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Japanese Language Skills as an Economic Resource in New Zealand Business

A comparison of the perceptions of tertiary students of Japanese regarding the value of language skills with the perceptions of students of international business and employers in tourism and trade in Canterbury

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language education in New Zealand has traditionally focussed on European languages. Asian language programmes are relatively new and have largely been introduced within the existing system, which allows few learners to reach high levels of proficiency. A survey of firms involved in exporting and tourism in the Canterbury region was conducted regarding the way companies communicate with their Japanese clients and associates, to what extent staff possessed Japanese language skills, where and how these were used and how they were valued. The results were then compared with results of a survey of a sample of students in the Canterbury region who were studying either Japanese or International Marketing.

Findings revealed that the more important the Japanese market was to a business in either tourism or exporting, the more likely they were to see language skills as a valuable resource and to invest in persons with these skills. In exporting language skills were commonly utilised at middle and top management level, whereas in tourism they were more commonly used in customer liaison and lower level activities. Language skills were generally ranked after functional and technical skills in terms of importance, although this varied depending on the importance of the Japanese market. It would appear that increasingly, language skills are viewed as an economic resource when combined with other skills.

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1. Introduction

Foreign language education in New Zealand has traditionally focused on European languages, reflecting our colonial history. In recent years however, there has been a shift in focus away from European languages and on to community languages, Maori and Asian languages. Recent government initiatives clearly show the government's commitment to increasing student participation in second language learning and large amounts of money are being invested for this purpose. On the other side of the coin, students are investing many hundreds of hours and at tertiary level, many thousands of dollars, in an effort to learn one or more foreign languages, particularly Asian languages, many assuming that proficiency in a foreign language will improve their chances of employment.

This study arose from the author's interest in a possible difference in the value attributed by employers to foreign language skills, and the value attributed by the government and students to these skills. In order to reach proficiency or even gain a working knowledge in a foreign language, in particular an Asian language, a huge investment of time and energy is required. If learners believe that this ability will be of economic benefit to them, it would be useful to know if this view is shared by employers.

Clearly the reasons that people decide to learn a foreign language are not necessarily solely economic and New Zealand has yet to reach the point where all education programmes are utilitarian. Language study provides many benefits including the enrichment of the individual and broadening of the mind. However, if many learners are motivated by an expectation that their skills will be marketable, only to discover too late that this is not the case, this is reason for concern.

While without a doubt such benefits are difficult to measure, perceptions of employers regarding foreign language skills could allow us some insight into the perceived economic value of such skills. By comparing these with student perceptions, the difference in perceived value could also be measured.

For the purposes of this study Japanese language was chosen as a representative foreign language. Japanese was the first Asian language to be taught widely in New Zealand schools and is now taught at more than half of all New Zealand secondary schools and a large number of tertiary institutions. Student numbers are far in excess of any other Asian language in New Zealand. In addition, Japan is one of New Zealand's most important trade partners and the most important non-English speaking trade partner. Foreign exchange earnings from Japanese tourism to New Zealand are second in value only to those from Australia.

In order to measure the perceptions of employers most likely to be involved with Japan, businesses in the areas of trade and tourism were targeted for this survey. Due to constraints of time and money, the sample was limited to businesses in the Canterbury region. Employers received a questionnaire regarding their business relations with Japan, which specifically addressed issues such as modes of communication used with Japanese clients and business associates, recruitment practices and number of staff with Japanese language skills.

The student sample was also taken from the Canterbury region. In order to measure student perceptions of the value of language skills, a sample of students from a local institution who were studying Japanese at the tertiary level were surveyed by questionnaire on their studies and their employment intentions and expectations. A similar survey was conducted of students taking international business studies at the tertiary level. In all cases the intended minimum sample size was $n = 30$.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested in this study is that students' expectations conflict with the perceptions of business in the trade and tourism area regarding the importance of language skills which in turn differ from the expectations of government with regard to the value of language skills.

2. Literature Survey

The extent to which foreign language skills are an economic resource is something which has recently attracted considerable attention in the English-speaking world. Although international trade and international travel are not a new phenomena, advances in technology affecting communication, transport and travel over the past three to four decades have seen the emergence of a new global economy where interaction between people of different cultures and different languages has become an increasingly common occurrence. The rapid pace of change has meant that research into this area has become all the more pressing and relevant.

The following section is divided into three main areas which reflect the structure of the research project to follow. After discussing problems of methodology, the first area, research into the value of Japanese language skills in business is reviewed. Literature on the economic contribution of languages in international business, actual use of languages in business, the role of foreign language skills in recruitment and career advancement, and a comparison of the value employers place on cultural awareness as opposed to linguistic ability is examined. The role of English in international business is also covered.

The second area focuses on research regarding student motivation for learning languages. Finally, language policy and language education funding in New Zealand is discussed in order to shed light on how the government values language skills. Literature on Australian language policy and resources for language education provides a useful comparison. For the purposes of this study, Japanese language skills are treated as a subset of foreign language skills in general, which much of the literature concentrates on.

2.1 The Value of Foreign Language Skills in Business

2.1.1 Problems of Methodology

To date, studies of the role of foreign languages within international business have had a tendency to be based on the assumption that language skills are good for business but few provide empirical evidence to support this.¹ Another problem with many of the studies is the small size of the samples. For example, Fixman's study (1990) was based on 32 interviews in nine companies; Walters (1990) on 30 companies.

The value of some research is diminished by a lack of definition of company size or in some cases a concentration on large companies only. Surveys undertaken in the United States tend to focus on larger firms which, as Fixman notes, usually have

¹ Enderwick P. and Akoorie M. "The employment of foreign language specialists and export success: the case of New Zealand" *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 11. 4 (1994)

greater resources available and experience quite different problems from small to medium size companies.²

The wide variation in the definition of "foreign language competence" is also cause for concern. Few studies attempt to measure the degree of competence of the specialists in question, nor do they differentiate between oral proficiency and written proficiency. The assumption in many cases is that a person who has a qualification in a language is likely to be proficient. In reality this so-called proficiency varies greatly between people and depends on a number of factors including the type of language tuition received, the relationship of the foreign language to a person's mother tongue, experience using the language and aptitude, to name but a few. While proficiency tests and ratings have been established, these are often ignored in the research. However, despite these shortcomings in some of the research available, studies into the value and role of language skills in business have revealed some interesting results.

2.1.2 The Economic Contribution of Languages

Isolating the contribution foreign language skills make to any business is no easy task. As Rodney Cavalier, Chair of the Australian Language and Literacy Council notes "the variables that contribute to success in international trade and economic development are too numerous to permit rigorous, unequivocal empirical studies. Ideally one would wish to demonstrate that, by adding X language skills to an enterprise, its trade will increase by Y per cent. No such simple relationship exists."³ Despite the difficulties inherent in the task, a number of studies in Great Britain and Australia, the U.K., the United States and Japan have revealed a positive correlation between export success and the employment of foreign language specialists.

Research has shown that highly successful exporters were more likely to employ people with languages skills than less successful companies. In Britain for example, research by the British Export Trade Research Organisation has confirmed that 90 per cent of all language graduates employed in exporting within the manufacturing sector were employed by Queens Award winners.⁴ In Australia it was found that there was a positive correlation between finalists in the AUSTRADE Export Award winners and the employment of foreign language specialists. 69 per cent of award winners employed an average of six staff fluent in at least one of Japanese,

² Fixman, C.S. "The Foreign Language Needs of US-Based Corporations". *Annals, AAPSS*. 511, September: 25-46. 1990, p.4

³ *Speaking of Business: The Needs of Business and Industry for Language Skills* (Australia: Australian Language and Literacy Council, 1994) pp.viii

⁴ Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G. *The Relationship between International Trade and Linguistic Competence* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992) p.97

Chinese, Arabic or French.⁵ A study of 70 companies involved in exporting in New Zealand by Enderwick and Akoorie (1994) also revealed that on average export award winners employed more speakers of foreign languages than did non-winners.⁶

Failure to utilise and value language skills has also been seen as linked with a lack of success in international business. A report on the relationship between international trade and language competence, commissioned by the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (ACCLAME) suggests that one of the reasons for the lack of economic growth in Britain, Australia and New Zealand may be an intrinsic cultural institution, namely a reliance on English. According to Joseph lo Bianco, Australian language policy expert, "Australia is losing more than \$3 billion a year because we don't speak a second language, and because migrants here can't speak English properly".⁷

Despite evidence of a positive correlation between the employment of foreign language specialists and export success, it appears that employers' awareness of it is low. Few employers in an Australian survey, for example, listed a lack of foreign language skills as an obstacle to success. However, factors which may be strongly related to such skills, such as a lack of knowledge of foreign markets, were commonly cited as problems.⁸ The findings of Enderwick and Akoorie's study are consistent with this. When asked to rate a list of factors associated with success, few respondents rated the employment of foreign language specialists very highly, while a large number, rated market knowledge as very important to their success.⁹

2.1.3 Foreign Language Skills in Recruitment and Career Advancement

Studies in a number of countries reveal that language skills appear to be rarely recognised formally in hiring, reward or promotional decisions.¹⁰ The skills and attributes considered to be most important by employers in international business were found to be personal or functional in nature and language skills are commonly seen as a "bonus"¹¹ Research overseas suggests that these attitudes are prevalent in other English speaking nations also. In the United States a study found that over

⁵ Enderwick, P. and Akoorie, M. (1994) p.20

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Smith, J. "Why foreign languages are good for business" *Australian Business*, Nov. 14 1990, p.68

⁸ Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G. (1992) p.97

⁹ Enderwick P. and Akoorie M. (1994) p.17

¹⁰ Fixman, C.S. (1990) p.4, Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. "Foreign Languages in International Business: The Case of New Zealand" *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, Vol. 4 (1) 1992, Levett, A. and Adams, A. *Catching Up With Our Future: The Demand for Japan Skills in New Zealand* (Wellington, Japan Foundation, 1987)

¹¹ Enderwick and Gray (1992), Watts, N. R. *The use of French in Exporting and Tourism* (New Zealand: Massey University, 1992)

the ten year period 1982 - 1992 the views of high school and college students and those in the business community regarding foreign language skills had not changed significantly. Businesses ranked foreign language skills among the least important hiring criteria and provided workers with little language or cross-cultural training. Workers, as a result, saw language skills as irrelevant in corporate reward systems.¹²

In terms of recruitment, the more likely a person was destined for an overseas transfer, the more highly language skills were valued. Research by Walters (1990) indicated that foreign language skills rated equal in importance to technical skills for positions which were expected to lead to international placements, although many of those interviewed stressed that these were only one factor among many to be considered in recruitment.¹³ United States research into business perceptions of the need for preparation to function successfully in an international context found that while functional expertise was considered to be the most critical skill contributing to performance, language skills were rated second most critical.¹⁴

There are significant differences in perception between countries. In contrast to the view commonly held of a "Euromanager" who is required to have a high level of fluency in at least three languages,¹⁵ a 1993 study of New Zealand managers discovered that 84 per cent believe that "a working knowledge of language is sufficient for most business needs."¹⁶ Interestingly, this view is shared by employers involved in international trade in Macau, according to research by Cremer and Willes.¹⁷

The degree to which language skills are taken into account appears to differ according to industry. Levett's study in New Zealand (1986) found that Japan skills played a part in staff selection for a high percentage of respondents in the tourism industry and in education but, for a very low percentage of those in services, exporting, importing and traders.¹⁸ Japan skills by themselves were not considered sufficient for any job, with the possible exception of translating, and for most jobs other abilities were more important.¹⁹ In Australia the two sectors which

¹² Guy, B. "Dismantling Self-Imposed Trade Barriers Revisited: The Role of Language Development Ten Years Later" *Annual Eastern Michigan Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions* 1992

¹³ Walters P. G. (1990) in Enderwick and Gray (1992), p.52

¹⁴ McEnery, J. and Des-Harnais, G. "Business Perceptions of Need for preparation to function successfully in International Context", *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions* 1988

¹⁵ Barham 1987; Weihrich and Buhler 1990 in Enderwick and Akoorie, (1994), p.7

¹⁶ Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1992), p.49

¹⁷ Cremer, R. and Willes, M. "Stock in Trade: the role of English in international trade proceedings", *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 2.1, (1991), p.106

¹⁸ Levett, A. and Adams, A. (1987) p. 3.9

¹⁹ Ibid.

employ the highest number of graduates of Japanese courses are education and tourism/hospitality.²⁰

There are a number of theories on the reason that language skills are not highly valued. According to Graham (1988) the main reason that foreign language skills are not highly valued in business is that many of the managers do not possess these skills themselves and have a tendency to hire and promote people with similar backgrounds to themselves. Enderwick and Gray's New Zealand research found that although over half of respondents to a survey of the top 100 New Zealand companies considered it important to communicate with clients in their native language, one of the reasons commonly given by those who did not see this as important was that they encounter few difficulties by using English.²¹

A number of studies suggest that the value of utilising foreign languages in communication lies in the goodwill created from building relationships.²² Thus, if a good relationship can be built without these skills it is not necessary to seek them. Other studies suggest that the more complex the product, the more important language.²³ However, it could be said that in today's complex world, even when dealing with primary products, discussing their treatment, handling or end use can become extremely complicated and therefore require very effective communication.

2.1.4 Cultural awareness vs. Linguistic proficiency

There is a clear separation in the literature of language skills and cultural understanding. It is generally held that cultural awareness is more useful in business and industry than linguistic proficiency. Research in Australia by the Australian Language and Literacy Council (1994) has supported this view. It found that Australian business people interviewed in 1993 invariably gave high priority to cultural knowledge and understanding in staff dealing with people overseas.²⁴ The view that language problems are mechanical and can be purchased *ad hoc* is prevalent. Fixman's study in the United States also found that foreign language ability was not considered to be related to cultural sensitivity.²⁵

Many researchers into cross-cultural communication stress the importance of understanding the cultural background and rules of etiquette of the other party.

²⁰ Marriott, H. and Spence-Brown, R. "Developments in Japanese-Language Education in Australia" *Current Report on Japanese-Language Education around the Globe* 2 (January 1995):p.162

²¹ Enderwick P. and Gray, D. (1992) p.56

²² Fixman C. (1990); Mendenhall, M. and Oddou, G. (1985); Walters, D. (1990) in Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1992) p.54

²³ Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G. (1992) p.45

²⁴ *Speaking of Business: The Needs of Business and Industry for Language Skills* (Australia: Australian Language and Literacy Council 1994), p.16

²⁵ Fixman, C. (1990), p. 6

Australian research into negotiation with Japanese noted the following:

... to defuse conflict and to manage the negotiation process fully, team members require the following personal skills - ... members must be able to think clearly and act appropriately so as not to offend the others. Knowledge of Japanese culture and tradition is therefore a prerequisite.²⁶

According to U.S. research, knowledge of cultural practices was considered much less important than knowledge of human relations skills and of business practices in the foreign country.²⁷ However, research into the success of American expatriate staff in 1992 suggested that 99.9 per cent of all expatriate failures are caused by cultural problems, not a deficiency in job skills.²⁸

2.1.5 Utilisation of foreign language skills in business and industry

The majority of New Zealand companies appear to rely heavily on English. New Zealand studies have found that a significant number of businesses involved in trade employ no staff proficient in languages other than English²⁹ In the largest New Zealand companies, employees with language abilities made up less than 5 per cent of recruits over the five years spanning 1988 - 1993³⁰ One reason for this low figure may be that New Zealand research has shown that firms dealing with Arabic and other Asian clients tend to locate employees overseas or employ residents of the foreign country.³¹ Watt's research in this area in New Zealand (1986)³² found that although there has been an increase in the amount of foreign language material employed by exporters in publicity and packaging, there was not the same willingness to use foreign languages in correspondence or in spoken communication with foreign customers. The attitude that the overseas client should be able to speak or write English was still prevalent.

The general impression that one gains is that while many NZ firms are prepared to employ private or commercial translators to prepare publicity materials in foreign languages for overseas markets, they are not as convinced of the advantages of recruiting staff who have the necessary foreign language proficiency to handle correspondence received in a foreign language, answered telex messages, respond to overseas telephone calls or carry out face-to-face business discussions with overseas clients.³³

²⁶ Clarke, Gay and Davies, I. "Negotiating with the Japanese" *Queensland Law Society Journal* Vol 22 No. 2, April 1992, p.131-139

²⁷ McEnery, J. and Des-Harnais, G. (1988)

²⁸ Caudron, S. *Industry Week*, July 6 1992

²⁹ Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1993); Watts, N. (1992)

³⁰ Enderwick, P. and Akoorie, M. (1993)

³¹ Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1992)

³² Watts, N. R. *Foreign Languages in Exporting*, (Palmerston North: Department of Modern Languages, Massey University, 1987) p.15

³³ Ibid

Further research by Watts in 1992 concentrating on French, found that while there had been a significant increase in the use of French for promotional materials, considerable reliance continues to be placed on interpreters or on the English ability of the French clients.³⁴

Utilisation of foreign language skills differs according to industry and country. Tourism appears to be an area where foreign language skills are most commonly used in New Zealand. According to Levett's 1986 study the majority of staff with Japan skills were used in this sector.³⁵ This was followed by exporting, traders, the services and education. (It must be noted however, that for 91 per cent of these people, "Japan skills" were defined as "level A" i.e. speaking clear English and understanding Japanese English, pronouncing Japanese names correctly and so on). In the United States, Fixman's research found that the service sector was more likely to need language skills than industry.

Company size is also a determining factor with regard to the utilisation of language skills. Fixman's research in North America suggests that size is a major factor influencing the employment of language specialists. According to her findings, "smaller companies were less likely to invest in such resources but were often more sensitive to the need for them than larger companies". The main reason was that they were dealing with companies of a similar size which were also unlikely to have access to staff with English language skills³⁶.

The level within a company at which language skills are used also differs according to industry and size of company. In Enderwick and Akoorie's New Zealand study (1994) of exporters the majority of respondents claimed that their language specialists were employed between the middle and upper managerial levels, with nearly one quarter at the upper level alone.³⁷ Findings of an earlier study by Enderwick and Gray (1993) also showed this tendency.³⁸ Stanley, Ingram and Chittick's Australian study also found that two high level areas, management and marketing were the ones where foreign language skills were needed most.³⁹

Language skills appeared to vary in usefulness according to the function for which they were used. Marketing was the most important functional area of employment of foreign language specialists according to research conducted by Enderwick and Akoorie⁴⁰ Other functional areas where a significant number of foreign language specialists were employed included technical/production and general management.

³⁴ Watts, N. *The use of French in Exporting and Tourism*, (Palmerston North: Department of Modern Languages, Massey University, 1992)

³⁵ Levett, A. and Adams, A. (1987) p. 3.4

³⁶ Fixman, C. (1990), p. 4

³⁷ Enderwick, P. and Akoorie, M. (1994), p. 13

³⁸ Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1993), p.63

³⁹ Stanley, J, Ingram, D and Chittick, G. (1990), p.11

⁴⁰ Enderwick and Akoorie, (1994), p.16

Recent New Zealand research has indicated that the principal tasks for foreign language specialists in exporting businesses were negotiation, liaison and product development. Market research was another area where a considerable number of such people were employed⁴¹. Other research by Enderwick and Gray found that language skills were required most by exporters in general communication.⁴² Fixman's research however, found that foreign language skills were most needed in personnel evaluation, marketing, technical work and R&D.⁴³

2.1.6 The role of English

English is commonly referred to as the language of international business. In any study of the role of foreign languages in business, the place of English as the language of international business cannot be ignored. As Coulmas notes:

With the dissolution of the British Colonial empire, which as one of its most important legacies left behind the English language in one function or another in most former colonies after independence, and the concurrent rise of the United States to become the unchallenged leader of the Western world, English became the foremost international language of the second half of this century against which all other contenders to world language status... are fighting a losing battle.⁴⁴

Certainly the value of English is not underestimated by those whose native tongue is not English. Amongst the educational and trading elites of Asia, for example, proficiency in English is increasingly sought after. In Japan, language training in English is an important part of corporate strategy and seen by many as a critical skill especially for manufacturing companies.⁴⁵ The majority of Japanese respondents to one survey on this subject agreed that English language skills are an essential weapon in the economic struggles of the future, many remarking that they were already. English instruction in countries where it is the mother tongue has become a valuable source of revenue as increasing numbers of students from non-English speaking nations endeavour to master this language.

