in any particular domain is still very much open. As Sheen (1994, p. 127) notes in his critical analysis of the advocacy of the task-based syllabus, "the frequent paradigm shifts in the field of second and foreign language teaching have not resulted in significant progress in language learning. The fault seems to lie in the overstatement of criticisms directed at existing paradigms and the failure to challenge the validity of the advantages imputed to replacements". Furthermore, the research that is required "will not be easy to obtain" so that "many of the hypotheses put forth must be viewed as tentative, and we must be cautious of the conclusions drawn from them" (Ioup, 1984, p. 350). In the light of this, it is necessary also to be cautious in critiquing the approaches to language teaching and learning that appear to underpin New Zealand curriculum documentation.

5.2.3 Attitudes towards a focus on form in communicative language teaching

5.2.3.1 Introduction

Arguments in favour of, or against, different approaches to syllabus, methodology and materials in the context of communicative language teaching are often related to the perceived advantages, or otherwise, of a focus on form in the language classroom. It is, therefore, relevant to survey some of the research literature in this area at this point. Literature that relates more specifically to particular hypotheses or particular recommendations in relation to syllabus and/or methodology will be introduced as appropriate below (see, for example, *5.2.4.4: The natural syllabus*).

On the basis of an examination of a number of studies relating to the effects of formal instruction, Long (1983) reported that six of these studies supported the contention that formal instruction aided acquisition, three did not, and one (i.e. Martin, 1980) appeared to show that exposure without formal instruction was beneficial. His general conclusion was that "there is considerable evidence to indicate that SL [second language] instruction does make a difference" (p. 374). Even so, a range of issues remain unresolved almost twenty years later, and some of the experimental studies that have been conducted since that time raise as many questions as they answer. Overall, however, research continues to indicate (Ellis 1994, 623) that "formal instruction can result in definite gains in accuracy". However, "if the instruction is directed at a difficult grammatical structure which is substantially beyond the learner's current interlanguage, it is likely that it will only lead to improved accuracy in planned language use". The critical question, a question with which much second language acquisition research has been concerned, is no longer, therefore, for most researchers, whether language learners should be made aware of structure, but how and when this should be done.

5.2.3.2 A review of some empirical studies of second language acquisition

On the basis of a study of Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking child learners of English, Dulay and Burt (1974) argued that there was evidence of a natural order of acquisition of English morphemes. This study was based on the use of eleven morphemes in obligatory contexts and was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. It has, in common with similar studies, been severely adversely criticized by a number of applied linguists

(see section *5.2.4.4* below). Nevertheless, this study, and others of a similar kind, have been seen by Krashen and others (see, for example, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982)) as providing support for the hypothesis that there is a natural order of acquisition in the case of second language learners, a natural order that can be activated by comprehensible input (see *5.2.3.5* below). There are, however, also more carefully constructed studies that claim to have detected a natural order of acquisition in the case of second language learners. Thus, for example, Cazden, Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann (1975) and Wode (1978) argue for developmental sequences for English interrogatives, Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann (1981) argue for developmental sequences in word order acquisition, and Pavesi (1986) claims that English relative clause acquisition follows a sequential pattern. Since the intermediate stages in the patterns detected in these experiments followed neither those of the first language, nor those of the second language when acquired in early childhood, this research appears to some to indicate that second language learners are creatively constructing the second language in terms of a process of gradually increasing complexity that involves, nevertheless, times of forgetting and backsliding and that can show evidence of fossilization (Kellerman, 1985). Consistent with this is Tarone's hypothesis (Tarone, 1990) that new forms may enter where speech is carefully controlled and may then be involved in free variation with existing forms before being gradually restricted in use. Thus, there may be a natural order in some instances of the acquisition of second languages. Whether that natural order, if it exists, applies irrespective of first language, whether it applies irrespective of the age of the learner, whether it can be activated in the context of the language classroom, and whether it can be altered or assisted are questions that have occupied applied linguists.

What was lacking in some of the earlier empirical studies on second language was an examination of the precise nature of input, particularly of contextualized input (Hatch, 1978). What, however, was also lacking, something that is particularly relevant to the discussion here of language teaching and learning in New Zealand schools and universities, was (a) a careful study of the effect of a focus on form in the language classroom, and (b) a study of the effect of classroom contexts in which meaning was consistently prioritized over form. The emergence of studies of this kind has represented a serious challenge to those who have advocated approaches to communicative language teaching that avoid any focus on form. Thus, for example, although Krashen (1982) has argued that comprehensible input in the presence of a 'low affective filter' is the only causal variable in second language acquisition, this is wholly inconsistent with Swain's observation (Swain, 1985) that the students he studied who were involved in the Canadian French immersion

programme had not fully acquired grammatical competence in French in spite of abundant comprehensible input, or Ellis's more general observation that output can vary very significantly (Ellis, 1987).

A study of 577 children with limited English proficiency in grades 2 to 10 in public schools in Iowa conducted by Weslander and Stephany (1983) indicates that although students who received more instruction did better syntactically, the effects were strongest at the lowest levels of proficiency. On the basis of a study of a group of 13 child learners of English as a second language, Ellis (1984) concluded that although three hours of instruction in wh-questions did lead some to improve substantially (as indicated in a game designed to elicit relatively spontaneous oral questions), those who improved the most were those who had practised the least, "providing further evidence that participation in classroom interaction may not be the secret to success" (Ellis 1994, p. 617). Similarly, Ellis (1992) found that differences in the accuracy with which adult beginner learners of German performed the 'verb-end' word order rule in communicative speech were not accountable for by differences in the amount of practice in this structure they had received over a six-month period. Nevertheless, many of these classroom learners appear to have achieved greater accuracy than purely naturalistic learners studied in the ZISA project (see Meisel, 1983).

Lightbown, Spada and Wallace (1980) studied the effects of half-hour grammar lessons on the accuracy with which 175 French-speaking school learners of English judged sentences to be grammatical, finding that there was significant improvement in relation to a range of morphological features in comparison with a control group. Pica (1983; 1985), however, on the basis of a study of the effect of formal instruction on unplanned speech, concluded that instruction aids the acquisition of only those features that are formally easy to acquire and that manifest transparent form-function relationships. However, as Ellis (1994, p.621) notes, an "intriguing possibility is that formal instruction may have a delayed effect": it could be that formal instruction in areas where form-function relationships are not transparent has an effect that is not immediately evident in production and, in fact, that effect may be evident only where the formal instruction is repeated in cycles.

When all of this is taken into account, there still remains considerable room for variation in interpretation of the observed phenomena. That interpretation is likely to be strongly influenced by the particular theory of language learning to which researchers subscribe. Some, for example, believe that second language acquisition is shaped by the principles of universal grammar (White, 1988) even if access to it is only partial and via the first

language (Felix & Weigl, 1991). Others believe that learning involves the strengthening of connections in complex neural networks and that, therefore, performance that looks like rule-governed behaviour may be a reflection of connections formed on the basis of relative frequency of patterns in input (e.g. Spolsky, 1988; Gasser, 1990). Sokolik (1990) has proposed that L2 learning may be associative in the connectionist sense, whereas L1 acquisition may be more rule driven in the generative sense. Ellis (1995) argues for a variable competence model, believing that learners may control a range of styles. More specifically, Skehan (1998) proposes a dual-mode system, with access to both rules and exemplars (see section *5.2.4.3* below). The critical question, therefore, is now for most applied linguists no longer whether formal emphasis is necessary in the context of tutored language learning, but how best to integrate a focus on form and a focus on meaning. Thus:

> Do we really need to engage in arguments about the relative merits of formal and functional explanations of language? Can we not simply accept that both are needed? (Ellis 1990, p.390).

As Long observes: "an attempt to explain acquisition by recourse to a single factor . . . lacks face validity" (Long 1990, p.661). This would appear to be a particularly pertinent observation when we bear in mind that second languages may be acquired with differing degrees of success, something that is far from understood at present. For example, whereas Scovel (1988) argues that only children are likely to acquire native-like competence in the area of pronunciation, Harley (1986) provides evidence that seems to support the contention that older learners are advantaged in terms of speed of acquisition. This may, in fact, however, hold only in the shorter term (Long, 1990a). Similarly, whereas some researchers believe that some learners have more aptitude for language learning than others (Carroll, 1981; Skehan, 1989), others believe that there is no such thing as innate aptitude in this sense (Neufeld, 1979). It may be, in fact, that there are various dimensions of aptitude (Skehan, 1989) and that different aptitude profiles need to be matched against methodologies (Wesche, 1981; Skehan, 1989). There is, furthermore, the question of attitude, motivation and personality, with the possibility that, for example, self-esteem (Heyde, 1979) and tolerance of ambiguity (Chapelle & Roberts, 1986) may correlate positively with success in second language acquisition, as may certain cognitive styles such as field independence, particularly in the context of tutored language learning (Brown, 1977). Finally, there is the question of learning strategies, or "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin 1975, p.43).

Overall, the empirical research to date suggests that contextualized formal instruction appears to result in faster learning and in higher levels of accuracy (Long, 1983; Pica, 1983), although such instruction is likely to be effective only if it is carefully timed (Pienemann, 1984; 1989) and accompanied by other types of focus (Ellis 1983, pp.92 - 113).

5.2.4 Syllabus design and the communicative movement

5.2.4.1 Introduction

The communicative movement has been associated with various attempts to replace and/or enhance the structural approach to syllabus design, an approach that introduces structures progressively, associating them at different points in the syllabus with different associated meanings. Whatever approach is adopted, it should, however, be remembered that there is a significant difference between requiring learners to operate verbally in informal settings and requiring them to develop sufficient control of language to operate in terms of all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in a wide range of settings and in relation to a wide range of discourse requirements (Cummins, 1986, p. 164).

5.2.4.2 The notional/functional syllabus

The work of the Council of Europe in the 1970s emphasized functions (the illocutionary forces of speech acts, such as 'apology' and 'complaint') and notions (structurally encoded meanings) and it was suggested that syllabus design could focus on these two in addition to modality (e.g. possibility, certainty etc.). Thus, for example, Wilkins (1976) proposed that syllabuses, which he referred to as 'notional syllabuses', could be constructed on the basis of these three, interacting components. Essentially, however, the notional component of a language syllabus would be similar to a structural syllabus except that it would be differently organized. Thus, for example, whereas a structural syllabus might list at a specific point a single structure associated with a single meaning (e.g. present simple for habitual actions), the notional component of a notional syllabus might include at a particular point in the syllabus, one or more ways of expressing concepts such as habitual action or ongoing activity that can be encoded in different ways structurally. Thus:

> Notional syllabuses are represented by their proponents as an alternative to, and an improvement on, structural syllabuses. . . . The two types of syllabus differ most obviously in the manner in which the linguistic content is defined. In the structural syllabus it is defined in formal terms, as lexical items and grammatical patterns manifesting the system of English. In the notional syllabus, language content is defined in functional terms, as notions which are realized by formal items. In both cases, the essential design is an inventory of language units in isolation and abstraction. In the structural syllabus, the inventory is ordered with reference to grading criteria. In the notional syllabus it is not (Widdowson, 1979, p.247).

There are difficulties associated with the notional approach to syllabus design. For example, although it was argued by the proponents of the notional approach that there is a considerable degree of artificiality associated with repeated practice of a particular structure (as in the case of typical realizations of a structural syllabus), the same objection could be made in relation to their own proposals. Thus, it could equally be argued that it is artificial to practice two or three different ways of expressing habitual or repeated actions (notional focus), two or three ways of making suggestions (functional focus), or two or three ways of expressing possibility (focus on modal meaning). Whether it is realistic or, indeed, necessarily advisable, to expect tutored language learning to avoid artificiality altogether is, of course, an important point in itself. However, even accepting that some degree of communicative artificiality is an inevitable aspect of tutored language learning, there are other objections that can be made to the notional/functional approach to syllabus design. It has, for example, been argued that the notional component of a notional syllabus is simply a differently organized and differently labelled structural syllabus, one that may be less efficient in implementation because of the absence of the type of selectional principles that characteristically govern the structural syllabus. Even more problematic for language teaching is the argument that the functional component of a notional syllabus is unrealizable except in cases of idiomatic and semi-idiomatic use of language (Crombie, 1988, pp. 284 - 287). This argument is based on the following observation:

> Almost any utterance can have almost any illocutionary force depending on the context in which it is used. So an utterance such as 'It's hot in here' may function as a request (to open a door or a window), as a complaint, as a warning (in a paint factory, for example) etc. (Crombie, 1988, p. 285).

Observations of this type raise a number of issues in relation to the concept of a notional/functional syllabus, issues that cannot be resolved simply by insisting that a syllabus with a primarily functional orientation should maintain structural progression wherever learners are assumed to be engaged in acquiring the basic structural patterns of the language. However, objections to the functional aspects of notional syllabuses may have less force in the context of increasing understanding of the importance of the role of exemplars and of memory in second language acquisition (see, for example, Skehan, 1998). Although this partial justification of an approach that emphasizes micro-functions is a retrospective one, it may, nevertheless be important in that it may provide an explanation for the enthusiasm with which many teachers adopted materials that were centrally based on micro-functions irrespective of the non-generative potential of these materials.

5.2.4.3 Task-based syllabuses, skills-based syllabuses, topic-based syllabuses and situational syllabuses

Prabhu's proposed task-based approach to language syllabus design (Prabhu, 1987) included a list of tasks that language learners are expected to perform, these tasks being graded in terms of conceptual difficulty. Reasoning-gap tasks are prioritized and no attempt is made to plan the linguistic content of lessons in advance, with teaching procedures that focus on form being discouraged. It has been argued that this approach does not, in any realistic sense, represent a syllabus at all in that it does not list what is to be learned. It may be, however, that language content is contained in an underlying 'hidden' syllabus made up of those language requirements that are presupposed by the nature of the tasks themselves. The concept of this type of a task-based syllabus, representing the communicative approach to language teaching in its strongest form, has been seen as misleading in that the listing of tasks "involves a statement of *means* (that is, the performance of tasks), rather than *ends* (that is, language)". In this sense, "*means,* that is, how ends are to be achieved, are methodological matters", and "it is difficult to assess whether your ends have been achieved if you have not stated them" (Crombie, 1988, p. 287). This objection is not answered fully by more recent approaches that look in detail at task difficulty. Thus, for example, in an overview paper, Robinson, Ting and Urwin (1996) argue that task difficulty is influened by cognitive load, planning time and prior information, and Foster and Skehan (1996) argue that tasks based on personal information present less difficulty than those based on less familiar information. In

discussing the design of tasks for the communicative classroom, Nunan (1989, p.1) asks whether "the specification of learning tasks [should] be seen as part of syllabus design or of methodology" and answers initially simply by stating that "with the development of communicative language teaching, the separation of syllabus design and methodology becomes increasingly problematical". He continues as follows:

> If we maintain the traditional distinction between syllabus design and methodology . . . then the design of learning tasks is part of methodology. However, if we see curriculum planning as an integrated set of processes . . . then the argument over whether the design and development of tasks belongs to syllabus design or to methodology becames unimportant" (p. 1)..

Nunan's approach is to design tasks that involve "learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (p.10). He argues in favour of tasks that involve information exchange (see, for example, Doughty and Pica (1986)) and problem-solving (see, for example, Duff (1986)) and that, where possible, are conducted by small groups of learners from different backgrounds and with different proficiency levels (see Veronis and Gass (1983)). For Nunan, task difficulty can be correlated with "the length of the text, the propositional density . . . the amount of low frequency vocabulary, the speed of spoken texts and the number of speakers involved, the explicitness of the information, the discourse structure and the clarity with which this is signalled" as well as the amount of textual support (including pictures and diagrams) provided and, in line with the findings of Brown and Yule (1983), the ordering of information (p. 98). However, Nunan also includes text complexity and grammatical complexity as aspects of task difficulty. In terms of task evaluation, Nunan makes reference to Candlin's categories of problematicity, implementability and combinability (Candlin, 1987), his own checklist for the evaluation of communicative tasks including goals and rationale, input, activities, roles and settings, implementation, grading, integration and assessment and evaluation (Nunan, 1989, pp. 135 – 137).

Thus, although he includes grammatical complexity and text complexity as aspects of task difficulty, he appears to side-step the issue of syllabus content versus methodological approach. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993, pp. 154 - 156) take a similar line, although they do suggest (a) that tasks should accompany, rather than constitute, a language

syllabus, and (b) that there should be a focus on form, a focus on form which is 'incidental':

> Throughout our entire argument we have scrupulously avoided the thorny issues related to syllabus design. By arguing for the teaching of grammar through task-based methodology, we are in no way implying that we favour a return to the traditional grammatical syllabus. Indeed, rather than argue for a particular syllabus type . . . we suggest that such tasks be used in any situation wherein the goals of instruction are compatible with the idea that structure and meaning are necessarily highly interrelated. . . . We recommend that task designers look at specific structurally-based processing problems to be overcome rather than at specific grammar points in a structural syllabus . . . . By starting with processing and working back to grammar, the connection between the two is more likely to be strong. . . . In the classroom, by repeatedly focusing the learner on relevant information (e.g. meaningful structural contrasts) one can facilitate the process of restructuring and automatization. Through this incidental focus on form, the process of SLA can be sped up and taken to a higher level of ultimate attainment.

In Nunan's case, the focus of tasks is on meaning rather than form. In the case of Loschky and Bley-Vroman, the focus on form is 'incidental'. In neither case is there sufficient empirically-based evidence for the recommendations that are made. Thus, Loschky and Bley-Vroman conclude that an incidental focus on form is necessarily preferable to a more systematic one, something that is asserted in the context of a number of assumptions that are not well-founded. Traditional grammatical syllabuses generally acknowledged the interrelationship of form and meaning as did those who implemented them. In any case, there are now very few advocates of syllabuses that are structured solely in terms of traditional grammatical categories. In attacking something that has rarely existed in the way in which it is described, something that certainly is not now prevalent, in order to support an alternative that is neither well-researched nor well-documented, Loschky & Bley-Vroman conduct their argument in a way that is not uncommon in the recent literature on language teaching (see, for example, Wilkins (1976)). As Widdowson (1998, pp. 337 – 338) observes:

> The linguistic skill-getting exercise of the traditional type did focus on meaning, but on that which is semantically encoded in form. It had a goal – the manifestation of code knowledge, and the outcome was evaluated in terms of code conformity. And

> there was a relationship with the 'real-world' in that it was supposed that an internalization of such knowledge would provide an instrument for subsequent use. . . . As Lado and Fries put it, the purpose of pattern practice was 'to reduce to habit what rightfully belongs to habit in the new language, so that the mind and personality may be freed to dwell in their proper realm, that is on the meaning of the communication rather than the mechanics of grammar' (Lado and Fries 1958). In other words, the end in view was communicative fluency. Of course, the word *habit* has unfortunate connotations these days, but it is important to note that pattern practice was preceded by presentation which was designed to demonstrate meaning, so what practice made habitual was a knowledge of forms as semantic encodings. It was not a matter of teaching form rather than meaning (as it is commonly misrepresented as being) but of teaching meaning as encoded in form, on the assumption that this would provide the basic resource for communication.

Exactly the same argument can be applied to other proposals for language syllabuses: they are based on misconceptions or misrepresentations and fail to address adequately the criticism that they are essentially language content-free. Thus, for example, a list of topics (e.g. *my family*) and/or of situations (e.g. *at the post office*) does not constitute a topic-based or situation-centred syllabus: it is not a statement of what is to be learned. Rather, it is a methodological statement: a statement that is indicative of the context in which the learning of language is to take place, of the context or contexts in which the language is to be used. Certainly, some topics and situations will presuppose some of the language that is to be taught and could, therefore, from this perspective, be said to contain parts of a hidden syllabus. Even so, listings of this type are inadequate on their own as an indication of what is to be included in language lessons. Where specifications of this type are included in syllabuses, they cannot be said, therefore, to constitute part of the syllabus: they are essentially indications of how the syllabus is to be contextualized and/or delivered.

The same could be said of what is sometimes referred to as a skills-based syllabus. It is, of course, true that some skills, such as, for example, using textual cues to abstract specific pieces of information from a written or spoken text, can constitute part of a language syllabus so long as the requirements are clearly stated. It is not, however, realistic to specify an entire syllabus in this way.

Reference has already been made here to a topic-based approach to syllabus design. Because this approach features so prominently in some New Zealand curriculum

statements, it is important to say a little more about it, particularly as it is the approach that appears to be recommended for tutored language acquisition by Krashen whose work has had a significant influence in New Zealand language teaching circles. In outlining what is referred to as 'the natural approach' to second language acquisition, Krashen and Terrell (1983) forward the hypothesis that adults, in acquiring a second language, follow a natural order of progression that needs to be discovered and reinforced. The evidence for this hypothesis is far from convincing (see section *5.2.4.4* below). However, what is actually recommended for the classroom is a topic-based syllabus. Thus, "the third general principle of the Natural Approach is that the course syllabus consists of communicative goals" and "this means that the focus of each classroom activity is organized by topic" so that "a possible goal might be to learn to communicate about trips the students have taken or be able to order a meal in a restaurant" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p.20). Thus, although Krashen argues that learners follow a natural order of acquisition in second language learning (see below), he recommends that classroom practice should be topic-centred and therefore, presumably, that the syllabus should be a topic-based one.

Any arguments in favour of a particular approach to language syllabus design need to be supported and advocates of task-based approaches have attempted to relate their proposals to second language acquisition research. The problem is, however, that such research as there is is often open to a range of possible interpretations. Thus, for example, task-based approaches to language programme content are now often presented in the context of what Long (1988) refers to as a *focus on form* rather than a *focus on forms,* by which is meant that the learner's attention is directed towards form as such (sometimes a range of forms) rather than a particular structure. However, as Ellis (1994, p. 641) observes, "it may be premature to reject a focus on forms approach", particularly as there is research (see, for example, Gick and Holyoak (1983)) that suggests that the effects of formal tuition may vary depending on whether a rule is presented in isolation or in conjunction with examples. Thus, "there is a need for much more research before the more traditional approaches to formal instruction (those based on the notion of practice) can be dismissed" (Ellis, 1994, p. 646) and "there are those who argue that while instruction may not be necessary for L2 acquisition, it does help learners to acquire more quickly". Furthermore, " a number of scholars . . . maintain that for some aspects of language at least, formal instruction is necessary" (p. 652). Overall, Ellis (1994, p. 659) concludes that although "it is not yet clear which kind of instruction works best", "there is evidence to suggest that focusing learners' attention on forms, and the meanings they realise in the context of communicative activities, results in successful learning".

There are a range of different perspectives on tasks in the language classroom. Thus, for example, Prabhu (1987) argues in favour of reasoning-gap tasks whereas Duff (1986) contrasts divergent and convergent tasks, arguing in favour of the latter in relation to effective engagement of acquisitional processes. Brown, Anderson, Shilcock and Yule (1984) argue that static tasks, such as tasks involving description, are easier than dynamic tasks, such as those that involve narration, and that these, in turn, are easier than absract tasks such as opinion-giving. Tarone (1985) correlates attention to form with accuracy of performance whereas Foster and Skehan (1996) note "a . . . complex relationship . . . between planning and accuracy, with the most accurate performance produced by the less detailed planners" (p. 229), an observation that highlights "the importance of tradeoff effects between the goals of complexity and accuracy in the context of the use of limited capacity attentional resources" (p. 299). What all now seem to agree on is that "the raising of awareness is a prerequisite for the restructuring of a learner's linguistic knowledge" (Gass and Varonis, 1994, p. 300).

In terms of an attempt to relate a task-centred proposal directly to an adequate theory of second language acquisition, the work of Skehan (1996) appears to be the most successful to date. Skehan examines a number of potential problems associated with task-based teaching "such as a potential focus away from form and towards lexis". Thus:

> Tasks themselves, given their defining properties of meaning primacy, outcome evaluation, and realism, may well predispose those engaged in task completion to engage in a mode of communication which does not prioritize a focus on form . . . . As a result, it may not be possible to rely on a task-based approach to automatically drive interlanguage forward" (p. 42).

Skehan reviews recent developments in cognitive psychology that appear to support a dual-mode perspective for language processing, proposing that task-goals should include accuracy, complexity-restructuring and fluency (p. 38). He argues that there are both strong and weak versions of a task-based approach, the strong versions involving the belief that tasks should be the unit of language teaching, the weak versions seeing tasks as a vital part of language instruction that are, nevertheless, "embedded in a more complex pedagogic context" (p. 39).

In proposing a cognitive approach to language learning based on a dual processing model, Skehan (1998) argues that the focus of task-centred activities needs to shift in order to (a) accommodate the different processing requirements of balanced language development, and (b) maximize opportunities for learners to use a range of approaches rather than to maintain a preferred learning style.

Bolinger (1975) has argued that the rule-governed basis of language may have been over-emphasized and that instances of language may be much more firmly based on lexical elements than was sometimes supposed, a point supported by Sinclair (1991) who observes that in practice the immense combinatorial possibilities of language are often subordinated to a preference for repeated co-occurrences of lexical items. In line with this, Biber (1988), Biber, Conrad and Rippen (1994) and Carter and McCarthy (1995) have demonstrated, on the basis of corpus studies, significant repetitive sequences in communication. What all of this suggests to Skehan (1998) is that what actually operates in second language acquisition is a type of dual-coding which involves the interaction of a rule-based system and a memory-based system. It is on the basis of this dual-based cognitive model that he proposes an approach to tutored language learning in which tasks are selected and organized in ways that maximize learners' opportunities to engage both systems. He argues, in line with the research of Bley-Vroman (1989) and Johnson and Newport (1991), that access to a pre-wired language acquisition device gradually diminishes so that by the age of "14 to 17 or so, direct primary processes no longer apply" (Skehan 1998, p. 283) and modularity based on a contrast between syntax and semantics is replaced by modularity organized on the basis of information-processing stages (input, central processing and output) (pp. 283 – 284). Foreign language aptitude is thus said to be linked to the three general components: phonemic coding ability (linked to the input processing stage), language analytic ability (linked to the central processing stage) and memory (linked to the output processing stage). Concepts such as 'noticing' (Schmidt, 1990) are associated with the input-processing stage (p. 284).

Above all, since "the powerful generative system . . . may be bypassed most of the time" in favour of memory-based processing that enables real-time communication to proceed, and since "language as communication emphasizes familiarity, meaning and memory rather than originality, form, and computation" (pp. 285 & 286), Skehan argues that there is a danger that learners who are not encouraged to focus on form will fail to restructure their language in ways that lead to greater accuracy. His response to this is the creation of "instructional conditions which . . . artfully juxtapose the demands of form and meaning in effective

ways" and which involve a range of activity types (pp. 286 – 287). This, in turn, involves reconceptualizing the competence-performance relationship. Thus:

> If performance can be based on access-oriented systems used directly, drawing upon lexicalised chunks and exemplars, then actual real-time language use may be able, at least for some of the time, to bypass what might be termed a complex, rule-governed acquired system. Performing language, in other words, may go well beyond simply using an underlying rule-based system (p. 287).

This will affect assessment as well as tutored language learning in that it suggests that assessment tasks will need to be analysed for processing demands (p. 287). So far as tutored language learning itself is concerned, this suggests to Skehan using tasks based on five general principles:

. choice of a range of target structures;
. choice of tasks which meet the utility criterion;
. sequencing of tasks to achieve balanced goal development;
. maximization of chances to use a focus on form through attitudinal manipulation;
. use of cycles of accountability (p. 288).

Skehan notes that these principles "accept that particular forms cannot be taught in any guaranteed way" but that "fertile conditions can be set up which maximize the chances that development will occur" (p. 288). There are, however, problems with this approach. In particular, as Skehan himself observes, "postulation of the importance of such a system [a dual-mode system] is too much of an inference at the present time; some extensive corpus-based research in the second language field is required" (p. 292) and "what are essentially speculations need to be matched by research studies " (p. 293). Above all, perhaps, we need to be wary of assuming that the approach proposed by Skehan will necessarily represent an improvement on alternative approaches rather than an addition to them. After all, although Skehan notes that "the impetus for change has to come from somewhere, and the pre-task stage can be useful as one means of introducing new elements into the interlanguage system" (p. 137), he does not have a great deal to say about the what, when and why of introducing new language, preferring to direct readers' attention to the possibility that different approaches to the introduction of new language may serve different functions:

> Teaching is clearly concerned with the introduction of new language, and perhaps with restructuring. It may be deductive and explicit (and of a more traditional sort), or it may be inductive and implicit, with material which is already structured, and in which learners need to search for generalizations. It can be speculated that deductive approaches introduce new language to the interlanguage system, while inductive approaches may be more effective to achieve restructuring of the underlying system, as the new elements of language which emerge inductively are related more effectively to the developing underlying system (p. 139).

A number of models of second language acquisition have been proposed. The mutlidimensional model presented by Pienemann (1984; 1989) and Pienemann, Johnson and Brindley (1988) involves six stages, the first involving formulaic language and the sixth involving internal analysis at the clausal level. This model does not, as Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) observe, account specifically for movement from one stage to the next. The analysis-control model presented by Bialystok (1990) represents both analysis and control as processes. However, this model does not deal explicitly with how the system grows in scale or how degree of complexity relates to increase in scale. The dual-code processing model proposed by Skehan (see above) attempts to address this problem by focusing on the way in which different types of task may prioritize memory or system restructuring. Skehan's argument in favour of devising tasks with different types of emphasis is a compelling one.However, the reasons for his advocacy of a process-centred approach to syllabus design, an approach in which tasks constitute the primary organizing principle, are less compelling.

Skehan's insistence (1998, p. 260) that there is a "conspiracy of uniformity" among textbook writers and syllabus designers and that "those with most power lack interest in learner differences" appears to be undermined by his own observation that "books now contain far more material, with 'multi' syllabuses . . . as well as extensive accompanying material" (p. 259). Equally, his rejection of those task-based syllabuses which he refers to as 'procedural' (for example, Prabhu, 1987), that is, those that involve pre-selected tasks, is largely based on the observation that "the person who 'calls the shots' is still the pedagogic expert" and "the tasks themselves are not of the learners' own choosing" (p. 262). This appears to be in conflict with his own assertion that careful control of tasks is desirable in order to ensure that learners do not select according to their own predisposition towards a particular learning style. Thus, the teacher needs to "[assess] . . . a pedagogic situation accurately" (p. 136) so that "faced with analytic or memory-oriented learners,

tasks can be chosen and implemented to induce learners to address aspects of performance and developmental course which may not come naturally" (p. 271). In the light of this, his preference for a process syllabus which gives learners "considerable autonomy and power" (p. 262) appears to represent a personal preference rather than a logical outcome of his central thesis, particularly in view of the fact that he observes that learners may not be willing to play a full role in syllabus negotiation or, indeed, capable of doing so (p. 262). Advocating an effective learner training programme (involving project work) in preparation for readiness (pp. 272 – 281) does not answer this objection. Thus, although Skehan's arguments in favour of devising and presenting tasks in ways that are likely to encourage balanced development is a convincing one, the extension of that argument into the realm of overall language programme construction, and, in particular, the advocacy of task-based and process-centred language programme design, is less well supported.

5.2.4.4 The natural syllabus

As has already been indicated, Krashen actually recommends a topic-based approach to tutored language acquisition. However, he also forwards the hypotheses (Krashen, 1985) that there are natural sequences in second language acquisition that are activated by comprehensible input. The input hypothesis is highly speculative. In Gregg's terms (Gregg, 1984, p. 82), it is "either clearly false or trivially true". It is unsupported by any direct empirical evidence. Indeed, "it cannot be operationalized or tested since the stages of acquisition to which it is related are left undefined in Krashen's work" (Pienemann, 1985, p. 47).

A number of scholars, including Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) as well as Krashen himself (1985; 1989), have cited literature that is claimed to support the hypothesis that comprehensible input is the critical factor in motivating second language acquisition. One of these studies is a cross-sectional experiment by Dulay and Burt (1974) involving a group of Chinese-speaking children and a group of Spanish-speaking children. The aim of this study was to examine the frequency of particular grammatical morphemes in contexts where they are obligatory. Dulay and Burt argued that the results of this experiment provided "strong support for the existence of universal child language-learning strategies" (p.37). They also argued that the experimental results provided "a strong indication that universal cognitive mechanisms are the basis for the child's organisation of a target language", and "that it is the L2 system, rather than the L1 system that guides that acquisition process" (p. 53).

These conclusions cannot be justified on the basis of either (a) the empirical approach adopted, or (b) the experimental results themselves. First, the study was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal and involved only eleven grammatical morphemes. It could not, therefore, reveal the actual order of acquisition of the listed morphemes already in use by the subjects. Secondly, because the output data for all subjects was combined, there is no way of locating instances that do not support the primary hypothesis. It is important to note the limitations of studies of this kind because they have been so central to Krashen's claims, claims that have had considerable influence in New Zealand language teaching circles. Overall, however, as Ellis (1994, p. 287) observes, these studies actually do little more than support "the commonsense assumption that learners need to understand input in order to learn from it", something that is quite different from the argument that comprehending input will necessarily result in acquisition. In this context, it is important to remember that it is a characteristic of second language development that learners develop at different stages and reach differing proficiency levels (Schumann, 1978; Klein & Dittmar, 1979). Major differences are detectable even at higher stages (Pienemann, 1981).

Sharwood-Smith (1993) differentiates between input that helps learners to interpret meaning and input that learners use to advance their interlanguages. In connection with this, Schmidt (1990) proposes the concept of noticing, of chanelling attention, to account for (a) the fact that not all input has equal value, and (b) where task demands are unduly heavy in terms of processing, they may actually make certain features less salient. With compex material and a limited number of variables as well as some degree of saliency in input, Ellis (1994) has argued that selective rule-focused approaches are superior, whereas implicit approaches are better in the case of a higher number of variables and less structured materials.

White (1987) notes that it may actually be failure to understand some structures that leads to learning in that this failure may force the learner to attend to syntactic properties in the search for clues to meaning. Furthermore, not only input, but also output, may affect second language acquisition. Thus, Swain (1985) argues that output may become more precise when learners experience communicative failure, an argument investigated by Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) who sought to establish whether pushing learners to produce more comprehensible output has a long-term effect. Their study, however, indicates that this may not necessarily be the case for all learners. Nor is it clear (Ellis, 1994, p. 284) whether pushed output can result in acquisition of *new* linguistic features.

These observations are important in relation to New Zealand curriculum documents because some seem, in part at least, to be predicated on the assumption that the teacher's task is primarily to introduce language in a comprehensible way in relation to topics of interest and relevance to learners. They seem, in other words, to rely, to some extent at least, on the assumption that a second language can best be acquired in classroom contexts where the focus is on meaning and on comprehensible input and where the formal aspects of language are given little emphasis. This approach appeared for a time to be supported by evaluation of Canadian immersion programmes. However, more recent evaluations (Harley and Swain (1984) and Swain (1985)) indicate that advances in fluency have not been accompanied by parallel advances in accuracy, an observation that has also been made in relation to approaches to communicative teaching that have prioritized meaning over form. These approaches "may induce learners to rely on strategies for communication which result in bypassing of the form of language", something that may "in the longer term . . . have a negative effect on the process of interlanguage change and development" (Skehan 1998, pp. 11 & 43).