However, while English undoubtedly plays an important role in international business communication, we have yet to reach the point where every person engaged in international trade is proficient at English, and the likelihood of this happening is remote to say the least. Of the world's population of approximately 5.6 billion, it has been estimated that over 350 million people have English as the first or native language, and another 700 to 1400 million people speak it as a

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1993), p. 64

⁴³ Fixman, C. (1990), p.6

⁴⁴ Coulmas, F. "The surge of Japanese" *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 80, (1989), pp. 115 - 113

⁴⁵ Hilton, C.B. "Japanese International Business Communication: The Place of English" *Journal of Business Communication*, Vol.29 No.3 (1992)

second or foreign language.⁴⁶ Most of the world do not speak English, although many of those who trade have a working knowledge of English.⁴⁷

In fact, the view that English is the international language of business is not without criticism.⁴⁸ It has been suggested that tolerance of foreigners unable to speak one's native language is inversely related to economic and political importance.⁴⁹ Consistent with this theory is Shipman's research (1992) which suggests that non-English speaking countries such as France and Germany, are becoming more assertive about the use of their own language. If this is the case, as Asian economies continue to grow and prosper, English may become less useful in interaction with these people.

Undoubtedly monolingual English speakers do not have the same access to business or scientific information as those who speak English and another language or languages.⁵⁰ Dr Yamaguchi, Director of International Management Studies at the AGSM in Sydney commented on what he referred to as "gateway issues". "One of these gateway issues is the need for foreign firms to analyse the rapidly changing business environment in Japan."⁵¹ Another issue was the fact that due to the rapid increase in international business being carried out with Japanese companies, most of the lengthy foreign language reading material remains unread.⁵²

It would appear that countries where English is not the native language have long recognised the need to speak the language of those with whom one is conducting business. The Japanese for example, have a particularly high awareness of this need. One study of companies dealing with China found that

87 per cent of Japanese companies agreed that it is important for the chief representative or senior manager to speak Chinese well compared to only 43 per cent for EEC companies.⁵³

Hilton's study (1992) found that foreign language skills were seen as an integral part of Japan's global vision which is allowing it to succeed so well.⁵⁴ In his 1986 paper on the possibility of a national policy on languages for Australia, Ingram notes that the economies of Europe and Asia which had shown the most rapid expansion "were assiduous in demanding that their people develop skills in a

⁴⁶ Crystal, D. (1987) in *Speaking of Business* (1994), p.9

⁴⁷ Cremer, R. and Willes, M. "Stock in Trade: The role of English in International Trade Proceedings", *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* Vol.2 No.1, (1991) pp.106 - 116

⁴⁸ Kapp, 1991; Pearson, 1989 in Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1992)

⁴⁹ Enderwick, P. and Akoorie, M. (1994), p.3

⁵⁰ Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G. (1992), p.98

⁵¹ Clarke, Gay and Davies, I. (1992) p.138

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Campbell, (1987), in Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G., (1992) p.92

⁵⁴ Hilton, C.B. (1992)

variety of other languages".⁵⁵ Indeed the great majority of people studying Japanese for example, are Asians, who account for 63.4 per cent of students of Japanese within Japan and almost 80 per cent of overseas students of Japanese.⁵⁶ As Coulmas notes, the seventies and eighties saw the study of Japanese transformed from a "somewhat exotic scholarly pursuit into the acquisition of a practical skill with economic utility."⁵⁷ It seems that this value is most highly appreciated in Asia.

The views of business people who have English as their native language remain divided. Australian studies have found that, particularly in manufacturing, the view that the customer speaks English and therefore knowledge of foreign language is not warranted is prevalent.⁵⁸

2.2 Student Motivation for Language Learning

An analysis of the numbers of students studying Japanese at different levels of education, and the retention rates provide an indication of students' evaluation of the value of these skills. The proportion of students who choose to continue or begin studying Japanese at tertiary level is particularly significant since it is at this level that students begin to specialise and must make choices to sacrifice some subjects. Influences on these choices are varied and include parental views, teachers, peers, media, perceived marketability and so on. However, with the exception of students who have spent a prolonged period in Japan on exchange programmes and the like, the average student completing the seventh form has a very limited command of Japanese. (This is the inevitable result of a programme of study which generally allows a maximum of five unconnected fifty minute periods of study a week). The value of Japanese language skills can therefore only be realised by improving on the level acquired at high school and engaging in some kind of tertiary study.

2.2.1 Numbers of language students in New Zealand

Up until the late sixties there were no opportunities at either secondary or tertiary level for New Zealand students to study Japanese. The 1970s saw a steady expansion in student numbers and this was followed by further growth in the eighties. Between 1982 and 1987 numbers of students studying Japanese at the secondary level grew by over 300 per cent from 1 677 to 5 921. Four years later in 1992 this figure had gone up by over 300 per cent again to 19 738 students. (see Table 1) During the same period numbers of students studying French and Latin have steadily decreased and numbers studying Maori have increased. As a percentage of all students, those studying Japanese amounted to approximately 8 per cent, Maori 9 per cent and French 12 per cent in 1992.

⁵⁵ Ingram, D. (1986) in Ingram, D. "Languages in the Business Community" *Babel*, 27.1 (April 1992) p.10

⁵⁶ Coulmas, F. (1989), p.121, 123

⁵⁷ Ibid p.129

⁵⁸ Stanley, J., Ingram, D.E. and Chittick, G. (1992), p.4

Language	1972	1977	1982	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
English	166 680	229 181	218 537	226 422	226 411	226 041	225 375	220 912	225 372
French	44 774	40 808	34 520	31 006	31 008	31 275	28 964	27 720	26 409
German	5 550	8 026	9 003	8 300	8 614	8 500	9 008	9 009	9 395
Indonesian	0	0	243	191	337	152	150	151	140
Japanese	0	1 771	1 677	5 921	7 868	10 039	12 442	15 921	19 738
Latin	6 843	6 671	5 286	3 798	3 669	4 242	3 228	3 011	2 828
Maori	4 249	13 013	14 048	21 395	22 191	18 909	19 470	19 818	22 303
Pacific Is	0	0	0	5	38	539	192	606	Not avail
Russian	136	0	201	258	254	279	177	191	207
Spanish	0	0	42	97	133	218	268	256	856
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	61	2	64	180

However, although total numbers have shown considerable growth in the past twenty years, the retention rate is not high. The increase in numbers is particularly apparent at third form level and also at fourth form level but numbers of students still studying Japanese at seventh form level are still a small proportion of those who begin at form three. This trend continues at tertiary level with numbers of students enrolled in Stage Three courses far fewer than those at Stage One. In the ten years 1985 to 1995 the total number of students enrolled in tertiary level courses has risen from 810 to 1706. Of those, the proportion who reach third year or higher has increased from approximately 10 per cent to 20 per cent. Thus 80 per cent do not even reach Stage Three. It would appear that the higher the level reached in Japanese, the fewer the students who continue to place a high value on continuing their language studies. (See Table 2 and 3 below)

Table 2

Numbers of students of Japanese language in New Zealand 1973-1985

Institution	1973	1979	1981	1983	1985
Universities					
First year	213	173	239	764	522
Second year	85	87	70	306	195
Third year	38	42	18	133	80
Graduate	0	13	12	21	13
Sub Total	336	315	339	1224	810
Polytechnics					
Full-time	0	0	14	14	26
Part-time	0	337	387	557	548
Other					
Part-time	94	37	19	44	430
Secondary schools					
3rd form	258	783	630	836	2010
4th form	154	467	405	372	971
5th form	141	238	244	263	511
6th form	86	257	221	198	349
7th form	47	83	65	93	133
Sub total	686	1828	1565	1762	3974
TOTALS	1116	2517	2324	3601	5788

Source: *Asian Language Survey in New Zealand Schools and Tertiary Institutions as at August 1985*, Curriculum Development Division, Department of Education, Wellington, December 1985

Table 3

Students enrolled in tertiary level Japanese language courses, 1995

Institution	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Auckland Uni	285	206	119		610
AIT	16	23	16		55
Unitech					
Waikato Uni					
Massey Uni	129	96	70	76	371
Victoria Uni	70	45	30	3	148
Canterbury Uni	42	66	47	28	183
CHCH Polytech	27	18	19		64
Otago Uni	140	100	35		275
Total					1706

Ref: New Zealand Centre for Japanese Studies Newsletter, Issue 67, May 1995

The reasons for this low retention rate are of course complex and varied and one cannot assume that the only motivation for students decisions are economic.

The following reasons are all feasible:

- demands of other subjects too great
- academically too demanding
- other skills more marketable
- disappointment with progress and ability
- lost interest
- lagging Japanese economy
- personal problems
- financial difficulties

Whatever the reasons, the low retention rate for students of Japanese at all levels of the New Zealand education system suggests that for the majority of learners, these skills are not highly valued in comparison to other skills.

2.2.2 Motivation

In terms of the motivation of those who do choose to study Japanese, improving future employment chances seems to be a common expectation. There is a clear difference in the literature between perceptions of learners and employers regarding the value of language skills. In New Zealand, a survey of 978 high school students of Japanese in 1991 found that most students who learn Japanese do so because they believe it will help them get a job.⁵⁹ This is consistent with research in Australia by Neustupny who found that for students enrolled in Year 11 of secondary school, future employment was an important motivating factor for learners of Japanese.⁶⁰ Other possible motivators include the increasing frequency of contact with Japan, and the association of Japanese with an economic power that may be seen as "a symbol of progressiveness".⁶¹

At tertiary level in the United States a number of joint business and language programmes have been established in response to industry demand. Initially, those enrolled in these programmes found that employers did not value this combination of skills particularly highly. In 1989, studies of graduates of B.A. and M.A. programmes in the United States which combine language studies and international trade studies revealed that while most graduates were employed in jobs with international concerns, they had difficulty breaking into the business world.⁶² This led to revisions to the programmes which raised the level of requirements of both language and business. Lambert's American study (1990) of 600 graduates of combined business and language programmes found that close to two thirds believed that it had been a factor influencing their recruitment, while just under a third of the graduates believed that their foreign language competence was of no help in gaining employment.⁶³ It would appear that in the right combination, these skills are of value when seeking employment.

⁵⁹ *Dominion Sunday Times*, 22 March 1992

⁶⁰ Marriott, H. and Spence-Brown, R. "Developments in Japanese-Language Education in Australia" *Current Report on Japanese-Language Education around the Globe* 2 (January 1995):p.161

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² Dugan ERIC 1989

⁶³ Enderwick, P. and Gray, D. (1993), p.53

2.3 Language Policy

The value governments attribute to language skills is reflected in their language policy. Statements by political leaders also give us some insight into the value of such skills, but it is only by examining the literature on language education policy and the resources and funding made available for people to either attain or maintain such skills, that we can begin to get an accurate picture of their value. The following section will cover these areas including discussion on policy and resourcing of Japanese programmes for native speakers of English, as well as English programmes for speakers of Japanese.

2.3.1 Language Policy in New Zealand

Government policy on Japanese language education, in fact policy on language education as a whole, is not formalised but rather, is implicit in the actions and statements of the agencies of government. Language education in New Zealand has not been policy led but has been characterised by a series of *ad hoc* and largely uncoordinated developments and a lack of clear direction. In recent years however, the need for a comprehensive policy on language education has begun to be recognised. As Peddie (1993) notes

In New Zealand, given the financial context of restraint, it might be expected that a major and potentially costly development such as a national languages policy would be unlikely to emerge. Yet pressure from Maori, the needs of migrants, and a growing awareness of the value of international languages of trade has created a climate where policy is increasingly necessary. ⁶⁴

In 1990 Dr Jeffrey Waite, a specialist in applied linguistics, was contracted by the Ministry of Education to prepare a comprehensive discussion document outlining New Zealand's language needs. The report *Aotearoa: Speaking for Ourselves* recommended amongst other things, that a national languages policy be developed. Six priority areas were identified for inclusion into this policy. They were as follows:

1. Revitalisation of the Maori language
2. Second-chance adult literacy
3. Children's ESL and first language maintenance
4. Adult ESL
5. National capabilities in international languages;
6. Provision of services in languages other than English ⁶⁵

This policy is yet to be formalised.

⁶⁴ Peddie, R.A. *From Policy to Practice: The implementation of languages policies in Victoria, Australia, and New Zealand*, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Auckland New Zealand, (1993) p.2

⁶⁵ Waite, J. *Aotearoa: Speaking for Ourselves* (Part One and Two) Wellington, Ministry of Education 1992 p. 18 - 22 in *Ibid.* p. 31

The need to increase national capabilities in international languages has been recognised by some for many years. As early as 1976 in a report commissioned by the Ministry of Education on Second Language Learning in New Zealand, the need for foreign language skills was recognised.

We believe it is essential for those who have foreign contacts, whether in commerce, tourism, technology or other specialised fields, to have some acquaintance with the language of the people they deal with.⁶⁶

The report recommended that a wider range of courses with a practical bias be developed to cover the different language areas. It commented that "In an extremely competitive world market such as exists today, relying entirely on English for marketing products would be suicidal."⁶⁷

Although opportunities for foreign language education have increased in the twenty years hence, efforts in the last five or six years have been particularly noticeable. In 1991 the New Zealand government launched Asia 2000, a strategy designed "to encourage New Zealanders to build up the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to be even more effective participants in the Asia - Pacific region."⁶⁸ In September 1994 the Asia 2000 Foundation was officially established. One of the goals of the Asia 2000 Foundation is "to develop further the 'Educating for Asia' programme, a strategy for promoting greater emphasis on Asian languages and studies in the New Zealand education system".⁶⁹ The view of the Foundation is that knowledge of Asian languages and cultures is essential to enable New Zealanders to work successfully with Asian organisations and individuals.

In terms of language education in schools, despite the lack of explicit language policy, the establishment of the New Zealand Curriculum framework, as a result of the restructure of the New Zealand education system following the Picot report (Administering for Excellence, 1987), has had a large influence on language education. The curriculum framework prescribes a number of essential learning areas which are required to be offered to students at secondary level. "Language and Languages" is designated one of these essential learning areas. In this document it states

All students benefit from learning another language from the earliest practicable age. Such learning broadens students' general language abilities and brings their own language into sharper focus. It enriches them intellectually, socially and culturally, offers an understanding of the ways in which other people think and behave, and furthers international relations and trade.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *Second language learning in New Zealand A report of the Working Party appointed by the Ministry of Education*, (Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1976), p.59

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ Asia 2000 p.1

⁶⁹ *Asia 2000 newsletter* 6 Oct-Nov 1995

⁷⁰ The New Zealand Curriculum Framework p. 10

Schools now have greater independence and are able to develop their own curricula within broad guidelines. It is therefore up to the school to decide which languages are offered and which are not. This is a reflection of the current government's philosophy of individual choice and the expectation that communities know best what education is appropriate and valuable for their children. To some extent, by delegating these decisions, the value that the government attributes to Japanese skills is somewhat ambiguous. However, the fact that "Language and Languages" are one of the essential learning areas suggests that they are valued to some extent.

Another area which provides insight into language policy for Japanese and thus an indication of how much it is valued, is curriculum design. A further result of the education reforms in New Zealand has been the disappearance of the old Department of Education and the establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. As Peddie notes

It (the restructuring of the New Zealand education system) placed considerable power in the hands of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority who, by their ability to establish and register "unit standards" in all subject areas for nationally recognised qualifications, effectively gained considerable control over languages curriculum.⁷¹

The goal of the Ministry has been to set curriculum for each of the languages by 1997. With regard to Japanese, The Draft Curriculum Statement for Japanese (October 1995) gives a number of reasons for learning Japanese. It states

Successful participation in diplomacy, education, trade, technology, tourism, environmental issues, cultural exchanges, and humanitarian roles and responsibilities demand language fluency. Our education system, therefore, needs to provide New Zealanders with a greater diversity of language learning.⁷²

No evidence is given to support these statements, however, it goes on to state:

As a Pacific country, New Zealand has increasing contact with this major trading partner (Japan) and the rapid increase in tourism allows many opportunities for personal contact and communication. Learners of Japanese can:
....broaden their employment options both in New Zealand and internationally.⁷³

Regardless of whether these claims can be substantiated by research or not, if they are taken as an indication of how much value the government places on language skills, it would appear that they are highly valued.

⁷¹ Peddie, R.A. (1993) p.28

⁷² Draft Statement for Japanese, p.1

⁷³ Ibid

2.3.2 Politicians' views

Since the early 90s political leaders have been calling for New Zealanders to rethink their orientation towards Asia. Numerous articles have appeared in the press stressing the need for heightened awareness of changes in the structure of the global economy, in particular, the increasing power of the nations of Asia. A better understanding of Asia and its peoples is seen as essential as New Zealand faces the twenty first century. Many have included in this equation a call for increasing numbers of New Zealanders to become familiar with Asian languages. This call is not new, it would appear rather that the need has become more urgent.

High profile politicians have publicly endorsed this view on a number of occasions. In 1992, soon after the release of the *Aotearoa* report, in a speech entitled English is not enough, Don McKinnon, the Minister of External Relations and Trade, stressed the need for New Zealanders to acquire international language skills.

... far greater priority must be given to international languages. No group of languages will be more important to us in the years ahead than those of the Asian region. It is no great secret that I have been encouraging all of New Zealand's traders to look to Asia for market growth. Europe and North America will remain important to us, but Asia is the world's most dynamic economic area and is likely to be increasingly important for New Zealand for some time to come.⁷⁴

At the 1993 Asia 2000 Education Symposium in Wellington, *Educating for Asia*, the Minister of Education Lockwood Smith quoted from the *Aotearoa* report:

A knowledge of appropriate international languages and appropriate cultural behaviours, when combined with other skills such as those of marketing and economics, is likely to contribute to gaining the competitive edge"⁷⁵

In 1994, during a tour of Asia, the Prime Minister, Jim Bolger announced that New Zealand is now part of Asia. Notwithstanding the considerable controversy that this statement caused, the government's support for increased recognition of the importance of Asia, its cultures and its languages is apparent.

In a press release in May 1995 the Minister of Education Lockwood Smith announced that the Government will substantially increase funding for the three year period 1996 - 1999 to encourage more schools to offer second language tuition to students in forms 1 to 4.⁷⁶ As justification for this he described the advantages of learning a second language. To quote Dr Smith, "Not only is second language learning a source of intellectual, social and cultural enrichment, it also helps to improve New Zealand's trade and tourism potential." Judging by politician's statements, Asian language skills are, or should be, highly valued.

⁷⁴ *English is not enough* Minister of External Relations and Trade, Don McKinnon, August 1992

⁷⁵ Waite, J. *Aotearoa: Speaking for Ourselves*, (Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1992) p.6

⁷⁶ Smith, Lockwood *News release May 7* (Wellington: Minister of Education, 1995)

2.3.3 Funding and resources

In light of the government's apparent support for valuing Japanese language skills more highly, as reflected in politicians' statements and implicit language policy in the previous sections, it is now timely to consider just what people's expectations are regarding language training, what is required in terms of time and money in order to reach the desired level of proficiency in Japanese, and whether the government is funding opportunities for language education adequately. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the extent to which English programmes for non-English speaking migrants are well funded.

Whereas in the past opportunities to communicate face to face with speakers of other languages were relatively few and the focus of language education, particularly at tertiary level, was on translation and literature, language learners today demand an ability to use their chosen language. As Australian expert in language policy Joseph Lo Bianco notes, one of the reasons for this change in expectation is that we are witnessing the greatest amount of population movement ever in the history of the world.⁷⁷ Lo Bianco cites some of the contributing factors as including increased student mobility, a trend towards globalisation of the labour market, increased migration, and the breakdown in the national control of the economy due to regional trade blocs, multinational companies and so on.⁷⁸ One can of course add to these advances in information technology (fax, telephones, satellite TV, the Internet, video phone, computers etc.) and increased accessibility to these due to price decreases, and, advances in technology affecting travel and transport resulting in the movement of people and goods across borders becoming cheaper, easier and faster.

Although learners generally want to use foreign languages, not all of them will wish to reach the same level of proficiency. It would be foolish to expect that all learners of Japanese for example wanted to reach a near-native proficiency in all four macro skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. For some, oral proficiency may be all that is required, while others may need to be able to read but not write. While difficult to define levels of proficiency and measure the time required to reach each specific level the United States Foreign Services Institute (FSI) has developed some guidelines in this area. According to FSI estimates, a native speaker of English with average aptitude for learning languages requires 2400 - 2760 hours of study to reach "Level Three" proficiency in reading and speaking. Level Three competence is described as follows:

Competence in a broad range of factual, persuasive and expressive language tasks performed in a variety of contexts. Most language tasks require decision making to select appropriate language; and the individual is expected to be able to combine and

⁷⁷ Lo Bianco, J. "Current Issues and debates in languages policy in Australia" *Address to the Fourth National Conference on Community Languages and English for speakers of Other Languages*, 1 - 4 September 1994 Christchurch, New Zealand

⁷⁸ Ibid

recombine language elements to accomplish key work tasks.⁷⁹

This is three to four times as long as it would take the same person to learn French. According to Levett's survey regarding the demand for Japanese skills in New Zealand (1986), over half of the positions in future which will require Japanese skills will require at minimum, a "sound knowledge of both the written and spoken language".⁸⁰ This suggests a level comparable with the above mentioned F.S.I. Level Three.

The extent to which the education system should reflect the changing needs of the economy is of course the subject of much debate. New Zealand has tended to steer a course in the middle ground providing an education system which provides opportunities to learn vocational skills and develop generic skills. However, to the extent that language education is provided at all, there should be opportunities for people to reach the level of proficiency described above, as well as lower levels of proficiency as required by different industries. This of course has serious funding implications.

2.3.4 Secondary Level Language Education

At secondary level the number of institutions offering Japanese has been steadily increasing since the first courses were offered in the late sixties. Significant growth was apparent in the early and mid-eighties, and increasing demand led to further expansion from that period onwards. Whereas in 1986 Japanese was offered at 73 secondary schools, 18.3 per cent of all schools, by 1992 it was offered at 204 secondary schools. Although not as widely available as French or Maori this accounted for 50.1 per cent of all secondary schools. (See Table 4).

Table 4 Number of secondary schools with students studying each language, 1986 - 92

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
English	398	398	396	396	397	397	407
French	321	317	304	292	296	281	284
German	155	148	143	139	135	135	131
Indonesian	2	2	6	3	3	2	5
Japanese	73	82	100	109	145	172	204
Latin	74	66	61	54	50	45	42
Maori	217	226	239	222	233	242	268
Pacific Is	0	0	0	8	3	12	Not avail.
Russian	4	3	4	5	4	3	5
Spanish	9	4	7	15	9	11	23
Chinese	0	0	0	4	1	4	5

from *The place of Asian Studies in the New Zealand School Curriculum* by Colin Knight

⁷⁹ Australian Language and Literacy Council *Speaking of Business: The Needs of Business and Industry for Language Skills* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994) p. 130

⁸⁰ Levett, A. and Adams, A. (1987)

Funding for language learning at secondary level has also increased recently. On 7 May 1995 the Minister of Education Lockwood Smith announced that the Government will spend \$4.8 million over the next three years to encourage more schools to offer second language tuition to students in forms 1 to 4.⁸¹ Although schools have discretion over which languages to spend these funds on, the Minister said that he expected that schools would use much of the funding to expand the teaching of Asian languages.

While the opportunity to begin language learning is certainly reasonably well resourced, due to the limited time allocated to this subject in the weekly timetable, with the exception of students who spend a prolonged period in Japan on exchange programmes and the like, the level of proficiency reached after five years study at high school are very low. Those who have spent from forms three to seven studying the language have received less than 700 hours of lessons. Many have begun studying later and have had even less tuition time. Japanese competes with other subjects and is usually timetabled for one hour a day at most.

Low retentions rates are also cause for concern. The Ministry of Education has found that of students studying a second language in the third form in 1990, less than 10 per cent were still studying a second language in the seventh form in 1994.⁸²

The reasons for this are complex and require further research, but it is apparent that second language study is perceived as less important than other subjects.

2.3.5 Tertiary Level Language Education

At tertiary level, Japanese is available at all seven universities and many Polytechnics. While this sounds promising, on closer examination one finds few opportunities to achieve high levels of proficiency in Japanese, and entry to many courses is restricted. The main problem with most University courses is that language is studied on a part-time basis. As Levett noted in 1986

There are between 5 - 8 hours of teaching per week during the brief 26 week teaching period in the New Zealand academic year. Nor do the Universities provide summer programmes for continuous Japanese language study. It seems an inefficient way to acquire foreign language skills, especially in a language as difficult as Japanese.⁸³

Over the course of a three year degree, the average student therefore only receives at most 700 hours of tuition, falling well short of the 2400+ hours required.

This problem has been identified by a number of commentators and some have questioned the role of universities in teaching languages. Gavan McCormack, a senior lecturer of Japanese at the Australian National University is one such critic of the

⁸¹ Smith, L. Minister of Education *News release May 7 1995*

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Levett, A. and Adams, A. (1987)

current system who has called for an end to an education system in which difficult languages such as Japanese are treated in the same way as European languages. In a presentation to a national symposium *Educating for Asia* in July 1993, McCormack pointed out that under the current system although students are flooding into Australian Universities to study Japanese, after three years of study they still cannot read a newspaper. The same is true of most New Zealand university graduates with a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese.

Lecturer in Asian history Dr. Ann Trotter of Otago University has acknowledged some of the problems faced by universities offering courses in Asian languages. At the symposium *Educating for Asia*, she noted that whereas in the past the product of a language department tended to be literary experts, the needs of today's students are different. In her experience, language is increasingly seen as something which will give students an economic advantage and proficiency is what is required.⁸⁴ In spite of this, in many institutions change is slow to take effect. The way funding is allocated does not foster intensive language tuition and the demands on staff to engage in research also make it difficult to run intensive courses. Thus, although efforts are being made at some institutions to increase tuition time through computer aided learning and the like, a number of language departments continue to run courses focused on reading and grammar and the literature of the country, and, on the whole tuition hours have remained low.

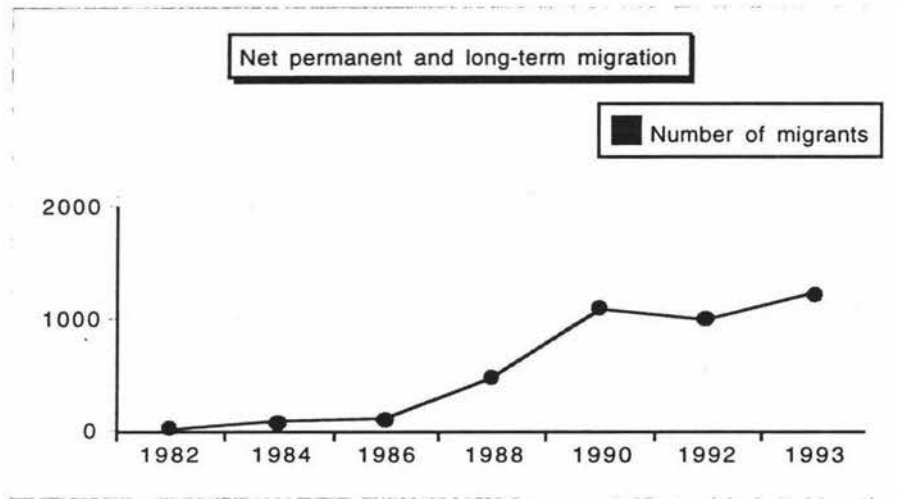
In recent years government policy has been to encourage more competition and variety in the provision of education. The clear intention of this policy has been to allow consumers more choice and to make education providers more responsive to the demands of both industry and the public. Though not without its critics, this has resulted in a number of alternative courses in Japanese (amongst other subjects) being established around the country. Changes in legislation in 1992 have broadened choice at tertiary level by allowing institutions other than universities to confer degrees. As a result, the degree courses in Japanese which have been established at Christchurch Polytechnic and the Auckland Institute of Technology, for example, offer intensive language tuition thus allowing students the opportunity to become highly proficient.

⁸⁴ *Educating for Asia Symposium* (1993)

2.3.6 Immigration

Another source of language skills is of course the migrant population, but too often the skills of these people are overlooked because of their poor English. Net migration to New Zealand from Japan has been increasing steadily over the past ten years (see Fig. 5) although those from Japan rarely account for more than 2 per cent of total migrants.

Fig.5 Net permanent and long-term migration to New Zealand from Japan 1982 - 93



Source: Statistics New Zealand

A considerable proportion of Korean migrants can also speak Japanese and migration from Korea has increased also. Until very recently a number of migrants have been able to settle in New Zealand with very limited, and in some cases, non existent, English ability. Many of these people are well trained and well qualified and have much to offer this country but are prevented from doing so because of their inability to speak English.

Resourcing of courses in English as a second language gives us an idea of the value that the government attributes to language skills in general, and thus may shed some further light on the value of Japanese language skills. Up until 1996 schools received \$120 a year for each immigrant child to cope with the extra English tuition required by such children.⁸⁵ Many schools found this insufficient and the problem reached a head when one school in Auckland made headlines with a proposed enrolment scheme which favoured English speakers over migrants. As the result of such problems, the government has introduced stricter rules regarding language skills for new migrants. From October 1995, as the result of a new levy on those who don't pass an English test, the money available for English education was expected to rise. While this may be taken as a further indication that the language skills of migrants are valued, it may also be seen as a purely pragmatic move.

⁸⁵ Laxon, A. "New Zealand: Pupils ready to learn but no money available", *New Zealand Herald*, 8 February 1996.

2.3.7 Language Policy in Australia

Literature on Australian language policy reveals dramatic changes in recent years and serves as a useful comparison for New Zealand, given the similarities in historical background and the influence of its colonial past. Australia is considered to be one of the leaders in language policy making and planning in the English-speaking world.

Although the economic significance of languages was recognised from the early seventies, it is only since the mid eighties that this has become a focal point of language policy debate. During the seventies the primary focus of language teaching was on multiculturalism, community understanding and improving access to services for the increasing numbers of immigrants to Australia who did not speak English.⁸⁶ According to Professor Gentile, Head of School of Languages, Interpreting and Translating at Deakin University, "multilingualism was traditionally linked to low-status socioeconomic groups and regard for language ability was further eroded when a second language was no longer necessary for tertiary entrance."⁸⁷ Until the late 1980s foreign languages in education were regarded "as principally of academic or 'high culture' interest, to be the legitimate interest of students of the arts, of *literati*... and any vocational relevance of language skills was denied."⁸⁸

In 1987 a national policy on languages was adopted. A variety of reasons justifying language learning were put forward including, but not exclusively, economic reasons. It was recommended that Australia make a concerted effort to increase the number of people proficient in languages other than English and to better utilise the language skills brought by immigrants.⁸⁹ The Australian Commonwealth government has allocated considerable financial resources (see Table 6) to the implementation of this languages policy which includes amongst other things, a second language learning programme.⁹⁰

Table 6 Funding for languages policy in Australia

Year	Amount allocated
1987 - 88	A\$15.1 million
1988 - 89	A\$28 million
1990 - 91	A\$27.3 million

⁸⁶ Ingram, D. (1992), p.10

⁸⁷ Rance, C. "Australia: Growing interest in community interpreting", *Melbourne Age*, 20 January 1996

⁸⁸ Ingram, D. (1992), p. 9

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 12

⁹⁰ Lo Bianco, J. in Baldauf and Luke, Baldauf, R. Jr. and Luke, A. (eds) 1990 *Language Planning and Education in Australia and the South Pacific* (Australia: Clevedon Press, 1990), p.65

Of this total fund, \$7.44 million was to be allocated each year for three years to programmes in the languages of economic importance eg. Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese, and community languages.

As Lo Bianco notes,

It has become widely accepted that it is in the national interest to address language questions seriously because of the relationship between the broad economic, specifically trading, directions of Australia and the nation's available language resources.⁹¹

In Australia efforts are being made to introduce an Asian component across the curriculum. The goal is to "right the balance" from what was previously a very Euro-centric approach to a more global approach. The priority has shifted from languages to language studies in an attempt to include more about the culture and society of other countries.⁹² Under a plan agreed to by the states and federal government, all primary school children are expected to be studying a language other than English by 1998, and all year 10 students studying a second language by 2006.⁹³

2.4 Summary

Although there is considerable evidence in the literature suggesting a link between the use of language specialists and export success, awareness of this among business people in countries where English is the predominant language is low. In general, language skills have been viewed separately from a knowledge of cultural differences, and those in business in these countries have tended to accord higher priority to an understanding of the culture and ways of business of one's overseas customer or associate. As a consequence of this attitude, language skills were not highly sought after and rated among the least important criteria when recruiting new staff, unless a person was clearly destined for an overseas posting. An exception to this appears to be the tourism industry. However, even in this industry language skills alone were not considered sufficient for any position. This is not to say that language skills are not utilised in business, but rather that they rarely are seen as high in importance. Utilisation of these skills in terms of level, function and area appears to differ depending on industry, and research findings differ on this point.

Literature on the attitudes of those in business in countries where English is not the native language presents a different picture. It suggests that in such countries both governments and businesses value language skills highly, and encourage, and in some cases require, people to acquire these skills. The fact that English clearly plays an

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 62

⁹² Jenny McGregor, Asia Education Foundation, *Asia in the Secondary Curriculum*, an address to Educating for Asia Symposium, Wellington, July 1993

⁹³ The Bulletin, April 19, 1994

important role in international business communication is indisputable but, it is not only the study of English that is encouraged in these places but other languages also.

In terms of the value students place on language skills, the literature on retention rates for language classes suggests that in general it is not high. One may surmise that the size of the New Zealand economy does not demand a large number of people with Japanese language skills and perhaps this low retention rate merely reflects this. Students (or their parents), may be well aware of the attitude of employers towards language skills and may be making a rational economic decision. For those who choose to continue to study, it would appear that one of the primary motivators relates to improved employment opportunities. Thus, according to the literature, the perceptions of the majority of students who either do not study or discontinue studying languages are not dissimilar to the views of employers regarding language skills.

The extent to which the government values language skills is somewhat ambiguous. Recent changes in the New Zealand education system have allowed for more flexibility in the curriculum and for the community to have a greater voice in what and how their children are taught. The number of opportunities in schools for learning foreign languages, including Japanese, has certainly increased markedly in the past ten years. The government has spent considerable effort promoting the value of second language skills and has increased funding for this area. The fact that Japanese is now offered at more than half of all secondary schools around New Zealand means that there is ample opportunity for a large number of young New Zealanders to begin learning Japanese.

There are however, still a number of problems, many of which were identified ten years ago in Levett's report and which still have not been adequately addressed. Although the opportunity to begin studying Japanese is available for many, opportunities to reach a reasonable level of proficiency are very scarce. This has a flow on effect for current and future teachers of Japanese also. Few institutions offer the intensive courses required to reach a reasonable level of proficiency.

By relegating the whole issue of foreign language education to the education sector while at the same time encouraging individual choice and competition, the government is assuming that people know what is best for them. However, if general awareness of the value of language skills is low, it is unlikely that any changes will take place as fast as would be desirable. If boards of trustees are made up of people who do not value second language skills, it is unlikely that such programmes will be encouraged in schools. The voices of Asian minorities will be drowned out by those of the monolingual majority. At tertiary level, unless University departments become seriously threatened by other providers of education, courses will remain unchanged.

3. Approach

3.1 Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested in this study is that students expectations conflict with the perceptions of business in the trade and tourism area regarding the importance of language skills which in turn differ from the expectations of government with regard to the value of language skills.

In order to test the above hypothesis the following groups were selected to be the target for a survey of opinion. Due to constraints of time and budget, the survey was limited to the Canterbury region.

- Full-time tertiary students of Japanese, Christchurch Polytechnic
- Students of international business, Christchurch Polytechnic
- Employers in the tourism industry, Canterbury region
- Companies involved in exporting, Canterbury region

In all cases the intended minimum sample size $n = 30$.

3.2 Empirical Survey

3.2.1 Student Survey

The student survey was posted in late 1994. All full-time students of the Bachelor of Japanese Language degree¹ at the Christchurch Polytechnic received a written questionnaire with their end of year results in late November 1994. An identical survey was also posted to students enrolled in a Diploma in International Marketing at Christchurch Polytechnic in early December. Students were given a prepaid envelope and asked to return the survey by the end of January 1995.

Of the 64 questionnaires which were sent out to students of Japanese, 46 were returned which equates to a 70% return rate. The rate of return from students of international business was considerably lower. Of 52 surveys posted only 17 were returned, a return rate of 33%.

¹ The Bachelor of Japanese Language degree is a relatively new programme which has been running at the Polytechnic since 1993. It evolved from the two year Advanced Certificate in Japanese, an intensive course concentrating on the spoken language and aimed particularly at the tourism industry, which began in 1985. The degree course is applied in nature and aims to achieve high levels of proficiency in both spoken and written language.

The questionnaire addressed the following issues:

- Student profile (age, sex, years of study etc.)
- perceptions of the importance of language skills
- perceptions of the reasons people study language
- motivation for studying language

(see Appendix 1)

Trends in language student numbers over the past ten to fifteen years were also analysed in order to complete the picture.

3.2.2 Survey of companies in trade and tourism

A questionnaire was designed for businesses in trade and tourism which attempted to measure firstly the importance of the Japanese market to the business and the extent to which Japanese language was used in business transactions. In addition, the survey attempted to elicit people's opinions regarding the importance of understanding the Japanese language and being familiar with the culture. The questionnaire was designed so that as much as possible could be used commonly across all three sectors of industry.

The employer survey was drawn from a sample of Canterbury businesses in the trade and tourism industries. The intended sample size $n = 30$. The questionnaire addressed the following issues:

- company profile
- attitudes towards foreign language skills
- recruitment practices
- pay and promotional opportunities for staff with language skills
- language training
- current staff profile with regard to Japanese language skills
- how staff with Japanese language skills are utilised
- modes of communication (oral and written)
- use of agents or intermediaries
- use of translators and interpreters

(see Appendix 1)

3.2.2.1 Exporters

The survey of exporters was conducted with the assistance of the Canterbury Development Corporation Ltd. (CDC) Christchurch, which maintains a database of local businesses involved in exporting to Japan. CDC estimates that it lists close to 20 per cent of all businesses in Canterbury. Since this information is confidential, the CDC agreed to send out the survey with a cover letter on CDC

letterhead endorsing the project and requesting support. This was sent out in early December 1994 with the regular CDC newsletter. Of the 142 companies which received the survey, 55 returned it completed. This is a return rate of 38.8 per cent.

3.2.2.2 Tourism

In order to cover as many companies involved in tourism in Canterbury as possible, contact was made with the Canterbury Tourism Council (CTC). The Chief Executive agreed to having the survey and a letter of explanation posted out with the January newsletter of the CTC in early 1995. 550 businesses on the CTC database received copies of the survey during the last week in January 1995 and of these a total of 64 were returned giving a rate of return of 11.6%.

4. The Students

4.1 The Survey

As outlined previously, the questionnaire for students was aimed at two distinct groups of students - students of tertiary level Japanese and students studying international business. It was designed to measure respondents' awareness of market requirements regarding language skills, to discover the reasons people choose to either study or not study language, and perceptions regarding the value of Japanese in New Zealand business.

4.1.1 Survey results

A total of 63 responses were received out of a potential pool of 116 - a rate of return of 54%. Of these the majority (73%) were enrolled in the Bachelor of Japanese Language at Christchurch Polytechnic. 17 responses were received from students enrolled in the Diploma in International Marketing also at the Christchurch Polytechnic.

4.1.2 Student Profile

Over half of the respondents were female (57%) , 40 per cent were male and 2 did not specify their gender. There was a predominance of females amongst students of Japanese with 67 per cent female as compared with 44 per cent of the students of international business (see Table 7).