4.2.4.5 Content-based approaches to syllabus design

Content-based instruction can be either 'content-driven' or 'language-driven' (Snow, 1998, p. 243). In either case, it is difficult to relate directly to syllabus design. Thus, for example, a list of topics to be covered (whether or not that list relates to a specific academic subject, or specific academic subjects) cannot be said to constitute a language syllabus. If that list of topics is accompanied by some type of language specification, then it could be argued that it is that specification, rather than the list of topics, that constitutes the language syllabus. In such cases, the topics provide contextualization for the language syllabus. Even so, content *is* included as a syllabus component by Graves (1996), and Krahnke (1987) refers to content syllabuses.

The issue of content-based instruction is an important one in New Zealand terms, particularly in the context of Mäori-immersion education and in the context of the ways in which students for whom English is an additional language are accommodated in the school system. It is, however, currently less central to discussion of the teaching and learning of international languages (other than English) in New Zealand even though it could be argued that it had some influence on the construction of those language syllabus documents,

particularly the French syllabus document, which appeared in the 1980s. Thus, the French syllabus document (Department of Education, 1987a) places topics at the core of the syllabus. Even so, other aspects of that syllabus document make it clear that the syllabus is not predicated on the assumption that content-based instruction represents a replacement for language-centred instruction.

One version of content-based language instruction that has received some attention recently is the adjunct model described by Snow and Brinton (1998), a model that links language courses with content courses in order "to integrate better the reading, writing, and study skills required for academic success in the university setting" (p. 553). This model could be applied with equal validity to school settings, although its application in the context of the learning of international languages other than English in New Zealand schools would be more difficult to apply than it would in the case of the learning of English or Mäori.

5.2.4.6 Discourse-centred approaches to syllabus design

The debates that have raged over the design of language syllabuses have led some to propose a compromise position. Brumfit (1980), for example, proposes a core and spiral approach to syllabus design in which the syllabus has the staged grammatical system as a core with notional, functional and situational specifications being conceived of as a spiralling round the core. On the surface, this proposal seems a sensible one. However, the fact that almost any given segment of language can perform almost any function means that the majority of functions (illocutionary acts) cannot, except in the case of idiomatic use, be related to exponents independently of context. This, in turn, means that they can cannot be systematized. They may, therefore, contribute to language learning in that they may re present a useful store of memorizable chunks. They are less likely, however, to contribute to system reorganization.

The core and spiral syllabus proposal involves a recognition that grammatical progression is economical in that it is generative. It does not, however, represent a solution to the problems that have been associated with structural syllabus design by proponents of communicative approaches to language teaching. For example, Wilkins has argued:

> One of the major reasons for questioning the adequacy of grammatical syllabuses lies in the fact that even when we have described the grammatical (and lexical)

meaning of a sentence we have not accounted for the way in which it is used as an utterance (Wilkins 1976, p.10).

If we are to account for the way in which language is actually used, we will be obliged to look not only beyond morphology and sentence grammar, but also beyond those primarily unitary values (e.g. 'suggestion', 'warning', 'threat' etc.) that have been prioritized in Wilkins' work and that derive from one aspect of pragmatic study, that is, from pragmatic research that relates to the work of Austin (1963), Searle (1969; 1975) and others on speech acts. We will be obliged to look at pragmatics and discourse analysis more generally. We will be obliged, for example, to look at work on cohesion (e.g. Halliday and Hasan, 1976/ 1985), on macropatterning and genre (e.g. Hoey, 1983; Derewianka, 1990; Swales, 1990; Paltridge, 1993), on text grammar (e.g. van Dijk, 1972, 1977), on frame semantics (e.g. Fillmore, 1976), on case relations (e.g. Fillmore, 1968) and on deixis (Fillmore, 1971). In doing this, we will have to decide what can be accommodated within the syllabus and what belongs more appropriately to methodology.

All of these orientations towards language can make a contribution to syllabus design and different ones can be prioritized at different stages of language development and in relation to different types of goal. Thus, for example, studies of genre have been found to have applications in a number of different settings, including that of the Adult Migrant Education Program Literacy Project organized through the National Centre for English Language Teaching and research in Australia (Hammond, 1989). In particular, it has been shown to be applicable even in the early stages of learning (Burns, 1990). The application of genre studies in the context of language learning is not confined to the Australian systemic functional approach. It has also, for example, been associated with North American New Rhetoric studies and with studies relating more specifically to the use of language for specific purposes. In each case, a range of useful insights has been made available to language teachers (Hyon, 1996), insights that have implications for curriculum development.

Genre studies have played an important role in the development of the text-centred approach to language curriculum design outlined by Feez (1988, pp.1-18). In the case of this approach (associated with the *Certificates in Spoken and Written English* designed for adult learners of English in Australia), there are broad curriculum guidelines that leave the syllabus planning decisions to teachers. Feez notes, however, that "the objectives for a

course based on a text-based syllabus are always related to the use of whole texts in context" (Feez 1998, p.23). There can, of course, be very real advantages in focusing language learning on whole texts in context. However, to insist that all language learning will be conducted in this way, and that it will always involve "a teaching-learning cycle based on the concept of scaffolding" (Feez 1998, v), is to presuppose that learner needs can always be accommodated within the same methodological framework. Feez provides an example in which the course objectives are "clustered together to achieve an overall goal which involves the use of a whole text in a context" (p. 23).

UNIT OF WORK

CASUAL CONVERSATION

Goal:

To enable learners to participate in a casual conversation in a workplace.

Objectives:

The learners will:

. understand the purpose of casual conversation in Australian workplace culture

. know which conversation topics are appropriate in Australian workplaces

. recognise and use the key elements of a casual conversation i.e. greetings and closures, feedback, topic shifts

. recognise and use conversation chunks such as comments, descriptions or recounts

. take turns appropriately within simple exchanges i.e. question/ answer, statement/ agreement, statement/ disagreement

.use language appropriate to casual conversation including politeness strategies, informal language, idiom

.build pronunciation and paralinguistic skills and strategies, specifically in the areas of intonation and gesture (Feez 1998, 23).

There are potential problems associated with this type of objectives setting. Each separate objective appears straightforward. This appearance is, however, deceptive. There is enormous complexity involved in, for example, using "language appropriate to casual conversation including politeness strategies, informal language, idiom". Recognizing and

using "conversation chunks as comments, descriptions or recounts" presupposes a very sophisticated level of language development, unless, of course, what is really required is learned, formulaic interaction. In certain contexts, there can, of course, be considerable advantages associated with this type of learning. These advantages may, however, be short term unless this type of learning is integrated with learning that is designed to prioritize system reformulation. Otherwise, learning of this type can more readily be associated with what Widdowson (1983, pp. 17 – 187) refers to as 'training' rather than 'education':

> The purpose of training is to impart a set of skills, which are, in effect, a repertoire of responses tagged with appropriate stimulus indicators, a set of paired associations. A *linguistic* skill involves the linking of an abstract linguistic rule with its concrete expression: the relating of form and substance. . . . One can think of a *communicative* skill as involving a repertoire of linguistic forms tagged with appropriate situational or notional/functional indicators: the relating of form and situation.

Language training can, of course, be extremely valuable, particularly where, for example, new migrants need to be able to function at a basic level in a range of social and workplace contexts within a limited time. However, all language learners are likely to benefit from being given the opportunity to move beyond a restricted repertoire, from being provided with opportunities for language education in addition to language training (Crombie & Rika-Heke 1991, p.25). This may not always be possible. However, where language learners remain in an educational setting for more than a very short period of time, it could be seen as the responsibility of language educators to attend to their longer term general language education needs as well as to their immediate language training requirements. As Widdowson (1983, p.18) goes on to observe:

> Whereas . . . one might reasonably think of training as the imparting of *skills*, education is essentially a matter of developing *abilities*, understood as cognitive constructs which allow for the individual's adjustment to changing circumstances. Thus, abilities provide for further learning through creative endeavour.

In the context of the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools, we are inevitably involved with language education. We must, therefore, establish meaningful

language education objectives which relate to the development of abilities. This certainly does not mean that there will be no role for memorization based on exemplars. Indeed, there are good reasons for supposing that such memorization has an important role to play. Overall, the best response in this context may be to make use of some adaptation of the type of discourse-centred syllabus recommended by Crombie (1985) in which structure plays a central role. It is this type of construct that appears to underlie the construction of the New Zealand draft curriculum guidelines for French and German.

5.2.4.7 Procedural syllabuses

A genuinely procedural syllabus is, according to White, one that focuses not on what is to be learnt, but on how it is to be learnt, one that, in other words, avoids all pre-selection and pre-arrangement of linguistic content (White, 1988, 44). It may, for example, list ways of learning language, such as making intelligent guesses about meaning on the basis of understood components of content or learning how to use a dictionary. Although it is perfectly possible to conceive of such a syllabus strand as running alongside other syllabus strands, it is difficult to imagine that such a syllabus could, on its own, usefully structure language lesson planning. As with the majority of approaches that avoid linguistic selection altogether, or that select entirely on the basis of non-linguistic categorization, the assumption must be that a second language can be acquired in a classroom setting in a way that is similar to the way in which a first language is acquired naturally. Certainly, human beings, adults and children, can, and do, acquire second and subsequent languages through direct exposure to communities in which these languages are spoken. However, there are very significant differences between their situation and that of the second language learner of a non-community language in a New Zealand classroom setting. These differences relate, among other things, to (a) the length and duration of exposure; (b) the number of different settings in which the language is used and in which the learner may act as participant and/or observer, (c) the different requirements that relate to using language as a spoken medium in informal and semi-formal settings and as a spoken and written medium in informal, semi-formal and formal settings; and (d) the discourse-related requirements that are associated with the use of a second language in a wide range of contexts, discourse requirements that are reflected in many of the approaches to assessment associated with educational contexts. Above all, since the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* is predicated on the assumption that learning can be described and assessed in terms of progressive levels of development, the procedural syllabus concept has little to offer in this

context. This remains the case even where procedural syllabuses are seen specifically in terms of task engagement, where the assumption is that "interlanguage development will occur as a result of the way learners have to transact tasks" (Skehan, 1998, p. 265). There can be little doubt that tasks, particularly tasks that engage a range of strategies, must be central to classroom-centred language learning. However, there is nothing in the literature surveyed here that provides a convincing rationale for specifying the content of language courses in terms of tasks alone, however well-chosen these tasks are.

5.2.4.8 Language syllabus design: some implications for the design of national language curricula

Overlapping with some of the approaches discussed (and, to some extent, with one another) are needs-based programming of the type referred to by Brindley (1989, pp.63 - 78), and the proportional approach proposed by Yalden (1987, pp.92 - 101). What each of these approaches has in common is that it is essentially eclectic in nature. In other words, each of them draws on different aspects of communicative language competence at different stages. Overall, it would appear that an eclectic approach is the most appropriate in the context of current debates on language syllabus content, particularly where these language syllabuses are designed for a wide variety of learners and where it is necessary to take the issue of accountability seriously. An eclectic syllabus should not, however, be a syllabus that confuses content and methodology.

There is no reason why national language curricula should not be lexically and structurally coherent at the same time as including those aspects of text and discourse production and comprehension that can be systematized. In terms of progression and objectives setting, there is much to be gained from taking careful account of the experiences of teachers and examiners over a number of years. National language curricula can be designed in such a way as to allow for the construction of a range of different types of programme to suit different contexts and different learners. They need not, and generally do not, assume that learning will be confined to what is explicitly included in curriculum statements and guidelines. What, however, they must do is provide as clear an indication as possible, on the basis of a combination of theory, empirical evidence and experience, of what learners are likely to be able to achieve in the classroom context and in the time available. What is surprisingly absent from published research on language syllabus design to date is an emphasis on what learners are actually known to achieve in an overall sense in specific

educational contexts. Thus, for example, student responses to New Zealand national language examinations over several years provide a considerable amount of evidence of what theycharacteristically achieve in New Zealand language classes at different stages, as does the wealth of teacher understanding of their learners. That neither of these resources has featured prominently in existing research on second language development appears to indicate the unfortunate lack of any real involvement in day-to-day language teaching, particularly at non-advanced levels, of many applied linguists.

5.2.4 Communicative approaches to methodology and materials

Discussion of content and methodology are often integrated in applied linguistics literature. For this reason, much of the discussion above is as relevant to language teaching and learning methodology as it is to language syllabus design. Although reference is made here to some of the research findings that have already been discussed (see sections *5.2.1 – 5.2.4.8*), repetition is kept to a minimum.

There have, in the past few decades, been significant changes in language teaching methodologies. The grammar translation method that was popular in Europe until the 1940s (and beyond in many parts of the world) gave priority to written language, the emphasis being on translation and on syntactic knowledge (Larsen-Freeman 1986, pp.9 & 10). Criticisms of this approach meant that it gradually gave way to a more direct method which prioritized the "use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom" (Stern, 1983, p.458). Often, the direct method was associated with the use of artificially constructed texts (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983, p.5). The direct method was gradually refined and became integrated with the audio-lingual approach, an approach associated with behaviourism and with structural linguistics, an approach that emphasized habit-formation (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.485). Characteristic of this approach, an approach that was popular in the 1960s, was "an interpretation of language learning in terms of stimulus and response, operant conditioning, and reinforcement, the emphasis being on successful, error-free learning in small well-prepared steps and stages" (Stern, 1983, p.465). Associated with this approach was extensive use of the language laboratory and a range of techniques of auditory and oral practice, frequently involving constructed dialogues (Stern, 1983, p.466).

Audio-lingualism was challenged by linguists who rejected, from a cognitive perspective, behaviourist assumptions and who argued that "linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation" and "formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy" (Chomsky, 1966, p.153). Thus, imitation and repetition were regarded as being less central to language learning than was underlying linguistic competence. With this change in emphasis came a changed attitude to learner errors which came to be viewed as inevitable by-products of language learning (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.460).

The challenge to cognitive code-learning theory involved a challenge to the notion that linguistic competence was fundamental. That challenge came initially, as has already been noted, in the form of a concept of communicative competence, a concept that emerged out of the work of anthropological linguists such as Hymes (1971) and functional linguists such as Halliday (1970; 1973; 1975). Central to this challenge to audio-lingualism, a challenge that has associated with it a range of methodologies, is the belief that comprehension of meaning in context is at least as fundamental to language learning as is structural control. However, the belief that structure is unimportant in language learning is by no means a necessary consequence of the belief that communicative competence involves more than structural competence. There is, as Long and Crookes (1991) observe, little of substance in second language acquisition research that could justify any such conclusion. However, views on whether form-focused teaching directly contributes to second language proficiency range from those of Krashen (1981; 1985), who believes that they have a role, but not a central one, through those of Selinger (1979), who believes that they facilitate learning, to those of McLaughlin (1978) and Sharwood Smith (1981), who perceive there to be a strong correlation between effective language learning and form-focused instruction.

Although, as Celce-Murcia observes, "there is ambivalence about issues such as whether, when, and how teachers should correct grammatical errors", the debate is no longer centrally about whether structure is important, but about "the nature, extent, and types of grammar awareness activities appropriate for second or foreign language learning" (Celce-Murcia 1991, pp.460 - 461). Long, for example, observes that a focus on form along with any other behaviours or tasks that make certain features of the second language salient improves rate and ultimate level of attainment (Long, 1988). It is, however, important to observe that there are a variety of ways of encouraging learners to notice forms other than traditional methods of metalinguistic discussion (Rutherford and Sharwood Smith, 1988).

For example, in relation to an experiment on the acquisition of restrictive relative clauses in English, Doughty notes that "in terms of the observed gains in relativization ability, a focus on meaning and a focus on rules were equally successful techniques, provided that subjects were directed to notice the elements of relativization in the input" (Doughty, 1991, p.462). She also observes that "semantic repetition may be a redundancy format that is a key to subjects' understanding of the input" (p. 462)..

One thing that is characteristic of communicative language teaching is that it attends, in a range of different ways, to functional as well as structural aspects of language. It is now generally agreed that "the learner must . . . be given opportunities to develop strategies for interpreting language in actual use" (Littlewood,1981, p.3). Indeed, growing awareness of the lack of direct correlation between linguistic form and function has meant that there has been a gradual move away from focusing on functions in and for themselves and towards emphasizing "strategies for recognizing the communicative function of utterances in context" (Melrose,1991, p.19).

In attempting to outline the characteristic features of communicative language teaching, Littlewood identifies four broad skill domains as being associated with the communicative approach. These are: manipulation of the language system, ability to relate form and communicative function, understanding of the social meanings of linguistic forms, and strategic control in the use of language to communicate effectively in specific situations (Littlewood,1981, p.6). With these four broad skill domains, he associates three general principles that underlie communicative methodologies:

> *the communication principle*
> (involving the belief that activities that engage genuine communication promote learning);
>
> *the task principle*
> (according to which the extent to which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks is regarded as important to language learning); and,
>
> *the meaningfulness principle*
> (according to which the learning process is supported to the extent that language is used meaningfully) (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 6, 77 & 78).

These principles do not have a specific set of circumscribed methodologies associated with them. As has so often been maintained, there is no best method and just as there are important variations in the teaching context, there are important differences among learners that need to be reflected in the variety of methods employed. Furthermore, a wide range of materials may be considered appropriate. As Widdowson notes, although there has been an emphasis within communicative language teaching on authentic materials, the concept of authenticity should not be confused with that of genuineness: materials may be regarded as authentic so long as they are appropriate and accessible (Widdowson 1983, p.30).

5.3 New Zealand language syllabuses and curriculum statements: a comparative critique

5.3.1 Introduction

The early 1980s saw the beginning of an attempt to achieve consistency in New Zealand language documentation within the context of the emerging *New Zealand Curriculum Framework*. At the centre of this attempt has been the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1991) and the work of the *Council of Europe* on language functions (Wilkins, 1976), learner needs (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977) and comparability of competencies across languages (Wilkins, 1973; Van Ek, 1975; Van Ek & Alexander, 1977). However, in spite of surface similarities, differences in emphasis have been detectable from the beginning. These differences appear initially to have been attributable, in part at least, to differing beliefs about the role of grammar in the language curriculum. Later, however, initial differences appear to have been exacerbated by a more general uncertainty, an uncertainty that reflects the questioning of the early language work of the *Council of Europe* that has taken place within linguistics and language teaching. That uncertainty is reflected in terminological confusion, in differing approaches to category specification, and in detectable difficulties in sustaining the original concept of comparative competencies across languages.

5.3.2 Curriculum statement versus syllabus: theoretical and practical issues in the New Zealand context

The French and German syllabus committees that were set up in New Zealand in 1980 were charged with reviewing the prescriptions for the *School Certificate* and *University Entrance* Boards. The final documents that emerged as a result of the deliberations of the members of these committees were referred to as syllabuses rather than curriculum statements. This may have been, in part, because they were intended to serve the dual function of (a) providing specifications for national examinations, (b) outlining the overall approach to the specific language with which they were concerned. Even so, the overall intent appears to have resulted in documents that were, in many ways, little different from later documents, documents that are referred to as curriculum statements rather than as syllabuses. From the beginning, then, there appears to have been some uncertainty about how the terms 'curriculum statement' and 'syllabus' are intended to be interpreted in relation to language, an uncertainty that may reflect (a) different uses of these terms in different societies (e.g. in the USA and in Britain), and (b) disagreement in the literature on language teaching and learning concerning the distinction between syllabus and methodology, and (c) uncertainty about the role that linguistic specification should play in national curricula and about the relationship between achievement objectives and linguistic specification. These issues are not addressed directly in the documentation. Instead, the term 'syllabus' is avoided altogether in curriculum statements appearing from the 1990s onwards. From that point on, teachers are advised of the need to prepare programmes of work on the basis of curriculum statements, the implication being that these programmes will incorporate syllabus specifications.

In many curriculum areas, there are no particular difficulties associated with attempting to link curriculum statements to programmes of work without making direct reference to syllabus specifications. In the area of language teaching and learning, however, the problems involved can be profound. If they are not resolved, teachers are likely to be left largely to themselves when it comes to the most difficult and complex decisions, decisions concerning what is to be taught, decisions that are, in the context of language programmes, fraught with practical and theoretical complexities and surrounded by fierce debate.

In most cases, the language documents produced by the *Ministry of Education* (earlier, the *Department of Education*) are less help in addressing these issues than they could be.

Indeed, it could be argued that most of these documents actually, in some ways, increase the difficulties faced by language teachers in that they are, in places, unclear, even contradictory, in relation to what is expected. In order to appreciate the full extent of these problems, it is necessary to begin by outlining the issues involved in more detail in the context of comparing and contrasting the documents in terms of their responses to a number of issues that have come to the fore in relation to discussions of communicative language teaching. First, however, a little more needs to be said about one central area of difficulty associated with the failure to outline clearly the intended relationship between curriculum and syllabus.

It has already been noted that at no point in the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents is the distinction between these documents and syllabuses made clear. The major difference, in this respect, however, between the French and German syllabus documents and later curriculum statements and guidelines is that the syllabuses list minimum linguistic content, whereas the curriculum statements and curriculum guidelines list that content in the form of suggestions and/or examples. The distinction is not, however, a clear-cut one. Thus, for example, the following statement appears in the curriculum statement for Spanish:

> The statement provides ideas for learning, teaching, and assessment and also for possible cultural experiences, as well as suggested structures and vocabulary. These are not exhaustive lists of ideas - they are intended only as examples, to suggest possible directions for teachers in their planning (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.5).

Certainly, it appears that ideas for assessment and learning activities are intended to be suggestions only. However, the 'suggested structures and vocabulary' do appear to have a different status in that they: "*indicate the linguistic content expected* and, when used in conjunction with the communication functions and the language level indicators, suggest the level of difficulty expected for each level"(emphasis added) (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.13).

Running throughout the curriculum documents is an uncertainty about the precise role of the linguistic indicators provided, an uncertainty that leads to contradictions such as the one indicated above. This type of uncertainty relates, in part, to the fact that many of the

achievement objectives included in the New Zealand curriculum statements for modern languages are not in a form that presupposes a range of linguistic exponent types.

A curriculum statement for a modern language that is ordered in terms of progressive levels and that includes achievement objectives that are intended to be amenable to testing and assessment presupposes a tutored language learning context in which students will learn to understand and use, with increasing accuracy and appropriacy, an increasingly wide range of target language. This is essentially what increasing proficiency means. Inevitably, in a tutored language learning context in which there are curriculum statements and/ or guidelines, increasing proficiency will relate to the ways in which teachers interpret these statements/ guidelines in terms of language exposure. Unless the achievement objectives included in these statements/ guidelines can be related to language exposure in terms of, at least, general expectations, teachers will have no way of deciding how to interpret the objectives and, thus, no way of determining what the expectations are in relation to student performance. Thus, the objectives must either (a) presuppose certain types of linguistic exposure/ development, or (b) include linguistic indicators. Where they do neither, they are, in effect, impossible to interpret in relation to testing and assessment. In the case of many of the achievement objectives in New Zealand *Ministry of Education* curriculum statements for modern languages, this is the situation. Many of the objectives are (see *Chapter 4*) too general to relate in any meaningful way to exponents (e.g. 'describe themselves and others'). These objectives suggest a range of micro-functions which can be encoded, depending on context, in almost any way (e.g.'sympathise with others').

This situation can be resolved by:

. finding a way of expressing achievement objectives that presupposes a range of linguistic realizations;

and/or

. accepting that, so far as modern languages are concerned, linguistic specifications must be included as part of achievement objectives specification.

Whatever the relationship between natural language acquisition and tutored language learning, it remains the case that schools must, in the best interests of their students, teach in a way that allows for a transparent relationship between programme objectives and

assessment and evaluation. It is important not only to be able to determine what progress students are making, but also how effective programmes are in optimizing that progress in terms of the specified objectives. There is every reason to argue that this should be done in a way that allows for adaptation to meet individual student needs. There is, however, no reason to suppose that providing language-based targets at different curriculum levels will inhibit, in any fundamental way, teachers' capacity to do this. Providing guidance in the form of staged achievement targets is, in modern languages as in mathematics or technology, simply a responsible way of sharing experience and encouraging best practice.

In connection with all of the various proposals for language syllabus design that have been forwarded, it is important to remember the following point made by Brumfit (1980, p. 57):

> A syllabus is a way of describing something which must be learnt for pedagogic purposes, and the chief characteristic of an educational institution is its focusing function; that is, an educational institution acts as a physical and temporal focus for learning. The limitations in time and place provide the major differences between formal and informal learning: there is an implicit promise in setting up an educational institution to use procedures that will in some sense be more efficient than the more or less random ones of informal learning in the world outside. And a syllabus is a statement of efficient learning.

This point is equally important to bear in mind, perhaps even more so, in the case of national curriculum design. There is an implicit promise in producing national curriculum documents that they will be designed in a way that underpins those efficient procedures that should characterise educational institutions.

A national curriculum statement for a modern language should provide teachers with a clear indication of how they can best help their students to succeed in meeting realistic national expectations, expectations that must, inevitably, take into account how best, in terms of gradual introduction to increasingly complex language behaviour, to help students improve their proficiency in the target language.

5.3.3 Specific language syllabus documents: a critique

5.3.3.1 Introduction

The New Zealand French and German syllabus documents represent a transition stage, a stage that preceded the full implementation of the New Zealand *Curriculum Framework.* Nevertheless, there are many features of these documents that are carried over into later curriculum documents. In particular, the overall communicative orientation in relation, in particular, to achievement objectives setting and to methodology and assessment is retained. These documents are, therefore, of importance in setting the direction for subsequent developments. They are, of course, also significant in that they remain at the time of writing, the documents that are used in schools throughout New Zealand. When they were first introduced, these syllabuses seemed to represent a considerable advance on existing approaches to language teaching and learning in New Zealand. They were, after all, produced at the beginning of a period of major rethinking in the area of linguistics and language teaching and learning. Now, however, with the benefit of hindsight, the difficulties the writers of each had in relation to objectives setting, linguistic and functional specification and the discussion of assessment is evident. In spite of many similarities of approach, what is also evident is that there are philosophical differences between the two, differences that are detectable in a number of areas.

5.3.3.2 The French syllabus document

The New Zealand French syllabus document was the first in a series of language documents designed primarily to give guidance to New Zealand schools in relation to overall objectives at different stages. Although it appeared officially in 1987, it was first produced in draft form in 1981. Much has happened in linguistics and in the area of research on language teaching and learning over the past twenty years and it is, therefore, not surprising that the French document now appears dated in a number of ways. In particular, although it usefully points the way towards revised, contextually-sensitive methodologies, the minimization of formal specifications (particularly at *levels 1 - 3*) and the omission of a whole range of linguistic considerations that are fundamental to discourse construction and comprehension (e.g. modality, cohesion, text-type) is reflected in a patchy and unbalanced presentation. Furthermore, there is evidence of some uncertainty in relation to the question of accuracy and the relationship between accuracy and assessment.

In this area, the French syllabus is rather different from the German one. Thus, although the writers of the German syllabus note that formal accuracy "must be recognised as a factor that affects students' ability to communicate clearly" (Department of Education, 1988, pp. 12 - 13), the writers of the French syllabus, while acknowledging that formal accuracy of grammar and pronunciation are factors that affect communicative ability, clearly give them a subordinate role in assessment. They insist that the place for the testing of specific language items is "as a diagnostic procedure" (p.9). This inevitably causes confusion in relation to assessment and, in particular, in relation to the making of judgments that relate to progress. After all, formal accuracy is one aspect of communicative competence, and although it is now considered wholly inappropriate to insist on formal accuracy at all times, it is, nevertheless, important to assess formal accuracy in appropriate communicative contexts as part of summative assessment procedures (see *Chapter 6*).

At the beginning of the French syllabus, there is a section headed *Communicative Approach* (pp. 6 - 7) in which we are told that "the main emphasis in a communicative approach is on increasing students' ability to comprehend everyday French and use it" (p.6). This is the primary sense in which the term 'communicative approach' is used. We are, however, advised (New Zealand Department of Education, 1987a, p. 6ff.) that each of the following is also characteristic of this approach:

. context is of paramount importance at all times (including controlled practice) and language should be used in contexts that emphasize its functions as a means of communicating ideas, attitudes and feelings;

. students should be challenged to infer meaning from clues and English should be used only where strictly necessary;

. 'real-life' situations, involving the students' own life experiences and role play, should be emphasized;

. classroom language should be part of the students' communicative repertoire;

. guided small-group and pair interaction should be encouraged;

. there should be regular feedback (without insisting on correct language at all

times);

. reference is made largely to aural-oral skills in the achievements although the skills of reading and writing are also to be practised as appropriate;

. there should be clearly articulated objectives;

. grammar and vocabulary should be selected on the basis of appropriateness for meeting the listed achievements;

. evaluation should be based on the achievements listed in the syllabus and the main criterion should be effective communication and the transfer of information with the testing of specific language items being confined to diagnostic contexts.

In the main, this list is made up of methodological specifications. However, the last three items have implications for content. Taking these three together indicates that, in the opinion of the syllabus writers, it is characteristic of what they refer to as 'the communicative approach' that objectives should be stated in a way that does not include grammar and vocabulary. Rather, grammar and vocabulary "should be *based on* the achievements listed in the syllabus" and thus, by implication, the objectives should be such as to facilitate the choice of grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, since evaluation is to be based on the achievements listed in the syllabus, the main criterion being "effective communication and the transfer of information", the implication is that the achievements listed in the syllabus can be related in some specifiable way to effective communication and the transfer of information. A further implication appears to be that effective communication and the transfer of information can be assessed without direct reference to linguistic accuracy in that the testing of "specific language items" is to be "confined to diagnostic contexts". However, both accuracy and appropriacy are important aspects of communicative effectiveness, and assessment that includes reference to degrees of accuracy can be based on the use of language in context. A more detailed discussion of the implications of this apparent sidelining of the language in which achievement objectives are encoded is included in *Chapter 6*.

The list provided earlier (see p. 203), indicates that the 'communicative approach' is seen in the French syllabus document as relating to what is taught and why (syllabus), how it is

taught (methodologies) and how it is evaluated (assessment). There are also implications here for what materials are considered to be of use in the teaching and learning context.

There are also some difficulties associated with references to skills in the French syllabus. The emphasis is said to be on listening and speaking. It is noted, for example, that "the achievements are written mainly in terms of aural-oral skills", although "the skills of reading and writing will also be practised as appropriate" (p.10). Even so, national examinations have continued, as will be discussed more fully in *Chapter 6*, to place considerable emphasis on reading and writing skills. In fact, from *level 4* onwards, when the requirements of forthcoming language examinations inevitably begin to have a major influence on the syllabus, topic-based specifications and an earlier emphasis on listening and speaking are abandoned in favour of a more traditional lexical and structural approach.

Although it is claimed in the French syllabus that it "specifies minimum content only", provides for the "progressive development of language skills" and "comprises five sequential levels" (p. 10), it is also observed that "the order in which the topics and grammatical structures are studied will vary from school to school, depending on the textbook used" (p. 10). This raises a number of issues in that it appears to suggest (a) that the 'progressive development' and 'five sequential levels' built into the curriculum are unimportant, and (b) that the syllabus that underpins whatever textbook, or textbook series, is selected may take precedence over the progressive development recommended in the syllabus. As is indicated in *Chapter 8*, teachers of French currently use a wide range of different textbooks. It is almost certainly the case that some of these textbooks will be more appropriate, in relation to the realisation of the national syllabus, than will others. More appropriate advice might, therefore, be to attempt to select a textbook, or textbook series, which can be readily adapted to meet the needs of the national syllabus. What is really required, however, where national syllabus and curriculum documents are in use, is materials that are designed in accordance with the requirements of these syllabuses and curriculum documents. This has been acknowledged by the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* which now commissions materials designed with newly released curriculum documents in mind. It is now, therefore, no longer necessary for curriculum designers to make recommendations that might have the effect of undermining the integrity of the approaches adopted in designing curricula. This does not mean that teachers should be advised to abandon the use of textbooks, but simply that they should be encouraged to take

the relevant national syllabus/ curriculum statement into account in evaluating textbooks and in adapting textbook contents to meet their needs.

The specifications for *levels 1 - 3* of the national French syllabus are, in terms of linguistic recommendations, limited. However, they represent a recommended minimum which is intended to ensure that (a) all learners were given an opportunity to succeed and that, therefore, teachers do not feel obliged to progress at a rate that may be inappropriate for their students, and (b) that there is adequate time for the pair and group tasks that are regarded as fundamental to communicative orientation. The paucity of linguistic content may also, however, be a reflection of aspects of the Scottish *Tour de France* project, a project that had considerable influence on the New Zealand French syllabus and its implementation. However, the *Tour de France* materials were designed largely for Scottish students from age eleven upwards, whereas students in New Zealand typically began the study of French at age thirteen at the time that the national French syllabus was introduced. Whatever the reason, it could be argued that the French syllabus encourages the sort of over-simplified view of the target language that Pienemann has criticised in relation to the natural approach (Pienemann 1985, p.47). Morphological, syntactic and semantico-grammatical specification is very limited in the early stages (*levels 1 - 3*) of the French syllabus, discourse-related specification (e.g. coherence, cohesion) is minimal, and phonological specification is absent throughout. As has already been noted (see *Chapter 4*), the vocabulary lists include unanalyzed chunks of language along with some syntactic indicators. The topics selected sometimes aid language specification (e.g. 'telling the time and date, and describing the weather'; 'getting around town'); sometimes they do not (e.g. 'talking about yourself and other people').

Each level from *level 1 – level 3* of the French syllabus includes a number of different topics, and each topic (e.g. 'getting acquainted'; 'describing yourself and your family'; 'school'; 'eating and drinking') is followed by a list of objectives. This is followed by a vocabulary list which includes unanalyzed chunks ('comment vous appelez-vous?'; 'ce n'est pas'; 'qu'est-ce que vous désirez?') and syntactic items ('ne...pas'; 'ne...rien'). Short grammatical lists are included at the end of each level. At *levels 4* and *5*, however, no topics are supplied (although lists of topics were made available later), there are general objectives stated as 'achievements' for the level as a whole (e.g. 'give reasons and explanations'; 'present arguments for and against'), and lists of grammar and vocabulary are included following the achievements.

The objectives involve a wide range of different specification types, including direct and/or indirect reference to micro-functions (e.g. 'greet people'; 'give directions') and a few macro-functions (e.g.'summarize'), case roles (e.g. 'say where things are') and aspect (e.g. 'talk about daily routines'). This is not necessarily a problem in itself. What is, however, a problem is the fact that it is difficult to detect any overall sense of direction or coverage in either the achievement statements or the linguistic recommendations. There is, for example, very little reference (direct or indirect) to aspectual categories or to categories of modal meaning. In other words, the achievement statements do not take account of different types of language function in any systematic way, make minimal reference, particularly in the early stages (*levels 1 - 3*), to language form, and vary from the very specific (e.g. 'ask for the price of something') to the very general (e.g. 'talk about yourself, your friends, and others'). What this means is that they do not, in any coherent sense, provide guidance in relation to what is actually expected of learners in terms of what they should be able to do linguistically at different stages. Thus, they fail to provide effective guidance in relation to assessment and evaluation.