Table 7 Student respondents by sex

	Total sample	Students of Japanese
Male	40%	33%
Female	57%	67%
Not specified	3%	0%

Respondents were quite evenly spread over the three age categories specified, with the biggest group fitting the category "over 25 years old". Amongst those who were studying Japanese most were between 20 and 25 years old. (see Table 8a)

Table 8a Age profile of student respondents

	Total sample	Students of Japanese
Over 25 years old	38%	28%
Between 20 and 25	36%	46%
Under 20	20%	26%
Not specified	4%	0%

The group with the most representation overall, and amongst students of Japanese was the group of third year students. Together the first and second year students comprised approximately half of the total. (see Table 8b)

Table 8b Study record of student respondents

	Total sample	Students of Japanese
First year students	19%	22%
Second year students	28%	24%
Third year students	30%	39%
Other	16%	11%
Not specified	6%	4%

4.1.3 Value of language skills by industry, area and level

The survey was devised to measure the value students attribute to language skills and their perception of market demand for such skills. Questions were designed so that they would be comparable with those asked of employers to the greatest extent possible. They included questions related to market requirements, questions on their own motivation for choosing to study Japanese, or not to study it as the case may be.

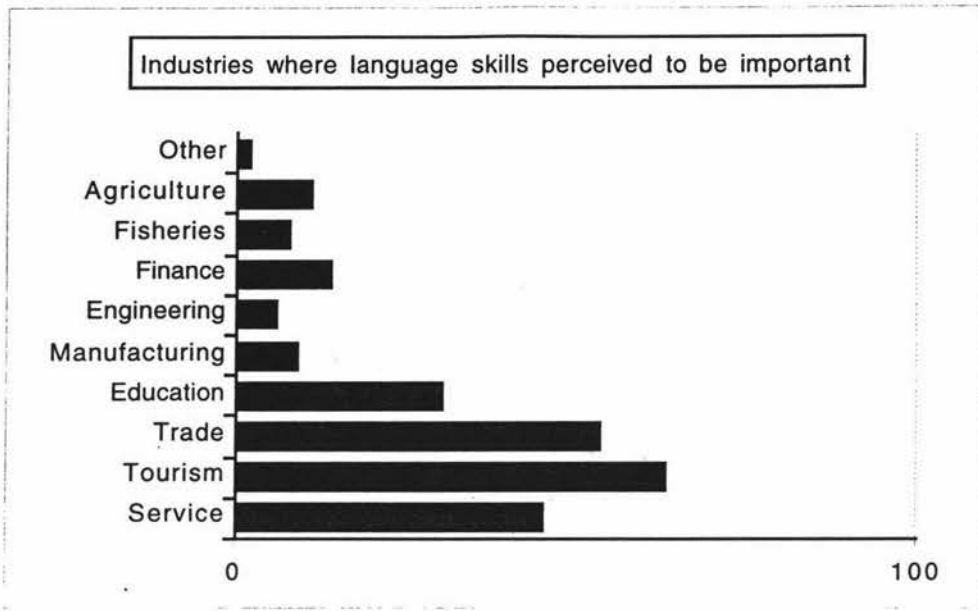
A number of questions in the survey were designed to elicit the respondents awareness of current market requirements for foreign language skills in particular Japanese. This awareness could be seen as the result of information from a number of sources including advice from parents, teachers, career advisors, peers, newspaper articles, television and so on.

Students were asked to choose the industries in which they believed language skills to be the most important. The choice given was as follows:

<i>Service</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Forestry</i>
<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
<i>Trade</i>	<i>Finance</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>Fisheries</i>	

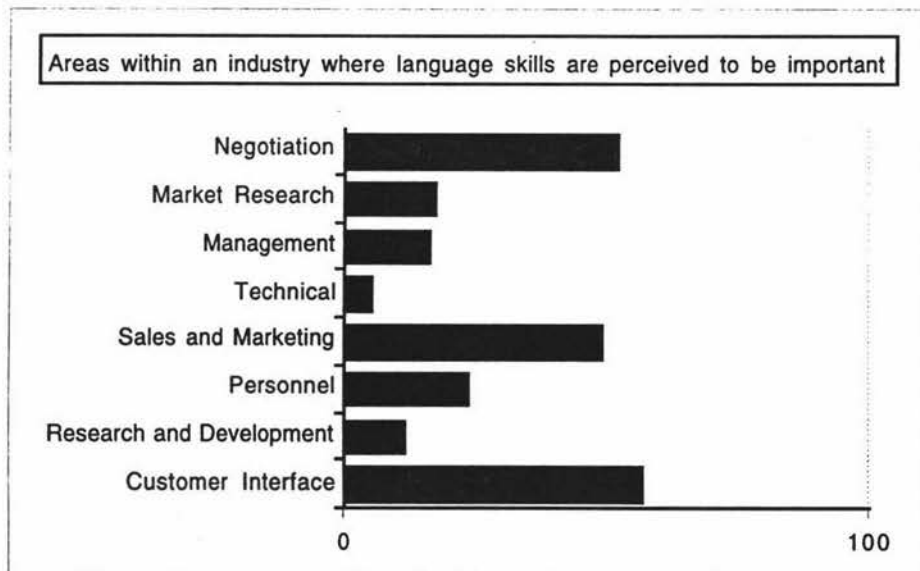
Without exception, all respondents chose the tourism industry as an industry in which language skills are important. Next in popularity was trade, the service industry and education, in that order. Few chose the other industries specified. (see Fig 9)

Fig. 9



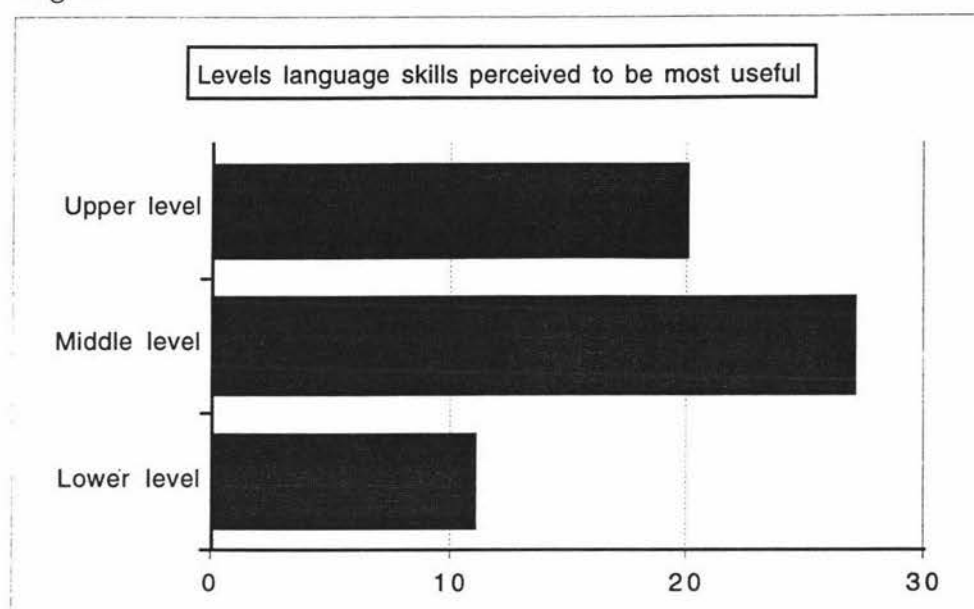
Students perception of the area within an industry that language skills would be most useful was also worthy of note. Given the same choice of categories as was given to the employers, the majority chose customer interface, negotiation, and sales and marketing as areas where language skills are most important. (See Fig.10).

Fig. 10



In terms of the level of organisation that language skills are seen to be as most useful, most students considered that language skills are most useful at the middle level of an organisation. (See Fig 11).

Fig. 11



This is consistent with the major findings of the literature related to exporting, but quite different from the tourism industry where Japanese skills are mainly used at the lower level for customer liaison and so on.

When asked how important it is for companies involved in international business to communicate with their non-English speaking clients and business contacts in the client's native language the response was divided. Only one respondent rated this as not important at all. Just over half, 54% rated this as very important though in contrast, 43% rated this as not very important. Interestingly, of these 43% almost half (48%) were students of Japanese.

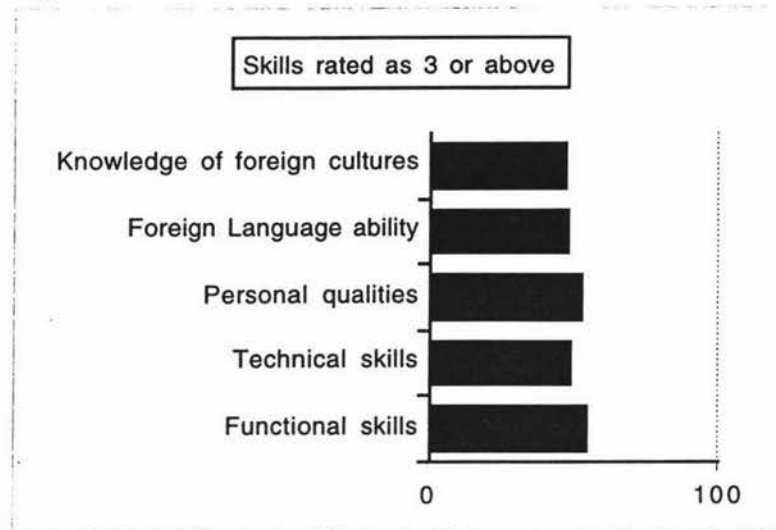
4.1.4 Value of language skills in the employment market

In order to gauge students expectations regarding the value of language skills in the job market, students were asked a number of questions. Firstly, they were asked to rate the following in terms of their importance in the job market on a scale of 1 to 5, in the same way as employers were asked.

Functional skills
Technical skills
Personal qualities (attitude, personality, etc)
Ability to speak a foreign language
Knowledge of foreign cultures

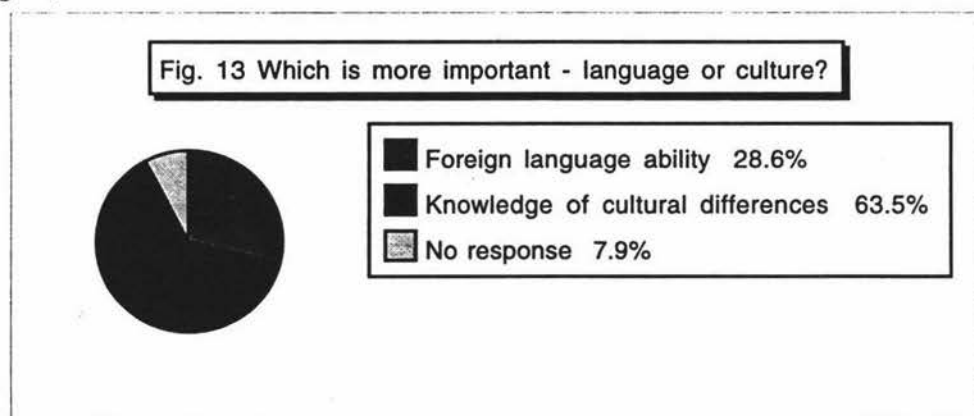
In general all the skills listed were rated as 3 (important) or above by approximately an even number of people. However, while 55 per cent rated functional skills as *very important* only 10 (16%) rated an ability to speak a foreign language as *very important*. (see Fig. 12)

Fig. 12



Secondly students were asked whether they thought that language skills are an advantage when seeking employment. The great majority (95%) answered in the affirmative to this question. Of these 71% were currently studying Japanese themselves.

The next question in this area asked whether the respondent would expect people with language skills to receive extra pay or promotional opportunities for their skills. Approximately three quarters (76%) answered affirmatively to this question. When the answers of the students of Japanese were compared with those of business it was found that a much higher proportion of students of Japanese (85%) expected this than students of business (50%). Students were then asked to compare the value of foreign language skills with a knowledge of foreign cultures in international business. The majority chose cultural awareness as more important than foreign language ability. (see Fig.13)



When asked if they believe it is valuable for students in New Zealand to study foreign languages, an overwhelming 97% of respondents answered yes. In addition, the majority (90%) of respondents answered that they had studied a foreign language. To ascertain the views of students regarding Japanese the following question was included: *Do you believe it is valuable for students in New Zealand to study Japanese?* Again the majority (87%) answered yes. Only 3% answered no, and 6% answered “don’t know”, the remaining 4% of answers were not valid. To further clarify students’ views of employment opportunities, students were asked if they thought that there were sufficient opportunities available in New Zealand for people to use Japanese language skills. About half of the respondents answered yes to this question, indicating perhaps that either these skills were more valuable overseas, or that employers did not seek such skills (see Table 14)

Table 14 Views on employment opportunities for people with Japanese skills

Yes	32 (51%)
No	18 (28%)
Don't know	9 (14%)
Not specified	4 (6%)

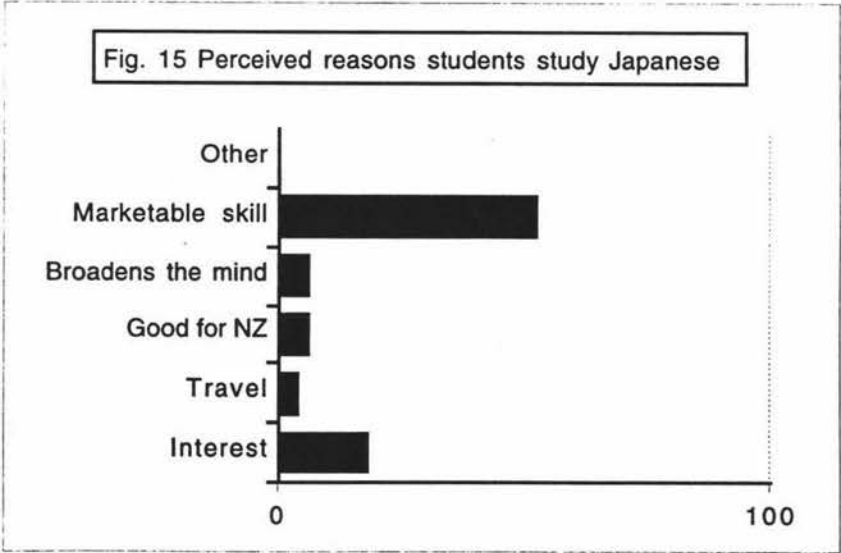
4.1.5 Motivation for Language Study

The final question in this area was as follows:

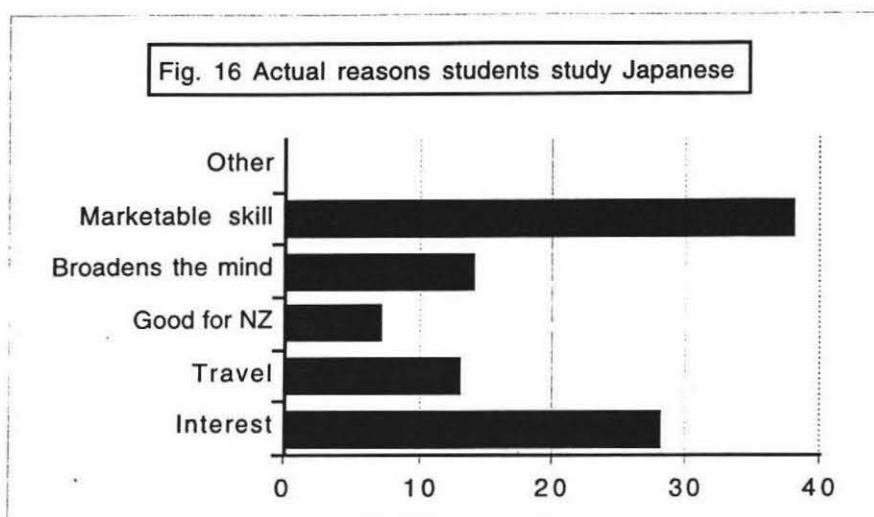
What is the main reason students in New Zealand study Japanese?

- Interest
- Broadens the mind
- Travel
- Marketable skill
- Good for New Zealand
- Other (please specify)

The large number of respondents who believed that students motivation for study was that Japanese is a marketable skill is significant. (see Fig. 15)



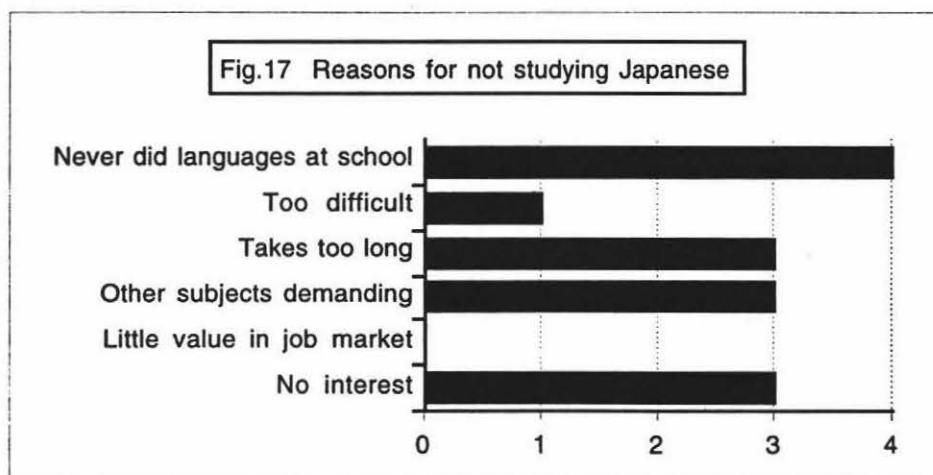
Students were then asked if they themselves studied Japanese and if so the reasons. 46 of the 63 (73%) respondents replied that they did study Japanese. The most commonly stated reason for this was that it was seen as a marketable skill. Another common reason was that they had an interest in the language. (See Fig.16)



Clearly economic motivation is a large factor in students' choice of subjects. For those who did not study Japanese the following options were given as reasons for this choice:

<i>No interest</i>	<i>Takes too long to become proficient</i>
<i>Little value in job market</i>	<i>Too difficult</i>
<i>Other subjects too demanding</i>	<i>Never did language at school</i>

For the 16 students who did not study Japanese the reasons were fairly evenly spread among the reasons given with the exception of the options "Little value in the job market" and "Too difficult". This would suggest that even these students believe that Japanese ability does have value in the job market. (See Fig. 17)



Students were asked in which industry they hoped to find employment once they had graduated. Many respondents gave two options for this question and two did not answer at all. Tourism was the most favoured option for students of Japanese. Their expectations of employment are outlined in Table 18.

Table 18 Employment expectations of students of Japanese

Tourism	27 (43%)
Trade	6 (9%)
Education	11 (17%)
Translating/Interpreting	4 (6%)
Other	6 (9%)

The large number who hope to find employment in the tourism industry is significant and is probably related to the Polytechnic's reputation for responding well in the past to the needs of the tourism industry with regard to Japanese skills.

A quite different result was obtained from the students of the Diploma in International Marketing. Many of these respondents were studying part-time and were already employed. Some of those who fitted this category listed their area of employment as follows:

- Electronics design and manufacture
- Self-employed
- Manufacturing industry
- Export
- Engineering

Others listed their hopes and expectations for work after graduating in the following areas:

- Import/Export
- International business
- Manufacturing/Sales/Export
- Education - English language schools

Students were invited to make comments on the value of language skills. Comments from those enrolled in full-time Japanese courses included the following:

"They will become more important in the future as tourism increases, so NZ needs more people who can speak foreign languages".

"Without New Zealanders who have the ability to speak foreign languages, ie. Japanese, Chinese, Korean etc. the tourist industry etc. would suffer. However until people with this type of ability are recognised, it is difficult to see the value of foreign language skills in this country".

"One is made more aware of one's own language when one studies a foreign language".

"Builds international understanding and peace. Develops general skills such as memory and prediction."

"...the difference between not being able to communicate in today's tough business world can decide whether a business interaction is successful or not".

"...should be encouraged hugely at school - not just marketable languages for today such as Japanese and Korean, but those that will be of benefit when today's school children are getting degrees and entering the work force..."

"...studying a foreign language and the culture that goes with it will inevitably aid in dealings with overseas businesses thus increasing New Zealand's trade potential with other countries."

"Learning a foreign language also teaches you cultural differences which are important in understanding differences between cultures. This is important when dealing in trade issues etc."

"I think the ability to speak any foreign language is more difficult than most employers perceive because too many employers are putting functional skills over foreign language skills. Foreign language skills are extremely important to communicate effectively between races. I think that some people fail to realise that although functional skills are also extremely important, they are quicker and easier to learn than a foreign language."

Comments from those enrolled in the Diploma in International Marketing included:

"Japanese is fine for present tourist trade - surely our future trade will be more with other Asian countries - particularly mainland China. What about Mandarin and Cantonese?"

"Teaching of foreign languages should start at primary school and be widely available".

"Cultural awareness is probably as important as the language itself. Many students only progress to beginners level so can't converse fluently with native speakers. Sometimes its better to have native speakers employed who also understand service levels required. In the hospitality and tourism arena it is advantageous to know basic words for guest interaction".

"I would study Japanese if it became significant to my work or interests. For the same reasons I would study Mandarin, Malay, Hindi or Spanish".

"You have an appreciation for other cultures, you can communicate and can learn other languages".

"At work (exporting business) we have many letters translated into English ie. Swedish, German, Spanish etc. Correspondence from Japan is always received in English."

"The knowledge of different cultures is very important for businessmen".

4.2 Summary

The findings of this research show that it is difficult to treat "students" as one body and opinions on the value of language skills clearly differ to some extent depending on whether the student concerned is studying language or not. While acknowledging that the small sample size for students of international business may not present a totally representative view, it would appear that these students did not value language skills as highly as those actively studying Japanese. While most students saw Japanese as a marketable skill, and an advantage when seeking employment, fewer business students believed it would attract higher pay or promotional opportunities. Students' perceptions of the level at which language skills are most useful perhaps reflect an optimism that they will be able to find a middle or high level position.

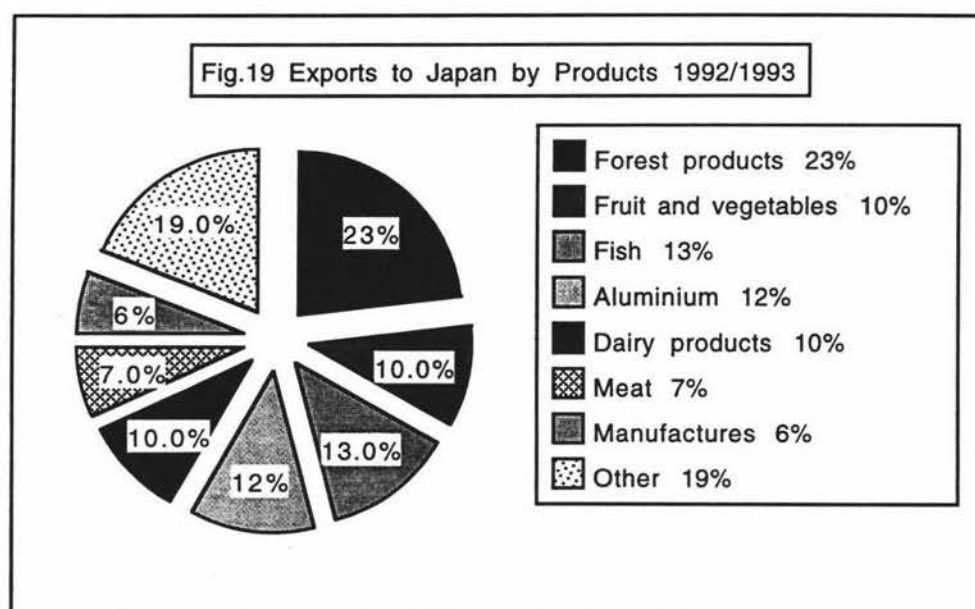
Language skills were seen as being particularly useful in the tourism industry and also in trade, education and the service industry. Interestingly, all students considered an understanding of other cultures as more important than understanding the language of the business client, and only about half the students believed that there were ample opportunities for them to use Japanese in the work force in New Zealand.

5 New Zealand Business

5.1 Exporters

5.1.1 Background

Japan is one of New Zealand's main trading partners. It is the second biggest export destination after Australia, taking 14.6% of all New Zealand exports (f.o.b.) for the year ended September 1994 and 17.2% for the year ended September 1995.¹ It is New Zealand's largest market for fish, cheese, aluminium, wood pulp, logs, coal, and squash, and pays top prices for high quality food products such as kiwi fruit, persimmons, live and chilled seafood and grain-fed beef.² Exports have traditionally been heavily concentrated on primary products and processed primary products. (see fig. 19)



Since 1994 dramatic changes have been taking place in the Japanese market with the so-called "price destruction", the simplification of the distribution system, and the increasing number of consumers looking for lower prices. This has had far-reaching implications for exporters and provided new opportunities and may be one of the reasons that exports increased 18.5% in 1995. There was a noticeable increase in value-added goods over this period, with sales of furniture and prefabricated buildings up 80%, and sales of ice cream up 118%.³ Elaborately transformed manufactures however account for only a small proportion of exports to Japan.

¹ Statistics NZ 1995

² *Stretching for Growth Building an Export Strategy for New Zealand 1993/94* TRADENZ

³ *Export News* 13 Nov. 1995

Canterbury

The Canterbury region has a population of close to half a million⁴ and extends from the Clarence River in the north to the Waitaki river in the south, and west as far as the Main Divide. The great majority of the population (91.4%) are of European ethnicity according to the 1991 census.

Traditionally the primary sector and the downstream industries servicing it have been the focus of the economy, although recently there has been considerable growth in other areas. Due to the small size of the local market, businesses in the Canterbury region are heavily export focused, with some manufacturers exporting up to 90% of production. The majority of primary produce is exported. Major exports include meat, wool, dairy products and products from a growing horticultural sector. Sheepskin products, leather goods, deer by-products and seeds are also important exports. Almost 90 per cent of the region's export income is produced by the agriculture and horticulture industries.⁵ Other important export industries are electronics, plastics, and computer software.⁶

5.1.2 The Survey

The questionnaire for businesses was designed to elicit employers' attitudes towards language skills and also, more importantly, the extent to which these skills were considered important in recruitment, promotional opportunities and training. Information on how businesses communicated with their Japanese clients and business associates, and how language skills were used in reality was also sought.

5.1.3 Survey Results

In December 1994, 142 questionnaires were posted out to those companies in the Canterbury region which were listed with the Canterbury Development Corporation as being involved in exporting to Japan. A total of 55 responses were received - a rate of return of 38.73%. Following are the results of the survey.

5.1.4 Company Profile

In terms of staff numbers, the majority of companies which responded to the survey fit the category small - medium size firms by New Zealand standards, with 60% employing 1 - 20 staff. Approximately one company in six (16.3%) had 21 - 50 staff, while a similar number (14.5%) had 51 - 200 staff. A small number (9%) employed over 200 employees. (see Table.20)

⁴ According to the 1991 census, the population of Canterbury was 446,114 Source: Statistics NZ

⁵ Canterbury Promotion Kit, Canterbury Development Corporation Ltd. 1995

⁶ Colin McInnes, Chief Executive, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce 1994 Directory of Members

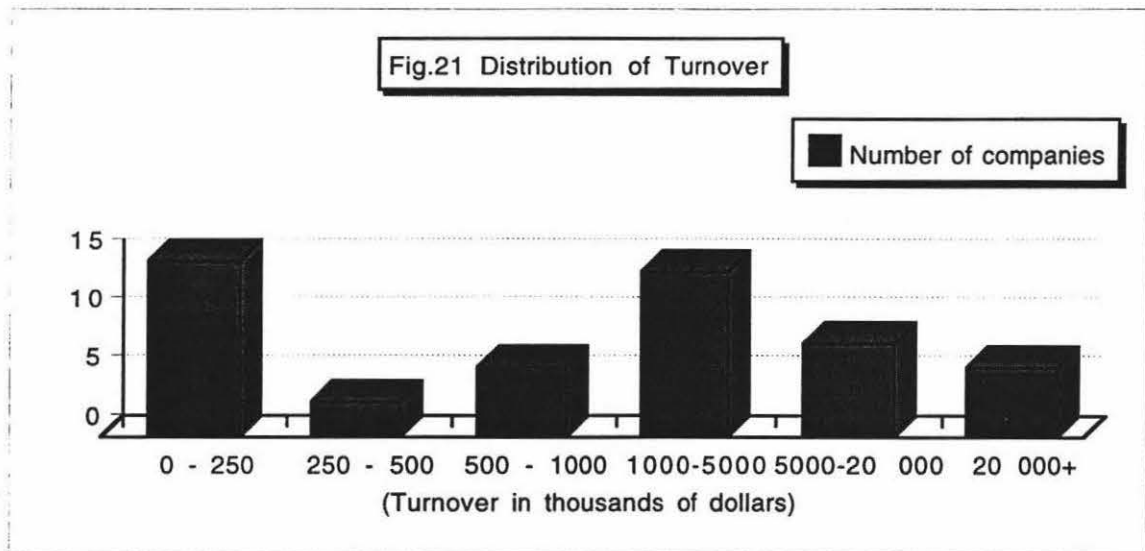
Table 20 Company size by number of staff

1 - 20	60.0%
21 - 50	16.3%
51 - 200	14.5%
Over 200	9.0%

The high proportion of companies with twenty or fewer staff is of particular significance in this study as one would expect that these companies would be less likely to have the resources available to employ a language specialist than larger companies.

Turnover

Turnover amongst respondents was varied ranging from 0 - \$250 000 (15%), to twenty million dollars or over (6%). A large number (14%) fitted the category of between one and five million dollars. 3 per cent and 6 per cent of companies fitted the categories \$250 000 - \$500 000 and \$500 000 - 1 000 000 respectively. 8 per cent were in the category \$5 million - \$20 million. (see fig. 21) 5.4 per cent of responses were invalid.



Area of business

The majority of exporters who participated in the survey (72.7%) were engaged in manufacturing. Other activities included distribution (12.7%), wholesale (30.9%) and retail (14.5%). A small number (18.1%) were also involved in importing. Many companies were engaged in a mixture of these activities.

Importance of the Japanese market

While all of the companies which received the questionnaire were listed as exporters to Japan, of the sample of 55 companies participating in the survey, the majority (36 companies, 65.4% of the total) stated that the Japanese market was either important (I), very important (V) or of critical importance (C) to their business. It is these companies which are of considerable interest in this research as they are the ones which one may expect to be more likely to put some effort and resources into maximising their success with Japanese clients. Of these 36 companies, 14 (38.8%) stated that the Japanese market was of critical importance to their business. The responses of these companies are also worthy of note given that their relationship with the Japanese means the success or failure of their business as a whole. Their responses will be analysed in isolation as appropriate. The Japanese market was considered very important for 9 (16.3%) of all respondent companies, and important for 13 (23.6%) of companies.

Table 22 Importance of the Japanese market for exporters

Marginal importance (M)	19 (34.5%)
Important (I)	13 (23.6%)
Very Important (V)	9 (16.3%)
Critical Importance (C)	14 (38.8%)

Correlation between size and importance of the Japanese market

When staff numbers were compared with the degree of importance of the Japanese market it was found that of those companies for which the Japanese market was considered of critical importance, just over half (57.1%) had a small number of staff in the range of 1 - 20. The remainder were spread between the other categories with only one company indicating it had more than 200 staff. Annual turnover for these companies was generally in the higher categories with 75% of them in the \$500 000 or more category. Those companies which rated the Japanese market as "very important" tended to be larger in size and turnover than the average. Seven of the nine companies in this category had a staff of over twenty and an annual turnover of \$500 000 or more. Six of these had an annual turnover of over one million dollars. Those which rated the Japanese market as "important" were predominantly small in both numbers of staff and turnover. The majority, 12 out of 13 (92.3%), had a staff of between one and twenty and just over half (53.8%) had an annual turnover of under \$250 000. (see Table 23)

Table 23 Cross tabulation of importance of the Japanese market and turnover

	0 - 250 000	250 - 500 000	500 000 - 1 m	1 - 5 million	5 - 20 million	20 million+
Critical	3	0	2	5	1	2
Very Important	1	0	1	2	2	2
Important	7	1	1	2	1	0

Table 24 Cross tabulation of importance of the Japanese market and staff numbers

	1 - 20	21 - 50	51 - 200	200+
Critical	8	2	3	1
Very Important	2	4	2	1
Important	12	0	0	1

According to much of the literature on doing business with Japan, the initial costs of establishing a relationship with the Japanese is rather high as it necessitates travel to Japan, accommodation, entertaining guests and so on. This may be one reason for the predominance of larger companies with relatively high turnover amongst companies for which the Japanese market is rated highly. One might conclude that it is more difficult for companies with fewer resources to do business successfully with Japan.

5.1.5 Attitudes

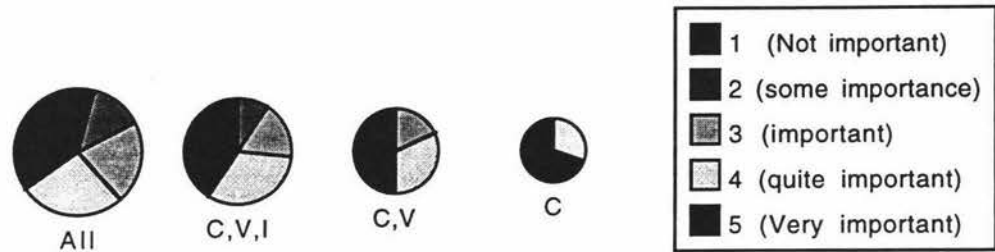
Attitudes towards cultural understanding

Two questions were included in the questionnaire in order to ascertain the employers' attitudes towards understanding Japanese culture and using Japanese language. One would imagine that the majority of respondents would rate an understanding of Japanese culture and business etiquette for those who deal with Japanese clients quite highly.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "not important" and 5 is "very important", the majority of companies (80%) indicated that an understanding of Japanese culture and knowledge of Japanese business etiquette for staff who deal with Japanese clients was 3 or above. A large number (72.7%) rated the importance of such an understanding as above 3, and about one third (32.7%) rated it at 5 or very important. Only 9 companies (16.3%) rated it as 1 or 2.

When respondents' views on this area were compared with the degree of importance of the Japanese market, a definite correlation was obvious. As one might logically expect, those companies which had more of a vested interest in Japan were more aware of the importance of understanding Japanese culture and business etiquette. The more important the Japanese market, the higher this awareness. (see Fig. 25)

Fig. 25 Importance of understanding culture c.f. market significance

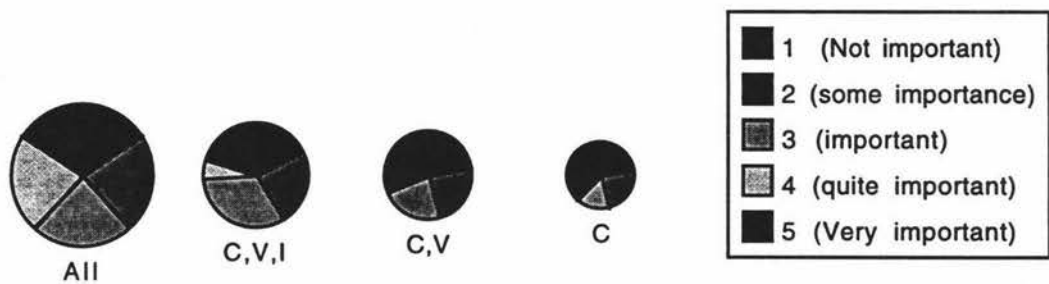


C = Companies for which the Japanese market is of critical importance
V = Companies for which the Japanese market is considered very important
I = Companies for which the Japanese market is considered important
All includes the above three groups plus those for which the Japanese market is of marginal importance.

Attitudes towards the use of Japanese for Japanese clients

Fewer respondents rated the importance of language skills as highly as awareness of cultural differences. When asked to rate the importance of communicating with Japanese clients/associates in their native language on the same scale of 1 to 5, just over half (50.9%) of the total sample of 55 companies considered that it was important (a rating of 3 or above) to communicate with Japanese clients in their native language. Again, there was a clear correlation between the importance of the Japanese market and the degree to which communicating with Japanese clients in their native language was seen as important. The more important the Japanese market, the more likely that language skills would be seen as very important, as Fig.26 illustrates.

Fig. 26 Importance of language knowledge c.f. market significance



A further indicator of exporters attitudes towards the importance of language skills was their views on what sort of educational background students interested in international business should have. In response to a question which asked whether it is valuable for New Zealand students interested in international business to study Japanese, the majority (76%) of the total sample answered in the affirmative as opposed to 18% who disagreed. (6 % of responses were invalid).

Respondents were invited to comment on their answer and the majority did. Of those who believed it was valuable for students interested in international business to study Japanese, a variety of reasons were expressed. Many stated that an understanding of the language improved communication, one noting that it sometimes helped explain supposed "problems". One respondent wrote "Japanese are fastidious in all business matters and must be supplied with what they want not what happens to be the New Zealand standard, and it takes time to establish good PR." Another felt that as a world economic power, Japan deserved the respect of knowing the language. Several respondents noted that the Japan was a significant market for New Zealand with great potential for growth as the tastes of younger Japanese shift to Western goods. A number commented that the Japanese clients appreciate the effort of foreigners who learn Japanese. The view that other languages apart from Japanese were also important was common. A number of respondents suggested that students should also be encouraged to study Chinese, Spanish German, French, Mandarin, Thai, or Korean, many emphasising that Chinese is likely to be of more use to New Zealand in future as the potential of the Chinese-speaking market is huge.

Comments from those who held the opposite view (18%), that Japanese language skills would not be valuable for students interested in international business and some saw value in language skills other than Japanese. A large number commented that it would be more useful for students to study Chinese, and one felt that German would be more useful. The advantage of language skills was seen to be small by one respondent who commented "They are hard, tricky businessmen and the advantage of knowing the language is minor in comparison to the other factors in a deal." Some were clearly satisfied with the English ability of their Japanese clients and therefore felt study of Japanese was unnecessary, although one commented that the Japanese should learn English. One comment showed some interesting insight "Japan is a minor market for us - however, possibly if we had a more aware attitude and more knowledge we would find we had easy access and therefore more exports."

5.1.6 The Reality

Recruitment practices, promotion, pay, training and current staffing

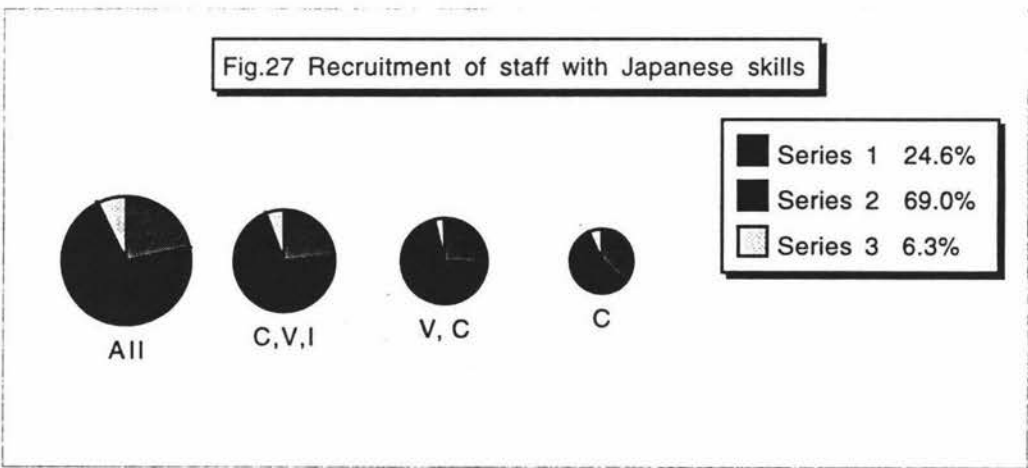
In order to get a more accurate understanding of the value ascribed by employers to language skills, questions relating to recruitment practices, promotion, pay, training and current staffing were included in the questionnaire. While approximately half of

all respondents considered it important to communicate with Japanese clients in their native tongue, it would be unwise to assume that this is what happens in practice. Many people pay lip service to gender equality yet continue sexist practices!

5.1.6.1 Recruitment

Recruitment practices is one area where the value of language skills can be easily measured. If these skills are considered very valuable, one might expect that they would be actively sought when recruiting staff. It is precisely this area where the biggest discrepancy in value exists according to the hypothesis. Whereas students assume their language skills in which they have invested much time and money to be highly valuable, it is suggested that employers are more interested in their other skills.