The ability to transmit and receive information is, as has been noted, to be seen as the ultimate goal, and the focus of assessment, formal accuracy of grammar and pronunciation being treated as a secondary criterion, although one that is recognized as a factor that affects communicative ability (p. 9). The problem here is that although it is recognized within the communicative movement that part of learning a language is experimentation, and although it is also recognized that experimentation will inevitably involve errors, errors that should not always be corrected, it is also acknowledged that accuracy is a central aspect of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). Furthermore, although it is claimed in the rationale for the French syllabus that "the criterion for the selection of grammar and vocabulary has been their appropriateness for meeting the listed achievements" (p. 10), it is not evident that this is always the case, particularly in view of the fact that the achievements statements are often open to a wide range of different interpretations in terms of realization. An objective such as 'give information about yourself and your family' (*level 1, topic 1d*) presupposes that words for family members will be used. Beyond that, however, there is a very wide range of realization possibilities. Examination of the vocabulary list, however, reveals that the expectation is that age will be discussed in the context of cardinal numbers 1 - 60 (with possible numbers extension) and that students will be able to indicate which family members live with them. Examination of the grammatical items listed for *topic 1d* at the end of *level 1* reveals that the expectation is that students will also be taught singular

possessive adjectives and articles in combination with 'de'. Beyond that, the choices available for further extension are, in fact, limitless. What is actually being taught at the minimum level is a specific range of vocabulary associated with family membership and specific morphological and syntactic structures. The problem, however, is that the way in which the specifications are given (with unanalyzed chunks and morphological and syntactic specifications being included in vocabulary lists) makes it considerably more difficult than it need be to determine exactly what is expected. For example, the inclusion of 'ou' in the vocabulary list for *level 1, topic 1b* indicates that inversion of subject and verb groups will be involved. However, although the comment 'and singular forms' following a list of verbs in the infinitive (also at *level 1, topic 1b*) indicates that the first, second and third person subject pronouns will also be incorporated at this stage, there is no similar indication in relation to plural subject pronouns.

The French syllabus document appears to reflect some of the uncertainty that sometimes characterized the early stages of what has come to be known as the communicative movement. Although it embodies an important methodological shift in emphasis away from the rote learning of decontextualized rules, it achieves this at the expense of clarity and coverage in relation to content and explicitness in relation to assessment expectations. Essentially, what teachers are provided with is a minimal lexical and structural syllabus, although:

. the recursion (for revision purposes) that is often associated with such syllabuses is not evident, and, indeed, might be difficult to incorporate in view of the fact that the topics need not be presented in any particular order;

. linguistic coverage appears sparse in the initial three levels as well as patchy, with many things that are traditionally included in a structural/lexical syllabus (e.g. ways of expressing possibility, probability, certainty) being largely absent;

. there is no clear indication of the extent to which improvement, in terms of linguistic accuracy, is to be expected at particular stages;

. the discourse emphasis that is now incorporated into many syllabuses and curriculum statements in order to accommodate textual as well as clausal and sentential structure is largely absent;

. the overall linguistic expectations for each level (particularly for *levels 1 - 3*) have to be recovered by putting together the vocabulary lists and the grammar summary for each level and then re-examining the vocabulary lists in terms of what they contain that is not centrally lexical.

When the vocabulary lists and grammar summaries are put together, the minimum linguistic expectations are uncovered. This appears, in fact, to constitute the core of the syllabus in a more central sense than do the specified achievements.

Some French teachers may decide to treat the French syllabus as a whole and begin by abstracting its core requirements at each level. Others may decide to follow the staged progression. In doing so, they may, however, encounter some difficulties. Thus, for example, 'parce que' (because) appears in the French syllabus under the heading of 'talking about yourself and other people' (*level 1, topic 1c*). Although it is clearly important to provide students with an ability to give reasons, some teachers may feel that reasoning can best be introduced in contexts that include comparison and contrast and/or preferences. Because there is nothing in the linguistic specifications for *topic 1c* to suggest that comparison, contrast and preference are to be prioritized, teachers are faced with problems. They may resolve these problems in a number of different ways. One possible way of resolving them is to move considerably beyond the minimum linguistic specifications associated with each topic. However, if the primary objective is not to increase the learning load, but simply to redistribute it, this possible solution might be seen as inappropriate. In any case, the complexity of lesson planning will be considerably increased if teachers attempt to do this at the same time as attempting to retain the linguistic essence of subsequent units. They will be obliged to recycle linguistic exponents at points where they were intended to be introduced even though they may have preferred, in terms of the overall coherence of the programme, to focus on the recycling of these exponents at other points. Furthermore, although this type of approach may partially resolve problems associated with the desire to introduce linguistic forms earlier than they are introduced in the syllabus, it does not resolve the problems that teachers will experience where they wish to introduce particular linguistic forms later. Under such circumstances, they may feel that to do so would disrupt overall progression.

It has already been noted that the French syllabus includes very little specification that could be seen as contributing towards discourse construction and comprehension. There is, for

example, at *level 4*, in a section dealing with student achievements, a note concerning individualised reading. Here, the only specification is that students should have available to them "a selection of interesting reading material of varying lengths written at a level which permits the student to read with ease without having to make undue use of a dictionary or word list" (p.39). There is nothing here, or elsewhere, that deals specifically with genre or text type although these are now treated extensively in the Australian school context (see, for example, Derewianka (1990)) and had had a considerable influence on the teaching of English as a second language even before the New Zealand French syllabus was produced (see, for example, *Discovering Discourse* (The British Council, 1979).

5.3.3.3 The German syllabus document

The German syllabus document is, in spite of many surface similarities, rather different in emphasis from the French syllabus document although it was produced just one year later. The German syllabus identifies "a minimum core for German language study", observing that "a syllabus should cover only as much as students can master in the time available" (Department of Education, 1988, p. 4). Although the emphasis here on the achievement of certain minima is similar to that in the French syllabus, there are two main differences: (a) mastery is emphasized, and (b) the vocabulary and grammar lists are both more extensive. Although there is a list of recommended topics, the syllabus is not divided up into chunks that are related to specific topics and so teachers are likely to feel less constrained in terms of where they introduce specific conceptual categories and linguistic exponents.

The approach outlined in the French syllabus is described as "student-centred" and it is noted that that "the linguistic experience in a New Zealand classroom must be as authentic as possible" (p.4). However, whereas the French syllabus document refers to 'the communicative approach' as being concerned primarily with an emphasis on "increasing students' ability to comprehend everyday French and use it" (p.6), the German syllabus document states that the syllabus is based on three general principles: the cumulative nature of language learning, the importance of cultural understanding, and the fact that "there are two aspects to language learning: development of knowledge of sounds, words and structures, and development of the ability to use this knowledge for communication" (p.5). Thus, the writers' intention of adding to, rather than subordinating, formal aspects of language is clear from the outset. Furthermore, the contextualization of grammatical instruction is emphasized: "choose materials for grammatical and structural drills with a

definite communicative target in mind, so that students will see clearly the connection between formal training and the practical use of language for communication" (p.10). In addition, so far as assessment is concerned, formal accuracy "must be recognised as a factor that affects students' ability to communicate clearly" (pp. 12 & 13). Once again, however, as in the French syllabus, there is little evidence of attention being paid to the specifics of creating coherent and cohesive discourse in relation to a range of genres and text types, although reference is made in the *Form 6* syllabus specifications to "descriptive and narrative writing" (p.50).

Unlike the French syllabus, the German syllabus is not divided into three levels prior to *Sixth Form Certificate*. The syllabus section from *Beginner* to the end of *Form 5* has eight general topics (plus some suggested additional topics). Associated with each, is a list of objectives and a vocabulary list. The overall number of vocabulary items listed in the syllabus to the end of *Form 5* is just over 1,000 items (with just over 100 items in the additional background vocabulary list). This section is followed by a grammatical structure list for the syllabus section as a whole (pp. 39 - 47), a list that is much more detailed than that provided in the French syllabus document. The objective statements are similar in type to those listed in the French syllabus document. However, the more comprehensive, and less topic-specific, linguistic specification means that it is a more straightforward matter to determine what language is required in the realization of the objectives as a whole.

5.3.4 The language curriculum statements: a critique

The French and German documents are referred to as syllabuses. Theoretically, therefore, they should be documents that are different in kind from the language documents that followed them, documents that are all referred to as curriculum statements. Specific curriculum statements are intended to be set out at a number of levels (usually eight) which indicate progression and continuity throughout schooling and to specify the learning outcomes for all students as well as define specific objectives (i.e. achievement objectives). They are also intended to include guidelines relating to appropriate approaches to teaching and learning and to suggest assessment procedures and provide assessment examples. They are, thus, concerned with methodology and assessment as well as content. They are not, however, intended to provide a syllabus in any direct sense. Instead, the intention is that they should provide the broad directions for programme planning in the form of the

specification of achievement objectives. Currently, there are considerable differences, as well as similarities, among the modern language curriculum statements.

5.3.4.1 The Spanish curriculum statement

In line with the *National Curriculum Framework*, the Spanish curriculum statement attempts to specify learning goals as achievement objectives at eight progressive levels (Ministry of Education, 1995a, p.12). However, the fact that "the structures and vocabulary are only suggested, not prescribed" (p. 16), raises a range of issues in relation to the concept of progression that is built into the statement and in terms, more generally, of the intention that curriculum statements should define learning objectives. What is evident in the Spanish statement, as in all of the others, is the difficulty of distinguishing meaningfully in the area of language between achievement objectives and the realization of achievement objectives: it is extremely difficult to determine whether, and to what extent, an objective such as, for example, 'ask for and respond to simple personal information' has been met unless we are specific about what type of information is involved and what type of linguistic expectations we have.

There are major problems associated with attempts to specify objectives functionally in the case of language curriculum documents. First, there are many different types of function. Some of these, such as, for example, the expression of the modal meanings 'possibility' and 'probability', may have a wide, but specifiable, range of associated linguistic realizations. Others, such as, for example, 'complimenting people', may be almost limitless in terms of possible exponents. In certain cases, the issues will be complex, interacting ones involving various aspects of discourse construction. Thus, for example, 'arguing a case', or 'explaining how and/or why something works' will involve, among other things, the capacity to manipulate and encode modal meanings differently in different contexts, the sequencing of information and/or argument and the linguistic signalling and encoding of that sequencing. Thus, some types of functional objectives specifications (e.g. 'greeting people') will have direct linguistic implications, other types (e.g. 'stating reasons or purposes') will have more indirect, and more varied, linguistic implications. Finally, many types (e.g. 'insulting or complimenting people') can be realized in almost any linguistic form and will, therefore, be almost impossible to relate in any realistic way to assessment. Thus, although functional specification can provide an important aid to language learning, it is not realistic to relate assessment exclusively to functional

specification. In fact, however, in spite of the claim in the Spanish curriculum statement that achievement objectives are functional in nature and that assessment should relate directly to these functions, there is evidence to suggest that this is not what is intended in practice:

> Assessment should be based on activities which measure skills in communicative contexts. . . . Assessment tasks should reflect the situations, *the expected language content*, and the purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations. Assessment should measure both communicative competence and linguistic accuracy, and should allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content (emphasis added) (p.17).

In an attempt to address the problem of specifying meaningful objectives, the Spanish curriculum statement does two things:

. it provides general language development descriptors for four stages, each stage encompassing two of the eight levels; and

. it not only specifies achievement objectives in terms of what it refers to as 'communication functions', but also provides realization examples as well as what are referred to as 'language level indicators' in relation to these functions.

It is stressed, however, that although different communication functions (which are used to conceptualize the objectives) are described for each level, "teachers can return to functions at any level, increasing the complexity of the structures and vocabulary for more advanced students" (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 15). Thus, it is clear that the curriculum designers envisage different realizations for functions at different stages. Given that this is the case, assessing whether or not the stated achievement objectives have been successfully achieved must relate to the way/s in which they are realised. However, because the language listed at any point in the curriculum apparently has the status only of suggestion, it appears to follow that the ability to use that language at that point cannot be regarded as a fundamental aspect of assessment. Even so, the fact that reference is made to 'expected language content' (see above) appears to undermine this conclusion. Once again, what we find is a fundamental contradiction that arises from what appears to be an attempt to divorce communicative objectives from an important aspect of communicative language

competence, that is, from the language in which these objectives are realised. No amount of rhetoric will remove this contradiction. If they are to provide genuine guidance in relation to programme planning and if they are to be relatable, in any non-trivial way, to assessment, the objectives must either (a) presuppose a certain range of language in their realisation, or (b) be explicitly associated with a range of linguistic realizations.

There is a further problem in relation to assessment. If assessment is to relate, in an overall sense, to the general language development descriptors included in the curriculum statement for Spanish, the assumption must be that it will be guided by some general concept of proficiency, a concept articulated in the language development descriptors themselves. If, however, the intention is that these general language development descriptors should play no role in assessment (as is suggested by the fact that they are not themselves listed as achievement objectives), then assessment will relate directly to the achievement objectives (communication functions) and the associated language level indicators. If this is the case, it is difficult to see what form that assessment can actually take. Thus, achievement objectives such as 'describe themselves and others', 'ask about and respond to personal information about themselves and others', and 'recognise descriptions of places, animals, and things' (*level 2*), are so general as to be almost impossible to relate to assessment. This remains the case even when the language level indicators (which appear to be skills-based components of proficiency-type statements) are taken into account. Looking, for example, at the language level indicators for listening and speaking, what we find is:

> In personal and familiar contexts, students should be able to:
>
> *Listening*
> . understand and respond appropriately to phrases and simple information;
> . get the gist of simple dialogue and information;
> .recognise and understand key words or phrases in simple dialogue or information.
>
> *Speaking*
> .speak simple words and phrases with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation;
> .initiate and respond in brief conversations using learned words and phrases.

None of this tells us what is actually required linguistically. The only real guidance there is comes in the form of (a) the examples that are associated with the achievement objectives, and (b) the lists of suggested structures and vocabulary. However, both the examples and the lists of suggested structures and vocabulary are intended to be indicative only, and so it makes little sense to relate our assessment directly to them. What this actually means is that communicative performance has been abstracted from its linguistic realization or, to put it another way, the core of performing communicatively in a language, that is, the actual language used (appropriately in context) is not specified. The result of this is that teachers are provided with lists of 'functions' without being provided with anything more than some suggestions about the range of language that might be associated with these 'functions'. In this context, the language level indicators that accompany specific functional objectives can be of little real relevance. How is it possible, for example, to determine whether students are performing adequately in relation to the expression of likes and dislikes at *level 2* given that the language level indicators merely indicate that they should, for example, 'use simple language to give brief presentations'? Unless we know, at the very least, what the minimum linguistic expectations actually are, it is impossible to determine what is meant by 'use simple language' in this context. Thus, there is little value in attempting to relate language level indicators to specific groupings of functions in the absence of a clear indication of the linguistic expectations associated with these groupings. This is particularly problematic where the language level indicators include unspecified comparatives such as, for example, 'with increasingly accurate . . . '.

It is claimed in the Spanish curriculum statement that the achievement objectives are "organised in terms of communication functions and divided into the strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing" and that these strands "indicate the language necessary for students to perform the various communication functions as they progress in learning the Spanish language" (p. 5). In fact, they do not. The strands do not make reference to language in anything other than the broadest of terms.

What we have here is a curriculum statement that concerns itself almost exclusively with methodology except for those occasions when the listed 'functions', such as, for example, 'understanding and expressing dates and time', are really notional rather than functional specifications, notional specifications (dates and times) that appear functional because they are embedded within expressions that are related to receptive (understand) and productive (express) skills. From this perspective, the nature of the achievement objectives is sometimes misleading. An objective such as 'understand, ask about, and express events or

facts in the past' (*level 5*) does provide teachers with an indication of expected language coverage and can be related to assessment. This is because it is actually a formal rather than a functional specification. The fact that it is expressed in notional terms (as a semantico-grammatical category) rather than directly in terms of tense/ aspect/ adverbial specifications does not make it functional. In fact, it is precisely because some of the achievement objectives are in this form, and in the form of micro-functions which have stereotypical realisations, that the curriculum appears to make some sense in terms of providing teachers with guidance in terms of linguistic coverage and assessment. In fact, because it is now accepted that notional specifications are really little more than lexico-structural specifications in disguise, the notional classifications found in earlier works (e.g. Wilkins, 1976) have been replaced in more recent *Council of Europe* literature by morphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic specifications that are listed as sub-categories of *linguistic skills and knowledge* (Council of Europe, 1996).

What all of this actually means, in practical terms, is that the Spanish curriculum statement does not, as it initially appears to do, replace linguistic specifications by functional ones that are concerned with the specification of more general communicative objectives. What it actually does is to label objectives of a variety of different kinds, some of which do involve linguistic specification, as functional. In this sense, there is very little difference between those sections of the Spanish curriculum statement that can readily be related to assessment and structural/ lexical syllabuses, and very little difference between those sections of the Spanish curriculum statement that cannot readily be related to assessment and courses in communication for first language speakers that are not language acquisition-centred.

Thus, so far as the Spanish curriculum statement is concerned, the attempt to distinguish between language curricula and language syllabuses by providing achievement objectives that are concerned with communicative functions rather than with linguistic categories is, at least in part, unsuccessful. It remains to be seen whether the other curriculum statements succeed in doing so. If they do not, it may be necessary to conclude that, in practical terms, the distinction between syllabus and curriculum statement cannot be usefully maintained in the case of modern languages. If we do attempt to maintain such a distinction, what we are likely to do in practice is produce a document such as the Spanish curriculum statement, a document that provides useful methodological guidance, but one that is, in several other respects, more confusing than enlightening whatever its surface rhetorical appeal.

5.3.4.2 The Chinese curriculum statement

In many respects, the Chinese curriculum statement is similar to the Spanish one. However, this very similarity raises important issues. For example, the language development descriptors (*emergent communication, survival skills, social competence,* and *personal independence*) are essentially the same (with some very minor differences) as those for Spanish and the same levels are associated with national examinations. In spite of this, however, the expectations in relation to rate of progress and standards of achievement at different stages are clearly very different and, therefore, questions need to be asked, in the absence of linguistic specification, about the validity of the language development descriptors and of the language level indicators. It is clear, for example, that "can write extended passages and simple messages" (*social competence*: *levels 5* and *6*) is likely to be rather differently interpreted in the case of New Zealand school learners of Spanish from the way it is likely to be interpreted in the case of New Zealand school learners of Chinese.

There are further problems associated with the language level indicators. Thus, for example, part of the *level 1* language level indicator for reading in the Spanish statement is:

. recognise and understand simple words and phrases.

In the Chinese statement, the phrase "in personal and familiar contexts" is added. To what extent this addition is intended to affect assessment is unclear. What is, however, clear is that whereas the suggested structures and vocabulary included in the Spanish curriculum statement are listed *as* structures and vocabulary, the Chinese curriculum statement provides structures and vocabulary in the context of possible realizations of the listed functions so that they are, effectively, further examples of functional realizations and could, therefore, be treated as fixed formulae. In the case of functions that are associated with stereotypical encodings, this does not constitute a problem. However, in other cases, the danger with this type of presentation is that memorization may *replace* creation, with functions being directly associated with memorized encodings.

As with the Spanish curriculum statement, the Chinese curriculum statement includes under the heading of communication functions much that would not generally be considered functional. For example, vocabulary for days of the week, months and years is listed as a

function on the basis of being preceded by the word 'use' (i.e. 'use time, days of the week, months, and years'). Similarly, 'parts of the body' and 'colours' are included as functions, the basis for their inclusion under this heading being that they are preceded by the verbs 'name' and identify' (i.e. 'naming parts of the body'; ' identifying colours': *level 2*). We do, therefore, to some extent at least, have lexical and formal specification. However, that specification is not immediately apparent because of the functional headings associated with this classification. Lexical and structural classification, in other words, appears to be functional because it is presented in the context of words that are associated with receptive or productive uses of language. In this sense, as in the case of the Spanish curriculum statement, appearance and reality are rather different. It is not the case that all of the achievement objectives are functional in character. Several of those which are not presuppose specific language selections in very much the same way as would lexical and structural syllabuses. Thus, parts of the curriculum statements for Spanish and Chinese resemble lexical and structural syllabuses whereas other parts are difficult to relate in any direct way to language acquisition/ development and to assessment.

Even though some of the achievement objectives in the Chinese curriculum statement are essentially structural and lexical in nature, what we do not appear to have is a clear outline of the linguistic expectations at different levels unless, that is, it is assumed that the linguistic expectations are largely limited to the lists of examples (including those examples subsumed under the heading of 'suggested structures and vocabulary'). If we cannot assume this, it is extremely difficult to determine, as in the case of the Spanish curriculum statement, how the lists of 'functions' and language level descriptors are to be treated in the assessment process (see *Chapter 6*). As in the case of the Spanish curriculum statement, it is far from clear what is actually meant by the term 'function'. Certainly, what Wilkins refers to as notional classification (Wilkins, 1976) is subsumed under functional labels.

One thing that emerges from a comparison of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements is that the surface similarity is misleading. Although, for example, the *level 8* communication functions and language level indicators are very similar, including those language level indicators that relate to reading and writing, the number of characters that students are expected to be able to recognize and use is such as to suggest major differences in relation to levels of linguistic performance. This is not a problem in itself. What is, however, a problem is that the curriculum statements are structured in a way that suggests that these differences are not fundamental ones. In fact, the Chinese and Spanish

curriculum statements are so similar as to give the impression that levels of competency in the two languages are directly comparable not only at the end of *level 8*, but also at various other levels and stages. What this actually means is that the curriculum statements are misleading. What must be very considerable differences in proficiency at the same curriculum level between first language speakers of English learning Spanish in New Zealand schools and first language speakers of English learning Chinese in New Zealand schools are effectively concealed. In this sense the curriculum statements may have face validity but lack content validity and cannot, in any realistic sense, be said to relate to assessment.

5.3.4.3 The Japanese curriculum statement

In the Japanese curriculum statement, produced in 1998, the term 'communicative' is explicitly associated with methodological matters, relating to activities which should be "effective, stimulating, and varied" (Ministry of Education, 1998a, p. 6). The section dealing with the role of grammatical structures in the language programme in the Japanese curriculum statement (p10) may be directly compared with the section dealing with language structures in the Spanish curriculum statement (p.11), with the exception that the Japanese statement advises teachers to "avoid burdening learners with exceptions" (p10).

The language development descriptors appear once again and are extremely similar to those included in the Spanish curriculum statement. However, it is noted that "New Zealanders learning Japanese as a second or subsequent language are unlikely to reach the stage of personal independence at secondary school levels". A comparison of the association between language development descriptors and curriculum levels in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements is provided in *Table 5.1* below. In *Table 5.2* below, the relationship between curriculum levels for the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements and levels of the New Zealand *Qualifications Framework* are indicated. In *Table 5.3* below, the learning development descriptors in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements are equated directly with levels of the New Zealand curriculum Framework. In these Tables, EC = Emergent Communication; SS = Survival Skills; SC = Social Competence; PI = Personal Independence

Table 5.1: Relationship between Curriculum Levels and Language Development Descriptors in the New Zealand Ministry of Education Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements

	EC	EC & SS	SS	SS & SC	SC	PI
Spanish	Curriculum levels 1 & 2		Curriculum levels 3 & 4		Curriculum levels 5 & 6	Curriculum levels 7 & 8
Chinese	Curriculum levels 1 & 2		Curriculum levels 3 & 4		Curriculum levels 5 & 6	Curriculum levels 7 & 8
Japanese	Curriculum levels 1, 2 & 3	Curriculum level 4	Curriculum levels 5 & 6	Curriculum level 7	Curriculum level 8	

Table 5.2: Relationship between Curriculum Levels in the New Zealand Ministry of Education Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements and Levels in the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 1	New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 2	New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 3
New Zealand curriculum statement for Spanish and Chinese level 5	New Zealand curriculum statement for Spanish and Chinese level 6	New Zealand curriculum statement for Spanish and Chinese level 7
New Zealand curriculum framework for Japanese level 6	New Zealand curriculum framework for Japanese level 7	New Zealand curriculum framework for Japanese level 8

Table 5.3: Relationship between the Learning Development Descriptors in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements and Levels of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework

	New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 1	New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 2	New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 3
Curriculum Statement for Spanish	Level 5: Survival Skills	Level 6: Survival Skills	Level 7: Personal Independence
Curriculum statement for Chinese	Level 5: Survival Skills	Level 6: Survival Skills	Level 7: Personal Independence
Curriculum statement for Japanese	Level 6: Survival Skills	Level 7: Survival Skills & Social Competence	Level 8: Social Competence

Thus, the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements relate in the same way, in terms of language development descriptors and curriculum levels, to the *New Zealand Qualifications Framework* levels, whereas the Japanese curriculum statement relates differently, in terms of both language development descriptors and curriculum levels, to the *New Zealand Qualifications Framework* levels. In the light of this, we should bear in mind that :

. the *Qualifications Framework* levels are intended to ensure comparability so that, for example, students at *level 1* of the *Qualifications Framework* ought to have comparable levels of ability however long it takes them to reach that level;

. the language development descriptors appear to have been introduced, in part, in order to facilitate developmental comparisons among students of different modern languages.

One approach to this issue is to acknowledge that it will, in general, take longer for the majority of New Zealand students whose first language is English to reach a specified proficiency level in some languages than it will in others. This being the case, different proficiency descriptors (language development descriptors) may be associated with the same level within the *Curriculum Framework* in the case of different languages. It does not follow from this, however, that different curriculum levels also need to be associated with different levels within the *Qualifications Framework* if the assumption is that each curriculum level is designed in such a way as to be, in general, covered in approximately the same amount of time. Thus, curriculum *level 1* may, bearing in mind the complexity of the writing system, be less detailed in the case of an Asian language such as Japanese than it is in the case of a Romance language such as French. However, the amount of time generally required to cover curriculum *level 1* may be approximately the same in both cases. Thus, *curriculum levels 6, 7* and *8* could, in all cases, be associated with *levels 1, 2* and *3* of the Qualifications Framework. However, in the case of one modern language, curriculum *level 6* might, for example, be associated with the *social competence* language learning descriptor, whereas in the case of another modern language, it might be associated with the *survival skills* language development descriptor. This would mean that levels within the *Qualifications Framework* were conceptualized in terms of expected levels of competence following approximately the same amount of input. The alternative, that is, consistently associating the same level within the *Qualifications Framework* with the same curriculum level *and* the same language development descriptor in the case of all modern languages would mean that it had to be accepted that students of some modern languages would not be in a position to submit themselves for national examinations until considerably later than others, if at all. An option

that is not logically available is to associate the same curriculum levels and the same language development descriptors with the same levels of the *Qualifications Framework* for all languages irrespective of the amount of time generally required to reach a specified proficiency level and yet to expect that all students will sit national examinations at approximately the same stage in their scholastic careers. Nevertheless, this is what is done in the case of Spanish and Chinese.

In order to determine whether the situation is, in reality, any more coherent in the case of the Japanese curriculum statement, it is necessary to add the achievement objectives to the equation. Thus, it is necessary to determine whether the achievement objectives associated with, for example, *level 5* of the Japanese curriculum statement (associated with the *survival skills* descriptor) are similar to those at *level 5* of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements (associated with the *social competence* descriptor), or whether they are more directly comparable to the achievement objectives at *levels 3* and *4* of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements (associated with the *survival skills* descriptor). Logically, the achievement objectives at *level 5* of the Japanese curriculum statement ought, in terms of the language development descriptor applied, to be more similar to those at *levels 3* and *4* of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements than they are to those at *level 5* of these statements. Similarly, the language level indicators (expressed as 'language skills') at *level 5* in the Japanese curriculum statement ought to be closer to those at *levels 3* and *4* of the Spanish and Japanese curriculum statements. *Table 5.4* below provides a comparison of the language level indicators at *level 5* of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements with the language skills at *level 5* of the Japanese curriculum statement (emphasis in bold added).

Table 5.4: Comparison of the Language Level Indicators at Level 5 of the Spanish and Chinese Curriculum Statements and the Language Skills at Level 5 of the Japanese Curriculum Statement

	Listening	**Speaking**	**Reading**	**Writing**
Spanish: level 5	. understand and respond appropriately to dialogue, narrative, and information expressed in more complex language; . get the gist of more complex language; . recognise and understand detail in more complex dialogue and information.	. speak confidently, with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation and increasing fluency; . use more complex language in simple conversations to seek information and respond appropriately; . use more complex language to present information and ideas.	. get the gist of a **wide** range of texts containing some unfamiliar language; . recognise detail and interpret meaning from a range of texts.	. write simple passages using more complex language confidently and with increasing accuracy; . write simple passages with some linking of sentences and structuring of ideas.
Chinese: level 5	. understand and respond appropriately to dialogue, narrative, and information expressed in more complex language; . get the gist of more complex language; . recognise and understand detail in more complex dialogue and information.	. speak confidently, with increasingly accurate **tones**, pronunciation and intonation and increasing fluency; . use more complex language in simple conversations to seek information and respond appropriately; . use more complex language to present information and ideas.	. get the gist of a range of texts containing some unfamiliar language; . **identify** detail in a range of texts; **. recognise up to 280 Chinese characters.**	. write simple passages using more complex language confidently and with increasing accuracy; . write simple passages with some linking of sentences and structuring of ideas; **. write up to 170 characters.**
Japanese: level 5	. seek and give information through conversation in a range of everyday situations; . read and write notes and short letters in which sentences are linked and ideas are logically ordered; . write *hiragana, katakana*, and some *kanji* accurately and fluently.			

In practice, the generality of all of these statements (with the exception of reference to number of Characters in the case of Chinese), the indeterminacy of modifiers such as 'range of'/ 'wide range of' and the use of non-specific comparatives (e.g. 'more complex') in the case of the Spanish and Chinese indicators makes comparison almost impossible. The only specific difference that can be asserted with confidence is the fact that whereas the Spanish and Chinese indicators refer to "a wide range of texts containing some unfamiliar language", the Japanese skills statement refers to "notes and short letters". The only

significant difference here is the lack of reference in the case of Japanese to "unfamiliar language" since the linguistic demands associated with "notes and short letters" will not necessarily be different from those associated with "a wide range of texts". Thus, comparison in terms of language level indicators/ skills statements yields very little of significance.

Comparison in terms of achievement objectives may, however, be more productive. *Table 5.5* below lists the achievement objectives that occur at *level 5* in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements.

Table 5.5: *Comparison of the Achievement Objectives at Level 5 in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Curriculum Statements*

Spanish curriculum statement: level 5 objectives	**Chinese Curriculum statement: level 5 objectives**	**Japanese curriculum statement: level 5 objectives**
. understand, ask about, and express events or facts in the past	. understand, ask about, and express events or facts in the past	. recognise, ask about and say **when** events occur * first reference to past events at **level 3**
. ask about, express, and respond to states, actions, or events, referring to themselves	No equivalent	* similar objective occurs at **level 4** (i.e. . ask about, express, and respond to comments about events and ongoing actions, referring to themselves)
. ask for, offer, accept, and refuse help	No equivalent	No equivalent
. recognise, enquire about, and express ability or inability	* occurs first at **level 4**	* occurs first at **level 4** (repeated at level 6 and level 8)
. regognise, enquire about, and express wishes and **intentions**	No equivalent	. recognise, ask about, and express wishes * intentions occur at **level 6**
. understand, issue, accept, and decline invitations	. understand, issue, accept, and decline invitations	. occurs at **level 3**
. recognise, enquire about, and express agreement and disagreement	. recognise, enquire about, and express agreement and disagreement	No equivalent
. give and receive apologies	. give and receive congratulations, thanks, **apologies**, and compliments	. first reference to apology and thanks at **level 1** . first reference to compliments and congratulations at **level 2**
. recognise, ask for, and express opinions with reasons	. recognise, ask for, and express opinions, giving reasons	No equivalent
* occurs at **level 4**	. compare and contrast people, places and things	. compare and contrast people, places and things (repeated at level 7)
* reference to 'words relating to measurement' occurs at **level 4**	* reference to 'measure words' occurs at **level 4**	. recognise and express amounts and quantities
No equivalent	No equivalent	. ask for, give and decline permission
* reference to 'acceptance and refusal' at **level 6**	* reference to 'acceptance and refusal' at **level 3** and **level 6**	. recognise and use expressions that relate to giving and receiving
* similar objective at **level 7** (i.e. . recognise, express, and ask about opinions, attitudes or emotions in relation to events, actions and other people)	* similar objective at **level 7** (i.e. . recognise, express, and ask about opinions, attitudes or emotions in relation to events, actions and other people)	. recognise and ask about feelings in relation to events, actions and other people

An examination of *Table 5. 5* reveals that four of the nine achievement objectives occurring at *level 5* of the Spanish curriculum statement also occur at *level 5* of the Chinese curriculum statement. In one further case, an objective is very similar. However, three of

the *level 5* achievement objectives in the Spanish curriculum statement appear to be have no equivalent in the Chinese curriculum statement. In the remaining case, an achievement objective that occurs at *level 5* in the Spanish curriculum statement occurs at *level 4* in the Chinese curriculum statement. Overall, then, there is significant overlap (over 50%) between the achievement objectives at *level 5* of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements. So far as the Japanese curriculum statement is concerned, the overlap between its *level 5* objectives and the *level 5* objectives in the Spanish curriculum statement are less marked. However, of the nine achievement objectives occurring at *level 5* of the Spanish curriculum statement, five occur in the same or similar form at *earlier* (rather than, as anticipated, later) levels in the Japanese curriculum statement. In three cases, there appears to be no equivalent in the Japanese curriculum statement of *level 5* objectives that occur in the Spanish curriculum statement. In only one case does an achievement objective that occurs in the Spanish curriculum statement at *level 5* appear at a higher level (*level 6*) in the Japanese curriculum statement. Of the five achievement objectives that occur in the Japanese curriculum statement at *level 5* that have no equivalent at *level 5* in the Spanish curriculum statement at *level 5*, two have an equivalent form occurring at an earlier level in the case of the Spanish curriculum statement and two have an equivalent form occurring later. In one case, there is no equivalent achievement objective in the Spanish curriculum statement.

What all of this appears to indicate is that there is no systematic relationship between the occurrence of particular achievement objectives at particular levels in the Japanese curriculum statement and the different association of language development descriptors with curriculum levels from that found in the curriculum statements for Spanish and Chinese. What also emerges from the comparison is the fact that several of the objectives in the Japanese curriculum statement appear more than once at different curriculum levels. In each case, they are associated with different suggested structures and expressions and different examples. What this appears to indicate is that it is these differences, rather than the achievement objectives themselves, that are associated with the concept of levels, that is, it appears to indicate that the 'suggestions' are more fundamental to the curriculum progression than is acknowledged. Once again, the difficulties inherent in attempting to separate curriculum statement from syllabus in the case of modern languages is highlighted.

In the Japanese curriculum statement, there are no language level indicators expressed under the heading of the four skills. Instead, there is for each level, a single skills

statement. Direct comparison with the language level indicators in the Spanish and Chinese statements is, therefore, not possible. Even so, it is interesting to note that at levels 5 and 6 (*Survival Skills)* of the Japanese statement, the language skills achievement objectives are:

Japanese Language Skills Achievement Objectives (Level 5)

Students should be able to:

. seek and give information through conversation in a range of everyday situations;

. read and write notes and short letters in which sentences are linked and ideas are logically ordered;

. write hiragana, katakana, and some kanji accurately and fluently.

Japanese Language Skills Achievement Objectives (Level 6)

Students should be able to:

. get the gist of a range of texts and pick up some new language from its use in context, when listening and reading;

. use written and spoken language flexibly in a variety of routine situations.

These can, in spite of the different formulation, be seen as comparable with the language level indicators for *levels 3* and *4* (survival skills) of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements. It might, therefore, be expected that the communication functions listed for *levels 5* and *6* (*Survival Skills*) of the Japanese curriculum would also be comparable with those listed for *levels 3* and *4* (*Survival Skills*) of the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements rather than with those listed at *levels 5* and *6* (social competence) of these statements. A partial comparison is indicated in *Table 5.6* following.

Table 5.6: Comparison of Achievement Objectives at Level 5 of the Japanese Curriculum Statement with the Levels at which these Achievement Objectives Appear in the Spanish and Chinese Curriculum Statements

Japanese curriculum statement – level 5 achievement objectives	**Chinese curriculum statement – achievement objectives**	**Spanish curriculum statement – achievement objectives**
. recognise and express amounts and quantities	Level 4	Level 4
. ask for, give and decline permission	-	-
. recognise, ask about and express wishes	-	Level 5 (but also includes intentions)
. recognise and use expressions that relate to giving and receiving	Level 3	-
. recognise, express and ask about feelings in relation to events, actions and other people	Level 7 (but also includes opinions and attitudes)	Level 6
. recognise, ask about and say when events occur	Level 3	Level 1 (Roughly Comparable: Understand and express dates and time)
. compare and contrast people, places and things	Level 5	Level 4
Japanese curriculum statement – level 6 achievement objectives	**Chinese curriculum statement – achievement objectives**	**Spanish curriculum statement – achievement objectives**
. ask for, give and respond to directions	Level 4	Level 4
. recognise, ask about, and express intentions	-	Level 4 (Roughly comparable: Understand and express future plans)
. ask or direct others to do something or not to do it	Level 6	Level 5 (Roughly comparable: Ask for, offer, accept and refuse help)
. recognise and respond to descriptions of activities and events	Levels 4 & 5	Level 4 (but refers to events in the present and to location, time and frequency) Level 5 (refers to events or actions in the past)
. describe activities and events using complex sentences	-	-
. recognise and give reasons for or against a proposed activity	-	-
. recognise, ask about and express abilities or inabilities	Level 4	Level 5
. recognise, ask about, and express likes and dislikes	Level 3	Level 3

What *Table 5. 6* reveals is that although there is some correlation between the achievement objectives at *levels 5* and *6* (*Social Competence*) and *levels 3* and *4* (*Survival Skills*) of the

Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements, this correlation is by no means a direct one. Thus, five of the fifteen achievement objectives listed at *levels 5* and *6* of the Japanese curriculum statement have no equivalent in the Chinese curriculum statement and three have no equivalent in the Spanish curriculum statement. Six of the fifteen objectives at *levels 5* and *6* of the Japanese curriculum statement correlate with achievement objectives at *levels 3* and *4* of the Chinese curriculum statement and five correlate with achievement objectives at *levels 3* and *4* of the Spanish curriculum statement. One of the achievement objectives in the Japanese curriculum statement correlates with objectives at both *levels 4* and *5* of the Chinese and Spanish curriculum statement. Of the remainder, one correlates with an achievement objective at *level 5*, and one with an achievement objective at *level 7* of the Chinese curriculum statement. Three of the achievement objectives in the Japanese curriculum statement correlate with objectives at *level 5* of the Spanish curriculum statement, one correlates with an achievement objective at *level 6* and, finally, one correlates with an achievement objective at *level 1*. It is impossible, therefore, to say with any conviction that the difference in terms of the levels at which the language development descriptors are applied relates to the occurrence of comparable achievement objectives at these levels.

What we might expect to find, given the correlation between language development descriptors and curriculum levels in the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements, is a further correlation in terms of achievement objectives and language level indicators at each curriculum level. In fact, although there *is* a general equivalence, that equivalence may be attributable as much to the incestuous nature of the Chinese statement (drawing, as it clearly does, so directly on the Spanish one), as it is to any genuine equivalence in terms of student competencies at different stages. However, the fact that there is a broad equivalence itself raises questions given that it is generally accepted that New Zealand students learning Chinese will, in general, take longer to reach a specified proficiency level than will New Zealand students learning Spanish. This need not mean that there are any fundamental problems associated with the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements, so long as it is acknowledged that New Zealand students learning Chinese may take longer to reach, for example, level 5, than do students learning Spanish. If, however, it is considered that this would give an unfair advantage, in terms of success in national examinations and/or in terms of the amount of effort required to reach the appropriate level for national examinations, to students of some languages, the answer might be simply to accept that a *Bursary* examination in one language need not be equivalent, in terms of

communicative expectations, to a *Bursary* examination in another language. Accepting this would be inconvenient for those who argue for consistency of standards across examinations, but it would not raise issues of fundamental concern to educationalists. It does, however, raise fundamental questions about the use of descriptors, functional labels and language level indicators in the Spanish and Chinese curriculum statements.

It was, presumably, issues of this type that led the writers of the Japanese curriculum statement to adopt an approach that is different in some ways from the approach adopted by the writers of the earlier curriculum statements and to propose that so far as Japanese is concerned *levels 6, 7* and *8* (rather than *levels 5, 6* and *7*) would relate to levels *1 - 3* of the *New Zealand Qualifications Framework* and that *levels 6* and *7* of the curriculum statement would relate to the *Survival Skills* language development descriptor (rather than *levels 3* and *4*), with *level 7* representing a combination of *Survival Skills* and *Social Competence*. The problem with this formulation is, however, that it should follow that *levels 6* and *7* of the Japanese curriculum statement should equate, in terms of achievement objectives (communication functions and language skills), to the achievement objectives (functions and language level indicators) in earlier statements that correlate with the same language development descriptor. The fact that this does not happen raises questions about whether the overall descriptors can be said to serve any useful purpose at all. How, if they do not relate to objectives, its it possible to determine, in curriculum terms, whether or not a particular student's performance can be equated with a particular descriptor? The issues can be seen to be even more problematic when it is recognized that:

. some functions that appear in the Japanese curriculum statement (e.g. *ask for, give, and decline permission*) do not appear at all in earlier ones;

. some functions that appear in both the Spanish and Chinese statements (e.g. *agreement and disagreement*) do not appear at all in the Japanese one;

. some functions that appear in the Spanish statement (e.g. *recognise, enquire about, and express ability and inability*) do not appear in the Chinese one;

. some functions that would appear to be extremely common (e.g. *requesting an explanation*) appear in none of these statements.

In view of all of this, it would appear to be important that the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* should look again at the following issues and questions, issues and questions that became more pressing with the publication of the Japanese curriculum statement:

. What are the intended purposes of the language development descriptors: are they intended to relate to the functions and achievement objectives at the curriculum levels with which they are associated?

. Is the intention that the language development descriptors should be associated with the same levels in each curriculum statement? If not, what is the relationship between the language development descriptors and the curriculum levels intended to be?

. Is the intention that each curriculum level in all of the curriculum statements should be described in approximately the same way in terms of functions and achievement objectives/language level indicators?

. What is the precise sense in which the term 'function' is intended to be used in the curriculum statements?

. What, precisely, is a curriculum statement intended to describe/prescribe and how are teachers intended to make use of it in drawing up syllabuses and lesson plans?

In the absence of specific answers to these questions in the form of statements of intent, it will be extremely difficult for teachers of languages in New Zealand to know precisely what the curriculum statements are intended to achieve.

5.3.4.4 The draft Korean curriculum statement

In the draft Korean curriculum statement, the emphasis is on communication skills which are, in turn, related to functions: "communication skills, which are fundamental to the language classroom, are reflected specifically in the communication functions in this draft curriculum statement" (p.10). Like the Japanese curriculum statement, the draft Korean curriculum statement has only three descriptors: *Emergent Communication, Survival*

Skills and *Social Competence.* However, unlike the Japanese curriculum statement, the Korean curriculum statement associates *levels 1 - 4* with *Emergent Communication* and *levels 5 - 8* with *Survival Skills.* These levels are not directly associated in the curriculum statement with levels of the *Qualifications Framework.* The relationship between language development descriptors and curriculum levels in the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements and the draft Korean curriculum statement is indicated in *Table 5.7* below:

Table 5.7: *Relationship between Language Learning Descriptors and Curriculum Levels for Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean in the New Zealand Curriculum Statements*

	Emergent Communicat -ion	**Emergent Communicat- ion & Survival Skills**	**Survival Skills**	**Survival Skills & Social Competence**	**Social Competence**	**Personal Independence**
Spanish	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Chinese	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Japanese	Levels 1 - 3	Level 4	Levels 5 & 6	Level 7	Level 8	
Korean	Levels 1 - 4		Levels 5 - 8			

It might be argued that there ought, given the similarity of the Korean and Japanese languages, to be a more or less direct correlation between the language development descriptors and curriculum levels in the case of these curriculum statements. However, as is indicated above, such correspondence is found at the lower levels only (*levels 1 - 4*) so that, for example, whereas *levels 7* and *8* of the Japanese curriculum statement are related to the *Social Competence* language development descriptor, the same levels of the Korean curriculum statement are related to the *Survival Skills* language development descriptor. There are, furthermore, significant differences between the two curriculum statements at each level with, for example, the draft Korean statement making reference to 'likes and dislikes' at *level 1* whereas the Japanese curriculum statement does so at *level 2.*

A detailed comparison of the curriculum statements at any level, and in terms of coverage as a whole, reveals some major differences. Thus, for example, although the Japanese curriculum statement includes reference to 'ability and inability' at *level 4*, the only

comparable objective in the draft Korean curriculum statement is at *level 6* (i.e. *'say what they can do'*). Furthermore, the draft Korean curriculum statement seems to have considerably less sense of progression than do the other curriculum statements. Thus, for example, we find at *level 8* of the draft Korean curriculum statement, 'say who is in their extended family'. Furthermore, although use of habitual aspect appears to be expected at *level 4*, there is no evidence of reference to future time until *level 6* where we find 'arrange to meet someone somewhere'. Future time is again implied at *level 7*, with 'plan spare time activities'. Even at *level 8*, however, there is no reference to past time, unless it is assumed that this is implied in 'talk about New Zealand' or 'talk about school life and leisure time'.

The Korean curriculum statement lists achievement objectives as a combination of communication functions, culture and language skills. However, the sense in which it makes use of the label 'communication function' appears to be different from that encountered elsewhere. For example, one 'communication function' for *level 1* is:

> Students should be able to meet and talk to someone about themselves, for example, their name, their age, where they live, their pets, and their likes and dislikes.

> At *level 4,* one of the 'communication functions' is:

> Students should be able to talk about school.

Thus, with the draft Korean curriculum statement any theoretical underpinning that had previously accompanied the use of the term 'function' appears to be absent. Furthermore, in a fashion reminiscent of the French syllabus, content is listed under the heading of 'Suggested Topics' and 'Specific Outcomes'. For example:

> *Level 2:*
> *Suggested topic:* myself, my family, and other people
> *Specific outcome:* say what colour people's hair and eyes are

> *Level 7:*
> *Suggested topic:* education and work

Specific outcome: students can talk about tests

The suggested topics and specific outcomes are accompanied by suggested expressions and suggested grammar.

In spite of the difference in labelling, the 'specific outcomes' that appear in the draft Korean curriculum statement are at times in much the same form (and often have much the same type of content) as statements relating to 'communication functions' in other curriculum statements. This is, however, not always the case.

In the Japanese curriculum statement, the 'communication functions' listed in the main body of the curriculum statement are repeated as part of the outcomes statements, whereas the equivalent of these (i.e. *specific outcomes*) are not repeated as part of the achievement objectives in the Korean curriculum statement. Furthermore, in contrast to the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese statements, and in common with the French and German syllabuses, the expressions listed in the draft Korean statement are not suggestions, but required minima. Thus, "specific Korean words, phrases, questions, and statements are listed at each level to indicate the increasing range and variety of language that students are expected to acquire. . . . The expressions listed are a suggested minimum only. Teachers should feel free to add words that match their students' interests and abilities" (p.19). What is of concern here is that the suggested expressions, the minimum required language content, are made up of what is essentially an inventory of language units in isolation and abstraction. There is no reference at all, even at *level 8*, to genres or text types; there is nothing at all about sequencing, cohesion or text construction.

The Korean curriculum statement is currently in draft form only. Even so, it is different in so many ways from the earlier curriculum statements as to suggest that the writers of these statements are left very much to their own devices in addressing a range of theoretical and practical issues. In the process of addressing these issues, they have, almost inevitably, reached rather different conclusions and have, thus, produced documents that are different in some fundamental ways. If there is to be coherence and consistency among New Zealand curriculum documents, a range of issues will need to be addressed explicitly, issues that are particularly pressing in a context where new forms of assessment are about to be introduced, forms of assessment that presuppose that the achievement objectives for

modern second/ foreign languages are comparable at those stages where national examinations will apply (see *Chapter 6*).

5.3.5 The draft French and German curriculum guidelines

Some of the issues that have been raised as issues that need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum statements do appear to have been addressed by the writers of the French and German curriculum guidelines. For example, the language development descriptors that appear in the curriculum statements appear in the French and German curriculum guidelines as general achievement objectives (proficiency target statements), one for each curriculum level. Although the earlier labelling is retained (with, for example, *Emergent Communication 1* and *Emergent Communication 2* replacing *Emergent Communication*), there is also an indication of how each of these overall objectives relates to internationally recognised proficiency benchmarks. Furthermore, the overall achievement objectives include both a general statement and a more specific statement relating to each of the four skills and, thus, incorporate aspects of what were referred to as 'language level indicators' in the Spanish curriculum statement. In connection with this, it is relevant to observe that Cervi (2000, p. 60) has argued that "the application of a competency-based approach to language teaching and assessment is more achievable, desirable and appropriate than is sometimes supposed", going on to note that "as anyone who has been involved with major public language tests such as IELTS or Cambridge exams knows, the emphasis has long been on criterion-referenced assessment" and "the band descriptors used in many such tests . . . contain information not only about *what* a candidate should be able to do in the target language at specific levels, but also about the conditions and *circumstances* in which they should be able to display this ability" so that "the inclusion of such information in band descriptors is comparable to the specification in competency statements of the range of conditions and required standards associated with the task to be performed within that competency". Therefore "adjustment of language proficiency scale descriptors to make them competency statements would certainly be achievable" (p. 64).

The achievement objectives for both the French and the German guidelines are the same, as are the suggested topics, suggested socio-cultural aspects and suggested text types and many of the suggested learning and assessment activities. However, the suggested structures and examples are different, as is the way in which the achievement objectives

are recycled. The aim seems to be to seek to achieve consistency in terms of the overall communicative objectives at the same time as taking fully into account the necessary differences in terms of specific linguistic progression. Even so, difficulties remain. Although there is a clearly articulated progression for each of the languages, the language continues to be in the form of suggestions only. This is partially resolved by the nature of the achievement objectives themselves, achievement objectives that are of a number of different types, that accommodate discourse considerations and that presuppose a range of linguistic realization (both formulaic in the earlier stages and non-formulaic in the later ones). Some of the achievement objectives at each of the eight curriculum levels are outlined in *Table 5.8* below.

Table 5.8: *Sample Achievement Objectives: Draft French and German Curriculum Guidelines*

Level 1	**Greet, farewell and thank** people and respond to greetings and thanks. Understand, express and enquire about **location**.
Level 2	Understand, express and enquire about **ownership.** Understand, express and enquire about **likes and dislikes**, giving reasons where appropriate.
Level 3	Understand, express, enquire about and compare and contrast **habits and routines.** Understand, express, enquire about and compare and contrast **immediate future plans.**
Level 4	Understand, express and enquire about the **quality, quantity and cost** of things. Understand, request, give and withhold **permission**, giving reasons where appropriate.
Level 5	**Affirm, deny, concede, contradict and correct** statement and comments, giving reasons where appropriate. Understand. express and enquire about **reservations** in relation to ideas, suggestions and proposals.
Level 6	Understand, express and enquire about people's **willingness and unwillingness to do and say certain things**, providing reasons and explanations where appropriate. Understand, express and enquire about things that are/ were **always/ usually true**
Level 7	Report, enquire about and comment on **what people thought or said.** Recognise, express and enquire about **promises and commitments** in the context of simple conditions, possible/ probable consequences and reasons where appropriate.
Level 8	Understand, express and enquire about **examples and exceptions, definitions, amplifications, explanations and supporting details.** Recognise and **use language differently** in a range of contexts and situations **to convey the same/ similar information.**

5.4 Modern languages in New Zealand Universities: a critique

5.4.1 Introduction

For over a decade, New Zealand tertiary education has been undergoing a period of wide-ranging reform. Much of the impetus for this reform appears to have originated with the *New Zealand Business Roundtable*, an organisation of chief executives of major New Zealand business firms who meet to discuss and develop points of view on matters of common interest and, in particular, public policy (New Zealand Business Roundtable, 1988; Kerr, 1997).

In general, the reforms recommended for the tertiary education sector, reforms that have often been subsequently implemented, have been consistent with New Zealand's adoption of a market-driven economic model with associated deregulation and decentralisation. A 1988 research report from the Business Roundtable asserts:

> The New Zealand Government has in recent years embarked on a broad re-examination of the public sector. This has been essential from the point of view of the extent of its fiscal problems. To date the tertiary education system has been one of the least accountable parts of the public sector. Investigation of its claims on the government purse is therefore of considerable importance. It is also an area in which reform can simultaneously enhance the quality of its services, the efficiency of their delivery and the equity of their distribution (New Zealand Business Roundtable, 1988, p.66).

The reforms that took place between 1988 and 1997, reforms that significantly reduced the funding available from government sources for each student, were intended to:

> . . . improve the responsiveness of providers in meeting the needs of students, the economy and society; improve participation for groups traditionally under-represented in tertiary education; achieve greater cost-effectiveness in government expenditure on tertiary education; contain government expenditure even as participation grew; encourage students to make informed choices about their courses of study (Ministry of Education, 1997, p.71)

5.4.2 An emphasis on internationalisation and the knowledge-based economy

Since the implementation of the tertiary education reforms, funding formulas for universities have been changed from a general bid system to a much less generous EFTS (equivalent full-time student) funding system. Institutions are now expected to have a greater degree of accountability for the centrally funded resources allocated to them and to increasingly develop strategies to obtain funding from sources other than those provided by the government and the revenues generated from student fees. This has led to the need for a greater degree of autonomy for institutions and, in relation to resources generated from non-government sources, the development and delivery of a wider range of courses than was traditionally possible.

The New Zealand national education system is expected to produce graduates who have "the skills to function successfully in an international environment and to take advantage of new opportunities" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.5). There are two particular areas associated with the reform of tertiary education in New Zealand that have the potential to affect the delivery of language programmes. The first of these is the intention to develop areas of academic activity which can contribute to the development of a knowledge–based economy. The second is the determination to internationalise New Zealand education. In relation to the internationalisation agenda, the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* aims (a) to achieve international recognition of the New Zealand curriculum and of New Zealand qualifications generally, (b) to increase the number of academic agreements of various kinds (including student exchanges) between New Zealand educational institutions and educational institutions in other parts of the world, and (c) to increase the number of international students. It regards success in each of these areas as evidence of the strength of the internationalization process.

New Zealand *Ministry of Education* communications often refer to the fact that international students "make a contribution to the economy through the goods and services they purchase" and "bring an awareness of and tolerance for other customs and cultures which will assist New Zealanders to engage successfully in the new international environment" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.5). However, a significant omission from such commentaries on the internationalization of education is reference to the contribution that this internationalization can potentially make in the area of language teaching and learning.

5.4.3 International language departments in New Zealand universities: response to the changing educational environment

The economic-driven model that is currently in fashion in relation to New Zealand education encourages inter-institutional competition for student numbers. The user-pays philosophy and practice focuses attention on economies of programme delivery and, in doing so, provides an uneasy environment for the teaching and learning of international languages in New Zealand universities. In a country where a high percentage of the population is monolingual (see *Chapter 1*), one where there is considerable emphasis in education on those disciplines that offer immediate employment prospects, it is perhaps not surprising that languages appear to be increasingly at risk (See *Chapter 3*). In an attempt to cope, many university language departments have renamed and regrouped courses, updated publicity materials and mounted departmental webpages where the study of international languages is actively marketed. In many cases, the primary reason given for learning these languages is the strategic contribution they are said to make to the portfolio of skills and qualifications needed by new graduates who want to seek employment in an increasingly international arena. Potential students are reminded, for example, not only that that "China is the oldest continuous civilisation surviving today with a recorded history of over 3000 years", but also that "Chinese culture is both rich and influential" and that "Chinese is a language of major international importance" (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/home/frame.html>: visited 10 June 2000). Students are urged to study German because "the study of German enhances the study of many other disciplines such as Tourism and Marketing" (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/home/frame.html>: visited 10 June, 2000) and because "graduates with good understanding and awareness of Europe, past and present, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with Europeans, will be essential to New Zealand's future" (<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~wwlang/euro/eustwel.html>: visited 10 June 2000).

While University Language Departments are clearly responding to a change of focus in New Zealand education as evidenced in the publicity materials they produce, what is not so apparent is that this change is truly reflected in overall course offerings. A graduate whose future work might involve "business, trade and commerce, tourism, foreign affairs, development, education" (<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~wwlang/easia/japwel.html>: visited 10 June 2000) could, for example, be reasonably expected to leave university with a level of language proficiency in line with skills in his or her chosen professional field and with some experience of operating in an environment in which English is not the primary medium of communication. It appears, however (see *Chapter 4*), that neither of these

expectations will necessarily influence in any fundamental way the type of language programme made available.

The following sections of this chapter examine a range of issues relating to language acquisition papers at six of the seven New Zealand universities currently offering international languages. In particular, the discussion will relate to the extent to which these papers represent real opportunities to support high level language proficiency development in New Zealand university students (something that is examined more fully, with specific reference to German, in *Chapter 8*).

5.4.4 Availability of modern foreign languages in New Zealand universities

In *Appendix 2*, a comprehensive list of all language and language-related courses listed in New Zealand Universities in the year 2000 is provided. A summary of these courses is presented in *Chapter 4 (Table 4.14)*. Courses in modern foreign languages are offered at seven of the eight New Zealand universities, the greatest number being available at the University of Auckland. As indicated in *Chapter 4*, each of the universities listed offers courses in Chinese, French, German, Japanese and New Zealand Mäori. Spanish is offered in 5 of the 7 universities. Russian is currently offered in 3 universities, although comments included in the Victoria University of Wellington Calendar for the year 2000 indicate that the future of Russian courses there may be under review. Whereas the establishment of Korean courses at the Universities of Auckland and Waikato reflects increasing economic and migratory ties between Korea and New Zealand over the past 10 years, the University of Waikato is to suspend these courses from the year 2001.

5.4.4.1 Language acquisition papers at undergraduate level at New Zealand universities: routes from starting point to end point

The number of language acquisition papers at undergraduate and graduate level in the six New Zealand Universities reviewed was outlined in summary form in Chapter 4 (*Tables 4.33 – 4.35).* Because of the modular format of language courses at the Auckland University of Technology, courses offered in that institution were not included in the data represented in these tables.

At undergraduate level across the six New Zealand universities surveyed, 300 of the total 696 courses offered (43%) had a language focus. At graduate level, 40 of the 379 courses (fewer than 11%) had a language focus. Overall, of the 1075 courses offered at both undergraduate and graduate level combined, 330 (31.6%) had a language focus.

New Zealand Universities have traditionally offered beginner language acquisition courses in those languages that are not taught in New Zealand secondary schools. Recently, however, there has been a trend for universities also to offer beginner courses in those languages, particularly French and German, which are taught widely in New Zealand secondary schools. This has created the need for a complex range of *Stage I (Part 1)* courses to allow students to progress from any one of two or three key starting points to a common *Stage III (Part 111)* end point and major. *Table 5.9* summarises the number of language acquisition courses required to progress from beginner level to Stage III level in a number of languages in six New Zealand universities.

Table 5.9: *Number of Courses Required to Progress from Beginner to Stage 111 Level in a Number of Modern Languages in Six New Zealand Universities*

	University A	University B	University C	University D	University E	University F
Chinese	6	6	6	5	4	7
French	5	5	5	6	6	5
German	6	4	6	5	5	5
Indo/Malay	6			4		
Italian	5			4		
Japanese	4	8	7	6	4	7
Korean	7	6				
Russian	4			6	3	
Samoan	6			5		
Spanish	5	5	5	4		

While the number of language acquisition courses here appears relatively consistent, the number of tuition hours offered (in terms of what can be determined from the publicity materials available) at each university in these same languages presents a less consistent picture. *Table 5.10* provides a summary of estimated tuition hours in language acquisition courses for those languages that are listed in *Table 5.9*. Note that where an asterisk appears, the hours are approximations only. In fact, in all cases, the hours may not be wholly accurate. Any conclusions reached on the basis of these figures must, therefore, be

regarded as tentative. Nevertheless, the figures are indicative of a situation that appears to be far from satisfactory.

Table 5.10: ***Estimated*** *Number of Hours of Tuition Available in Language Acquisition Courses from Beginner to Stage 111 in a Number of Modern Languages Available at Six New Zealand Universities*

	University A	University B	University C	University D	University E	University F
Chinese	342	276	438	360	480	348
French	312	384	240	336	360	336 *
German	276	324	240	360	325	384 *
Indo/Malay	300			360		
Italian	300			264		
Japanese	336	324	840	384	480	612
Korean	288	240				
Russian	240			360	375	
Samoan	144			312		
Spanish	264	312	264	264		

Thus, at one New Zealand university a student studying Japanese from beginner level would follow 8 language acquisition courses over approximately 324 tuition hours; at another, the same student would follow 7 language acquisition courses over approximately 840 tuition hours.

In those languages offering multiple entry points from *Beginner* to *Stage III*, a student who enters with the equivalent of *Bursary* level language, has a reduced number of hours before reaching *Stage III* papers. *Table 5.11* summarises these hours as estimated for French, German and Japanese at the six universities surveyed. Once again, it should be noted that there may be additional tuition hours in some cases that are not clearly signalled in the publicly available publicity materials.

Table 5.11: *Estimated Number of tuition hours from Sixth Form Certificate/ Bursary level to Stage 3 in three languages at six New Zealand universities*

	University A	University B	University C	University D	University E	University F
French	168	288	192	288	180	144*
German	216	216	144	240	225	144*
Japanese						

When the hours in the table above are subtracted from the estimated number of tutored hours available to a student who enrols at *Beginner* level, what remains is the number of hours apparently assumed by staff in tertiary institutions to be required to assist a student in moving from beginner level to a level equivalent to *Bursary* level. These hours are summarised in the *Table 5.12* below for French German and Japanese only.

Table 5.12: *Estimated Number of Hours of Language Acquisition Tuition Assumed by University Staff to be Required by Students to Reach the Equivalent of Bursary Level French, German and Japanese*

	University A	**University B**	**University C**	**University D**	**University E**	**University F**
French	144	96	48	48	180	192*
German	60	108	96	120	100	240*
Japanese	72	60	456	96	120	324

A secondary school student who has a language module option in his or her first year of secondary schooling and then a further four full years of tuition in a language is likely to have had in excess of 600 hours of tutored language learning from *Beginner* level to *Bursary* level in comparison with, for example, the estimated 60 hours available in German at *University A*.

It has been estimated by those involved in designing the French and German curriculum guidelines for New Zealand schools that the relationship between the eight curriculum levels covered in schools and international proficiency benchmarks is as indicated in Table 5.13. Here, EC = Emergent Communication; SS = Survival Skills; SC = Socoal Competence; PI = Personal Independence.

Table 5.13: *Estimated Relationship between New Zealand Curriculum Levels and International Proficiency Benchmarks (as indicated in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for French and German)*

Curriculum Level 1	Curriculum Level 2	Curriculum Level 3	Curriculum Level 4	Curriculum Level 5	Curriculum Level 6	Curriculum Level 7	Curriculum Level 8	
EC A	EC B	SS A	SS B	SC A	SC B	PI A	PI B	
Beginning French A	Beginning French B	Elementary French A	Elementary French B	Pre-intermediate French A	Pre-intermediate French B	Intermediate French A	Intermediate French B	Upper-int. French

On this scale, *University Bursary* (or equivalent) would be taken at the end of curriculum *level 6.* If we now examine a proficiency scale such as the IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) as a benchmark (see *Table 5.14* below) and attempt to line it up against the New Zealand curriculum levels outlined in *Table 5.13* above (taking into account the Achievement objectives (proficiency descriptor statements) included in the draft French and German curriculum guidelines – see *Appendix 3*), we end up with something like the situation outlined in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.14: *Outline of IELTS Proficiency Scale*

1. Non-user	A few isolated words.
2. Intermittent User	No real communication possible except the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in predicable situations to meet immediate needs. Great difficulty in understanding spoken and written language.
3. Very Limited User	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication.
4. Limited User	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Frequent problems in understanding and expression. Not able to use complex language.
5. Modest User	Partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations though likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in familiar areas.
6. Competent User	Generally effective command of the language in spite of some inaccuracies, inappropriate usages and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
7. Good User	Has operational command of the language with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriate usages and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally understands and uses complex language well and can follow, and produce, detailed reasoning.
8. Very Good User	Fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriate usages. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex, detailed argumentation well.
9. Expert User	Fully operational command of the language: appropriate, fluent, accurate, with complete understanding.

Table 5.15: *Overall Relationship between IELTS Proficiency Scale and Overall Achievement Objectives Occurring in the New Zealand Draft Curriculum Guidelines for French and German*

Non-user	Emergent Communication A and Emergent Communication B
Intermittent User	(Beginner)
Very Limited User	Survival Skills A (Elementary)
Limited User	Survival Skills B (Elementary)
Modest User	Social Competence A (Pre-intermediate)
Competent User	Social Competence B (Pre-intermediate)
Good User	Personal Independence A and Personal Independence B (Intermediate)
Very Good User	——
Expert User	------

Even taking into account that an adult beginner in a university context may have a high level of motivation and may progress at a more rapid rate than an average school student, it seems unlikely that progress from beginner to university *Bursary* standard (assuming that this represents *good user* or *intermediate)* could be achieved in the majority of cases after 48, 180 or even 192 contact hours in language acquisition courses. After all, the research findings of Brown (1998,36) indicate that "continued instructional emphasis on IELTS writing task completion . . . can assist IELTS preparation students to achieve an average gain of one IELTS bandscore over a ten week course of instruction" (Browne, 1998, 36). Brown is referring to progress in only one of the four skills (writing) and the ten week course to which he refers involved students aged between 16 and 25 years who were studying for 25 hours per week (that is, a total of 250 hours). This suggests that the assumptions made in New Zealand universities about the amount of tuition time required for a student to move from beginner to *Bursary* level may be unrealistic.

5.4.4.2 An overview of language acquisition paper prescriptions

The prescriptions for language acquisition papers at New Zealand Universities suggest that there is an overall lack of precision, transparency and coherence in the delivery of language courses. In many cases, the prescriptions indicate the general methodological approach that underpins the course rather than, for example, the anticipated language proficiency gain (e.g. "special emphasis on practical work, spoken Spanish and development of aural-oral skills" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 43)). Often, the prescriptions are primarily materials-focused (e.g. "critical study of supplementary materials including contemporary literature, documentary prose, newspapers and a variety of practical writing" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 270). In some cases, they are articulated in ways that relate to the testing and assessment procedures to be used (e.g. "oral and written expression in French, aural and written comprehension; tested in some or all of the following ways: comprehension, conversation, composition, exposition of a topic; translation, dictation, reading aloud, with linguistic and stylistic analysis" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 294).

Aims are usually expressed in very general terms such as, for example, "further develop understanding of the principles and practice of the modern Chinese language and ability to communicate in the language" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 270). In some cases, however, attempts have been made to provide some measurable benchmark outcome

achievement such as "by the end of the second semester students will be able to recognise and write more than 500 Chinese characters" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 268). Generally, however, attempts to achieve such specificity are sporadic. Thus, for example, the 500 Chinese characters to which reference has been made are to be used "to converse in simple language", the word 'simple' remaining undefined. This attempt to achieve specificity in the early levels of the University of Auckland prescriptions for Chinese is not continued into the upper levels of study. Course prescriptions at higher levels indicate simply that courses are "designed to consolidate students' language skills" (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 270). There is no indication of the level of proficiency represented by those skills (whatever those skills may be).

In spite of the ways in which prescriptions are expressed, many language acquisition courses have titles clearly intended to indicate some kind of progression. At the *University of Auckland* for example, prescriptions for Italian language courses do not include anything but very general statements about the language outcomes, but are nevertheless labelled in a way that suggests that their primary purpose is proficiency enhancement. Thus, the *Stage I* course is called *Beginner Italian*, the Stage II course is called *Intermediate Italian,* and at *Stage III*, the course is called *Advanced Italian*. There is no evidence to suggest, however, that these labels actually correspond to international proficiency benchmarks.

In some cases, course prescriptions have titles that do not correspond with the course content outlined in the prescription. Thus, for example, *Course 295.201 (Samoan Language: Structure and Writing Skills)* at the University of Auckland is accompanied by the following course prescription: "An extension of the skills of *reading*, writing, *listening and speaking*. Emphasis will be placed on the structure of Samoan sentences and the various meanings of terms within the context of a Samoan sentence. Practice in writing in Samoan and translation" (emphasis added) (University of Auckland Calendar 2000, p. 336).

In a very small number of cases, the content of courses with a language focus is determined by the requirements of an international examination which the students will have the opportunity to sit at the end of the course. For example, at the University of Canterbury one of the *Stage III* courses "loosely follows the requirements of the KDS examination" (<http://www.grmn.canterbury.ac.nz/>: visited 31 July, 2000). One of the requirements of

this examination (the *Kleines Deutsches Sprachdiplom)* is the writing of essays (of about 400 words) on the basis of German fiction. The underlying assumption here appears to be that all four skills will be developed in the context of the description of social, historical and psychological aspects of prose fiction. Students are advised that they "will *read* 2 literary texts in order to train for both oral and written expression", that "grammar exercises now focus more on the language of written and formal German" and that "another step towards correct German writing is closer attention to German spelling and punctuation" (<http://www.grmn.canterbury.ac.nz/>: visited 31 July, 2000) (emphasis added). A number of German language courses at other universities (e.g. Otago, Canterbury, Auckland) are also linked to the *Kleines Deutsches Sprachdiplom* (KDS) examination or to the *Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache. (*ZdaF). The ZdaF was originally conceived as a standard examination for foreign workers seeking employment in West Germany. This is, therefore, a practically oriented examination. The *KDS* is a standard diploma of proficiency in the German language, administered by the *Goethe Institut* and the University of Munich. It is officially recognised by all German Ministries of Education and gives proof of language proficiency for most German, Swiss and Austrian universities. The Goethe Institute website provides the following prescription for the KDS (Kleines Deutsches Sprachdiplom) otherwise named the ZOP (Zentrale Oberstufenprüfung):

> Proof of a highly qualified command of German. Candidates should be able to understand and analyse complex authentic texts with regard to content and vocabulary, and have a very profound insight into areas of German culture and background studies. They should also be able to express their opinions accurately and succinctly. The ZOP also requires the study of two works by German-language authors (out of a list of four) and the advanced preparation of a brief lecture (approx. 5 minutes) on a chosen topic of general interest. Candidates who pass the ZOP are exempt from the language entrance examinations at German universities" (<http://www.goethe.de/an/mel/enspruef.htm>: visited 10 June, 2000).

5.4.4.3 Modern language papers in New Zealand universities: some conclusions

An examination of New Zealand university language acquisition courses in terms of prescriptions, tuition hours, and overall outcomes statements suggests a lack of attention to

detail. There is considerable inconsistency among universities in terms of the assumptions made about tuition requirements in relation to proficiency gains. In general, proficiency is articulated in relation to three general labels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. These labels are not, however, tied to proficiency descriptor statements and there is no indication of how discrimination within and between levels is to be determined. There is, in general, no clear outline of course content in terms of vocabulary, syntax, discourse features or, indeed, in terms of any of the aspects of language competence outlined by the *Council of Europe* (1996).