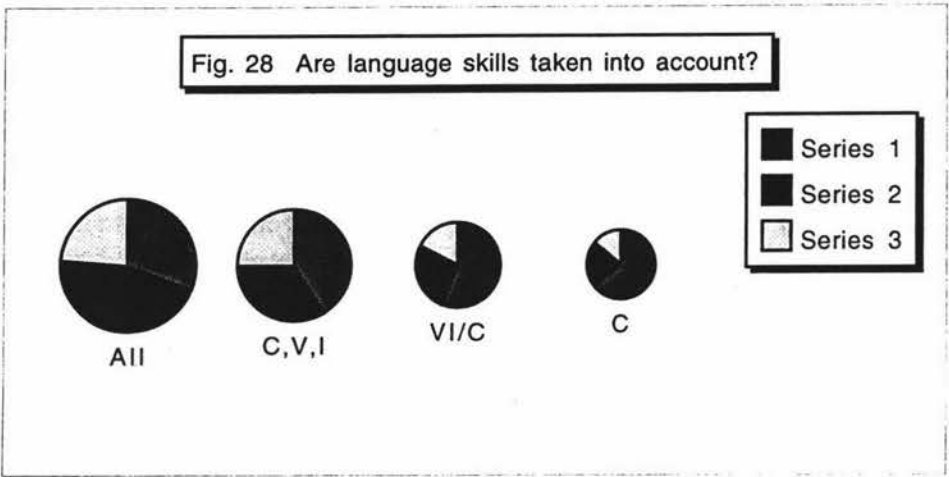
Consistent with the findings in the literature, and with the hypothesis, the majority of respondents (70.9%) had not sought to recruit people with Japanese language skills. Of the total sample, one in five companies (21.8%) had sought people with such skills and 4 (7.2%) answered not applicable. However, the more important the Japanese market was to the company, the more likely they were to have made efforts to recruit staff with Japanese skills. (see Fig 27)



Interestingly, of the 20 companies which rated the importance of communicating with Japanese clients or associates as 3 or above (important to very important), only 9 had sought to recruit people with Japanese skills and 10 said they never have.

Another way to measure the value given to foreign language skills is to question whether such skills are taken into account when recruiting employees. While it may be that some companies don't actively seek out such skills, applicants possessing them may be seen as having an advantage over those without, given that they meet certain other criteria. In response to this question just under half the respondents (45.4%) answered in the negative, while approximately a third (30.9%) answered affirmatively. A considerable number of respondents (23.6%) answered not applicable to this

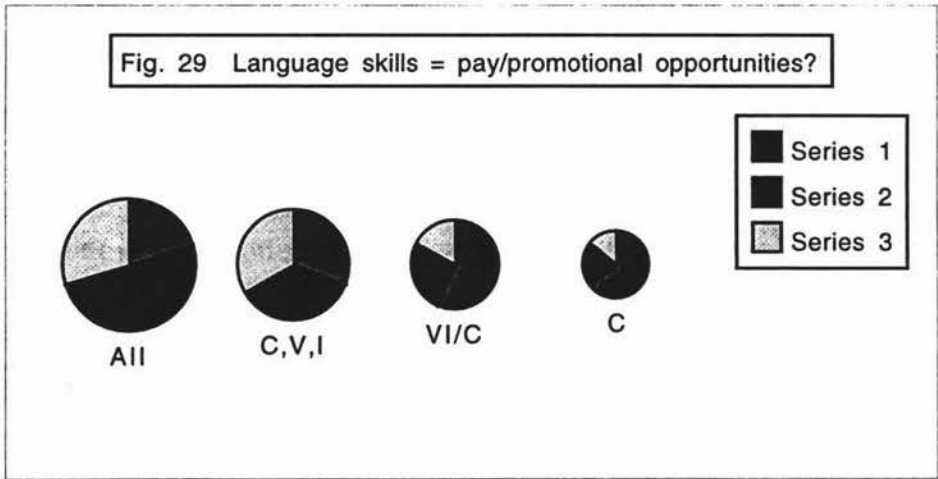
question. The greater the importance of the Japanese market, the higher the proportion of companies which did take foreign language skills into account as illustrated in Fig. 28.



Consistent with the findings in the literature, the view that foreign language skills are a bonus is clearly evident here.

5.1.6.2 Pay/promotional opportunities

A further way to measure the value employers place on foreign language skills is to question the extent to which such skills carry any extra pay or promotional opportunities. Of the total sample one company in five (20%) said that they did carry these opportunities while just under half (49%) of the companies stated that language skills did not carry any extra pay or promotional opportunities. Those answering not applicable numbered 16 (29%). Again there is a clear correlation between the degree to which such skills provide extra pay or promotional opportunities and the importance of the Japanese market.

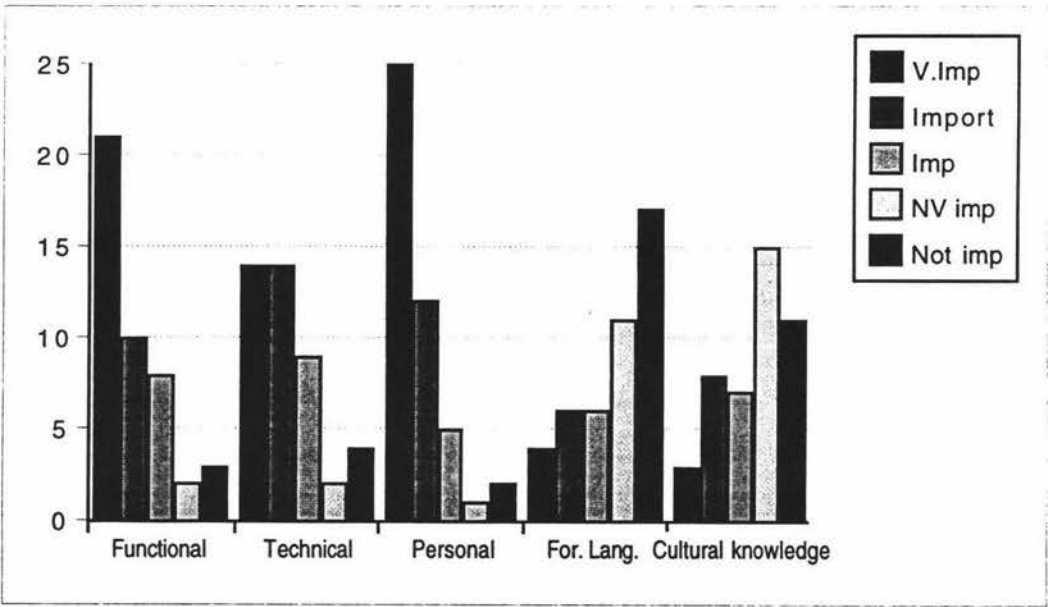


For those companies which rated the Japanese market as of critical importance 64 per cent did recognise Japanese language skills and reward them financially. Although these skills tend not to be actively sought in the majority of cases, it would appear that the more important the market, the more likely they will be taken into account and rewarded financially once employed.

5.1.6.3 Comparative value of language skills

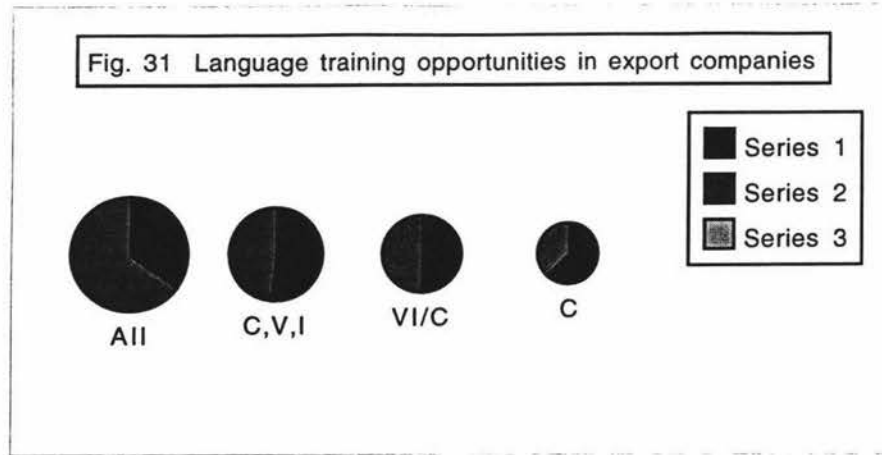
In order to compare the value placed on language skills with other skills, respondents were asked to rank a number of skills in terms of their importance when hiring staff. These included functional skills (communication skills etc.), technical skills, personal qualities (attitude, personality etc.), an ability to speak a foreign language and a knowledge of foreign cultures. Functional skills and personal qualities were generally considered far more important when hiring new staff and few companies rated an ability to speak a foreign language as important relative to the other skills listed. Very few considered a knowledge of a foreign language as “very important.” (see Fig.30)

Fig. 30 The comparative value of language skills c.f. other skills

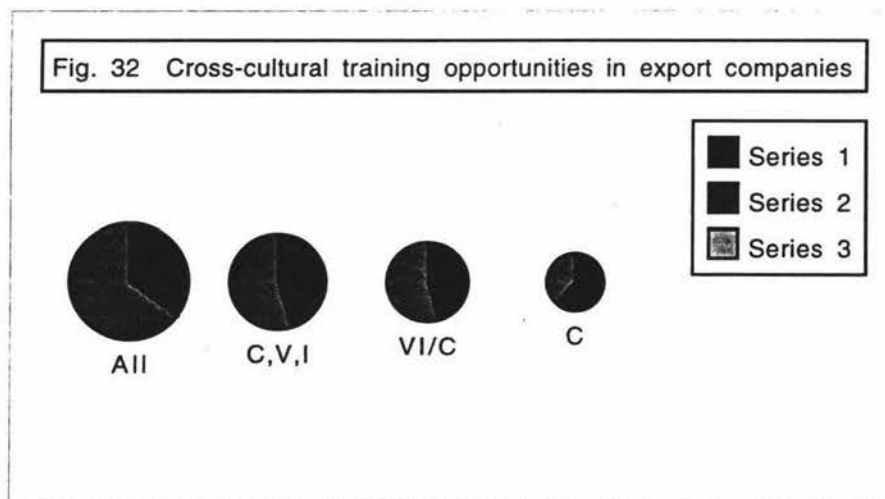


5.1.6.4 Training opportunities

Language training was not widely encouraged amongst respondents as a whole although one third of all companies stated that they did encourage staff to engage in language training. The more important the Japanese market was for the firm the more likely they were to encourage such training (see Fig. 31).

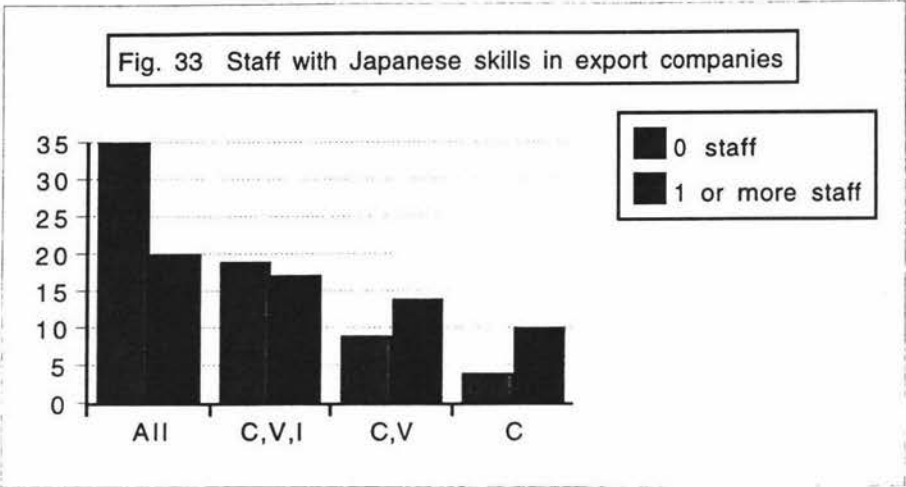


A similar pattern emerged with regard to encouragement for cross-cultural training. One third of all companies stated that they encouraged staff to engage in cross-cultural training while just under two thirds (60%) did not. 7% of responses were invalid. The more important the Japanese market, the more likely the company encouraged such training. (see Fig. 32)



5.1.6.5 Current staff and their Japanese language skills

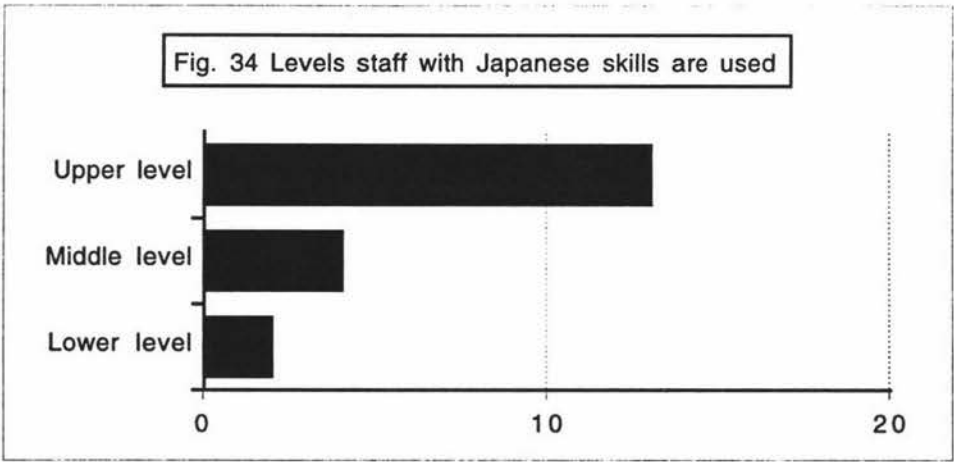
Of the total sample, 35 (63%) had no permanent staff with Japanese language skills and 20 (36.36%) had at least one permanent staff member with Japanese language skills. It must be noted that in order to keep the questionnaire a manageable size, to encourage people to respond, these skills were not broken down to more specific levels of proficiency so the following figures represent a very broad definition of language skills. They may include those with a very elementary knowledge of pleasantries and greetings, as well as those who are highly proficient in all four macro-skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing. The more important the Japanese market, the higher the proportion of staff with Japanese language skills. (see Fig. 33)



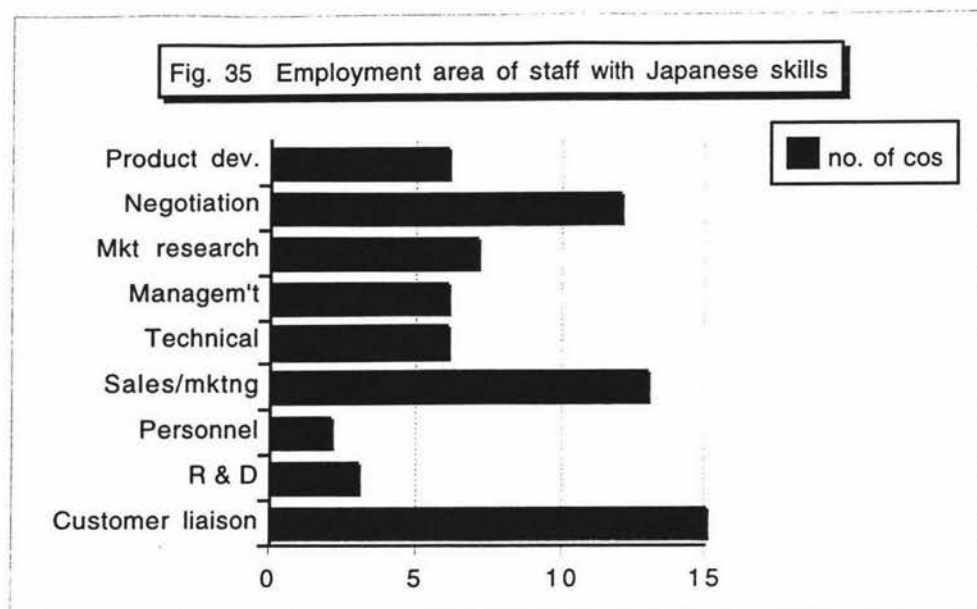
The majority of companies were satisfied with the skills of their staff. Only 7 of the 55 companies (12.7%) considered that a lack of Japanese language skills among their employees had negatively affected their company's success, as opposed to 44 (80%) who said that it had not. The proportion which did believe that it had affected company success increased the more important the Japanese market was.

Actual use of Japanese staff

Of those who employed staff with Japanese language skills, 7 of the 20 (35%) had at least one member of staff who was native Japanese. The staff with Japanese language skills were primarily used at the upper level as the figure below indicates. This finding is consistent with research by Enderwick and Akoorie. (see Fig. 34)



In terms of functional area, staff with Japanese skills were employed in a variety of areas, in particular customer liaison, sales and marketing and negotiation. (see Fig. 35)



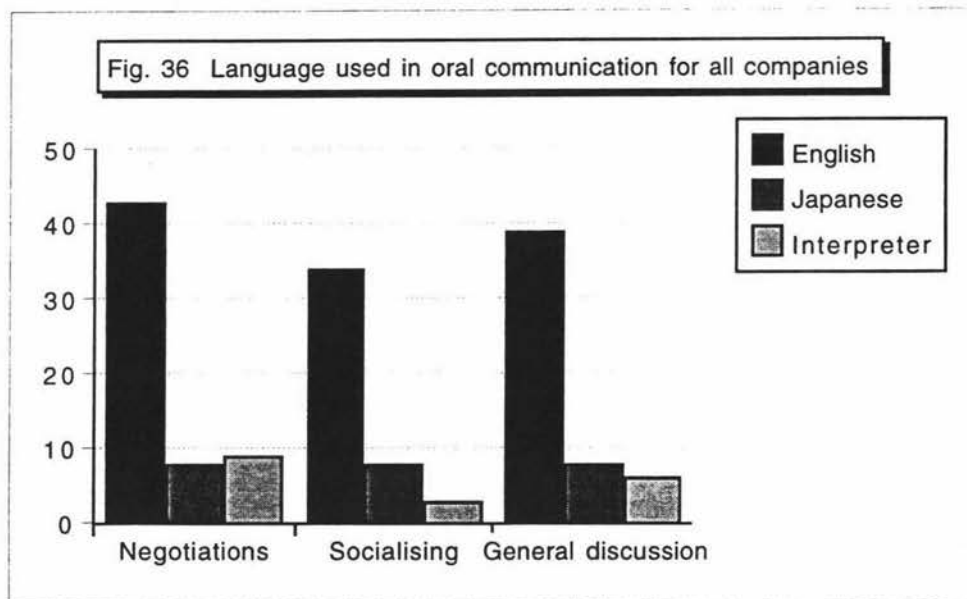
While no data was obtained on the level of Japanese skills staff had, the questionnaire did include a question to differentiate between written and oral skills. When asked whether oral Japanese skills were more important than an ability to read and write Japanese in their industry, the majority (83%) answered affirmatively and 17% answered equally important. Not one respondent answered negatively to this question. This has major ramifications for Japanese language education which has tended to focus heavily on reading and writing Japanese, especially at tertiary level university courses.

5.1.6.6 Modes of Communication

The following section discusses in more detail how exporters communicate with their Japanese business associates and customers. Communication can be broadly categorised into two distinct types - written communication and oral communication. While acknowledging that both types of communication can assume many forms, rather than burdening the questionnaire with a long list, these were broken into three and five categories respectively. For oral communication these were face to face negotiations, socialising and general discussion; for written communication, general business, advertising, legal documents, proposals and reports. These categories were also used by Stanley, Ingram and Chittick (1990) in their study of the relationship between international trade and linguistic competence.

Oral Communication

As can be seen in Fig 36 English was the most favoured language for all types of oral communication for exporters by the majority of respondents. Japanese was used in a small number of cases - 9% for negotiation, 8% for socialising and 9% for general discussion. The relatively infrequent use of interpreters (10%) suggests that in the majority of cases, the Japanese customer or agent had a sufficient command of English to get through the business. Fig.36 illustrates this clearly.



One might expect that the more important the Japanese market was to a company, the more likely they would be to use Japanese in their communication. This appears to be the case for oral communication. Whereas over all companies, English is used almost five times as often as Japanese, for those companies which rate the Japanese market as important, very important or of critical importance, though English is still used more than Japanese, it is used just under four times (3.71) as often as Japanese. This trend is even more evident when the sample is narrowed down still further to those respondents who consider the Japanese market to be very important or of critical importance to their business. The proportion of Japanese used increases to almost equal to the amount of English used (1.35 times). For those companies which rated the Japanese market as of critical importance, the proportion of English increases slightly to twice the amount of Japanese, however, this may be due to the small sample size - only 14 companies fit into this category. (see Figs 37 - 40).

Fig.37 Oral Communication where Japanese market Critical, V.Impt or Impt

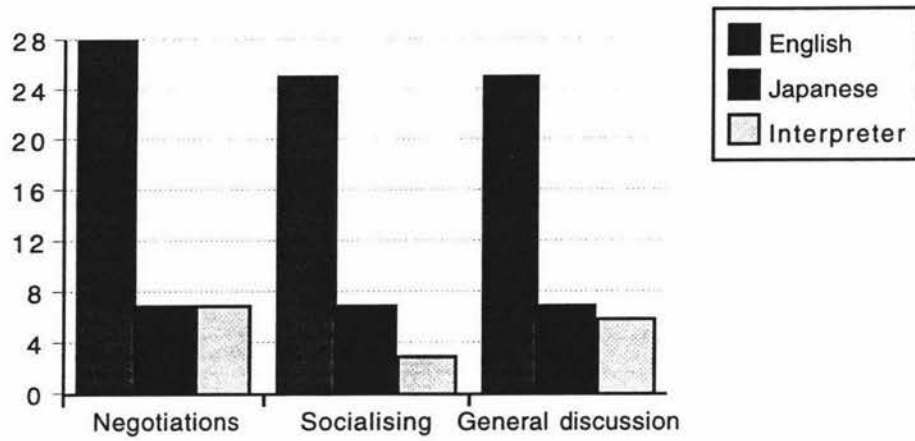


Fig. 38 Oral Communication where Japanese mkt rated Critical or V.Impt

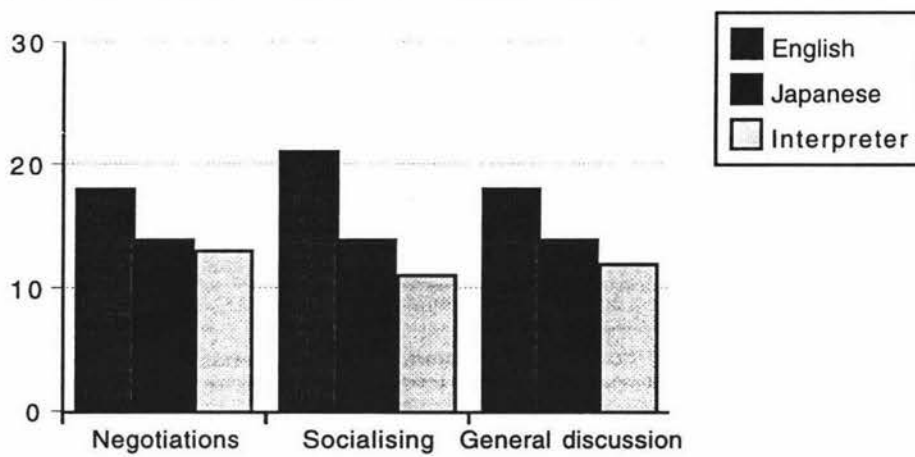
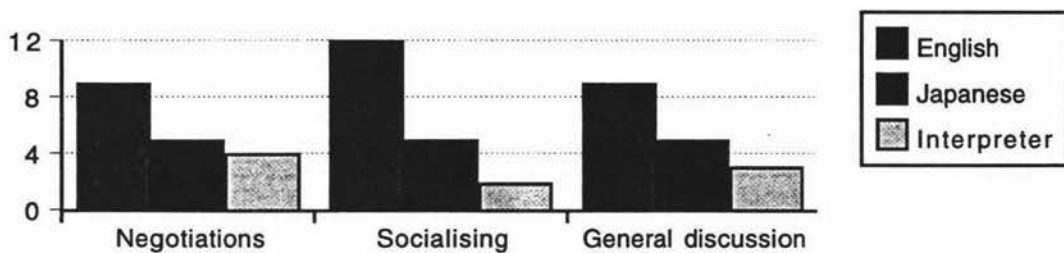
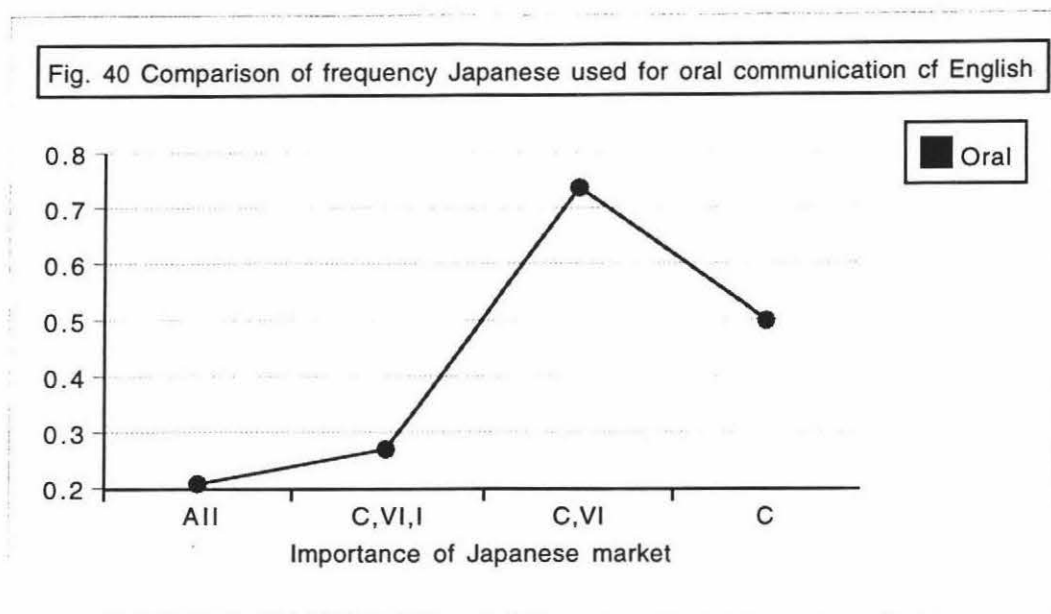


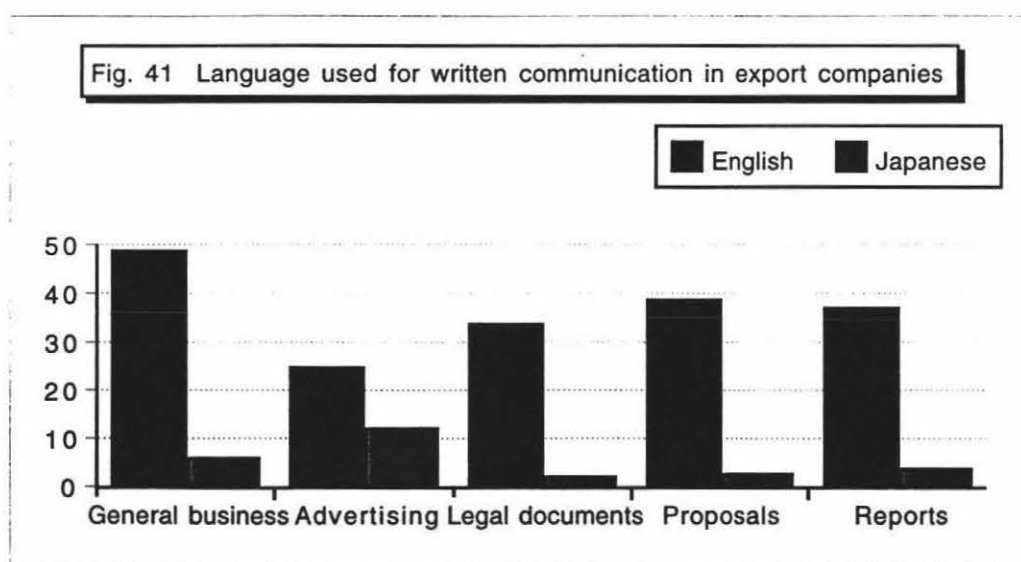
Fig. 39 Oral Communication where Japanese mkt rated critically important





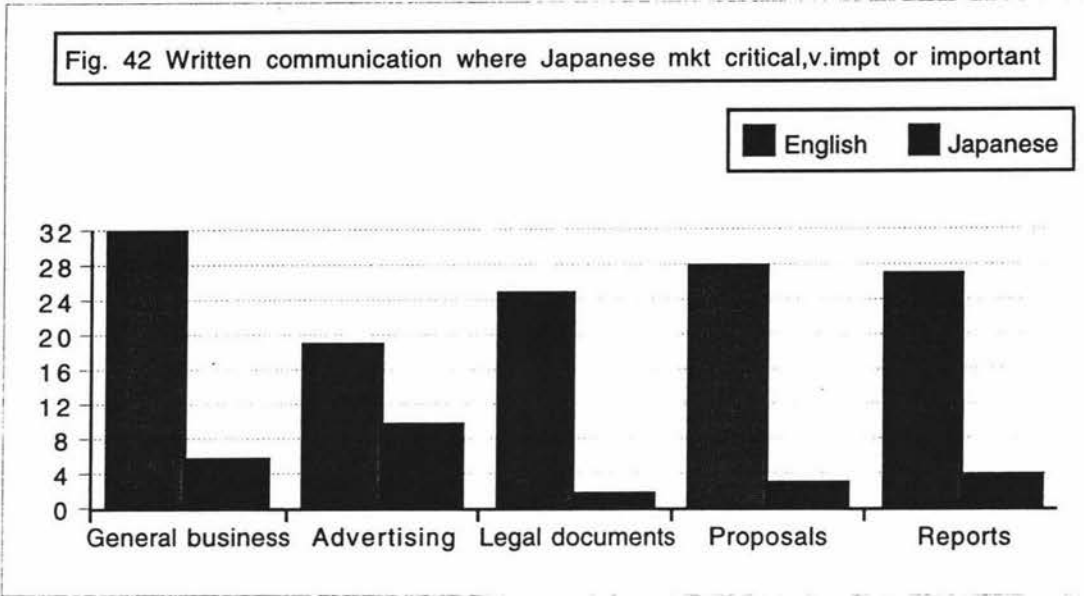
Written Communication

Consistent with the results relating to oral communication, the majority of exporters used English for written communication also. The one area in which a significant number of companies used Japanese was advertising (44%). Fig 41 shows the data for the different uses of written communication in detail. Overall, English is used almost seven times as often as Japanese for the total sample.

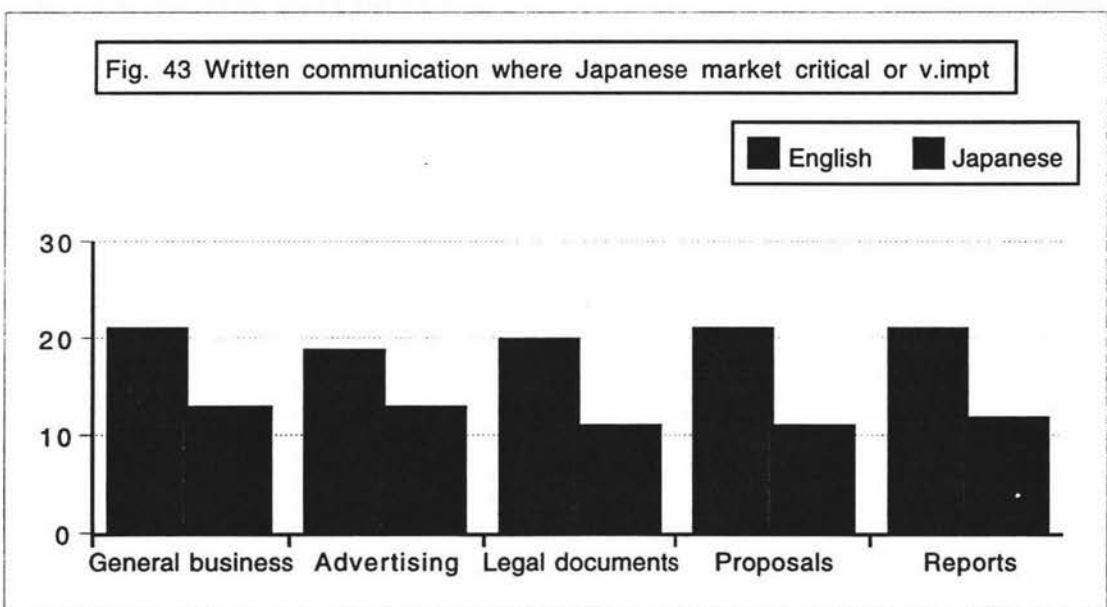


As in the case of oral Japanese, one might expect that the more important the Japanese market is to a business the more likely it would use Japanese in communication with Japan. When those companies for which the Japanese market was of marginal importance were removed from the sample, a slight increase in the proportion of

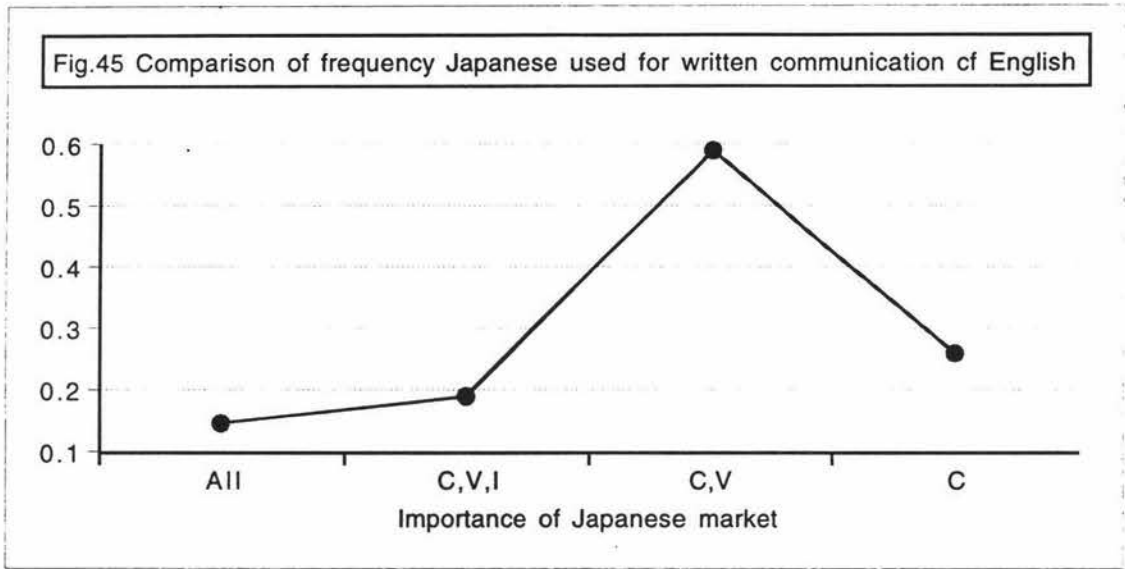
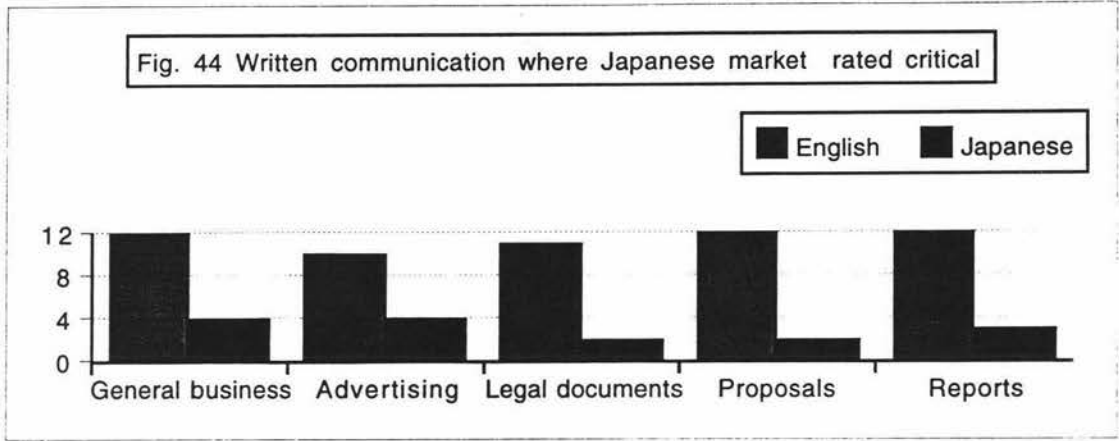
businesses using Japanese in written communication was evident, as illustrated in Fig. 42. The use of English decreases from seven to five times (5.24) as often as Japanese overall.



When the sample is limited to those companies which rated the Japanese market as very important or of critical importance, the proportion of Japanese used increases dramatically as illustrated in Fig. 43.



The proportion of English used decreases to just over one and a half times the frequency that Japanese is used. (1.7 times) . For those companies for which the Japanese market was of critical importance English was used more frequently, almost four (3.8) times as often as Japanese. (see Fig.44) Again the small sample size - 14 companies - may account for this.



5.1.6.7 Use of agents or intermediaries, translators and interpreters

The extent to which a company uses agents or intermediaries for its overseas market servicing is one factor which would certainly affect the frequency Japanese is used. One might assume, as research by Enderwick and Akoorie (1992) suggests, that a servicing mode of direct selling may require a greater use of in-house foreign language specialists than is the case when the services of intermediaries are engaged. One may also expect a correlation between the use of such intermediaries, the size of the company and whether it has the resources to establish its own agency overseas.

Agents

Amongst those companies which responded to the survey, agents or intermediaries were quite commonly used. Only 18 (32.7%) of the sample companies stated that they never use intermediaries or agents for their business dealings with Japan. There is

a general tendency for the reliance on agents to decrease as the importance of the Japanese market increases, as illustrated by Table 46 below. However, a considerable number which rate the importance of the Japanese market highly, appear to use agents or intermediaries from time to time.

Table 46 Exporters use of agents for dealing with Japanese clients

	All	C,V,I	C,V	C
Never	18 (32.7%)	11 (30.5%)	8 (34.7%)	6 (42.8%)
Sometimes	19 (34.5%)	15 (41.6%)	9 (39.1%)	3 (21.4%)
Often	6 (10.9%)	5 (13.8%)	4 (17.3%)	4 (28.5%)
Always	12 (21.8%)	5 (13.8%)	2 (08.6%)	1 (07.1%)

One may conclude that this is due to increased reliance on in-house staff with Japanese skills, however, interestingly this does not appear to be the case. Although six out of the 11 (54%) companies which rated the Japanese market highly (C, VI or I) and never used agents did employ staff with Japanese skills, four out of the ten companies (40%) also in this category (C VI or I) but which often or always used agents also employed staff with Japanese skills. When narrowed down further to only those companies which rated the Japanese market as very important or of critical importance, two thirds stated that they also employed staff with Japanese skills. In light of Enderwick and Akoorie's finding that a servicing mode of direct selling may demand a greater use of in-house foreign language specialists, this is an interesting result.

There did not seem to be any clear relationship between the size of the company and its likelihood of using agents or intermediaries. Of those companies which used agents to some degree, and rated the Japanese market as very important or of critical importance, the majority (64%) were in the high turnover range of over \$1 million per annum, and staff numbers were evenly spread over the three categories 1 - 20, 21 - 50 and 51 - 200. Companies which rated the Japanese market as very important or of critical importance but which stated that they never used agents or intermediaries also tended to have high annual turnover (71% = over \$1 million) but lower staff numbers. The majority of this group (5 out of 8) had fewer than 20 staff. Because actual numbers are quite low it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this.

Translators and Interpreters

The use of outside translators and interpreters by respondents was quite low. Given the considerable reliance on English described earlier perhaps this is not surprising. Overall the majority of companies (69%) stated that they never use outside interpreters or translators. This does not vary to any great degree when correlated with the importance of the Japanese market. (see Table 47).

Table 47 Use of outside interpreters and translators by exporters

	All	C,V,I	C,V	C
Never	38 (69%)	23 (64%)	12 (52%)	9 (64%)
Sometimes	14 (25%)	11 (31%)	9 (39%)	5 (36%)
Often	2 (04%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)	0
Always	1 (2%)	0	0	0

There was however, a clear correlation between use of outside interpreters and translators and the existence of staff in-house who can be used for this purpose. Approximately one third of companies who export a considerable amount of their products to Japan stated that they sometimes use interpreters or translators. Of those in the category where the Japanese market was rated critically important, very important or 17 out of 36 (47%) employed staff with Japanese language skills, 14 out of 23 (61%) of those which rated the Japanese market as very important or of critical importance employed such staff and 10/14 (71%) of the companies for which Japanese business was critical employed staff with Japanese skills.