In the absence of clearly articulated national standards of proficiency expectations at different stages for each language, each university is free to establish its own concept of what constitutes progress in language acquisition. There is no indication that these concepts include reference to nationally or internationally established proficiency benchmarks and, thus, no way of determining whether a student who has passed, for example, *Stage 2* language papers at one university can be said to be, in general terms, as proficient as another student who has passed *Stage 2* papers in the same language at another university. All that can be said with confidence about a student of a modern language who has passed language acquisition papers at a particular stage is that he or she has had *X* hours of tuition, the number of hours being different for the same language in different institutions. Whether or not a student who has completed university papers in a modern language where these papers are said to be equivalent to *Bursary* examination standard, does, in fact, have approximately the same overall proficiency level as a student who has studied that language at school and has achieved a particular *Bursary* examination grade is a question that cannot be answered.

5.5 General conclusion

What is clearly required is a way of determining what proficiency gains are to be expected in different languages at different stages in the New Zealand educational system. What is also required is some research in relation to how these proficiency gains can best be achieved and how much tuition, of what types, is generally required in order to meet proficiency expectations associated with different stages. Added to this is the need to determine how proficiency gains can best be tested, and how discrimination within the same overall proficiency bands can best be achieved. Examinations need to relate, and be

seen to relate, to achievement objectives and this, in turn, means that these achievement objectives need to be clearly articulated. In the absence of any of this, a prospective student of a modern language in a New Zealand school or university has no way of knowing what he or she can expect to have achieved on completion of his or her studies. In this respect, his or her situation may be little different from that of a student in other countries such as the United Kingdom (see *Chapter 2*). The fact that this is likely to be the case is no reason for arguing that these problems need not be addressed. In *Chapter 6*, therefore, the issue of testing and assessment within the New Zealand educational system is considered in relation to objectives specification.

CHAPTER 6

THE EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES: COHERENCE, CONSISTENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

6.1 Introduction: overall aim

All of the components of a national educational awards system should be in a harmonious relationship with one another and with other aspects of the overall system (coherent), free from contradictions (consistent) and expressed in a way that is readily understandable by users (transparent). If a national awards system performs well in relation to these three dimensions of effectiveness, then stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, employers and governments) can have a considerable degree of confidence in the processes and outcomes.

The primary aim of this chapter is to analyse, in terms of coherence, consistency and transparency, those New Zealand national awards for international languages that are available to secondary school students.

Universities in New Zealand, as in most other parts of the world, set and grade their own examinations and there is, therefore, no overall national system for the assessment of tertiary students of international languages. Even so, one section of this chapter (see *section 6.8* following) is devoted to an analysis of some modern language examination papers set by one New Zealand university over a period of years. Some students study an international language at university from beginner level and most universities identify the stage at which these students are expected to have achieved a level of proficiency comparable to students who have passed New Zealand *Bursary* examinations. There

should, therefore, be some consistency between the examinations these students are expected to sit and *Bursary* examinations in the same subject. If New Zealand national educational awards can be expected to be consistent with the achievement objectives specified in New Zealand curriculum statements, then language examinations set by New Zealand universities can also be expected to be consistent with the prescriptions for the courses to which they relate. In both cases, the issues are similar.

The intention, in adopting an approach to examinations that focuses on coherence, consistency and transparency is to contribute to that mediating role between test developers and test consumers that McNamara (1996, p.4) sees as being one of the contributions that applied linguistics can make to educational debate in this area.

There are many areas where assessment raises complex and contentious issues. In the area of language learning, these issues are particularly problematic: inferences about integrated competencies, competencies that are not themselves well understood, have to be made on the basis of the performance of tasks. These tasks may not, however, necessarily fully replicate the various types of communicative activity in which language users may be engaged in non-pedagogic contexts. Thus:

> The assessment of second language learners raises complex issues about the nature of language proficiency, the validity of assessment instruments, the reliability of scores, and the manner in which the whole process may influence the curriculum. The range of issues raised are not only of importance to those who design and develop language tests; they are also of importance to a variety of people who may be involved at various points in the cycle: the funding bodies, the test takers and language teachers (Elder and Wigglesworth, 1996, p.1).

A number of these issues are addressed in a 1995 New Zealand *Education Review Office* report (1995) in a way that can be directly related to the discussion of the assessment of modern foreign languages in this chapter. It is noted in that report that:

> Moves away from a measurement model (such as norm-referenced assessment) to a performance model (such as standards-based assessment) are in response to the perceived inadequacies of the measurement model to provide information about what a student knows and can do (p. 4).

Whereas, however, "teachers commonly use a standards-based approach when assessing students in their own classrooms", "national qualifications . . . are currently awarded on the basis of norm-referenced, externally administered national examinations" (p.4). There are, however, limitations in that:

> Many National Curriculum Statements do not specify achievement standards for the objectives. There are currently no benchmarks for defining these standards (p. 23).

Furthermore:

> The *comparison with stated objectives* approach cannot measure changes in student achievement (p. 23).

Thus, it has been claimed that standards of achievement "are to be found more in the rhetoric than in the reality" (p. 28):

> The National Curriculum Statements do not define standards but describe achievement objectives for a number of levels [and] the sheer number of the achievement objectives and the variation in their specificity means that teachers individually and nationally will have difficulty in reaching consistent judgments about when students reach certain levels of achievement.
>
> It will, therefore be difficult for judgments to be made nationally about levels of student achievement through the New Zealand curriculum (p. 28).

This issue can be addressed nationally at senior secondary level through moderation techniques. However, this is a partial solution only (Education Review Office, 1995, p. 28).

All of the examination materials to which reference is made in this chapter are included in *Appendix 4*.

6.2 Setting the scene: New Zealand national education awards for international languages in secondary schools and the context in which they operate

The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993) provides the context within which national planning for education operates. The Framework, as indicated earlier (see *Chapters 4* and *5*) states the principles that give direction to all teaching and learning and outlines the policy for assessment at school and national levels:

> Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum. The New Zealand Curriculum builds on the close relationship between learning and assessment. It provides clear learning outcomes against which students' progress can be measured (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 24).

The national awards that relate to international languages are formulated within the context of the New Zealand *Qualifications Framework* which is intended to relate, as closely as possible, to the New Zealand *Curriculum Framework.*

National syllabuses and national curriculum statements and guidelines describe the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values outlined in the New Zealand *Curriculum Framework* in terms of the specific area to which these syllabuses and curriculum statements and guidelines relate. Curriculum and assessment policy for all years of schooling is based on these documents and standards for national examinations

and assessment are based on the achievement objectives they contain. Although the achievement objectives must be specified in a way that is sufficiently general to allow for innovation, creativity and responsiveness to individual needs in the classroom, they must also be (a) progressive in nature, and (b) amenable to assessment in terms of different levels of performance. At different stages of schooling, success in performing in relation to the achievement objectives may be determined on the basis of (a) school-internal assessment, (b) external assessment or (c) a combination of external and school-internal assessment.

At the end of each school academic year (November), the majority of students in New Zealand who are in their eleventh year of schooling (*Year 11*) sit what is referred to as the *School Certificate* examination. This examination is administered nationally by the New Zealand *Qualifications Authority*. *Year 12* students are eligible for the award of *Sixth Form Certificate* which is based on continuous in-school assessment. *Year 13* students are eligible for *Higher School Certificate* which is also based on a form of continuous assessment. Because modern languages are not available for *Higher School Certificate,* that award is not discussed here. In what is generally the final year of schooling (*Year 13*), students may sit New Zealand *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations.

In this section, particular attention will be paid to New Zealand national educational awards that relate to national examinations, that is, to *School Certificate, University Entrance, Bursary* and *Scholarship* awards. *Sixth Form Certificate*, for which there is no national examination, will be discussed in less detail as will *unit standards* and *achievement standards*, the latter being central to the New Zealand *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* which is planned for introduction in 2002. At that point, other national awards will be phased out.

Unit standards "are intended to define what students know or should be able to do in a particular area of knowledge or skill" and credit is gained when " the assessor is confident

from the evidence presented that the student has achieved and is able to maintain the required standard" (Education Review Office, 1995, p. 8). Although *unit standards* have been applied to a number of subject areas in New Zealand secondary schools, they have not been applied widely to international languages. There are two main reasons for this, reasons that are almost certainly related:

> . as part of a wider-based action relating to salaries and conditions, the New Zealand *Post-Primary Teachers Association* (PPTA) has resisted the implementation of unit standards, objecting, in particular, to their use in subjects which are seen as involving something other than mechanical skills;
>
> . although the New Zealand Ministry of Education commissioned a document outlining a common set of unit standards for all modern languages in schools, that document was the last of the unit standards documents to be produced and appeared at a time when the PPTA was recommending that its members refuse to implement unit standards.

In spite of widespread disquiet with the application of the concept of *unit standards* to non-vocational subjects, that concept appears to have influenced the development of the concept of *achievement standards,* itself a concept that is fundamental to the New Zealand *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* which is planned for introduction in 2002.

Unit standards have been criticised for being atomistic in nature. It has been argued by the New Zealand *Ministry of Education*, however, that achievement standards will not suffer from this failing. Whereas unit standards are assessed in terms simply of success or failure and are, therefore, mastery-based, achievement standards will, it is argued, relate to broad outcomes and will recognize superior performance (credit, merit, excellence) in relation to these outcomes. If these broad outcomes are to be the achievement objectives as specified in curriculum statements and guidelines, then the success of standards-based

assessment must depend to a very considerable extent on the nature of these achievement objectives. If the broad outcomes are to be different from the achievement objectives specified in national curriculum documents, the question of consistency and coherence in the system as a whole will need to be fully addressed.

Although existing unit standards for modern foreign languages make reference to the requirements of the relevant language syllabus or curriculum document, their titles do not directly reflect the objectives specified in these documents. Thus, for example, all modern language unit standards at *Level 1* are headed 'Converse in [X] in predictable contexts' (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/>: visited 20 June, 2000). It may be that achievement standards will be similarly articulated. If they are, there is considerable potential for confusion in relation to the sense in which they are intended to represent an expression of the achievement objectives outlined in curriculum statements and curriculum guidelines.

The New Zealand national awards discussed here are considered in relation mainly to the early syllabus documents for French and German (the main focus being on French) and in relation to later curriculum statements (Spanish in particular). However, consideration is also given to the draft curriculum guidelines for French and German which will, subject to any revisions agreed in the consultation process, replace the existing French and German syllabuses. These new guidelines are considered here for two main reasons:

. they have the same set of objectives at each level and are, therefore, the first curriculum documents for modern foreign languages to attempt to establish a common set of objectives;

. they are the subject of widespread consultation at a time when consideration is also being given to the establishment of achievement standards in relation to the proposed *National Certificate in Educational Achievement.*

6.3 A profile of the New Zealand national awards at secondary school level: introduction

In this section, each of the New Zealand national educational awards relating to modern foreign languages that are available at secondary school levels will be profiled so that these profiles can then be considered in relation to (a) the examination prescriptions, and (b) the achievement objectives outlined in national curriculum documents.

6.3.1 *School Certificate*

The *School Certificate* award is commonly taken by students in their third year of secondary education (*Year 11* of schooling, when students are generally 15 or 16 years of age). The vast majority of students in New Zealand schools are involved in *School Certificate* assessments. This award is regarded as a 'rite of passage' within New Zealand education in that it is used by students and teachers as an indicator of future academic potential. It is also used as a benchmark for admission to certain types of vocational training and is widely regarded by employers as being indicative of general educational capacity.

There are 33 subjects offered for examination at *School Certificate* level. Of these, five are international languages: French (Second Language), German (Second Language), Indonesian, Japanese (Second Language) and Spanish (Second Language) (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 23). Te Reo Mäori and Samoan are also offered, as is Latin. For the purposes of this discussion, however, Latin has been excluded (because of its classical language status) as has Samoan (because of its community language status) and te reo Mäori (because of its special nature as the language of the indigenous people of New Zealand).

At *School Certificate* level, there are fully externally examined and fully internally assessed options available in mathematics, English and science. However, the situation is different in relation to languages where the major part of the assessment is by examination, the remainder by in-school continuous assessment. Students are awarded one of five grades: (A, B, C, D or E) in each of the subjects for which they enter. Each of these grades is associated with a range of percentage marks as follows:

Grade	Percentage Mark Range
A	80-100
B	65-79
C	50-64
D	30-49
E	1-29

(New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 25).

Although it is generally accepted that *School Certificate* is the end point of three years of study in a subject, the number of teaching contact hours that students have had in each subject prior to assessment can vary markedly from subject to subject and from school to school. With the exception of English and Te Reo Mäori, there are no guidelines relating to the optimum or minimum number of hours' tuition regarded as a normal requirement for students to reach an acceptable entry standard. The relevant entry in the *School Qualifications Handbook* is:

> Every candidate must complete in that year [i.e. the year of entry for the award] a course of instruction which meets in full the requirements of the approved prescription for the subject (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 24).

There are a number of advantages associated with this type of specification. Schools can, for example, offer compressed courses for students who begin new subjects in their third year of schooling. However, their capacity to do so will depend upon a range of factors relating to timetable requirements, class sizes and teacher availability. Subjects with fewer candidates will often have less inherent flexibility. This generally includes international languages which are not part of the national compulsory core of subjects and which are often treated very differently from subjects that are part of that common core.

The current trend in New Zealand education is for schools to offer what is called within the profession a 'taster' or 'smorgasbord' of optional subjects in *Year 9* of schooling (*Third Form*). While there is a range of different ways of organising the delivery of these

subjects, one common approach is to offer a range of electives for 12 weeks at a time. This means that students study the compulsory core subjects over an entire year and, in addition, study up to eight other elective subjects in twelve week blocks. The reasoning behind this approach is that this 'taste' of a range of subjects will allow students to make more informed choices for the optional part of their *Year 10* (*Form Four*) programme. In *Year 10*, the optional subjects chosen by the students are usually taken over the year as a whole. However, the number of hours of tuition available in these subjects may be fewer than in core subjects. In *Year 11*, an equal number of tuition hours for each subject (whether a core or an elective) is generally available. Thus, for example, a core subject such as mathematics might be timetabled for three hours each week in *Year 9* and four hours each week in *Years 10* and *11*. However, an elective subject such as Japanese might be timetabled for three hours each week for twelve weeks in *Year 9*, three hours each week throughout *Year 10* and four hours each week throughout *Year 11*. On the assumption that there are 42 weeks in a school year, a student sitting a mathematics examination for *School Certificate* may have had as much as 29% more class contact time in the three years preceding examination than may a student studying Japanese.

The flexibility built into the requirements for courses leading up to *School Certificate* allows for considerable differences in tuition patterns both among and within subjects. For example, whereas some students in some New Zealand schools will have had a full-time programme in an international language (typically 4 hours each week) for three years prior to *School Certificate* examination, others will not. These differences must be expected to have some impact on achievement expectations and achievement standards. This issue has been addressed to some extent by the New Zealand *Qualifications Authority*. A note added to the prescription for French reads as follows:

> Candidates taking the School Certificate French (Second Language) examination will have studied French for varying periods of time, ranging from those who have started French in *Form 5* to those who have studied French for at least three years.
>
> Candidates who have studied French for less than three years are advised that they might be at a disadvantage in relation to

those who have undertaken a three-year course (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 111).

A similar note is included in the prescriptions for German, Japanese and Indonesian. There is, however, no such inclusion in the prescription for Spanish.

The reduced number of tuition hours typically available for international languages in the first three years of secondary schooling is of major concern to language teachers. A constant refrain in the responses to the *Questionnaire for Language Professionals* (see *Chapter 7* here) is the need for more time allocation for language subjects and the desire to have them declared a compulsory part of the base curriculum. Discussions with regional language advisors and executive members of the NZALT (New Zealand Association of Languages Teachers) indicate that although this matter has been taken up with the *Ministry of Education* on a number of occasions, no solution to the problem is likely in the foreseeable future.

6.3.2 *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship*

There are 30 subjects offered at *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, six of which are international languages: Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999, 33). It should be noted that although there is a curriculum statement for Chinese, Chinese is not currently available for *School Certificate* examination. Korean, for which a draft curriculum statement *is* available, is not offered. However, Indonesian, for which there is no curriculum statement is offered.

Students are given both a grade (A - E) and a percentage mark. The grades correspond to the following mark ranges:

Grade	Final Percentage Mark Range
A	66-100
B	56-65
C	46-55
D	30-45
E	1-29

(New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 34)

Thus, different percentage mark ranges are associated with grades A, B, and C at *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* levels.

A single examination in each subject at this stage of schooling serves a variety of purposes. Thus, a student who is awarded a minimum of a C grade in each of three subjects is eligible for entry to university (*University Entrance*). A student who gains 250-299 marks aggregated over 5 subjects is awarded a B level Bursary and a student who receives 300+ aggregated over 5 subjects is awarded an A level Bursary (*Bursary*). On the advice of the chief examiner in each subject, Scholarship certificates are awarded to students who have achieved a very high standard in that subject (*Scholarship*). The number of these scholarships varies from year to year. Top scholars in each subject are rewarded with a cash grant (currently $3000 for a subject cohort of over 100 candidates and $1000 for a subject cohort of candidates under 100).

Of particular note for languages is that :

> Candidates identified by their school as first language speakers of French, German, Japanese or Spanish are not eligible for subject scholarships or top scholar awards in their first language subject (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 35).

6.3.3 *Sixth Form Certificate*

There are 31 approved national subjects for the award of *Sixth Form Certificate*. Of these, five are international languages: French, German, Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 26).

In addition to nationally approved subjects, there are also local subjects approved for this award:

> Every teaching institution may, before the first day of September in the year before the course of instruction commences, seek approval from the Authority to offer for the qualification a subject developed to meet the needs of their own students (p. 26).

The New Zealand *Qualifications Authority* is more specific about tuition hour requirements for *Sixth Form Certificate* subjects than it is for *School Certificate* subjects: a student must have "at least four hours of instruction per week" in the subject in the year in which it is assessed (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999, p. 27).

The assessment for *Sixth Form Certificate* is ongoing throughout the year. Students are awarded a number grade from 1 - 9 (1 being the highest) in the subjects (a minimum of one and up to six) they present for assessment. Although candidates are assessed locally (i.e. internally assessed), their grades are moderated nationally. There are a number of different subject-specific moderation schemes in place. However, the total overall *Sixth Form Certificate* grades are moderated against the *School Certificate Examination* grades gained by each school cohort in the previous year.

6.3.4 *Unit standards*

As indicated above (see section *6.2*), unit standards have never been widely applied in the case of international languages in New Zealand. Furthermore, the intention is that unit standards should, once the *New Zealand Certificate in Educational Achievement* is introduced, be restricted to vocationally-oriented subjects (not including international languages). Nevertheless, generic unit standards for modern languages have been developed and that development constitutes a part of the overall profile of existing New Zealand educational awards.

In order to offer programmes of education and training assessed against unit standards, providers must be accredited by the New Zealand *Qualifications Authority.* A centrally established and directed external moderation system has been set up by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority* on behalf of a *Languages Advisory Group* and accredited providers assessing against unit standards must engage with the moderation system that applies to these standards.

The unit standards that have been developed have titles that appear to relate to the language development descriptors that are listed in a number of curriculum statements (see *Chapters 4* and *5*). Thus, the curriculum statement for Spanish (Ministry of Education, 1995a, p. 21) includes the following language development descriptor (headed *Emergent Communication*):

> By the end of level 2
>
> Learners can understand language that contains well-rehearsed sentence patterns and familiar vocabulary and can interact in predictable exchanges. They can read and write straightforward versions of what they have learned to say. They are aware of and understand the typical cultural conventions that operate in

> interpersonal communication. Although they may be enthusiastic participants in class, learners may still be reticent about using Spanish outside the classroom.

The first unit standard for French listed by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority* (*Level 1*; 6 point credit) (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/>: visited 20 June, 2000) is entitled: *Converse in French in predictable contexts.* The purpose is stated as follows:

> People credited with this unit standard are able to hold a personal conversation, and a transactional conversation in French in a predictable context.

Both the title and the statement of purpose appear to reflect part of the language learning descriptor outlined above. This interpretation is reinforced by the special notes accompanying the unit standard which include, in the definition of 'predictable', "specific situations which do not depart from those that have been well-rehearsed". However, although the title and function appear to be consistent with *Levels 1 - 2* of more recent New Zealand curriculum statements for modern languages, the actual content is specified in relation to *Level 3* of the French syllabus (which equates to *Level 6* of later curriculum statements):

> Communication functions, structures, vocabulary, and cultural aspects are consistent with the requirements of the French syllabus as it relates to *Level 3* (*Year 11*).

The first unit standard for Spanish, Japanese and Chinese listed by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority* has the same title and purpose as that for French. This time, however, "communication functions, structures, vocabulary, and cultural aspects" are to be "consistent with the requirements of [the curriculum statement for Spanish] as it relates to *Level 6*".

Included in the special notes relating to this unit standard is the fact that "evidence is required from one conversation and one transaction of a minimum length of one minute each". A conversation is defined as follows:

> Conversations could be face to face, telephone, interviews and role plays.

Transaction is defined as:

> Transactional refers to conversations conveying or seeking information to achieve an outcome such as a purchase, or seek timetable information.

One of the problems here is that the overall purpose statements relate to language learning descriptors which occur at different curriculum levels from the content statements referring to achievement objectives. This inconsistency will inevitably have implications for validity.

6.3.5 The *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* and achievement standards

In 2002, the *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* (NCEA) for secondary school students is planned for introduction in New Zealand. The NCEA will be based on achievement standards which describe broad outcomes and which recognize superior performance (credit, merit, excellence) in relation to these outcomes. Because the NZEA outcomes will relate, either directly or indirectly, to the achievement objectives listed in *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents, these achievement objectives must be stated in a way that allows for the recognition of superior performance if the overall aims of the NCEA are to be achieved. As will be demonstrated later, there appears to be a need to review curriculum statements in order to ensure that this is the case.

In conformity with the overall direction of recent *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents, the NCEA will recognise eight levels of performance. The correlation between curriculum guidelines levels and NCEA levels is likely to be as indicated in *Table 6.1*.

Table 6.1: *Relationship between New Zealand Curriculum Levels and NCEA Levels*

Curriculum Levels	NCEA Levels
6	1
7	2
8	3

At this stage, it is not clear whether the NCEA achievement standards will relate directly or indirectly to the achievement objectives listed in curriculum documents. That is, it is not clear whether the NCEA achievement standards will be expressed directly in terms of groupings of the achievement objectives stated in the curriculum documents, or whether there will be over-arching achievement objectives statements to which the specific achievement objectives listed in the curriculum documents will relate. In the case of international languages, the latter is the more likely scenario at least in the first instance. This is because the intention appears to be that there should be a single set of achievement standards for modern languages. As yet, however, only the draft French and German curriculum guidelines share a single set of achievement objectives at each level. Because the draft French and German curriculum guidelines include overall achievement objectives (proficiency target statements) for each level in addition to a list of more specific achievement objectives, there is the potential to use the overall achievement objectives statements as achievement standards prescriptions for the NCEA examinations. Thus, for example, the prescription for curriculum *Level 6* (*NCEA level 1*) for French and German would read as indicated in Table 6.2 following:

Table 6.2: Overall Achievement Objective for Curriculum Level 6 as Indicated in the Draft New Zealand Curriculum Guidelines for French and German

CURRICULUM LEVEL 6:
Social Competence B

Overall Achievement Objective:
Learners can use familiar language fluently, coherently and accurately in a range of familiar contexts and can adapt their language to meet the needs of a range of new contexts and situations. They can discuss, and read and write about, the past and the present and about facts, feelings, opinions and preferences. They can discuss, and read and write about, future plans, habits and routines, general truths and thoughts and beliefs. They can understand, and provide, reasons and explanations and detailed instructions. They can read independently, making use, where necessary, of glossaries, dictionaries and other reference works. They can review and revise their own writing. They can demonstrate a knowledge of those socio-cultural aspects of French-speaking societies that have been covered in class.

Listening: In dialogues, conversations and reports, learners can detect differing degrees of certainty and conviction as well as attempts to persuade and influence listeners. In familiar contexts, they can understand reasons and explanations and follow detailed instructions, detect differences in time referencing (past, present, future) and identify thoughts and beliefs, opinions and preferences, general truths and habits and routines.
Speaking: Learners can initiate and sustain routine conversations, ask questions for information or explanation and provide, in well-defined contexts, reasons, explanations and detailed instructions. They can talk about thoughts and beliefs, opinions and preferences, general truths and habits and routines. They can give short talks on familiar subjects. So long as the situation and context are non-threatening, they can be expected to experiment with new language. When they are using familiar language, their pronunciation and their use of rhythm, stress and intonation are recognisably French.
Reading: Learners can read and understand detail in texts containing familiar language and get the gist of texts that contain some unfamiliar constructions and vocabulary. They can work out how things, events and ideas are related by making use of textual clues such as familiar connectives (e.g. *mais, parce que*) and familiar adjectives and adverbs (e.g. *vite, lentement*). They can differentiate between past, present and future time references and can identify general truths and habits and routines. They can differentiate between fact and opinion and can identify thoughts, beliefs and preferences.
Writing: Learners can use familiar language appropriately and flexibly and experiment with new language in the context of specified tasks. They can use punctuation accurately and their spelling is mostly accurate. They can use simple, compound and complex sentences containing adjectives and adverbs appropriately and can make decisions about paragraphing based on topic-related information. They can signal the relationship between things, events and ideas by using conjunctions, adjectives and adverbs appropriately. They can write about facts, feelings, opinions and preferences, thoughts and beliefs, general truths habits and routines and can use language appropriately to differentiate past, present and future time references.

Here, proficiency is conceptualized as involving knowledge of language (not knowledge about language) and the ability to make use of that knowledge in performing a range of communicative activities. It therefore involves a combination of operational competence and pragmatic competence, with operational competence relating to grammatical competence and textual competence, and pragmatic competence relating to illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence (Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

Students who satisfactorily complete a level should, therefore, be able to perform in a way that is consistent with the overall achievement objective for that level (see above). In discriminating among these performances (e.g. competent, very good, excellent), attention would need to be paid to the level of skill demonstrated in relation to the more specific achievement objectives for that level. Adopting this approach more generally would mean that the other international languages available would locate learners in relation to the overall achievement objectives. Thus, for example, those responsible for Chinese in the national curriculum would decide which overall achievement best described their target for learners at NCEA *level 1* and locate this as the appropriate objective for curriculum *level 6*. It might be, for example, that the overall objective that appears at curriculum *level 4* in the case of the draft curriculum guidelines for French and German is considered appropriate for Curriculum *Level 6* in the case of Chinese.

In the case of the draft curriculum guidelines for French and German the same more specific achievement objectives are listed at each curriculum level (but recycled in a different way and associated with different realisations). In the case of other modern languages, the same set of more specific achievement objectives could be applied. However, at each curriculum level a different selection might be made from these more specific achievement objectives in conformity with the overall achievement objective selected for each curriculum level.

6.4 New Zealand national awards for international languages: establishing criteria for evaluation

This section is concerned with the establishment of criteria for the evaluation of New Zealand national educational awards for international languages, criteria that will be refined in later sections. The general criteria established here emerge out of a consideration of the New Zealand national educational awards for international languages

in the context of an overall framework for the description of modern language learning, teaching and assessment. That overall framework is the *Council of Europe* draft Framework for modern languages (Council of Europe, 1996). This draft Framework has been selected for a number of reasons:

. it is oriented towards facilitating international comparison of objectives and qualifications;

.it is intended to be clear, transparent and comprehensive in its approach;

. all aspects of the teaching and learning of languages and of testing and assessment are accommodated within it;

. one of its aims is to assist educational administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts.

The draft Framework can therefore provide a useful point of reference, an overall context in relation to which the specific New Zealand situation can be described, a context in which any system-internal contradictions between objectives, content and testing and assessment should be readily detectable.

In terms of the draft Framework, language users make use of *general competencies* (including declarative knowledge and skills and know-how) and *communicative language competence* (including linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills and knowledge). The linguistic aspect of communicative language competence includes phonology, orthography, vocabulary, morphology, syntax and semantics; the pragmatic aspect includes discourse, functional and design competencies; the sociolinguistic aspect includes rules of politeness, norms governing relationships between generations, sexes, classes and social groups and codification of certain social rituals. These competencies are put into action in the production and reception of spoken utterances and written texts in:

. expressing and understanding meanings in relation to relevant themes;

. interpreting and negotiating meaning in context;

. engaging in communicative activities (productive, receptive, interactive, mediating);

. performing communicative tasks as a participant in a communicative situation in a given domain in accordance with the co-operative principle (Council of Europe 1996, 6.2.1).

In putting competencies to work in the process of communication, users will employ a range of strategies (e.g. planning, execution, monitoring). However, "whilst all these abilities have to be deployed by a language user to deal effectively with the full range of communicative events, not all learners will wish, or need, to acquire them all in a non-native language" (6.2.2). What this means, in practice, is that "the appropriate objectives for a particular stage of learning for a particular learner, or class of learner, at a particular age, cannot necessarily be derived by a straightforward across-the-board reading of . . . scales proposed for each parameter. Decisions have to be made in each case" (6.2.5). Thus curriculum design in language learning implies choices between kinds and levels of objectives, these choices relating to the perceived purposes of the language learning at different stages and in different contexts. Necessarily, therefore, "depending on the types of objective on which emphasis is placed, the possibilities of assessment will vary enormously, as will the related levels and scales proposed" (7.2.2). One measure of the effectiveness of a national awards system that relates to the assessment of international languages in school contexts is, therefore, the extent to which it reflects the way or ways in which the relevant curriculum objectives are conceived and articulated. In the case of the New Zealand school system, the achievement objectives listed in syllabus and curriculum documents should have a direct bearing on testing and assessment objectives.

Educational authorities may, or may not, choose to make recommendations in relation to testing and assessment in curriculum documents. Where they do so, examiners need to attend to these recommendations. The following statement occurs in the New Zealand national curriculum statement for Spanish:

> Assessment should be based on activities which measure skills in communicative contexts. . . . Assessment tasks should reflect the situations, *the expected language content*, and the purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations. *Assessment should measure both communicative competence and linguistic accuracy, and should allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content* (emphasis added) (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.17).

Another measure of the effectiveness of a national system of awards relating to the assessment of international languages is the extent to which it takes account of such statements. In this case, examiners need to bear in mind that they are expected to assess "linguistic accuracy" and "communicative competence" in the context of "activities that measure skills in communicative contexts". It will be important, therefore, to determine the sense in which the term 'communicative competence' is used in the extract above bearing in mind the fact that communicative language competence is generally, as in the case of the *Council of Europe* draft Framework, seen as including linguistic accuracy. It will also be important to determine what is meant by 'activities which measure skills in communicative contexts'. The *Council of Europe* draft Framework commentary observes that tasks are communicative "to the extent that they require learners to comprehend, negotiate and express meaning in order to achieve a communicative goal" (Council of Europe, 1996, 5.1).

Text-to-text activities have a place in everyday language use although they are particularly common in language learning/ teaching and testing. However:

> The more mechanical meaning-preserving activities (repetition, dictation, reading aloud, phonetic transcription) are currently out of favour in communication-oriented language teaching owing to their artificiality and what are seen as undesirable backwash effects, though a case can be made for them as testing devices for the technical reason that performance depends closely on the ability to use linguistic competencies to reduce the information content of the text (5.4.1).

A further measure of the effectiveness of a national awards system that relates to international languages in schools is the extent to which its scales relate in a transparent way to the scaling that is found in national curriculum documents. The fact that New Zealand national curriculum documents are framed in terms of a progressive series of levels means that they are conceived in terms of scaling. Scaling can be based on a number of different approaches: *intuitive approaches* (involving the principled interpretation of experience), *qualitative approaches* (involving qualitative rather than statistical interpretation of information obtained) or *quantitative approaches* (involving statistical analysis and interpretation) (8.2.1.1). In the case of the *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents for modern languages, scaling appears to be largely intuitive and to be subject to revision and adaptation in the light of experience when curriculum documents are revised.

There are two inter-related approaches to the specification of levels in the New Zealand national curriculum documents: specification in terms of language learning descriptors ('overall achievement objectives' in the case of the draft guidelines for French and German) at different levels and specification in relation to groups of objectives at different levels. Recent curriculum documents for modern languages make reference to both.

Thus, in the New Zealand *Curriculum Framework*, the fact that achievement objectives are grouped at different levels presupposes a concept of progression. 'So, in the context

of performance, it is necessary "to generalise . . . about the position of the learner concerned in relation to . . . current communicative language proficiency" (8.5). The language learning descriptors that appear in New Zealand curriculum documents relating to international languages are based on an underlying concept of proficiency. They are, thus, a type of communicative language proficiency statement, where communicative language proficiency is treated as being located "between competence and performance" (8.5).

Language learning descriptors first appeared in the curriculum statement for Spanish where there are four, each associated with two curriculum levels. The relationship between these descriptors and curriculum levels in the case of the curriculum statements for Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean is indicated in *Table 6.3.*

***Table 6.3** : Relationship between Language Learning Descriptors and Curriculum Levels in the New Zealand Curriculum Statements for Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean*

	Emergent Comm-unication	**Emergent Comm-unication & Survival Skills**	**Survival Skills**	**Survival Skills & Social Competence**	**Social Com-petence**	**Personal Independence**
Spanish	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Chinese	Levels 1 & 2		Levels 3 & 4		Levels 5 & 6	Levels 7 & 8
Japanese	Levels 1 - 3	Level 4	Levels 5 & 6	Level 7	Level 8	
Korean	Levels 1 - 4		Levels 5 - 8			

There are three problems relating to these language learning descriptors (proficiency target statements) so far as the coherence of New Zealand national awards is concerned. First, the mapping of descriptors onto levels is different in the case of different languages. There seems, however, to be no principled basis for this mapping given that it is the same for a European and an Asian language (Spanish and Chinese), but different for two Asian languages (Chinese and Japanese). Secondly, although the generic labels are retained in the case of the draft Guidelines for French and German, the actual content of the descriptor statements is not retained which means that the issue of defining proficiency targets will need to be revisited across the board. Thirdly, there is no clear indication, except in the case of the draft curriculum guidelines for French and German, of how, or whether, these descriptor statements are intended to relate to a proficiency scale that can be applied more generally. This is problematic given that:

> A proficiency scale defines a series of ascending bands of proficiency. It may cover the whole conceptual range of learner proficiency, or it may just cover the range of proficiency relevant to the sector or institution concerned (Council of Europe, 1996, 8.3.3).

If the language learning descriptors are to provide any genuine guidance in relation to assessment, they need to be (a) specified as part of an overall proficiency scale, (b) expressed consistently. In the absence of this, the New Zealand national awards are likely to refer directly to the grouping of achievement objectives at each level in the syllabus and curriculum documents rather than to a combination of these and the language learning descriptor statements. However, with the exception of the draft curriculum guidelines for French and German, the syllabus and curriculum documents have different objectives and groups of objectives at different levels. This inevitably creates scaling problems for examiners.

The examination system, if it is operating effectively within the overall national framework, ought to be able to play an important part in the curriculum cycle and, hence,

in resolving these problems. This is because examiners have available to them a range of statistical techniques that can help resolve the question of comparative levels of difficulty. Item response theory, in particular the Rasch model, which was developed from probability theory, is now often used to determine the relative difficulty of individual test items in an item bank. It can, however, also be used to scale descriptors of communicative proficiency (Council of Europe, 1996, 8.2.1.1, 8.2.1.2 & 8.2.1.3). One aspect of effective co-operation between curriculum designers and examiners could, therefore, be the testing of descriptor statements and of the construction, levels placement and grouping of achievement objectives. A further test of the effectiveness of a national awards system is, therefore, the extent to which it plays an effective role in the overall national curriculum cycle.

Transparency is another important dimension of a national awards system, whether that transparency relates to examinations that are assessed externally or to school-internal assessment. Thus:

> Assessment of achievement in schools in many countries is through achievement grades, sometimes 1 - 6, with 4 as a pass, norm, or "satisfactory" grade. What is meant by the various grades is internalised by the teachers in the context concerned, but rarely defined. The nature of the relationship between teacher assessment grades of this type and proficiency levels is in principle the same as that between examination grades and proficiency levels, but is complicated by the fact that there will be a myriad of standards. . . . Nevertheless, it is possible to establish an approximate relationship between the range of standards in use in a particular sector and proficiency levels by using a number of simple techniques such as (a) providing standard definitions for different grades of achievement of the same objective, (b) asking teachers to profile average achievement onto an existing proficiency scale and grid, (c) collecting samples of performance and then scaling them, (d) asking teachers to use their normal grades to rate standardisation videos (8.3.3).

The *Council of Europe* draft Framework from which the above extract is taken presupposes a proficiency-based system rather than an achievement objectives-based one. The difference, however, need not necessarily be profound in the case of national testing and assessment of secondary school students. A system that is exclusively achievement objectives-based will focus on the achievement of specific objectives. Such a system might be appropriate in the case of adult learners in certain types of vocational setting. It is less likely to be appropriate in the case of secondary school students. So far as school-centred language learning is concerned, national curriculum statements may, as they now do in New Zealand, combine types of proficiency statement (the language learning descriptors) with achievement objectives, that is, with those objectives that are considered relevant to performance at different levels of proficiency. An international language examination that relates to the completion of a particular level within an overall system (e.g. the *School Certificate* examination, associated with the completion of curriculum *Level 6*), will be concerned to place students appropriately in relation to the cumulative effect of the achievement objectives up to that point in the system. However, because performance in relation to achievement objectives will be uneven, each candidate will present a different overall profile in relation to the objectives. Furthermore, the objectives for international languages are intended to be assessed in relation to communicative activities, and communicative activities involve a range of competencies (including general, non-linguistic competencies). For these reasons, examiners not only need ways of assessing performances in terms of specific achievement objectives, but also ways of assessing them in relation to more general proficiency statements that are intended to encompass a range of performances that signal an appropriate level of proficiency at a particular stage in the educational system. They must, in other words, generalise about proficiency on the basis of performances. They should, therefore, pay careful attention to any overall statements of proficiency that are included in curriculum documents, since statements of this type are intended to represent, in summary form, the expected proficiency range of candidates who have successfully completed the course of instruction to that point. They might, therefore, appropriately appear as examination prescriptions.

Thus, whether or not an examination explicitly recognises pass and fail grades, there will be grades (e.g. C, B and A) that signal that overall performance is within or above the proficiency range expressed in the appropriate language level descriptor, and grades (e.g. E and D) that signal that a lower level proficiency descriptor applies. In the absence of detailed profiling of individual student performances (something that is unrealistic at a national level), examination grades, in the case of the assessment of international languages, will be more meaningful if they can be related to proficiency descriptors. Thus, examination of international languages which takes place in the context of schooling should relate both to specific achievement objectives and, where they are available, to appropriate proficiency descriptors. In the New Zealand context, both are now available. One of the tasks of examiners should, therefore, be to strive for a transparent relationship between these objectives and proficiency statements and the processes, and outcomes, of examinations. Where they experience problems in achieving this transparency, they can play an important role, in dialogue with teachers and curriculum designers, in refining the descriptor statements and achievement objectives that appear in curriculum documents. This presupposes, in the case of the New Zealand school system, that there will be a close working relationship between the *Ministry of Education* (which is responsible for curriculum documents) and the *Qualifications Authority* (which is responsible for examinations).

Thus far, reference has been made to a number of criteria in relation to which the effectiveness of a national school-based language awards system in New Zealand can be evaluated. These criteria relate to the demands of coherence, consistency and transparency and can be summarised as follows:

. accurate reflection of any testing and assessment guidelines that appear in national syllabus and curriculum documents;

. consistency of approach across languages in relation to testing and assessment at the same curriculum stages;

. transparent relationship between examination procedures, content and scaling and the way or ways in which achievement objectives and proficiency descriptors are conceived, articulated and scaled in national syllabus and curriculum documents and in language learning contexts more generally;

. transparent relationship between examination grades at different stages in the system (e.g. *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship*), and between these and examination grades awarded in different subjects at the same stages in the system;

. transparent relationship between internal and external assessment approaches and standards;

.indications that the assessment system is playing an effective role in the overall national curriculum cycle.

These criteria can be considered in relation to system-internal considerations and to considerations that apply more generally. They should relate both to external testing and assessment and to school-internal assessment.

6.5 New Zealand national awards for international languages: applying the evaluation criteria

In this section, each of the criteria listed in *6.4* above will be applied to New Zealand national awards for learners of modern foreign languages in schools. Central to this discussion will be the implications for national testing and assessment of the approaches adopted in New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents.

The concept of communicative language teaching that informs New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents emerged out of the concept of communicative competence (see *Chapter 5*). However, each of these concepts has developed over time and neither, even in the initial stages, could be defined in a way to which all applied linguists and language teachers would necessarily subscribe. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are differences in the ways in which these concepts are interpreted by the writers of different New Zealand syllabuses and curriculum statements.

Both Campbell and Wales (1970) and Halliday (1970) examined the concept of communicative competence in relation to language learning and, in doing so, began a debate about the interaction between various aspects of general and linguistic competencies that has dominated research into second language learning for the last three decades. Thus, in the 1970s, Jakobovits (1970), Widdowson (1979), Savignon (1972), Morrow (1977), Munby (1978), and Oller (1979) all focused on the interaction between grammatical and socio-linguistic knowledge and understanding in the context of language use. In the 1980s, the contribution of strategic competencies began to be examined, particularly in the context of language testing (Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Oller, 1983). This lead to reformulations of the concept of communicative competence in terms of communicative language competencies, and to a realization that, in the testing context, these competencies had to be inferred from task performance, something that would not be a straightforward matter in view of the fact that general competencies had also to be taken into account (Savignon, 1983; Bachman and Palmer, 1982, Bachman and Palmer, 1984; Bachman, 1988; Henning, 1987; Spolsky, 1989; Bachman, 1990; McNamara, 1996). The issue of competencies (including strategic competencies) continued to occupy researchers in the 1990s (e.g. Bachman and Palmer (1996)) and was, in 1996, incorporated into the *Council of Europe* draft Framework which seeks to integrate modern language teaching, learning, testing and assessment into a single framework (Council of Europe, 1996). New formulations as reported in research literature are not immediately reflected in national approaches to testing and assessment. Some of them are appropriate for small group, formative assessment purposes only. Others, whatever their intrinsic merits, are too cumbersome to apply in a national context.

Furthermore, where testing and assessment are conducted on a national level, it is important to secure as much support as possible for the approaches adopted. Any major changes in approach will therefore take a considerable time to implement. For all of these reasons, the testing and assessment of international languages on a national level in New Zealand will inevitably appear conservative when viewed in the light of the international literature on language testing and assessment. This is to be expected. However, where national syllabus and curriculum documents incorporate new approaches, approaches that have implications for testing and assessment, the expectation must be that these approaches will, in turn, be reflected in the testing and assessment that is conducted at a national level. The critical question is not, therefore, whether New Zealand examinations reflect the most recent developments in testing and assessment theory, but whether they accurately reflect the testing and assessment assumptions that are built into national syllabus and curriculum documents.

6.5.1 New Zealand national awards for international languages: an accurate reflection of testing and assessment guidelines in national syllabus and curriculum documents ?

From the 1980s onwards, New Zealand national syllabuses and curriculum statements for international languages have recommended a 'communicative approach' to language teaching and learning. In each of these documents, the term 'communicative approach' has been defined in a slightly different way (see *Chapter 5).* However, common to all of them is an emphasis on 'real language' and 'authentic situations' and on encouraging students to use the target language in the performance of tasks whose accomplishment requires the comprehension and transmission of meanings. Since testing is invariably associated with the making of decisions, it is not surprising that there is also, throughout all of these documents, an insistence that the decisions that are made in relation to testing and assessment should reflect the emphasis in the documents themselves on a communicative approach.

All of the current New Zealand national syllabus and curriculum statements and guidelines for modern foreign languages make reference to testing and assessment and many of them contain statements that can be summed up as follows (also quoted above):

> Assessment should be based on activities which measure skills in communicative contexts. . . . Assessment tasks should reflect the situations, *the expected language content*, and the purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations. *Assessment should measure both communicative competence and linguistic accuracy, and should allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content* (emphasis added) (Ministry of Education, 1985a, p. 17).

Assessment that is based on activities is action-oriented. It views language testing as involving the accomplishment of tasks, purposeful actions which are undertaken in order to obtain results "in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved" (Council of Europe, 1996, 3.1). Reference is made above to 'activities that measure skills in communicative contexts'. The skills referred to in the relevant national syllabus and curriculum documents are reading, writing, listening and speaking. These are to be measured in 'a communicative context', that is, in a context in which learners are required to "comprehend, negotiate and express meaning in order to achieve a communicative goal" (Council of Europe, 1996, 5.1). Testing will also need to 'allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content'. At the same time, the linguistic content should be that which is 'expected', presumably that which is specified, directly or indirectly, in the relevant curriculum document, and the 'situations and purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations' should be reflected.

This, then, represents an over-view of the types of testing and assessment expectations that are associated with current New Zealand national syllabus and curriculum documents. In order to determine how accurately *School Certificate* and *University*

Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship examinations reflect this over-view, it is necessary to examine them in some detail. In doing so, it is, however, important to bear in mind that there are some differences of emphasis in relation to assessment guidelines between earlier syllabuses and later curriculum documents. Thus, for example, the national syllabus for French, the earliest such document to be produced which is still in use, includes the following statement:

> In the evaluation of communicative competence, the main criterion should be that of effective communication and the transfer of information. Formal accuracy of grammar and pronunciation is a secondary criterion, but it should be regarded as a factor that affects a student's ability to communicate" (Ministry of Education, 1987, p.9).

No such statement appears in the curriculum statements or draft curriculum guidelines for international languages, largely because they were all produced later and reflect a later stage in the development of the communicative movement. They, therefore, simply treat accuracy as one aspect of performance that relates to underlying competencies. However, the French syllabus document is still in use and so it is possible that any differences between French examinations and other modern language examinations may be attributable to the difference indicated above. With this possible exception, the following should be characteristic of *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations:.

. they should include activities that relate to everyday situations;

. these activities should involve communicative goals;

. in seeking to achieve these goals, candidates should be involved in reading, writing, listening and speaking;

. in the process of reading, writing, listening and speaking, candidates

should be involved in seeking to comprehend, negotiate and express meaning;

. in seeking to negotiate and express meaning, candidates should not be required to produce strictly predetermined language content;

. how successful candidates are judged to be should depend on (a) the extent to which they are successful in achieving communicative goals, and (b) the extent to which they are able to use accurately the language that is expected at the stage of the curriculum to which the examination relates.

Thus, those changes in the approach to the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages that are reflected in national syllabus and curriculum documents from the 1980s onward were intended to be accompanied by changes in the approach to testing and assessment. The model adopted at *School Certificate* and at *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, appears to have been based on Oller's integrative test approach and his Unitary Competence Hypothesis (Oller 1979).

Oller's development of the Unitary Competence Hypothesis (UCH) was intended as a corrective to discrete-point tests. Within the UCH, a theory of performance in communicative tests, referred to as 'pragmatic expectancy grammar', is outlined (Oller, 1979). Here, language proficiency is seen not as a series of isolated units, but as an indivisible whole. It is therefore argued that the object of communicative testing is to measure "language as it is used for communicative purposes" (Oller, 1979, p.16). This approach to language testing involved a variety of task-types. Thus, a test of proficiency may involve "any procedure or task that causes the learner to process sequences of elements in a language that conform to the normal contextual constraints of that language and . . . requires the learner to relate sequences of linguistic elements via pragmatic mappings to extralinguistic context" (Oller, 1979, p.38). McNamara (1998, p. 80) interprets this in relation to tasks as follows:

> [The tests] . . . focussed not so much on replicating tasks candidates might face in the world as on tasks which demanded of the candidates the same processing of language (understood in psycholinguistic terms) as is required in any real-world second language performance. Thus, tests requiring performances on relatively artificial tasks such as filling in gaps in a cloze passage or taking dictation were held to be as valid as performance tests involving more 'authentic' tasks which more obviously simulated real-world activities.

These task-types are clearly evident in New Zealand national language examinations. The following tables outline the types of task prescribed in the *School Qualifications Handbook* for use in the construction of the *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* language examinations in New Zealand (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1999).

Tasks referred to in the tables below as *Type A Tasks* involve "the same processing of language as is required in any real-world second language performance" (McNamara 1998, p. 80). Tasks referred to as *Type B Tasks* are those that replicate real-world activities. Note that in the table below, *Type A tasks* are in *italics*; Type B tasks are not in italics.

Table 6.4: *Type A Tasks and Type B Tasks Prescribed for New Zealand School Certificate Examinations: Listening and Speaking*

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Listening					
Matching picture/ sentence/word/location	*	*	*	*	
Multiple choice					
Writing/choosing a word phrase or	*		*	*	*
sentence	*	*	*	*	*
Marking or completing a form, map or	*				
diagram	*	*		*	
Completion of sentences	*				
Filling gaps in the text	*	*	*		
Writing one side of a dialogue	*	*	*		
True /false with reference to picture or		*			
statement				*	
Speaking					
Greetings and health	*	*	*	*	
Information about self and family	*	*	*	*	
Describing clothes and personal	*	*	*	*	
characteristics	*				
Giving information about homes and their	*	*	*	*	
location/s					
Describing towns and asking for	*	*	*	*	
directions	*	*	*	*	
Making purchases	*	*	*		
Ordering and paying for a meal/			*		
discussing menu/food	*	*	*	*	
Talking about school and related activities	*	*	*		
Making a telephone call	*	*			
Talking about health and visit to Dr,					
dentist or chemist	*	*			
Describing NZ, its location and climate		*	*	*	
Discussing daily routines					
Sport and leisure activities					
Holidays					
Eating and drinking in the family situation					

Table 6.5: *Type A Tasks and Type B Tasks Prescribed for New Zealand School Certificate Examinations: Reading, Writing and Cultural Studies*

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Reading comprehension					
Answering questions in English	*		*		*
Multiple choice	*		*		*
Writing notes	*				
Matching captions/sentences to pictures	*	*	*	*	
Putting sentences in sequence	*	*	*	*	
Filling in gaps in a passage	*				
Matching two halves of a sentence		*		*	*
Completion tests		*	*	*	
Translation					*
Writing					
Narrative based on single picture	*	*	*		
Narrative based on picture sequence	*	*	*	*	
Description based on single picture	*		*		*
Description based on picture sequence	*				
Writing a letter	*	*	*		
Writing based on map, plan or diagram	*	*	*		*
Writing/completion of a dialogue	*	*	*	*	
Writing a narrative based on outline	*			*	*
Writing a description based on outline	*				
Writing a postcard	*	*		*	
Completing a form	*	*			*
Writing a message	*	*	*		
Diary entry		*			
Completion of cartoon bubbles		*	*		
Written answers based on a passage in target language		*			
Description of place, person or activity		*	*	*	
Writing with situation as a start or finish point		*	*		
Writing about a person or persons indicated verbally				*	
Translation					*
Giving a comment or opinion					
Cultural studies					
Schooling	*		*		
Family life	*				
Housing	*				
Shopping	*				
Eating	*				
Holidays	*				
Sport and leisure	*				
Capital city	*				
Coat of arms			*		
Traditional values			*		
Puppets			*		
Islam / Church			*		
Independence day			*		
Markets			*		
Rice culture			*		
Culture					*
History					*
Geography					*

Table 6.6: *Type A Tasks and Type B Tasks Prescribed for New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Examinations: Listening and Speaking*

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish	Chinese
(Listening) Comprehension						No tasks listed
Writing word /short phrase in response to spoken questions	*					
Filling in a form according to instructions or information	*	*		*		
Matching	*		*			
Selecting correct items in a list	*			*		
***Recording** in the TL the main points of a spoken message*	*			*		
***Recording** the main points of a message in English*		*	*	*		
Multi-choice		*		*		
Word or phrase answers					*	
Summarise	*				*	
Objective questions about passage						
Objective questions relating to visual material						
Dictation						
Speaking						
Role playing	*	*	*	*		*
Conversation	*	*	*	*	*	*
Discussion	*	*				
Defending a point of view	*	*				
Give a prepared talk	*	*	*	*		*
Give an impromptu talk	*					
Summarising or re-presenting written or recorded material	*		*	*		
	*	*	*	*		*
Interpreting or describing visual material		*				
			*	*		
Discussing a written text					*	
Reading unseen passage out loud followed by questions					*	
A situation to be acted out						
Describing pictures						

Table 6.7: *Type A Tasks and Type B Tasks Prescribed for New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Examinations: Reading and Writing*

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish	Chinese
Reading						
Translation	*	*	*	*		*
Multi choice	*	*		*	*	
Filling in the correct word		*				
Matching						
Putting statements into the correct sequence	*					
Answering questions on the passage in TL	*	*		*	*	
Answering questions on the passage in English	*		*	*		
Listing the main points	*	*				*
Supplying headings	*	*				
Identifying key sentences in a paragraph or paragraphs	*	*				
	*	*		*		
Completion exercises		*				
Extending the line of narrative or argument						*
Use information to complete chart, map or table					*	
					*	
Summary in English						
Sentences for completion and transformation						
Writing						
Questions on literary and non-literary texts	*					
Defending a personal point of view	*					
Discussing a problem	*	*				
Imaginative writing	*		*			
Some aspect of life and culture	*	*				
Writing a letter		*				*
Commenting on content of text		*				
Continuing a narrative		*				
Relating a narrative from another person's perspective		*				
			*			
Expository writing choice from3/6 themes				*		
Creative writing from picture or sentence starters				*		
				*	*	
Provide kanji for passages written in kana				*		
Guided composition					*	
Writing sentences from non reading stimulus						*
Sentences for completion and transformation						*
Writing a postcard						*
Short note						*
Description of picture or cartoon						*
Likes and dislikes						*
Day's activities						*
Writing about a picture						*
Plan a trip						*
Describe a trip						*
Describe how to...						
Compare life in New Zealand to X						

Table 6.8: *Marks Awarded in New Zealand School Certificate Language Examinations for Type A and Type B Tasks*

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Receptive	*45*	*60*	*40*	*43*	*50*
Productive	45	40	45	43	35

Table 6.9: *Marks Awarded in New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Examinations for Type A and Type B tasks*

	Chinese	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Receptive	*50*	*50*	*55*	*50*	*55*	*60*
Productive	50	50	45	50	45	40

Leaving aside the testing of knowledge of culture, it can be seen that in five of the six international languages examined for the *School Certificate*, students gain 50% or more of their possible *language* marks in relation to *Type A Tasks*, where there is " the same processing of language as is required in any real-world second language performance" (McNamara, 1998, 80). In all of the *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations, students gain 50% or more of their possible *language* marks in relation to such tasks. In these cases, communicative language competencies are being extrapolated from performances involving language processing tasks that do not replicate real-world communicative activities.

As indicated above, receptive skills are tested using predominantly *Type A Tasks* and productive skills using predominantly *Type B Tasks*. The weighting of receptive and productive skills varies among languages within the same examination type. Thus, at *School Certificate* level, 60% of the overall examination total is awarded in relation to receptive skills in the case of German. In the case of Indonesian, 40% of the overall examination total is awarded in relation to receptive skills. The differences in weightings do not, however, appear to correlate with a distinction between Asian and European languages. There is also a lack of correspondence, although a less marked one, at *School Certificate, Bursary and Scholarship* examination level in relation to the weighting given to receptive and productive skills. Here, for example, the receptive/productive skills weighting is 60/40 in the case of Spanish. 50/50 in the case of Chinese, French and Indonesian and 55/45 in the case of Japanese.

Another factor worthy of consideration here is the approach to assessment represented in the marking schedules accompanying the chief examiner's reports (published in the year following the examination). What these reports indicate is that examination markers are instructed to mark receptive skills (reading and writing) on the basis of very tightly prescribed divisions (often relating to verb forms, gender and number agreement, and detailed knowledge of vocabulary). Productive skills are, however, assessed on a more fluid basis, that assessment taking discourse construction into account. Illustrative examples are included below for the 1997 *School Certificate French examination: Part A, Section 2 (Table 6.10); Part D, Section One (Tables 6.11, 6.12* and *6.13).*

Table 6.10: *New Zealand School Certificate French examination (1997): Part A, Section 2: Mark Schedule*

SECTION TWO: FILLING THE GAPS IN A TEXT: Dictated words fall into three categories:

1. Either the word is totally correct (leave blank) or if incorrect has one If word omitted, it has two // (Circled words)

et moi en me où ça mai lui pas

2. Stem/ending agreements (verbs/adjectives/plural nouns) : one / if the stem is incorrect, one / if the ending is incorrect. So the word attracts two // if both stem and ending are incorrect. If word is omitted it has two // .

all / és	copain / s	premier / s
jour / s	all ait	descend/ions
tomb / é	ét ait	grav / e
es/t	demand / é	fai/t
gauch / e	di/t	êt / es
Cass / é	pens / e	fin/i
	cet/	

3. Others: one spelling error: one /; more than one spelling error: two If word omitted, it has two // (Underlined words).

montagne	pendant	matin	vite
encore	fois	hôpital	médecin
puis		hiver	fin

NB: Extra word added attracts one / Joined up words or separated words, if nothing else incorrect: one / Accept hôpital without circumflex. Put a circle to show it should be there.

Accents, left out or incorrectly placed, count as errors.

DICTATION MARKING GRID

Add up the number of strokes and read off the grid for the mark. eg. 18 strokes = 12/20:

1= 20; 2 - 3 = 19; 4 - 5 = 18; 6 - 7 = 17; 8 - 9 = 16;
10 - 12 = 15; 13 - 14 = 14; 15 - 17 = 13; 18 - 19 = 12;
20 - 22 = 11; 23 - 26 = 10; 27 - 30 = 9; 31 - 34 = 8;
35 - 39 = 7; 40 - 44 = 6; 45 - 49 = 5; 50 - 55 = 4;

56 - 61 = 3; 62 - 67 = 2; 68 - 73 = 1; 74+ = 0

Table 6.11: New Zealand School Certificate French Examination (1997): Part D, Section One: Mark Schedule - Part 1 (content marks)

PART D: WRITING
SECTION ONE: 60 WORD PASSAGE

Do not be unduly influenced by the length of the passage unless it is very short. If more than one passage is written, you must mark all the passages and select the best mark.

CONTENT: 4 MARKS
Have guidelinesbeen followed? Has / have relevant information/ideas, with appropriate elaboration or development been communicated?

4.
A very good response to the task; all guidelines followed with generally appropriate elaboration or development.
Clearly relevant message throughout.

3.
A good response to the task: all guidelines followed with appropriate elaboration or development.
Message mostly relevant.

2.
A reasonable response to the task; most guidelines followed but some omissions.
Some elaboration or development. A partially relevant message.

1.
Task attempted, but little account taken of guidelines; major omissions.
Little or no attempt at elaboration or development

0.
Writes nothing relevant to the task.
OR / No attempt

Table 6.12 : New Zealand School Certificate French Examination (1997): Part D, Section One: Mark Schedule - Part 2 (language marks)

LANGUAGE: 6 MARKS

6.
Excellent standard (top 5% - 10% of candidates).
Very good variety of vocabulary / structures/ sentence patterns.
Language, including idiom, register, handled confidently (flair)
Sentences linked effectively.
Immediately comprehensible (to a native speaker): no or only minor inaccuracies.

5.
Very high standard.
Good variety of vocabulary / structures/ sentence patterns.
Awareness of idiom register. Use of linking words.
Comprehensible despite some inaccuracies, e.g. 1 - 2 major errors or a few (4 - 5) minor ones.

4.
Good standard.
Some variety of vocabulary / structures/ sentence patterns.
Some awareness of idiom register.
Reasonably accurate language, although significant errors.

3.
Fair standard.
Some attempt to vary vocabulary/ structures/ sentence patterns.
Accuracy may be inconsistent (mastery of basic grammar, weakness in more difficult areas)
OR: accurate but simple language overall.

2.
Below average standard.
Frequent repetition of common words / phrases / structures.
Simple sentence patterns. Anglicisms.
Frequent major errors (verb endings / agreements / inconsistent or wrong genders) which may
obscure meaning.

1.
Low standard.
Very limited vocabulary (frequent anglicisms,misspellings)
Only simplest sentence patterns used.
Very little awareness of grammar. Meaning frequently obscured.

0.
Virtually unrecognisable as French.
No structured sentences (lists of words only).

Table 6.13: New Zealand School Certificate French Examination (1997): Part D, Section One: Mark Schedule - Part 3 (calculating overall mark)

To obtain mark: eg C4 + L5 = 9 out of 10; C3 + L2 = 5/1 Write in C L Then: Multiply by 2 for mark out of 20 If content is 0, then 0 must be awarded for language. Circle missing information C. If the passage is insufficient in terms of length 'weigh' the number of words written against the total possible mark for a passage of 60+ words. A passage of 30 words should not score higher than **1** in content and no higher than **4** in language.

The result of this system is that, irrespective of the fact that textual manipulation is involved, receptive skills are evaluated on the basis of checks on grammatical knowledge with very little consideration for overall discourse coherence. On the other hand, productive skills are evaluated primarily in terms of the overall message conveyed, grammatical accuracy being a secondary consideration. Thus, it is possible for a student (in, for example, filling in blanks) to create a text that is partially incomprehensible and still gain half marks. Equally, it is possible for a student to gain at least half marks for a piece of writing that conveys an overall message but involves language that is inaccurate in many significant respects.

Since their initial development, Oller's pragmatic tests have been the subject of close analysis (see, for example, Hughes and Porter, 1983). A number of researchers, including Oller himself, have raised concerns about the approach. Of particular significance here are those studies that question the validity of the procedures used to establish the original statistical evidence for the tests and those that challenge the concept of a 'pragmatic expectancy grammar' on the grounds that it misleadingly suggests far greater rigour and systematicity than is actually the case.

In view of this, it is of some concern that in the examinations to which we have made reference, many of the question-types appear still to relate to a model that is now considered problematic, one that no longer sits comfortably with the concept of

'communicative approach' as outlined in New Zealand national syllabus and curriculum documents for international languages.

The overall format of the language examinations available at different stages of schooling in New Zealand has already been outlined, as have the skills components and question types. Thus far, however, the oral component of examinations has not been discussed.

In both *School Certificate* and *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations, there is an internally assessed oral component. In each case, teachers are recommended to observe and assess three different oral performances. Suggested approaches to assessment-types are outlined in the *School Qualifications Handbook* and include, for example, role play and prepared speeches. In some cases, a significant amount of pre-planning is involved; in others, it is not. Whether or not students perform successfully will, on some occasions, depend to some extent on how proficient their exchange partner is. In order to avoid this problem, some teachers may elect to assess oral performances in which they themselves participate. This can create further difficulties in terms of power imbalance and the possibility of unintentional intimidation. In attempting to counter this, some teachers may attempt to compensate in terms of the actual grades awarded. Those teachers who record interactions (a requirement in the case of *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations) may be less influenced by 'halo effect' than others.

There are further difficulties relating to (a) the amount of class time taken up by oral testing, particularly in view of the requirement for in-school moderation, and (b) the fact that there are no published detailed guidelines and exemplars relating to the award of marks.

Oral marks are submitted by schools to the New Zealand *Qualifications Authority* and are then moderated in relation to the marks gained by the students in that school in other areas of the examination. What this means, in effect, is that there is no acknowledgment

of the possible cohort significance of considerable differences in proficiency in oral performance in relation to other areas of performance.

Assessment tasks "should reflect the situations . . . and the purposes for which skills are used in everyday situations" and should "allow for a range of students' responses, rather than anticipating strictly predetermined language content" (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 17). Tasks will be communicative "to the extent that they require learners to comprehend, negotiate and express meaning in order to achieve a communicative goal" (Council of Europe, 1996, 5.1). Overall, New Zealand modern language examinations fare relatively well in relation to the extent to which *input* reflects realistic communicative situations such as, for example, dialogues between native speakers about everyday events and circumstances. However, when situations and student purposes are combined, the examinations fare less well. In general, the purposes are exclusively pedagogic in nature (e.g. writing dialogues and conversations, writing the directions that someone might give orally instead of, for example, marking oral directions on a map). Nevertheless, some of the writing questions in the examinations do relate to situations and purposes which students might be required to fulfil in certain real-life situations (e.g. writing a section on New Zealand lifestyles for a Japanese youth hostel magazine).

So far as avoiding predetermined responses is concerned, the writing questions are, in general, the most successful. However, for the most part, students are given no options in relation to response. In many cases, they are required simply to select one correct response from a range of possibilities.

In terms of their success in engaging students in comprehending, negotiating and expressing meaning, the examinations vary. There is very little opportunity, except, presumably, in the school-internal oral assessments, to *negotiate* meaning. In some of the more extended written sections, students do, however, have an opportunity to *express* meaning. Comprehension exercises are varied. In some cases (e.g. the 1997 Spanish *School Certificate* examination), students are required to listen for gist or overall

meaning. In others, however, they are involved in the manipulation of decontextualized sentences.

Giving more recognition to the integrated nature of skills in language use (reading and writing; listening and speaking) would remove some of the artificiality of the language operations in the examinations. Providing more thematic unity within and between sections of the examinations would provide more useful contextualization. Thus, for example, the same characters could appear in different, but related, situations in different parts of the examination: in later parts of the examination, characters could be involved in activities that were anticipated in earlier sections; letters could be written in response to letters received; students could listen to the first part of a conversation on tape and then join in by, for example, responding to questions addressed to them as a third party.

In relation to tasks, activities and goals, the examinations are, currently, inconsistent in their approach. Although attempts are made to engage the students in realistic language use and in comprehending and expressing meaning, many of the activities are of the mechanical, meaning-preserving type in which predetermined responses are the norm.

6.5.2 New Zealand national awards for international languages: consistency of approach across languages in relation to testing at the same curriculum stages?

There is considerable variation in terms of the weighting given to different skills and activities in different language examinations at the same stage of schooling (see *Tables 6.14 and 6.15.*

Table 6.14: New Zealand School Certificate Prescriptions: Components of Examinations and Maximum Mark Allocations

	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Listening comprehension	* (20 marks)	* (20 marks)	* (15 marks)	*(30 marks)	* (25 marks)
Translation	*(15 marks)	* (10 marks)	* (15 marks)		
Dictation		*(10 marks)			
Reading comprehension	*(10 marks)	*(20 marks)	* (10 marks)	* (30 marks)	* (25 Marks)
Writing	*(20 marks)	*(20 marks)	* (20 marks)	* (40 marks)	* (20 marks)
Cultural studies	*(15 marks)		* (15 marks)		* (15 marks)
Internally assessed components	Oral competence (20 marks)	Oral competence (20 marks)	Oral assessment (25 marks)	Oral competence (20 marks) Cultural studies (20 marks)	Oral competence (15 marks)

Table 6.15: New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Prescriptions: Components of Examinations and Maximum Mark Allocations

	Chinese	French	German	Indonesian	Japanese	Spanish
Reading	* (30 marks)	* (30 marks)	* (30 marks)	* (10 marks)	* (30 marks)	* (20 marks)
Writing	* (25 marks)	*(30 marks)	* (25 marks)	* (30 marks)	* (25 marks)	* (20 marks)
Dictation		* (10 marks)				
Translation				* (20 marks)		
(Listening) Comprehension	* (20 marks)	*(10 marks)	*(25 marks)	* (20 marks)	* (25 marks)	* (20 marks)
Summary in English						* (15 marks)
Sentences for completion and transformation						* (10 marks)
Internally assessed components	Speaking (25 marks)	Oral competence (20 marks)	* (20 marks)	Oral assessment (20 marks)	Oral competence (20 marks)	Oral competence (15 marks)

The *oral component* of examinations varies from language to language and from examination to examination. At *School Certificate* level, the value of the internally assessed oral component varies from 15% of the total (Spanish), through 20% (French, German and Japanese) to 25% (Indonesian). At *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, there is, once again, variation in relation to the overall value of the oral

component. It is, once again, worth 15% in the case of Spanish and 20% in the case of French, German and Japanese. In Indonesian, the value of the oral component is lower than it is in the case of *School Certificate* (reduced from 25% to 20%). In Chinese, however, where there is no *School Certificate* examination, there is a higher overall value attached to speaking (25%) than there is in any other language examination at this level. There is nothing in the syllabus or curriculum documents that indicates clearly why there should be these differences.

There are also variations in the area of *listening* comprehension. At *School Certificate* level, listening comprehension is worth 15% of the total in the case of Indonesian, 20% of the total in the case of French and German, 25% of the total in the case of Spanish and 30% of the total in the case of Japanese. At *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, listening comprehension is worth only 10% of the overall total for French. It is, however, worth 20% of the overall total for Spanish, Chinese and Indonesian, and 25% of the overall total in the case of German and Japanese. Once again, there is nothing in the syllabus and curriculum documents that signals why there should be these differences.

So far as *writing* is concerned, all of the *School Certificate* language examinations, with the exception of Japanese, award marks out of 20 (20% overall) for this section. In the case of Japanese, the value awarded to the writing section is 40% of the total, that is, twice that awarded in any of the other language papers, including Indonesian. At *School Certificate, University entrance and Bursary* level, writing is worth 20% of the total in the case of Spanish, 25% of the total in the case of German, Chinese and Japanese, and 30% of the total in the case of Indonesian.

The situation in relation to *reading* comprehension is equally uneven. At *School Certificate* level, reading comprehension is worth 10% of the overall total in the case of French and Indonesian, 20% of the overall total in the case of German and Spanish and 30% in the case of Japanese. At *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level,

reading is worth 10% of the total in the case of Indonesian, 20% in the case of Spanish, and 30% in the case of French, German, Japanese and Chinese.

At *School Certificate* level, *translation* is included in the German (worth 10%), French (worth 15%) and Indonesian (worth 15%) examinations only. At *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, translation is included only in the case of Indonesian (where it is worth 20%).

Dictation is included only in the German *School Certificate* examination (where it is worth 10%) and in the French examination at *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level (where it is worth 10%).

Cultural studies is included in some of the examinations (French, Spanish and Indonesian) at *School Certificate* level. In each case, it is worth 15% of the overall total. It is not included in any of the examinations at *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level.

There is one further inconsistency. At *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* level, both a summary in English (worth 15% of the overall total) and sentences for completion and transformation (worth 10% of the overall total) are included in the Spanish examination. Neither of these features in any of the other language examinations.

Overall, then, the pattern of the examinations in relation to skills is uneven. The skills are labelled traditionally (writing, reading (or reading comprehension), listening comprehension and oral (or speaking)). Only in the case of the last of these ('oral') is there, potentially at least, recognition that productive and receptive skills need to be considered in the context of interactive skills. Only in one of the Indonesian examinations is a mediating skill (translation) included. In no case are there clear differences between different sub-skills such as, for example, reading for gist and reading for specific information.

In almost all cases, whatever the title of the examination component, more than one skill is involved. Thus, for example, in the 1997 French *School Certificate* examination (see *Appendix 4*), the listening comprehension questions require students to write their answers (rather than, for example, circle appropriate pictures or select one of several potential answers from a tape). Similarly, in the case of the reading comprehension questions, students are required to provide written responses. In one case, however, they simply need to copy one of a number of listed words into each blank space in a written passage. This is not essentially a reading exercise at all since few of the sub-skills normally associated with reading (such as, for example, using contextual clues in inferencing) are the focus of attention.

The writing section of the 1997 French *School Certificate* examination has two sections. In the first, students can select one of three options. One of the options requires them to write a conversation involving several participants. The second writing section involves selecting two from four options. The first of these involves writing part of a conversation; the second involves the students in interpreting a map and then writing the directions that someone else would give them orally in a specified hypothetical context. In the third case, the rubric informs the student that s/he has 'been asked to give a talk describing your house'. Nevertheless, he or she is expected to respond in writing. The cultural studies component also involves writing. In this case, students are required to write in English.

So far as skills are concerned, the Spanish *School Certificate* examinations are considerably different from the French. Thus, for example, two sections of the 1991 Spanish examination (see *Appendix 4*), involve listening comprehension that does not involve writing. In each case, students are required to listen to a number of conversations in Spanish and select appropriate pictures in relation to the content of the conversations. There is, however, one listening comprehension section of this examination that involves reading. Students are required to listen to a dialogue and then read a range of possible answers to questions and tick the appropriate ones. Reading is also involved in preparation for the writing section of this examination. However, the reading sections are

short and the language level is considerably below that associated with Level 6 (*School Certificate* stage) of the Spanish curriculum statement. Once again, students are invited to write a dialogue. The reading comprehension questions do not involve writing. Instead, students are required to tick appropriate responses. In responding to the cultural studies section of this examination, students are not required to write in either Spanish or English. Instead, they tick boxes or select pictures.

It has been noted here that both the 1991 Spanish and the 1997 French *School Certificate* examinations require students to write dialogues or conversations. The 1997 German *School Certificate* examination (see *Appendix 4*) requires teachers to read two parts of a dialogue to students as part of a listening comprehension.

The *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* language examinations also present an uneven profile in relation to skills. Thus, for example, the 1997 Japanese examination (see *Appendix 4*) has one reading section which includes a list of very short decontextualized sentences. After reading, students select one word from a list and insert it into a blank in the sentences. A second reading section involves reading a two-part conversation and selecting five statements about the passage that are true. In neither case is writing involved. Neither is much writing required in the reading comprehension section where students are asked to answer questions using single sentences. Responding to these questions involves interpretation and inferencing. A section dealing with kanji (worth 10% of the overall marks) requires translation of nine words from kanji to okurigana and nine words to hiragana. In the writing section, there are three essay topics. Students are asked to write approximately 300 Japanese characters (in hiragana, katakana and kanji as appropriate) in relation to (a) an information chart (in English) relating to two types of café, (b) opinions about the relative merits of two options (flatting and boarding) for overseas students in New Zealand, or (c) advice for a youth hostel magazine in relation to aspects of New Zealand life and society. The aural section of the examination requires students to listen to a conversation in Japanese and respond by filling in the blanks in a report of the conversation written in English. Following this, there is a listening/reading section where students listen to ten sentences in Japanese and

select one of four written Japanese sentences that, in each case, they consider best relates to the sentences heard. A further listening section involves listening to a conversation in Japanese and then answering, in English, questions about the conversation that are written in English.

There are, then, considerable differences among modern language examinations in terms of (a) relative weightings of different components, (b) the way in which skills are treated, and (c) the activity types. These differences appear not to relate either to language type (e.g. Asian/ European; inflected/ uninflected) or to specific differences among syllabus and curriculum documents. Instead, they appear to relate, in part at least, to the particular background in language assessment of the individual examiners selected and/or to that of a particular group of language teachers. The latter may, in turn, relate to opportunities (or lack of them) for in-service development activities relating to testing and assessment.

6.5.3 New Zealand national awards for modern foreign languages: transparent relationship between examination content and achievement objectives?

Although there are a variety of different types of achievement objective that can be emphasised in language learning programmes, " language teaching in schools has to a large extent tended to stress objectives concerned with either the individual's general competence (especially at primary school level) or communicative language competence (particularly for those aged between 11 and 16), while courses for adults (students or people already working) formulate objectives in terms of specific *language activities* or functional ability in a particular *domain*" (Council of Europe, 1996, 7.2.2). In the case of the New Zealand *Ministry of Education* curriculum documents, the emphasis is on general competencies at *level 1* (including copying of formulaic language and interaction patterns) and on communicative language competence (including linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic dimensions) at higher levels. However, there are differences among the documents. Thus, for example, the syllabus documents for French and German which were produced in the late 1980s have a rather different orientation

from the curriculum documents produced in the 1990s and these, in turn, are different in a number of ways from the draft curriculum documents which appeared in 2000 (see *Chapter. s 4* and *5*). All of the documents are designed in terms of a progressive series of levels. However, the French document has five levels and the German document has three. The later documents have eight levels. The different levels can be equated to examination stages as indicated in the following table

Table 6.16: *International Languages in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Syllabus and Curriculum Levels and Examination Stages*

	School Certificate	**University Entrance, Bursary, Scholarship**
French syllabus	Levels 1 - 3	Levels 4 & 5
German syllabus	Up to end of Form 5	Forms 6 & 7
Spanish, Chinese, Japanese curriculum statements & draft Korean curriculum statement	Levels 1 - 6	Levels 7 & 8
French and German draft curriculum guidelines	Levels 1 - 6	Levels 7 & 8

The French and German syllabuses include vocabulary lists and grammatical summaries as part of the required content. The curriculum statements and guidelines do not. Instead, they include suggestions for appropriate grammar and vocabulary at different levels. However, in common with the French and German syllabus documents, they structure their achievement objectives in ways that involve a range of (at least minimum) lexical and grammatical assumptions. It is important for examiners to appreciate the ways in which this is done if they are to reflect in their examinations 'the expected language content' in terms of the achievement objectives.

How are examiners to determine what is expected in terms of language content in relation to the specification of achievement objectives? There are both direct and indirect ways of doing this. Direct ways include making reference to any lexical, syntactic or other linguistic specifications that are prescribed. Indirect ways involve examining the achievement objectives in terms of what can be inferred from them concerning linguistic realization. However, vocabulary lists and grammatical summaries are suggested only in the curriculum documents. To refer directly to them, rather than to the achievement objectives, in determining language content expectations would be effectively to give them the status of prescriptions. It is, therefore, important that achievement objectives should be clearly specified. The problem is that, so far as the French and German syllabuses and the curriculum documents for Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese and Spanish are concerned, there is no clear indication of how the objectives have been formulated in relation to an overall framework. In all of these cases, the objectives are presented as being functional in orientation. However, in the context of these documents, it is not clear how the term 'functional' is being used (see *Chapters 4* and *5*). It is a term that, in the context of New Zealand national syllabuses and curricula, has come to mean almost anything that is preceded by a word such as 'recognise', 'express', 'ask about' or 'enquire'. In the curriculum statement for Spanish, for example, each of the following, listed as an achievement objective, is simply described as a 'communication function':

. understand, state and ask about the location of people, places and things;

. recognise, express and ask about obligations;

. ask how to say something in Spanish (Ministry of Education 1995, 34).

A re-examination of Wilkins' original classification (Wilkins, 1973; 1974a and b; 1976), is therefore important in relation to objectives such as these. The first (*understand, state and ask about the location of people, places and things),* involves the semantico-grammatical category of location. It is *notional* rather than functional in character. That is, it involves ideational meaning, meaning that is linguistically encoded rather than

inferred from the interaction of text and context (Wilkins, 1976, pp. 21 – 22). Notions can be either very general or much more specific. *Time*, for example, is a general notion that can be refined in a range of ways. As notional categories become more specific (e.g. *ongoing event in the present*), the language that is used to realize them also becomes more specific.

The second achievement objective above (*recognise, express and ask about obligations*), involves *a* category of *modal* meaning (Wilkins, 1996, pp. 22 – 24). Modal meanings can be expressed in a range of ways, including, in English, modal verbs such as 'must' and 'might', adverbs such as 'possibly' and 'definitely', and nouns such as 'certainty'. In the case of obligation, the linguistic realization range is likely to be extremely wide. Unless, therefore, some indication of the linguistic range anticipated at particular levels is given, it is difficult to determine whether the objective has been met satisfactorily.

The last of the achievement objectives listed above (*ask how to say something in Spanish*), is concerned centrally with locutionary force (the encoding of meaning) rather than illocutionary force (contextually defined utterance function). It is, in other words, concerned with the meaning conveyed by the utterance by virtue of its actual content, rather than with the function or functions (e.g. *complaint*) that the utterance performs in particular contexts of use. Thus, testing in relation to such an objective would need to be very specific indeed.

Thus, in the context of an approach that attempts to meet all of the criteria outlined in *6.4* above, there are problems in determining whether student performances are satisfactory in relation to each of the different types of objective that are referred to as 'functional'.These problems are compounded by issues relating to the specificity of objectives.

Setting objectives for modern languages is an extremely difficult task. There is a danger that the objectives will be either too general or too specific to be of practical use. An

objective that is too specific is one that prescribes, or comes close to prescribing, a specific utterance, such as *invite people to come in* or *say goodbye* (Ministry of Education, 1998a, p. 26). Testing such an objective would involve testing for a specific utterance or, at best, for one or more of a restricted set of utterances. An example of an objective that is too general can be seen in the statement *recognise and respond to descriptions of activities and events* or *talk about people* (Ministry of Education, 1998b, p. 50; Ministry of Education, 1998a, p. 47). Objectives of this type can be interpreted in a variety of ways in a variety of contexts. It is, therefore, difficult to see how such objectives could be realistically incorporated into language examinations.

There are certain types of objective that can be said to be both too general and too specific simultaneously. For example, an objective that simply makes reference to a particular linguistic rule can be simultaneously too general and too specific. If it fails to take account of the significance of context in applying the rule, it will be too general. If it fails to make reference to the effect of related rules, it will be too specific. Learners will not necessarily be able to apply a particular linguistic rule with equal success on all occasions and in all contexts. This type of objective specification fails to accommodate a range of important considerations relating to appropriacy, creativity and choice. Broadly similar meanings can often be expressed linguistically in a range of different ways, and language learners may not necessarily respond in assessment contexts in ways that reveal the entire linguistic range that is available to them. Of course, an objective of this kind can be tested using decontextualized slot-and-filler types of exercise. Doing so would, however, be unlikely to reveal anything about the test taker's ability to communicate in the target language.

Different types of achievement objective specification can, therefore, be seen to present examiners with different types of problem. Where the achievement objectives are largely micro-functional in character, the problems relate largely to the fact that (a) micro-functions cannot, in general, be specified independently of context, and (b) the linguistic range in which micro-functions can be realized can be extremely wide. Additionally, micro-functions, by their very nature, relate to short utterances. Therefore, where

language achievement objectives are largely micro-functional in character, it can be extremely difficult to determine what should be tested, and why. In spite of this, micro-functional specification *can* play a role in specifying objectives for modern languages in national syllabus and curriculum documents, especially where, as in the case of *greetings*, the functions concerned are generally realized in specific ways. However, given that national curricula, by their very nature, will include a limited number of objectives, the majority of them must, of necessity, have generative power and must, therefore, be amenable to approaches to assessment that do not aim to elicit specific utterances. Thus, micro-functional classification cannot provide the major organizing principle for the specification of achievement objectives in national curricula.

In general, the achievement objectives that appear in national curricula must be (a) generative in nature, (b) neither so specific as to require one appropriate response only or so general as to be open to a multiplicity of possible interpretations. Unless this is the case, the objectives will not be readily amenable to testing and assessment. To determine how successful New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents are in meeting these criteria, criteria that are central to effective testing and assessment at a national level, it is important to begin by attempting to relate the objectives they contain to an overall framework that is expressed in terms of communicative language competence such as the draft framework outlined by the *Council of Europe* (1996).

The achievement objectives listed in New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents are generally expressed in terms of semantico-grammatical categories, micro-functional categories or macro-functional categories. These category-types relate to linguistic competence (semantico-grammatical categories) and functional competence (micro-functions and macro-functions), each of these being aspects of communicative language competence rather than aspects of general competencies (declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence and ability to learn). Semantico-grammatical, micro-functional and macro-functional categories are not the only aspects of communicative language competence. They are simply the ones that are given most emphasis in those national syllabus and curriculum documents that are currently in use in

New Zealand schools. In the following Table *(Table 6.17)*, they are located in relation to the various dimensions of communicative language competence that are outlined in the *Council of Europe* draft Framework. There, micro-functions and macro-functions are located within the categories of pragmatic competencies. Those categories that Wilkins (1986) referred to as notional (semantico-grammatical) involve lexical, grammatical and semantic competencies.

Table 6.17: *The Dimensions of Communicative Language Competence as Outlined in the Draft European Framework (Council of Europe, 1996, 4.7.2).*

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES		
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCIES	**SOCIO-LINGUISTIC COMPETENCIES**	**PRAGMATIC COMPETENCIES**
lexical competence	markers of social relations	discourse competence
grammatical competence	politeness conventions	functonal competence (including macrofunctions and microfunctions)
semantic competence	expressions of folk-wisdom	schematic design competence
phonological competence	register differences	
	dialect and accent	

In terms of the *Council of Europe* draft Framework (draft European Framework), micro-functions include some, but not all, of the 'categories of a notional syllabus' outlined by Wilkins (1976). They include modal meanings, but exclude semantico-grammatical categories (notions). Both micro-functions and macro-functions appear within the domain of functional competence. Micro-functions involve "categories for the functional use of single (usually short) utterances, usually as turns in interaction" (Council of Europe 1996, 4.7.2.3.2). Macro-functions involve "the use of spoken discourse and written text for particular functional purposes" (4.7.2.3.2). Expression of objectives in micro-functional terms may involve fixed expressions (e.g. 'greet people'), or may not ('follow . . . instructions'). Semantico-grammatical categories (notions) do not appear in the draft European Framework. Instead, lexical, grammatical and semantic competencies are listed separately under the general heading of linguistic competence.

Within the *Council of Europe* draft Framework, aspects of coherence and cohesion are located within the domain of discourse competence (4.7.2.3.1), functional specifications of texts or text segments, referred to as macro-functions (e.g. narration, explanation, argumentation) are located within the domain of functional competence (4.7.2.3.2), and interactive pairings (e.g. question/ answer; statement/ agreement, disagreement) are treated as aspects of schematic design competence (4.7.2.3.3).

In those New Zealand national syllabus and curriculum documents that are currently in use in schools, achievement objectives are generally expressed in terms of semantico-grammatical categories, micro-functions and macro-functions. In the case of the French and German syllabus documents, all of these are contextualized in relation to topics, these topics themselves relating to personal, educational and public (rarely occupational) domains and are reinforced by vocabulary lists and grammatical summaries (which are prescribed in the case of the French and German syllabus documents and suggested in the case of later documents). In addition, there are, in each case, suggested socio-cultural aspects.

With all of this in mind, it is possible to track the orientation of specific syllabus and curriculum documents and, thus, determine which aspects of communication are treated as being of particular significance. This is done in relation to Levels 1 - 3 of the French syllabus (relating to the *School Certificate* examination) in the tables below. Achievement objectives may appear more than once in these tables, each occurrence highlighting a different aspect of the overall content of the objective. The first four *Tables* below are based on the micro-functional categorization of communicative language competence in the draft European Framework and are intended simply to assist in highlighting those aspects of the micro-functional communication continuum that are focused on in the achievement objectives. It is important to note that classification in terms of the Council of Europe draft Framework is not always a straightforward matter because that framework requires further refinement.

Table 6.18: Micro-functions Relating to Socialising in Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
MICROFUNCTIONS RELATING TO SOCIALISING
1a ***Greet*** *people.* **1a** ***Introduce*** *yourself to others.* **1a** ***Introduce*** *someone else.* **1a** ***Ask*** *how people are and* ***answer*** *when asked* (includes basic schematic design competence: ask/answer) **1b** Follow simple classroom **instructions** **2f** Make **introductions.**

Table 6.19: Micro-functions Relating to Expressing and Discovering Attitudes in Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
MICROFUNCTIONS RELATING TO EXPRESSING AND FINDING OUT ATTITUDES, including MODALITY (obligations, necessity, ability, permission), VOLITION (wants, desires, intentions, preference) and EMOTIONS (pleasure, displeasure etc.)
2b Accept and refuse something politely (includes socio-linguisic competence (politeness)) **2b** Say what food you **like and dislike.** **2c** Talk about your **likes and dislikes** at school . **3c** Describe the **necessary** arrangements (see also macro-functional and semantico-grammatical objectives), **3c** Talk about a trip you **are planning**, describe where you go and what you do there, describe your return.(intention - see also *semantico-grammatical objectives*). **3b** Talk about things you **enjoy** doing. 3b Say what you **don't enjoy** doing.

Table 6.20: Micro-functions Relating to Imparting and Seeking Factual Information in Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
MICROFUNCTIONS RELATING TO IMPARTING AND SEEKING FACTUAL INFORMATION
1g Ask for **directions.**
1g Understand **directions**.
1g Give **directions**.
2d Ask for **directions** and understand how to get somewhere.
2d Say **why** you are going (reason) (also includes discourse competence: coherence/cohesion).

Table 6.21: Micro-functions Relating to Persuasion in Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
MICROFUNCTIONS RELATING TO PERSUASION
2a Ask for items in a shop.
2b Ask for things at the table.
3d Ask for something to drink in a café.
3d Order and pay for a meal in a restaurant (see also *notional objectives*).

The following table includes objectives that do not fit readily into the classification-types above, objectives that seem simply to call for specific utterances (e.g. 'say whether you are hungry or thirsty') or a general vocabulary set (e.g. 'talk about clothes').

Table 6.22: Utterance-based and Lexically-based Achievement Objectives Occurring in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
UTTERANCE-BASED AND LEXICALLY-BASED OBJECTIVES
1a Ask who someone is.
3f Say you are **not feeling well.**
3f Say **what is wrong** with you.
2b Say whether or not you are **hungry or thirsty**.
1b Name classroom objects.
2f Talk about **clothes**.

In addition to these micro-functional objectives, there are objectives that make reference to macro-functions. The macro-functions are in bold in the table below:

Table 6.23: Macro-functional Specification of Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
OBJECTIVES REFERRING TO MACRO-FUNCTIONS
Exposition and/or commentary: **1d Give information** about yourself and your family. **1g Give information** about a town. **3d Make comments on** what you eat and drink. **Description:** **1e Describe** a person. **1e Give a description of** yourself . **1f Describe** your home. **2b Describe** activities at mealtime. **2d Describe** a town. **3b Describe** an incident. **Description and/or explanation:** **3c** Talk about a trip you are planning, **describe** the necessary arrangements, **describe** where you go and what you do there, **describe** your return. **3d Describe** the actions of people in a restaurant. **3e Describe** the actions of people in a post office. **3f Describe** a visit to a doctor, a dentist, or a chemist. **3g** Say what your town has to offer.

It appears, then, that macro-functional specification is largely confined to description, comment and explanation. No direct reference is made to narration, exposition, exegesis, demonstration, instruction, argumentation or persuasion (Council of Europe 1996, 4.7.2.3.2). In fact, however, it is very difficult to determine precisely what the writers of this document had in mind in relation to macro-functions because the specification is very general. Thus, although the word 'describe' is generally used, there appear to be occasions where it is likely that explanation is intended to accompany description. In many cases, the terminology (e .g. 'talk about', 'discuss') is, in fact, so general that macro-functional classification is impossible. This is the case in each of the following:

2c *Talk about* your likes and dislikes at school .
2c *Talk about* your timetable and subjects.
2c *Talk about* a typical day at school.
2e *Talk about* daily routines.
2e *Talk about* things that happen at home.
2f *Talk about* yourself, your friends and others.
2f *Talk about* personal characteristics.
3a *Talk about* places to visit.
3a *Talk about* holidays.
3b *Talk about* sports.
3b *Talk about* things you enjoy doing.
3f *Talk about* an accident.
3g *Discuss* the climate.
3g *Talk about* your town and country.

In each of these cases, in spite of what might appear to be macro-functional classification, what we actually have is topic area specification. There are, in addition, a number of achievement objectives that specify topic areas (see *Table 6.24* below):

Table 6.24: *Topic-based Objectives Occurring in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)*

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
TOPIC-BASED OBJECTIVES (WITHIN PERSONAL, EDUCATIONAL and PUBLIC domains) (most of these are, along with some other objectives already listed under different headings, reclassified under the heading of macro-functions)
1d Ask others about **themselves and their families**.
1d Give information about **yourself and your family**.
1d Understand information others give you about **themselves and their families.**
2c Talk about **your timetable and subjects** (also classified as *notional*).
2f Talk about **yourself, your friends and others**.
3a Talk about **places to visit.**
3a Talk about **holidays**.
3b Talk about **sports**.
3d Make comments on **what you eat and drink**.
3f Describe **a visit to a doctor, a dentist, or a chemist**.
3f Talk about **an accident.**
3g Talk about **your town and country**.
3g Say what **your town** has to offer.
3g Understand information about **someone else's country**.

In addition to topic area specification in some achievement objectives, there are a few instances where achievement objectives are specified as tasks (see *Table 6.25* below).

Table 6.25: *Task-based Objectives Occurring in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)*

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
TASK-CENTRED OBJECTIVES
3e Make telephone calls. **3e Send a telegram.** **3e Write a letter** to a friend. **3e Address an envelope.**

Finally, there are achievement objectives that appear to involve lexico-grammatical categorization (notions). In some cases, the actual intent of these ('say where things are' - location) is clear. In others, it is much more difficult to determine what is intended. Thus, for example, 'describe a person' is likely to involve predication and attribution. This raises a number of issues about degree of specificity in objectives setting and about the ways in which objectives are intended to interact.

Table 6.26: Semantico-grammatical Categories of Achievement Objectives Occurring in the New Zealand Ministry of Education National French Syllabus (Levels 1 - 3)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FRENCH SYLLABUS: OBJECTIVES AT LEVELS 1 - 3
SEMANTICO-GRAMMATICAL OBJECTIVES
1b Say **where** things are (location).
1c Ask for and give the **time** (point of time).
1c Ask for and give the **date** (point of time).
3c Use the **24 hour clock** (point of time/ duration).
1c Understand comments about the **time, date and weather** (point of time/ frequency/ duration/ sequence/ volume/ moisture/ temperature).
1e Describe a person (predication/ attribution).
1e Give a **description** of yourself (predication/ attribution).
1e Understand a **description** of someone else (predication/ attribution).
1e Say what clothes **you wear** (predication/ attribution & possibly frequency/ habitual aspect).
1f Describe your home (predication/ attribution).
1f Recognise a house from a **description** (predication/ attribution).
1g Give **information about** a town (predication/ attribution).
2a Ask for the **price** of something (quantification).
2a Respond to the information the shopkeeper gives you (quantity: number/ operation &, possibly, the micro-functions of agreement/ disagreement/ inducement/ suggestion).
2b Describe **activities** at mealtime (point of time/ frequency/ duration/ habitual aspect).
2c Talk about a **typical day** at school (point of time/ frequency/ habitual aspect).
2d Say **where** you **are going** (motion/ direction).
2d Say **how** you get there (manner)
2d Describe a town (predication/ attribution).
2e Say **where** things are (location).
2e Say **how long** things take **to do** (duration).
2e Talk about **daily routines** (frequency/ habitual aspect).
2e Talk about **things that happen** at home (point of time/ frequency/ duration/ sequence).
2f Talk about **personal characteristics** (predication/ attribution/habitual aspect).
3a Talk about **means** of travel (manner).
3b Describe an **incident** (point of time/ duration/ frequency/ sequence).
3c Talk about a trip you are planning, describe **where** you go and **what you do** there, describe **your return** (location, direction - see also microfunctions relating to expressing and finding out attitudes).
3e Describe the **actions** of people in a post office (time: point of time/ duration/ frequency).
3d Order and **pay for** a meal in a restaurant (numerals/ operations - see also *microfunctions relating to persuasion*).
3d Describe the **actions** of people in a restaurant (time/ frequency/ duration/ manner).
3g Describe **where** New Zealand is (location).
3g Discuss the **climate** ((point of time/ frequency/ duration/ sequence/ volume/ moisture/ temperature).

Overall, these objectives lack coherence, consistency and transparency. In spite of surface appearances, the syllabus is essentially lexical, structural and topic-based. This tension between appearance and reality presents problems in relation to testing and

assessment, problems that are exacerbated by the fact that some of the objectives are expressed as *tasks* that can be performed in a wide variety of ways. One of the objectives listed under *3e* (*Write a letter to a friend*) could involve, for example, issuing an invitation, offering advice, making a suggestion, any combination of these, or one or more of a wide range of other possibilities.

Overall, therefore, a considerable number of the objectives in the French syllabus are non-generative in nature. A number are expressed in terms that are so specific as to suggest an almost one to one relationship between objective and exponent. These objectives involve language that is formulaic or semi-formulaic in nature. They therefore represent a relatively restricted repertoire of unanalysed language chunks. In general, such situationally specific utterances are learnt by rote. Using language of this type involves strategies for applying metacognitive skills as an aid to communication (Council of Europe 1996, 4.8). It involves "using highly accessible pre-fabricated language [the student feels] sure of – "islands of reliability"- to create stepping stones through what for the user is a novel situation (Council of Europe, 1996 4.8.2). While memorised chunks of language contribute effectively to the communicative process, their faithful reproduction does not provide a true measure of overall language competence. However, this problem cannot be resolved by focusing on the remaining objectives since many of them are so general as to be open to a multiplicity of possible interpretations. For these reasons, the problems associated with attempting to design national examinations that relate appropriately to the objectives in the French syllabus are considerable. The situation in relation to the New Zealand national curriculum statements currently in use is similar. In an article dealing with skills, abilities and contexts of reality, Widdowson (1998, p. 229) reminds readers that "the question is not how or whether we can directly replicate language which meets the contextual conditions of normal use, but how it can be treated so as to make it feasible and appropriate for learning in the contextual conditions as attested in particular classrooms" . Similarly, the question is not how faithfully language objectives replicate the conditions of normal use, but how they can be designed so as to be operationalized in a way that is feasible and appropriate in (a) the contextual conditions attested in classrooms and, (b) the contextual conditions that constrain testing and assessment.

The objectives as expressed in New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents are problematic in a number of ways in relation to the constraints that are necessarily present in the context of national examinations. In the case of the French syllabus document,

examiners also need to take account of topics. The French syllabus includes a list of topics relating to each curriculum level as follows:

Level 1
1a Getting acquainted
1b Looking around the classroom
1c Telling the time and the date, and describing the weather
1d Describing yourself and your family
1e Talking about yourself and other people
1f Describing your home
1g Getting around town

Level 2
2a Going shopping
2b Eating and drinking at home
2c School
2d Getting about town
2e Typical day at home
2f Describing people

Level 3
3a Holidays
3b Sport and leisure
3c Travel
3d Eating and drinking out
3e Communications
3f Health
3g One's country

These topics are not listed under the heading of objectives. It must be assumed, therefore, that the topics that *do* appear in the context of achievement objectives are to be treated differently and are, presumably, those that should feature in examinations. Similarly, since there are very few task-centred objectives, it seems reasonable to assume that all, or most, of them will be taken into account in national examinations. However, as the examination papers for *School Certificate* French reveal, the topics that are given prominence are as likely to be those that do not appear in objectives as those that do.

A wide range of topics is introduced in *School Certificate* and *Bursary* examinations. However, the range of genres (now sometimes referred to as 'text types' (see Paltridge,

1999) represented in the examinations is much more restricted. These are classified for the 1990 - 1998 French examinations according to the model proposed by Derewianka (1990). In the following analysis, oral components of examinations and cultural studies questions are omitted as are (i), (ii) and (iii) below. However, the texts produced by students in the case of (ii) and (iii) below will generally be of the recount type:

i) Matching picture to caption 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996 1998;
ii) Reconstruction of a dialogue 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996;
iii) Insertion of words into text 1992, 1994, 1997.

From 1994 onwards, the reading section of the examination has included three sections. In the 1997 examination, there was no translation question.

Table 6.27: *Classification of New Zealand School Certificate Reading Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)*

Reading	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	1					
1991	1					
1992	1					
1993	1					
1994	1					
1995	1					
1996	1					
1997	1					
1998	1					

Table 6.28*: Classification of New Zealand School Certificate Writing Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990-1998)*

Writing	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	4		3			
1991	5		1		1	
1992	4	2	1			
1993	6		1			
1994	5				1	1
1995	4		1		2	
1996	6				1	
1997	5	1			1	
1998	7					

Table 6.29: Classification of New Zealand School Certificate Translation Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Translation	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	1					
1991	1					
1992	1					
1993	1					
1994	1					
1995	1					
1996			1			
1997	1					
1998	1					

Table 6.30: Classification of New Zealand School Certificate Listening Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Listening	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	2					
1991	1	1				
1992		2				
1993	1				1	
1994		1			1	
1995	3					
1996	1	1				
1997	1	1	1			
1998	2					1

Table 6.31: Classification of University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Listening Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Listening	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	2	1				
1991	1				1	1
1992	2					
1993	2	1				
1994	2	1				
1995	2				1	
1996	1				1	1
1997	2				1	
1998	1				1	1

Table 6.32: Classification of New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Reading Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Reading	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990	2					
1991	2					
1992	1		1			
1993	2					
1994	3					
1995	2					1
1996	2					1
1997	2					1
1998	3					

Table 6.33: Classification of New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Translation Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Translation	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990			1			
1991	1					
1992	1					
1993	1					
1994			1			
1995	1					
1996	1					
1997						
1998	1					

Table 6.34: Classification of New Zealand University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship Writing Examination Questions in Relation to Genre (1990 – 1998)

Writing	Recount	Instruction	Narrative	Report	Explanation	Argument
1990			1		7	
1991			1		7	
1992			1		7	
1993			1		7	
1994			1		7	
1995			2		6	
1996			1		7	
1997	1	1	1		5	
1998			1		7	

As indicated above, by far the greatest number of questions at *School Certificate* level from 1990 – 1998, involved recount. At the higher level, recount continued to be the dominant genre/ text-type in relation to receptive skills, although, in relation to writing, argument features prominently.

In the face of difficulties in interpreting the objectives included in New Zealand syllabus and curriculum documents, examiners appear to rely heavily on the general topics, lexical lists and grammatical summaries that are provided (even where these are recommended rather than prescribed). The effect of this, so far as national examinations are concerned, is to render much of the achievement objective specification largely redundant even though the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* makes it clear that standards for examinations and assessments for the purpose of awarding senior secondary school qualifications "will be based on the learning outcomes of the national curriculum statements" (Ministry of Education 1993, 26).

The problems to which reference has already been made are not the only problems. The situation becomes even more confusing when the objectives given for the *School Certificate* examination for French (Second Language) as stated in the *NZ School Qualifications Handbook* (1999) are taken into account. This set of objectives relates to the examination itself and is different from the objectives listed at the appropriate levels in the syllabus. The objectives listed here are very general:

> The candidates will demonstrate their ability to:
>
> (a) 1. understand and make a written response to spoken French;
> 2. communicate orally in French with reasonable facility, using certain basic language functions;
> 3. understand written French;
>
> (b) 1. communicate in written French with an appropriate use of vocabulary and structure;
>
> 2. show their knowledge of the French way of life (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999, 111).

Phrases such as 'using *certain* basic language functions' or 'an *appropriate* use of vocabulary' provide no real guidance for the construction of a fair and consistent annual

examination. Even assuming that the 'basic language functions' to which reference is made are those specified in the relevant syllabus and curriculum documents, the problem involved in having what amounts to two different sets of prescriptions is not resolved.

For *University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship* examinations, the *School Qualifications Handbook* simply states the following general aims as a prescription:

> The prescription aims at assessing a candidate's command of the four language skills: listening speaking, reading and writing; together with their understanding of the way of life in French-speaking countries (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999, 617).

In spite of all of this, there may be, within language teaching circles, a generally agreed understanding of what constitutes an appropriate standard of achievement at *Years 11 – 13* of schooling. This is borne out by a report by Peddie (1989) to the *New Zealand Association of Language Teachers* on a *Sixth Form Certificate Trial Moderation Scheme* where it is indicated that evaluation is partly achieved by teachers "operating more from a covert 'sixth form' standard than the grade related criteria and exemplars" (NZALT Journal 1990, 33).

Overall, what appears to be required is a re-examination of the process of objectives setting in relation to the transparency, validity and integrity of the testing and assessment process as well as a re-examination of the relationship between examination prescriptions and the achievement objectives as specified in syllabus and curriculum documents.

6.5.4 New Zealand national awards for international languages: transparent relationship between examination and assessment grades at different stages in the system?

The *Council of Europe* draft Framework for modern languages makes reference to a range of assessment types (Council of Europe 1996, 9.3). It distinguishes between

achievement assessment (assessment of the achievement of specific objectives) and proficiency assessment (assessment of what someone can do/knows in relation to application in the real world) (9.3.1) and between norm-referencing (placement of learners in rank order) and criterion-referencing (situating testing in relation to the total criterion space) (9.3.2). Criterion referencing can relate to mastery (involving a minimum competency standard) or involve continuum-related (involving a series of quality grades) decisions (9.3.3). It may involve continuous or fixed-point assessment, the latter having the advantage of testing aspects of all stages of curriculum coverage (9.3.4). Assessment may be formative (ongoing and involving the type of feedback that is intended to inform learning) or summative (summing up attainment at the end of a learning stage in terms of a mark or grade) (9.3.5). It may be indirect (involving inferences about knowledge, understanding and capacity for use that are based on sample performances) or direct (involving direct tests of knowledge in specified areas) (9.3.6 & 9.3.7). It may tend towards subjectivity (judgment of quality by an assessor based on criteria that are not clearly specified) or objectivity, with movements in the direction of objectivity, and increased validity, relating to:

. the development of content specifications;
. the use of negotiated or pooled judgments;
. the adoption of standard procedures;
. the provision of definite marking keys for indirect tests and of specific, defined criteria for direct tests;
. the development of multiple judgments and/or weightings of different factors;
. the analysis of assessment data in relation to considerations of validity and reliability (Council of Europe 1996, 9.3.8).

In relation to validity and the national awards system, it has been observed by the Education Review Office (1995) that:

> The examiners receive information and training is established good examination practice. Marking panels are made up of educationalists . . . who are trained in the application of the marking schedule for the examination (p.19).

Furthermore, quality control features include:

> . a moderator for the draft examination;
> . peer review of the marking schedule;
> . sampling of each marker's marking (p. 19).

Considerations of reliability (the extent to which a test score may be influenced by random error) are generally determined in relation to a reliability coefficient estimated by retest and parallel test. Considerations of validity involve various dimensions including the extent to which a test appears to measure what it is intended to measure (face validity), the extent to which it correlates with a future criterion in a sample (predictive validity), the extent to which the test fits the construct it is intended to measure (construct validity), the extent to which test behaviour and criterion behaviour correlate (content validity), and the conformity between test and criterion (other test grades) measured at the same time and calculated by correlation coefficient (concurrent validity). The Education Review Office has this to say about reliability:

> The examinations are administered under standard conditions.
>
> Statistical analysis of the marks obtained on individual questions within an examination paper is used to indicate the level of difficulty and reliability of each question. Multi-choice items are pre-tested to ensure that unreliable items are not incorporated into the examination paper.
>
> There are intra-subject moderation systems for subjects with internally assessed components. . . . The moderation systems meet the same technical criteria for reliability as the systems for national examination subjects.
>
> A significant factor in the reliability of moderated internal assessments is the inter-comparability of teacher assessments within a school. Class results are

merged by the school to provide a single school listing for national moderation. Schools are required to have appropriate inter-class moderation procedures (pp. 19 - 20).

Judgments may relate to a scale made up of bands or levels (relating to, for example, proficiency descriptors) or they may relate to a checklist of points deemed to be relevant. The first of these is largely holistic (relating to global synthetic judgments); the second is largely analytic (looking at different aspects separately). A combination of holistic and analytic judgment is common in national assessment of modern foreign languages (9.3.10 & 9.3.11). Equally, other aspects of national assessment may involve a combination of approaches rather than a straightforward choice between them. Thus, as indicated earlier, national assessment of modern foreign languages may be neither wholly proficiency-based nor wholly achievement objectives-based (see *section 4.1* above).

In relation to the assessment-types outlined above, it appears that that the intention is that New Zealand modern language examinations should be achievement objectives-based (related to achievement objectives specifications), that is, should involve "assessment of what has been taught" (Council of Europe 1996, 9.1.3) and should relate to a prescribed list of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Thus, the following note from the *School Qualifications Handbook* occurs in the context of French examinations:

> 1. In this examination, the examiner will be limited to the attached list of prescribed grammatical structures (see Appendix *1*)
> 2. The meaning of any words used in the examination which are outside the attached list of prescribed vocabulary (see Appendix 1) with the exception of cognates, will be provided (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999, 112).

Similar statements are made concerning German (pp. 139-40; 149-155), Indonesian (p. 209); Japanese (p. 226) and Spanish (p. 326).

Thus, New Zealand modern language examinations for secondary school students are currently essentially summative, fixed point assessments which are achievement-based. In that they are intended to be achievement objectives-based, they must, to some extent at least, be criterion-referenced. However, because examiners are instructed to ensure that they mark according to agreed national distribution expectations, norm-referencing is superimposed on criterion-referencing, making it unclear how well a particular student actually performed in an examination in relation to the criteria (achievement objectives).

There are a very considerable number of factors involved in designing a national awards system for modern foreign languages and a country such as New Zealand which, with a comparatively small number of candidates for each award and, therefore, a limited budget, has to make decisions about where it will place its emphasis. Some of these decisions are indicated in the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* which asserts the importance of coherence and consistency within and among programmes, specifies key transition points in relation to a progressive series of levels and notes that assessment should be based on the achievement objectives as specified in the national curriculum documents (Ministry of Education 1993).

Thus, the national awards system should strive for comparability of approach among different modern language examinations and assessments. Any differences of approach should be justified in specific terms in relation to, for example, the different writing systems employed in different languages. Comparability of approach will be difficult to achieve, however, unless curriculum documents for different modern foreign languages express achievement objectives in the same way and, preferably, have the same set of achievement objectives at each level. However, comparability of achievement objectives need not imply equivalence of linguistic expectations. How an achievement objective is realised in one language at a specified level may be very different from how it is realised in another language at that level. So long as the linguistic expectations for each set of objectives at each level for each language are clearly indicated, the integrity of the system as a whole can be maintained. Equally, so long as there is a single group of language learning descriptors (proficiency statements) from which curriculum designers draw, they may, based on explicit reasoning, draw on them differently in relation to different

language types. Thus, for example, levels 1 - 8 of the Spanish and French curriculum statements may each be associated with a separate language learning descriptor, whereas levels 1 - 8 of the Chinese and Japanese curriculum statements may be associated only with the first five of eight language learning descriptors. What matters, so far as assessment is concerned, is that these decisions should be based on an explicit rationale. In the absence of curriculum developments that take factors such as these into account explicitly, the focus of attention here will be on (a) the grading of examinations and assessments, and (b) the approaches to moderation that are employed.

We have already seen that there are differences in relation to examinations in different modern languages at the same level. Thus:

(a) the sections of these examinations (in relation to, for example, whether translation is included) differ;

(b) the task types differ;

(c) there are different approaches to the assessment of different skill types;

Furthermore, the relationship between grades and percentage marks is different in the case of different national awards.

We have also already seen that there is no clear specification of the extent to which aspects of assessment are achievement objectives-based or proficiency-based or, where they appear to be proficiency-based, what the basis for proficiency assessment is. We have seen, too, that oral assessments are moderated against other aspects of a school cohort's assessment. What has not yet been discussed is the fact that examiners are requested to mark in relation to an overall concept of an appropriate spread of marks for a national cohort. What this means, in effect, is that it is very difficult to detect anomalies in particular examinations and, thus, to prevent a situation from arising in which there is a

gradual, or even marked, rise or fall in level of examination difficulty over a period of time.

Modern language examinations are prepared each year by a different examiner who is appointed by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority*. Given that this is the case, and given that examiners are required to mark to what is seen to be an overall acceptable national distribution, the issue arises as to how, or whether, level of examination difficulty from year to year can be monitored. As the Education Review Office (1995, 26) insists, "measures need to remain consistent over time". In order to see whether there might be problems in this area, a small-scale experiment was carried out with two different cohorts of Year 11 students in two different schools in two different parts of the country. The purpose of the experiment was to see how similar the marks awarded to the same group of students in two *School Certificate* French and German examinations (1991 and 1997) were.

Copies of the 1991 and 1997 *School Certificate* French and German examinations were sent to the teachers of French and German at *School Certificate* level who had agreed to participate. With the permission of their school principals, these teachers arranged for students to sit the examinations in the month before the actual *School Certificate* examination for the year concerned (1999). So far as possible, the circumstances of the testing replicated those of an actual examination. Both of the sets of two examinations (one set for French (1991 and 1997); one set for German (1991 and 1997)) were completed within a single week. There was only one group for the German examination. In this case, no instructions were given as to which of the two examinations should be administered first. In the case of French, two cohorts were involved. In this case, in an attempt to accommodate the possibility that students would perform better in a later, or earlier, test situation, one of the two teachers involved (the teacher of *Cohort A - see below*) was asked to administer the 1997 examination before the 1991 examination; the other (the teacher of *Cohort B - see below*) was asked to administer the 1997 examination first. When both examinations had been completed, the teachers sent the scripts to the researcher who arranged for them to be marked by a practising language teacher who had

participated in the past in a *School Certificate* marking panel. Marking was based on the published mark schedules. A summary of the results for each cohort is provided below. Marks for internal assessment of oral competence are not included.

Table 6.35: *Cohort A : New Zealand School Certificate French Examination Results (1991 and 1997 Examinations)*

Candidate	Listening /20	Translation /15	Reading / 10	Writing / 20	Culture /15	Total %
1 1997	14	13.5	6	11	9	67
1 1991	14.5	10.5	3	8	8.5	56
2 1997	13	12	6.5	8	4	*54*
2 1991	15.5	9	4	11	7	*58*
3 1997	10.5	5.5	3.5	2.5	6	*35*
3 1991	13	4.5	1.5	3	7	*36*
4 1997	10.5	7.5	4	6.5	6	43
4 1991	6.5	3.5	3.5	8	6.5	35
5 1997	11.5	10.5	6	9	8.5	57
5 1991	11	4	2	6.5	9	41
6 1997	6.5	7.5	5	8	5.5	41
6 1991	10.5	2	1.5	6.5	9	37
7 1997	12	13.5	7.5	9	4	58
7 1991	12	10	4.5	8	6.5	51
8 1997	14	11	4.5	8	4	52
8 1991	9.5	5.5	2.5	2.5	7	34
9 1997	12.5	11	6	10	7.5	59
9 1991	11.5	8	4	10.5	8.5	53

Table 6.36: *Cohort B : New Zealand School Certificate French Examination Results (1991 and 1997 Examinations)*

Candidate	Listening	Translation	Reading	Writing	Culture	Total %
10 1991	9	0	0	5	6	25
10 1997	12.5	12.5	4	7.75	6	53
11 1991	8	4.5	2.5	8	8	39
11 1997	11	9.5	3	7.5	10	51
12 1991	11.5	7.5	3.5	10	3	44
12 1997	13	14.5	5.5	NR	11	55
13 1991	13.5	8	4.5	10.5	9	57
13 1997	15.5	15	7	4.5	10	65
14 1991	7	7.5	5.5	7	5	40
14 1997	11.5	12.5	2	9.5	3	48
15 1991	16	14.5	5.5	11.5	15	78
15 1997	18.5	15	9	19	4	82
16 1991	17	14	8.5	10	13	78
16 1997	19	14.5	7.5	14	14	86
17 1991	12.5	9	4.5	7	10	54
17 1997	16	12.5	6.5	9	12.5	71
18 1991	15	9.5	3	7.5	8	54
18 1997	15	12.5	8.5	11	11.5	73
19 1991	8.5	6.5	4.5	8	11	*48*
19 1997	9	8	2.5	6	12.5	*48*
20 1991	12	7	2	8	13	53
20 1997	12.5	13.5	4	8	10.5	61
21 1991	14	13	4.5	7	10	*61*
21 1997	13	12.5	5.5	8.5	9	*61*
22 1991	12.5	12.5	5	9	9	60
22 1997	14.5	12.5	5.5	9	13.5	69
23 1991	12.5	12.5	5	9	9	60
23 1997	12.5	13.5	5.5	8	12	64

Table 6.37: *New Zealand School Certificate German Examination Results (1991 and 1997 Examinations):Trial Cohort*

Candidate	Listening	Reading	Translation	Writing	Total
1. 1991	13/30	6/20	0/10	10/20	36
1. 1997	41/60	36/40	10.5/20	14/40	63
2. 1991	19.5/30	4/20	3/10	12/20	48
2 1997	52/60	35/40	11/20	25/40	77
3. 1991	7.5/30	2/20	1.5/10	3/20	18
3. 1997	32/60	21/40	12.5/20	1/40	42
4. 1991	20.5/30	2/20	1.5/10	9/20	41
4. 1997	48.5/60	23/40	12.5/20	17/40	63
5. 1991	15.5/30	6/20	2.5/10	9/20	41
5. 1997	33/60	24/40	8.5/20	14/40	50
6. 1991	16/30	6/20	2.5/10	8/20	41
6. 1997	47.5/60	31/40	15/20	25/40	74

The marker was given no information about the schools or the students involved in the experiment. The instructions were simply to mark each script in accordance with the mark schedule and in exactly the same way as would be done in the case of *School Certificate* candidates. Final percentage marks have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

The results of the experiment in relation to French show that in only two cases (Candidates 2 and 3 in Cohort A) did the students score a higher mark in the 1991 examination than in the 1997 one. In only two cases (Candidates 19 and 21 in Cohort B) were the marks the same in both examinations. In all other cases, the students scored higher in the 1997 examination than in the 1991 examination. In some cases, the difference was slight (only 4 marks in the case of Candidate 6 in Cohort A and Candidates 15 and 23 in Cohort B). However, the variation is 28% in the case of Candidate 10 in Cohort B). The average gain over the students who scored better in the 1997 examination was 10.8%. If students who gained equal or better marks are included in the picture, the average gain drops to 8.7%. The order in which the examinations were administered appears to have had no significant impact on the marks gained.

Although the sample is small (approximately 1% of those students preparing in 1999 to sit the *School Certificate* French examination) and although only two examinations were involved, the results are indicative of a possible reduction in level of difficulty in *School Certificate* French examinations over time. Also indicative of this is the fact that a number of candidates wrote comments such as "I give up" on the 1991 scripts (but not on

the 1997 scripts). However, no firm conclusions should be reached in the absence of a more comprehensive experiment.

In relation to German, where there was a smaller sample, the results also suggest that there may be have been a tendency towards examinations becoming less demanding over time. Thus, for example, the overall average increase in percentage score in the 1997 examination in relation to the 1991 examination was 22%. Every candidate had an improved score in the 1997 examination, with the lowest percentage improvement being 9%, and the highest being 33%. The greatest gains relate to reading comprehension scores. Once again, it is important to stress that no definite conclusions can be drawn from a small-scale experiment of this type. Nevertheless, what is indicated is that a larger-scale experiment involving a greater number of students and teachers and a wider range of languages and examinations could be a fruitful line of research for the future.

6.5.5 New Zealand national awards for international languages: transparent relationship between internal and external assessment approaches and standards?

As indicated earlier, those parts of the national examinations that are assessed on a school-internal basis are moderated in relation to externally assessed components of the examinations. There are two problems associated with this approach:

(a) the lack of clear guidelines and exemplars for standards of internal assessment makes it extremely difficult for teachers, particularly less experienced teachers, to assign grades meaningfully;

(b) the moderation of oral grades in relation to the grades achieved by a particular school cohort in other areas of the examination undermines the principles involved in assessing oral performance as a separate skill.

One way of accommodating the first of these problems would be to establish clear criteria for oral assessment and to prepare exemplars nationally which can be made available to teachers. Ideally, teachers would then be given support in working towards assessing their own students in relation to the standards indicated in the criteria and demonstrated in the exemplars.

A similar system could be applied in the case of *Sixth Form Certificate* where there is no external examination and where teachers are advised either to assess in conformity with the aims and objectives outlined in the *School Qualifications Handbook* (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999) or to submit their assessment plans to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority for approval. The instructions for the assessment of *Sixth Form Certificate* French are attached (see *Appendix 5*). Although reference is made in these instructions to themes, topics, vocabulary and grammar, no reference is made to the achievement objectives that are listed in the national French syllabus. The marks awarded by schools in *Sixth Form Certificate* assessments are moderated nationally against the marks awarded in the previous year in *School Certificate* examinations on a school-by-school basis. Thus, if there is, for example, an overall reduction (or increase) in the level of difficulty from one year to the next in the *School Certificate* examination that is concealed by the practice of marking to national distribution curve expectations, this concealment will also be a factor in the final results for internally assessed awards. However, a comparison of the unmoderated raw scores for these awards in different years could be indicative of overall trends.

6.5.6 New Zealand national awards for modern foreign languages: evidence that the system of national awards plays an effective role in the curriculum cycle?

If examiners' reports are to play an effective role in the national curriculum cycle, there must be (a) a way of accommodating them in relation to that cycle, and (b) a way of interpreting them that is useful in relation to curriculum planning. There is currently no system that ensures that examiners' reports are taken into account when curriculum

statements are revised, nor are these reports prepared in a way that would be useful to curriculum designers. The first issue could be resolved by requesting that those who are appointed to design or revise national curriculum statements indicate clearly in their reporting to the Ministry of Education that they have taken full account of examiners' reports. The second issue is more difficult to resolve. Currently, the only report that is available is the Chief Marker's Report and Marking Schedule. An example is attached (see *Appendix 6*). This report makes no reference to the relationship between examinations conducted in a particular year and examinations conducted in previous years. Nor does it make reference to other modern language examinations conducted in the same year or in previous years. There is no analysis of comparative levels of difficulty of different questions and question types although there are general statements about levels of difficulty such as, for example:

> The first two listening questions were more difficult and few candidates gained full marks (School Certificate 1997, French, Chief Marker's Report).

Although, in their current form, these reports include information that is likely to be of use to teachers, such as, for example, information relating to which words were frequently omitted or misused, they do not contain much of the type of information that would be useful to national curriculum developers. Information of this type (e.g. which achievement objectives created most difficulty for learners) could be provided in a separate report if the examinations were restructured to reflect more accurately the achievement objectives and language learning descriptors (proficiency statements) that appear in national curriculum documents. However, if this is to happen, there must first be an attempt to redesign achievement objectives in a way that is more amenable to assessment.

6.6 Standards-based assessment and the *National Certificate of Educational Achievement*

In 1995, the Education Review Office, reporting on the assessment of student achievement, noted:

> Assessment of student progress and achievement is such a complex issue that there is difficulty in finding agreement in principle or in practice amongst policy makers, practitioners and academics. The need for consistency of approach to assessment, however, is even greater than in the past as New Zealand moves to a standards-based national curriculum and qualifications (Education Review Office, 1995, 26).

However:

> The use of words such as *levels* in the *National Curriculum Framework* and the *National Qualifications Frameworks* implies a national consistency of standards. . . . [that] is not, in fact the case (p.28).

As indicated earlier (see section *3.5*), a *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* (NCEA) for secondary school students is planned for introduction in New Zealand in 2002. This *National Certificate* will be based on achievement standards which describe broad outcomes and which recognize superior performance (credit, merit, excellence) in relation to these outcomes. Whether or not this will represent an improvement on the current system in relation to modern foreign languages depends on a number of factors. Two of the most important of these are: (a) how the concept of achievement standards is interpreted, and (b) whether achievement objectives for modern foreign languages can be designed in a way that accommodats the requirements of standards-based assessment.

Within New Zealand, one of the primary initiators of the standards-based assessment approach was the New Zealand Qualifications Authority which, in 1991, issued a discussion document in which it proposed a systematic, unified approach to the restructuring of national qualifications (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1991). What was recommended was a standards-based approach to assessment which was to be expressed in terms of a *National Certificate.* The original intention was that this approach would supplement, rather than replace, existing public examinations. This initial intention has, however, now been modified to the extent that the existing public

examination system is now likely to be replaced by the *National Certificate in Educational Achievement.*

In the UK, a revised curriculum has been introduced. Level Descriptions in the form of continuous prose have replaced sets of discrete Statements of Attainment (which attempted to specify appropriate levels of achievement for each level of each attainment target). This has raised a number of issues in relation to assessment that are also relevant in the New Zealand context. It has been argued, for example, that Level Descriptors are not amenable to true criterion-referenced assessment (Murphy, 1993, p. 11). The same also may be said of the New Zealand national curricula for modern foreign languages in their current form. The only sensible response to this, in both cases, is, it could be argued, to recognise that the strict requirements of criterion-referencing cannot apply and must be abandoned in favour of a concept such as that of standards-referenced assessment. In the context of standards-referenced assessment, however, quality of performance, or degree of achievement, is determined on the basis of best fit, the assessor's grading task being "to find the class or grade description which best fits the object in question, in the knowledge that no description is likely to fit it perfectly" (Sadler, 1987, p. 206). This being the case, the assumption must be that language level descriptors (proficiency statements) will become more significant and separate achievement objectives less so. In other words, the type of assessment recommended in the draft European Framework, assessment that relates primarily to proficiency descriptors (Council of Europe, 1996, 9.1) is likely to be more appropriate than assessment that is directly related to the type of achievement objectives statements that currently appear in national curriculum statements. In practical terms, this means that the language level descriptors should be categorised as overall achievement objectives for each level (as is the case in the new draft Guidelines for French and German). Specific achievement objectives at each level could continue to be included. However, these, and any suggestions in relation to specific language content, should be consistent with the overall language learning descriptor statements for each level. However, this leaves unresolved the issue of the distinction between *credit, merit* and *excellence*, an issue which, as Peddie (1995, p. 177) observes, "is one of the keenest areas of debate over a competency-based form of standards-based assessment".

Many of the problems relating to standards-based assessment and the *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* have yet to be resolved. Whatever the outcome of current debate on these problems, most of the issues raised in this chapter in relation to the national assessment of modern foreign languages in secondary schools will continue to be relevant. They are issues that need to be fully addressed whatever overall approach to assessment is adopted. However, the manner in which they are addressed will inevitably be affected by the overall model of assessment that is finally adopted.

6. 7 International language examinations in the context of New Zealand university education

New Zealand universities, in common with most universities throughout the world, are free to set their own examinations and to determine how these examinations will relate to the aims and objectives of each course. Thus, only some of the criteria for the effectiveness of a national school-based modern language awards system identified in *section 6.4* will be applicable. Those that are applicable are, with appropriate adaptations, listed below:

. consistency of approach across languages in relation to testing and assessment at the same curriculum stages;

. transparent relationship between examination procedures, content and scaling and the way or ways in which achievement objectives and proficiency descriptors are conceived, articulated and scaled in the relevant prescriptions and in language learning contexts more generally;

. transparent relationship between examination grades at different stages in the system and between these and examination grades awarded in different subjects at the same stages in the system.

The examinations relating to language acquisition papers in two different modern languages at the same institution over a 10 year time span will be examined below in relation to each of these criteria in turn. All of the examination papers to which reference is made in this section are included in *Appendix* 4.

6.7.1 International languages in one New Zealand tertiary institution: consistency of approach across languages in relation to testing at the same curriculum stages?

Those examinations that relate to *Stage 1* papers were reviewed for consistency of approach within the same institution over two different languages (French and German) with a ten year gap between the papers reviewed for each language.

In 1985, the German *Stage 1* examination paper is headed *Language Studies, Written and Oral.* This paper is worth 90%, with 10% being reserved for a separate oral examination. The first question requires students to translate a dialogue consisting of twenty nine sentences from English into German. The second question requires students to translate a prose passage involving some direct speech from German into English. There were eleven sentences in that passage. The final question requires students to write an essay in German of approximately 200 words on one of three general topics. Each question is worth 30% and three hours are allocated for completion of the examination.

In the same year (1985), the *Stage 1* examination paper for French was worth 80%, with 20% being awarded in relation to a separate oral. There are nine questions and candidates are required to answer all nine. The first question (worth 22 marks) is a listening comprehension in which students are required to answer in written French 22 comprehension questions written in French on the basis of a listening exercise. The second question (worth 5 marks) requires students to answer in French ten questions written in French that related to a French prose passage containing some direct speech. The passage has twenty eight sentences. The third question (also worth five marks) requires students to read three short advertisements in French and then answer, in

English, 10 questions (written in English) relating to these advertisements. The fourth question (worth 4 marks) requires candidates to fill in 14 blanks in a French passage by selecting the appropriate verb from a list if 14 verbs. The fifth question (worth 11 marks) requires candidates to read a short advertisement and then complete a written dialogue based on that advertisement by writing 11 dialogue segments to accompany 11 written dialogue segments with which they are supplied. For the next question (worth 7 marks) candidates read a passage (11 sentences) in French and then answer, in English, eight questions written in English. The seventh question (worth 5 marks) requires students to change a passage written in the present into the past. This involves altering eight verbal groups. Question eight (worth 7 marks) requires candidates to complete six short dialogue sections in French by adding appropriate verbal groups. Question nine (worth 14 marks) involves translating 28 short English sentences (decontextualized and unrelated to one another) into French.

It is clear from the above account that in 1985 the approach to examining *Stage 1* language acquisition papers in German was quite different from the approach to examining *Stage 1* examination papers in French. Quite apart from the differences in the three hour written paper, 10% of the overall total was awarded for an oral component in the case of German, with 20% being awarded for an oral component in the case of French.

In 1995, *the Stage 1* examination paper in German makes no reference to a separate oral examination. The paper is, however, entitled *German Language Studies, Written and Oral*. There are five questions and candidates are required to answer all five in three hours. The first question (worth 25%) involves translating a short prose text in English (15 sentences) into German. The second (worth 25%) involves translating a prose passage in German (16 sentences) into English. The third and fourth questions (worth 25% taken together) involve (a) transferring five sentences in German into indirect speech (using the subjunctive), and (b) transferring five active sentences into the passive voice. The final question (worth 25%) involves writing a short essay (about 200 words) on one of four general topics.

In 1995, the *Stage 1* examination paper in French was worth 75%, 25% being awarded in relation to a separate oral. There are thirteen questions and candidates are required to answer all thirteen in three hours. The first question (worth 3 marks) involves six lists of words and/or expressions and candidates are required to select from each list the word most commonly used in informal settings. The second question (also worth 3 marks) involves six lists of words and/or expressions and candidates are required to select from these lists the word or expression that does not belong to the particular group in which it occurs. The third question (worth 2 marks) requires candidates to select, from a list of three options, the definition that can be applied most appropriately to two different expressions. The fourth question (worth 7 marks) involves reading an extract from a holiday brochure in French (58 sentences) and answering seven multi-choice questions in French. The next question (worth 12 marks) involves answering 8 comprehension questions based on a prose text (39 sentences) in French. Question six (worth 16 marks) involves candidates in looking at and reading a cartoon script and then, imagining themselves as one of the characters, writing to a French friend (150 – 200 words) about what took place. Question 7 (worth 8 marks) asks candidates to select from eight groups of three sentences the one that is, in each case, most appropriate in relation to the performance of a specified function (e.g. giving an order).

The final section (6 questions) is headed *Grammaire*. The first question (worth 7 marks) requires candidates to complete a text by putting 14 bracketed verbs into the correct form: *imperfect or present perfect.* The next question (worth 2 marks) asks candidates to provide advice appropriate to 4 specified contexts in the form of an imperative or negative imperative construction. There follows a question (worth 2 marks) which requires candidates to write a short sentence about what they would do in 4 different circumstances using an appropriate form of a verb given in the infinitive and selecting two or a list of five object pronouns. The next question (worth 5 marks) requires candidates to complete a list of items by supplying the appropriate form of the article. Candidates are then required, in a question worth 6.5 marks, to complete a description of a public park by selecting from a list of thirteen adjectives, the adjective that can most appropriately be located in one of thirteen spaces in the text. The final question (worth

1.5 marks) requires candidates to write three questions that might be asked in a specified situation. The questions should not anticipate yes/no answers and should be expressed in different ways.

Once again, it is clear that the approach to examining *Stage 1* papers is very different in the case of French and German. Thus, so far as the examinations selected are concerned, there appears to be a lack of consistency of approach in the assessment of different languages at the same curriculum stage within the same institution.

6.7.2 International languages in one New Zealand tertiary institution: transparent relationship between examination content and achievement objectives?

As indicated in *Chapter 5*, university course prescriptions for language acquisition papers generally do not specify proficiency targets in anything but very general terms (e.g. beginner, intermediate advanced). It is, therefore, impossible to determine whether the assessment approaches adopted are consistent with proficiency target statements. Nevertheless, it should be possible to determine whether there is a transparent relationship between the specified aims and objectives of modern language courses and the examinations that relate to them.

So far as French is concerned, the tertiary institution whose examinations are being reviewed, notes that:

> Students with no previous knowledge of French will take in their first year: [A] and [B];
>
> Students with School Certificate or a little experience will take in their first year: [B];
>
> Students with a good Sixth Form Certificate or Bursary will begin with: [C]
>
> Exceptional students, at the discretion of the Convenor of French, may start with: [D]

This indicates that *Course A* is regarded as being equivalent to *School Certificate*; *Course B* as being equivalent to *Bursary,* and *Course C* as being at a higher proficiency level than both *School Certificate* and *Bursary*. *Course A* has two parts: a and b and these parts, taken together, are designated 'French for Beginners'. According to the details provided on the institution's internet site, these courses are designed for "beginners or for students who have done only a little French at school" and "are intensive courses" where "lectures are supported by computer, audio and visual material" (http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/french/index.shtml> and <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/german/index.shtml>: visited 10 July, 2000). The ratio of course work to final examination in the assessment process is 50/50. It is impossible on the basis of this description to determine what the content of this course is. However, given that students who complete this course will go on to a course considered appropriate for students who have completed *School Certificate* French, the assumption must be that the content and proficiency target are at least roughly equivalent to that for *School Certificate* (that is, to those sections of the French syllabus for schools that relate to *School Certificate* examinations). Similarly, in that students who have achieved *School Certificate* or have completed parts (a) and (b) of *Course A* will proceed to *Course B*, and given that students with a *Bursary* pass and those who successfully complete *Course B* will proceed to *Course C*, the assumption must be that *Course B* is equivalent to *Bursary* and, hence, equivalent to those sections of the French syllabus for schools that relate to *Bursary* examinations. The examination papers for *Course A* do not, however, appear to bear any direct relation to the *School Certificate* French examination as outlined above. Nor do the examinations for *Course B* appear to bear any direct relation to the *Bursary* French examination as outlined above.

Looking first at the 1998 examination for *Course A* (equivalent to *School Certificate* French), we find a very different approach from that of *School Certificate* examinations. The two are compared in the table below:

Table 6.38: Comparison of New Zealand School Certificate Examination Structure and Structure of an Equivalent New Zealand University Examination in French

	French *School Certificate* examination	**University examination in French at *School Certificate* level**
Oral	20 marks	25 marks
Listening comprehension	20 marks	-
Translation	15 marks	-
Reading comprehension	10 marks	10 marks
Writing (writing about a topic) **Writing** (filling in timetable blanks; writing a six sentence paragraph about a set topic; writing a list of instructions; writing a letter (minimum 40 words) on basis of a picture series)	20 marks	25 marks
Cultural studies	15 marks	-
Vocabulary (slot filling from a list; selecting the odd member of a list; selecting verb forms from a list to insert in a short text)	-	20 marks
Grammar (selecting one of a list of phrases to match a picture; selecting correct form of 'faire' and 'aller' to slot into sentences and a text; selecting correct form of a verb (provided in infinitive form) to insert into gaps in sentences; selecting correct form of preposition + article from a list to insert into sentence blanks; selecting verb forms from lists supplied to slot into sentences)	-	20 marks

So far as the 1998 examination that is equivalent to Bursary level is concerned, the comparison for French is indicated in *Table 38.*

Table 6.39: Comparison of New Zealand Bursary Examination Structure and Structure of an Equivalent New Zealand University Examination in French

	French *Bursary* examination	**University examination in French at *Bursary* level**
Reading	20 marks	10
Writing	30 marks	20
Dictation	10 marks	
Translation	-	
Listening Comprehension	10 marks	
Oral	20 marks	25 marks
Vocabulary (slot filling from a list; selecting the odd member of a list)		20 marks
Grammar (selecting the correct form of a verb (supplied in infinitive) to insert into sentence gaps; selecting correct form of correct form of article from a list to insert into gaps in sentences; selecting a comparative/ superlative form from a list to insert into sentence gaps; selecting correct pronoun from a list to insert into gaps in sentences; selecting correct form of indefinite article to insert into gaps in sentences)		25 marks

In terms of the types of activity required, there is also a considerable difference between the School Certificate examination and its university equivalent. There are very few tasks of *Type A* (requiring the same processing as is required in real-world language performance) or *Type B* (replicating real-world activities) in the latter case. With the exception of some of the writing tasks, most of what is required is the manipulation of decontextualized language segments.

6.7.3 Modern foreign languages in one New Zealand secondary and tertiary institution: transparent relationship between examination and assessment grades at different stages in the system?

There is very little that can be said about the relationship between examination and assessment grades at different stages in the system so far as New Zealand universities are concerned. Assessment schedules are not published and the lack of clear statements of aims and objectives and course content means that no genuine comparison can be made between different stages.

6.8 Conclusions

Attempts to develop effective outcomes-based assessment and reporting systems are not necessarily only a reflection of "the widespread introduction of corporate management principles such as competition, productivity and cost-effectiveness into education" (Brindley 1998, pp. 45 – 46). Blackmore (1998, p. 35) is no doubt right in claiming that such systems are driven "by utilitarian goals regarding the maximising of benefits with limited resources". However, given that educational resources in New Zealand are inevitably limited, there is much to be said for attempting to maximize benefits within the context of this limitation. Even so, the problems inherent in attempting to devise appropriate outcomes-based assessment in the area of language education are considerable, and New Zealand would do well to attend carefully to overseas experiences, particularly in the context of its current plans to introduce standards-referenced assessment on a school-wide basis. As Brindley, (1998, p. 46) observes, there is an inevitable tension between movements at the system level to become more "outcomes-oriented, centralized and bureaucratic" and the shift in focus at classroom and local level towards the individual learner.

Outcomes statements are "broadly speaking, standards of performance against which learners' progress and achievement can be compared and are usually developed on a national, system-wide basis (Brindley 1998, p. 48) such as, for example, the UK National

Language Standards (relating to the use of foreign languages at work) (Languages Lead Body, 1993), the European common framework scale of language competence (North, 1995), the Australian Certificates in Spoken English developed in relation to the Adult Migrant English Program (NSW AMES, 1995), and the Toronto Benchmarks for school learners (Rutledge, 1993). All of these, in common with the draft New Zealand curriculum guidelines for French and German and the developing draft Achievement Standards, involve graded descriptions of learner performances that are essentially proficiency statements.

In the New Zealand case, such developments are not taking place in a fully coordinated way. Thus, the emerging *Achievement Standards* for languages bear little relation to the emerging overall objectives statements in the draft French and German curriculum guidelines. Both documents, for example, define 'familiar contexts;' and both do so in quite different ways. The problems that can be associated with a lack of co-ordination of this type can be illustrated with reference to the Australian experience where two different scales relating to English as a second language in schools operated simultaneously. In 1991, the *National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia* (NLLIA) was commissioned to develop an assessment and reporting package to describe the progress of learners of English as a second language in schools from K-12. It produced a set of bandscales accompanied by exemplar assessment activities, observation guides and reporting formats (McKay, 1995). However, the *Australian Education Council* simultaneously produced National Curriculum profiles for eight key learning areas on the basis of which scales for English as a second language were developed, scales which differed from the NLLIA scales. The existence of these two different scales, both aimed at the same target population, has produced "a strong sense of confusion" among teachers (p. 19).

Added to the problems that can result from a lack of coordination of developments are problems that are generally associated with the introduction of new rating scales, problems that are not confined to the interpretation of these scales. Where descriptors are based largely on intuition, even where that intuition is the result of considerable

experience and has been the result of widespread consultation, they need to be effectively trialled before they are used on a national basis. Even at the trial stage, high quality rater training needs to be put in place. Additionally, the descriptors themselves need to be subjected to detailed scrutiny involving, for example, the type of Rasch analysis that has already been used in descriptor scaling (Griffin, 1991). Performance-based assessment procedures developed on the basis of such descriptors need themselves to be carefully examined in terms of cut-off points (Cizek, 1993) and construct and content validity (Messick, 1994). The data derived from actual language performance will not necessarily indicate that there is the necessary consonance between the constructs described in the descriptors and actual performances (Lee and Musumeci, 1998; Fulcher, 1987; Lantolf and Frawley, 1988). Overall, the initial appeal of such assessment schemes may be offset by the considerable costs involved in their development and in ensuring that they operate successfully and are accompanied by appropriate reporting mechanisms. Because they emphasise successful task completion rather than contextualized developmental information, it is inevitable that their diagnostic utility will be limited.

The New Zealand *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* is to be introduced in the year 2002. However, the emerging descriptors have not so far (as at July 2000) been trialled. What this indicates is that New Zealand is moving towards standards-referenced assessment too quickly, with too little emphasis on the need for a solid research base, too little consultation across all of the sectors that are stakeholders in the process, too little attention to subject differences, and too little understanding of the implications of standards-referenced assessment for curriculum documentation and delivery. As Brindley (1998, p. 67) notes, "dialogue and consultation between politicians, policy-makers, assessment specialists, administrators, practitioners and relevant others" needs to take place "*before* new assessment systems are put in place, not after the political decision has been taken to implement the system". So far as language testing is concerned, the introduction of standards-referencing involves a range of theoretical and practical issues that have not been adequately debated and "language testing is an uncertain and approximate business at the best of times. Even if to the outsider this may be camouflaged by its impressive, even daunting, technical (and technological) trappings,

not to mention the authority of the institutions whose goals tests serve" (McNamara, 2000, pp. 85 – 86).