5.1.7 Summary

It would appear that in the export industry Japanese language skills and the importance of understanding cultural differences are most highly valued by those companies which consider the Japanese market important to their business. The proportion of business conducted in Japanese increases significantly as the importance of the Japanese market increases.

Japanese tends to be used by people at high levels within an organisation, in particular for negotiation, sales and marketing and customer liaison. This is possibly in response to Japanese cultural norms which require people of high status to be met by people of equally high status, and where age commands respect.

This has important implications for people wishing to enter into the field of trade and perhaps explains why Japanese language skills are rarely actively sought, and are considered less important than other skills and abilities. Assuming that most recruitment aims to fill junior positions, even if a person does have Japanese skills, it is likely that these will not be required until they have spent some time at their place of employment and have advanced to a higher level.

The fact that there is a definite correlation between the importance of the Japanese market, the size of the company and the extent to which Japanese language skills are valued is not unexpected but raises some interesting questions. If language skills are only valued and used when the Japanese market has assumed considerable importance, this may act as a barrier to other companies ever reaching this point. In other words, small companies with limited resources, for which the Japanese market is only of marginal importance, may be destined to stay in that position.

5.2 Tourism

5.2.1 Background

Tourism is the largest earner of foreign exchange for New Zealand generating \$3.6 billion in the year to December 1994. The largest number of visitors come from Australia and Japan, which together accounted for 40% of the total market in 1992/93.¹ North Asia and Germany are the industry's fastest growing markets and by the turn of the century it is expected that half of New Zealand's overseas visitors will come from countries where English is not the predominant language.

The tourism industry is made up of a network of businesses including hotels and other places providing accommodation, passenger transportation services, eating and drinking establishments and recreational and cultural services. The tourism industry in Canterbury makes a significant contribution to the local economy generating \$414 million for the year ended June 1994 and considerable employment. Christchurch is a popular destination for tourists both for its local attractions and as a gateway to other popular destinations such as Queenstown and Mount Cook. In the year ended December 1994 there were 552 000 international visitors to Christchurch, of these approximately 15% came from Japan.

Typically the Japanese tourist stays two nights in Christchurch. A considerable proportion, one in four, spend their nights in private homes. One might guess that a large proportion of these people are students of English who tend to have home stays rather than stay in hotels. The other type of accommodation popular amongst Japanese is top class hotels. It is estimated that Japanese visitors spend on average \$424.82 per day, over twice the average for international visitors.²

5.2.2 The survey

The survey for businesses in the tourism industry was designed to obtain information on the profile of the company of the respondent, their attitudes towards foreign language skills and their actual use of staff with language skills. Many of the questions focused on how staff communicated with visitors from Japan.

5.2.3 Survey Results

In January 1995 the Canterbury Tourism Council posted out a copy of the survey to all of its members (see Appendix 1) attached to the Council newsletter, with a letter of explanation and endorsement from the Chief Executive. A total of 64 responses were received out of a potential pool of 550 - a rate of return of 11.6%.

¹ Stretching for Growth TRADENZ 93/94 p.57

² Canterbury Promotion Kit

5.2.4 Company Profile

Responses were received from a variety of businesses in all sectors of the tourism industry - transport, accommodation, leisure activities, retailing, and food and beverages. The following table indicates the number of responses from each sector.

Table 48 Respondents from the Tourism Industry by sector

Transport	17
Accommodation	18
Leisure Activities	21
Retailing	18
Food and beverages	12

Staff

In terms of staff numbers, the majority of companies which responded to the survey fit the category small - medium size firms by New Zealand standards, with 71.9% employing 1 - 20 staff.

Table 49 Respondents from the tourism industry by number of staff

1 - 20 staff	71.9%
21 - 50 staff:	12.5%
51 - 200 staff:	12.5%
Over 200	03.1%

Turnover

Annual turnover amongst respondents was varied although over one in four companies fitted the category \$0 - \$250 000. (see Table 50)

Table 50 Respondents from the tourism industry by turnover

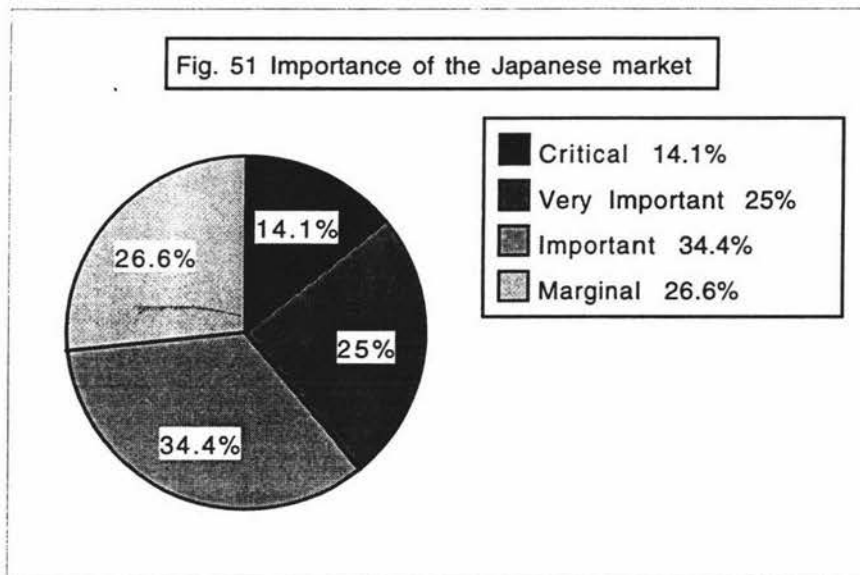
\$0 - \$250 000	17	26.5%
\$250 001 - \$500 000	13	20.3%
\$500 001 - \$1 000 000	9	14.0%
\$1 000 001 - \$5 000 000	11	17.1%
\$5 000 001 - \$20 000 000	8	12.5%

Importance of the Japanese market

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the Japanese market as one of the following categories:

- Critical importance (C)*
- Very important (V)*
- Important (I)*
- Marginal importance (M)*

Of the 64 companies, 47 (73.4%) stated that the Japanese market was either important, very important or of critical importance to their business. In view of the fact that the Japanese constitute approximately 15% of all international visitors and that they spend more than the average tourist this is not surprising. (see Fig.51)



5.2.5 Attitudes

Cultural understanding and linguistic competence

As in the case of exporters, the questionnaire included two questions designed to discover employers' attitudes regarding the importance of staff who deal with Japanese clients understanding Japanese culture and language. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of these abilities separately on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "not important" and 5 is "very important".

The majority of companies (47 out of 64, 73%) indicated that an understanding of Japanese culture and knowledge of Japanese business etiquette for staff who deal with Japanese clients was 3 or above, indicating that this was considered quite important. The more important the Japanese market, the higher the percentage who considered

understanding culture important. Differences in attitudes were noticeable across industries, with those in the Food and Beverage industry unanimously agreeing that understanding the culture was important (3 or above) for those dealing with the Japanese. (see Table 52).

Table 52 Respondents indicating understanding Japanese culture important, by industry

Food and beverages	100%
Leisure	86%
Accommodation	83%
Retail	72%
Transport	70%

Regarding language skills, of the total sample of 64, 44 (68.75%) considered that it was important to communicate with Japanese clients in their native language. This did not vary greatly when correlated with the importance of the Japanese market, averaging 70%. When industries were compared those which ranked it as important were most numerous in the Food and Beverages industry and the least numerous in transport. (see Table 53).

Table 53. Respondents indicating language skills important, by industry

Food and beverages	75%
Leisure	72%
Accommodation	67%
Retail	67%
Transport	65%

To further clarify the value attributed to Japanese language skills, respondents were asked whether they thought it was valuable for New Zealand students interested in the tourism industry to study Japanese. In response to this question the vast majority (82.8%) answered “yes”. When asked to elaborate on their reasons for the answer to this question, although reasons were varied, common themes were apparent. Most obviously, language ability was seen as an advantage since it improved communication and prevented misunderstandings. Several referred to the Japanese tourists difficulties with spoken English, in particular the older generation. The following comments from retailers reflect this view:

“ Japanese are the only nation who cannot speak English at a competent level”.

“In spite of all younger Japanese learning English their verbal skills are surprisingly limited”.

A respondent from the leisure industry stressed that language ability was especially important in areas where client safety was in question. Economic reasons were also commonly cited, many respondents making reference to the fact that the Japanese

market was an important one for New Zealand tourism and one which was growing. The following comments are indicative of this view:

"Japanese are the major spenders and therefore should be sought after more than other Asian groups who spend very little".

"...once they (Japanese) understand that many front line people in New Zealand understand and speak Japanese it should help to increase numbers arriving here".

One respondent from the transport industry stated

"... the rest of tourism could gain greatly by attending to their (Japanese) requirements. Only 1% of all travelling Japanese reach New Zealand."

Many (6 in total) commented that while a knowledge of Japanese is useful in the industry, proficiency in other languages was also important, for example German and Mandarin. Some frustration at the number of Japanese nationals working in this industry was expressed

"...I think tourists should be able to communicate with New Zealanders rather than importing Japanese for the purpose."

Comments from those who answered in the negative (fewer than one in six) reflected the split apparent in the literature between those who believe that English is the international language of business and those who disagree. One respondent from the accommodation area wrote

"Tourism is a growing industry. Other Asian countries are starting to increase in volume and you can't keep ahead of all languages therefore English and good people skills will cater to all."

Another from the accommodation and leisure industry stated that

"most Japanese can speak a little English and can understand written English".

Some stated that the Japanese enjoy practising their English and were sometimes offended or confused by unskilful attempts to use Japanese.

It would appear that in the tourism industry peoples experience with language difficulties varies depending on which sector they fit into. For those involved in accommodation, exchanges of information are more likely to be limited to fairly predictable areas such as check in times, check out times, etc. as opposed to perhaps those involved in leisure.

5.2.6 The reality

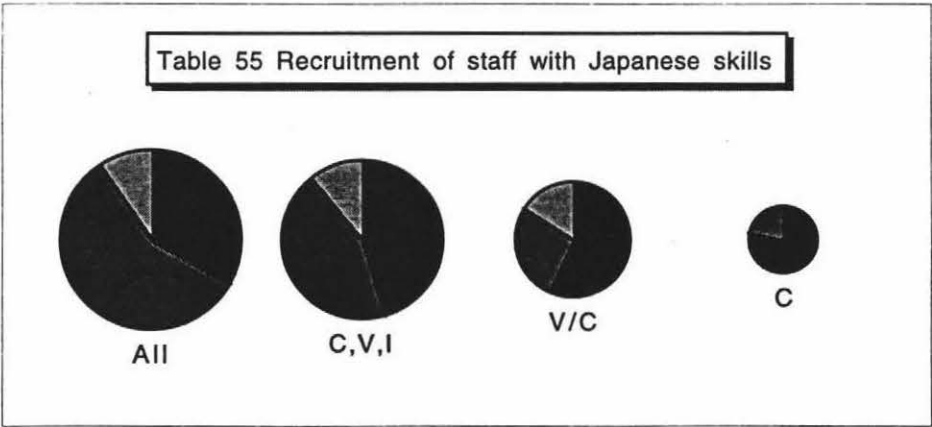
5.2.6.1 Recruitment

While supporting the notion of communicating with Japanese in their own language in theory, fewer respondents put this into practice. Of the total, 32.8% had sought to recruit staff with Japanese language skills as opposed to 56.2% who had not. The remainder of responses were not valid. By industry, only about half of respondents had sought to put into practice their attitudes towards the importance of speaking to Japanese clients in their own language and recruiting staff with Japanese skills. (see Table 54)

Table 54 Percentage of those who had sought to recruit staff with Japanese language skills, by industry

Food and beverages	42%
Leisure	23%
Accommodation	33%
Retail	24%
Transport	23%

Interestingly, of the 33 companies for which the Japanese market was important and which rated the importance of communicating with clients as 3 (important) or higher , 19 (57.5%) had sought to recruit people with language skills. However, only 13 of the 33 (39.39%) conducted general discussion in Japanese, and only 7 (21.21%) socialised in Japanese but 17 (51.51%) conducted customer service in Japanese. Not surprisingly, the proportion of companies who had sought people with Japanese skills increased the more important the Japanese market was to the business concerned. (See Fig 55).

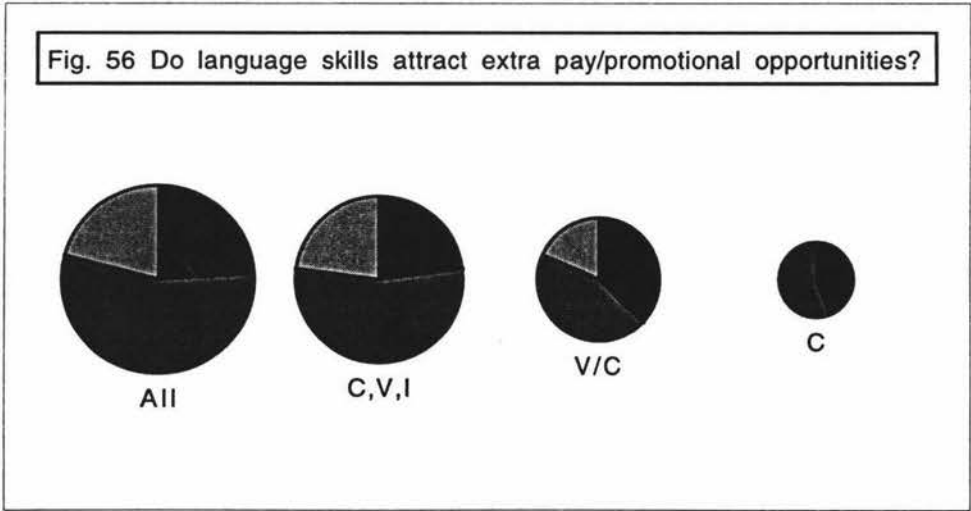


Although they may pay lip service to the importance of speaking to Japanese in their own language, it appears that is only when there are economic gains to be had or potential losses that employers actually put their attitudes into practice.

A high proportion (45.3%) of the total sample stated that they did take language skills into account when recruiting new staff as opposed to about one third (32.8%) which said these skills were not taken into account. 18.8% of respondents chose n/a. Again, depending on the importance of the Japanese market to the business concerned, the more important the market, the more likely they were to take these skills into account. For companies which rated the Japanese market as either very important or of critical importance, 64% stated that they did take foreign language skills into account, as compared to only 12% who did not.

5.2.6.2 Pay/ promotional opportunities

Unfortunately for those who have spent thousands of hours acquiring proficiency in Japanese, when asked whether language skills carried any extra pay or promotional opportunities the response was negative for over half of the respondents (53.1%). Approximately one in five businesses (23.4%) said that they did carry these opportunities. 13 respondents answered not applicable. As the importance of the Japanese market increased, a higher proportion of businesses stated that they offered what amounts to financial reward for staff with language skills. For businesses which rated the Japanese market as either very important or of critical importance, 40 per cent stated that these skills did attract extra pay or promotional opportunities. However, of those businesses which rated the Japanese market important and which stated that communicating with Japanese clients in their native tongue was important, only 10 of the 33 (30.3%) financially rewarded language skills and 17 (51.51%) provided no financial reward or promotional opportunities. (see Fig. 56)



5.2.6.3 Comparative value of language skills

In order to compare how foreign language skills were valued compared with other skills and qualities respondents were asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 5 the following in terms of their importance when hiring staff:

Functional skills (communication skills etc.)

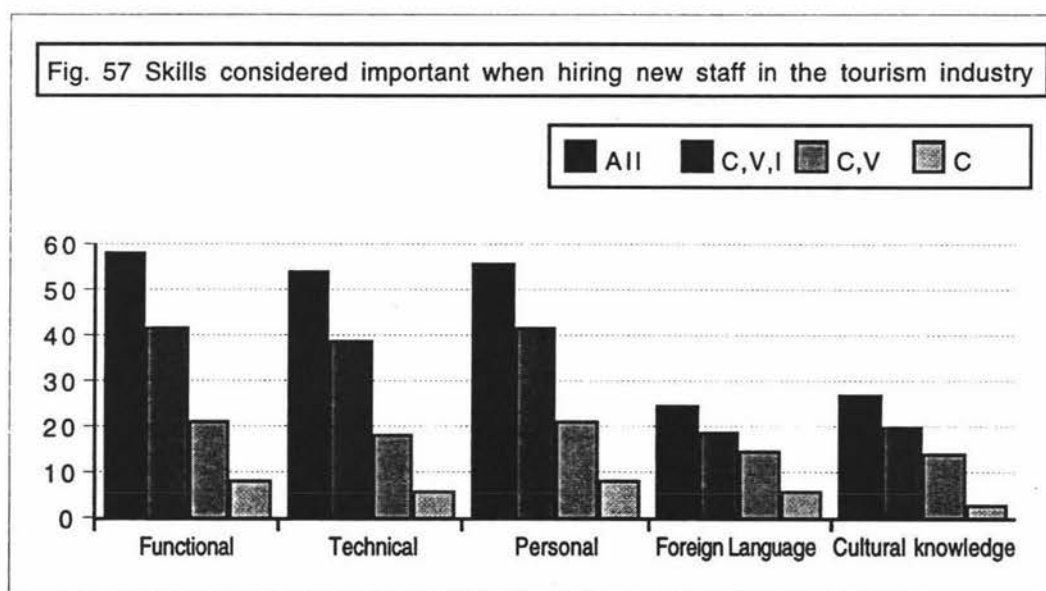
Technical skills

Personal qualities (attitude, personality etc.)

Ability to speak a foreign language

Knowledge of foreign cultures

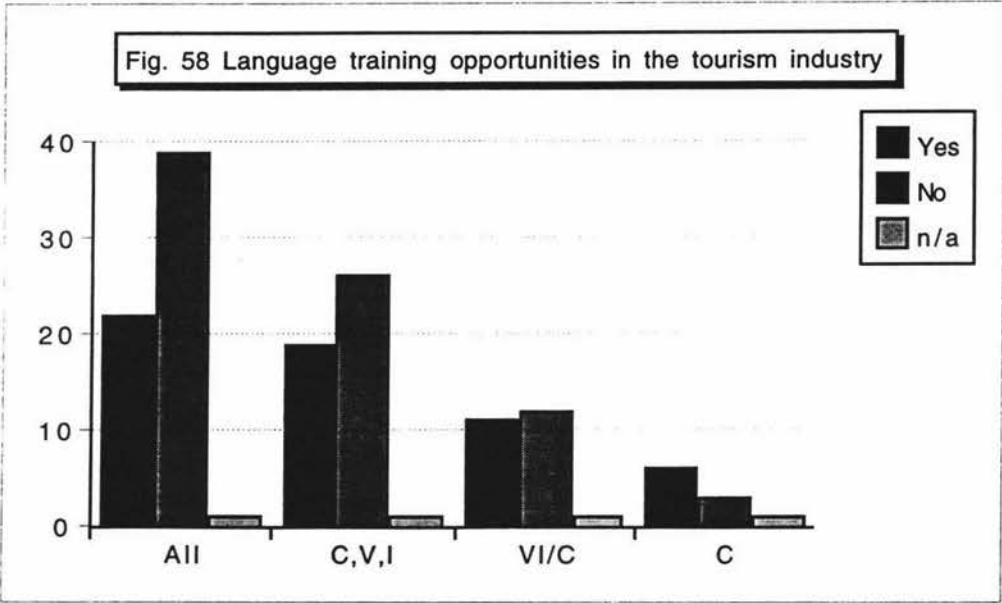
Regardless of the importance of the Japanese market, in all cases functional skills, technical skills and personal qualities were considered important by many more respondents than those who rated the ability to speak a foreign language and knowledge of foreign cultures as important. This finding is consistent with those of Enderwick and Akoorie and a number of other studies. It supports the view that language skills are considered a bonus, even in the tourism industry. (see Fig.57)



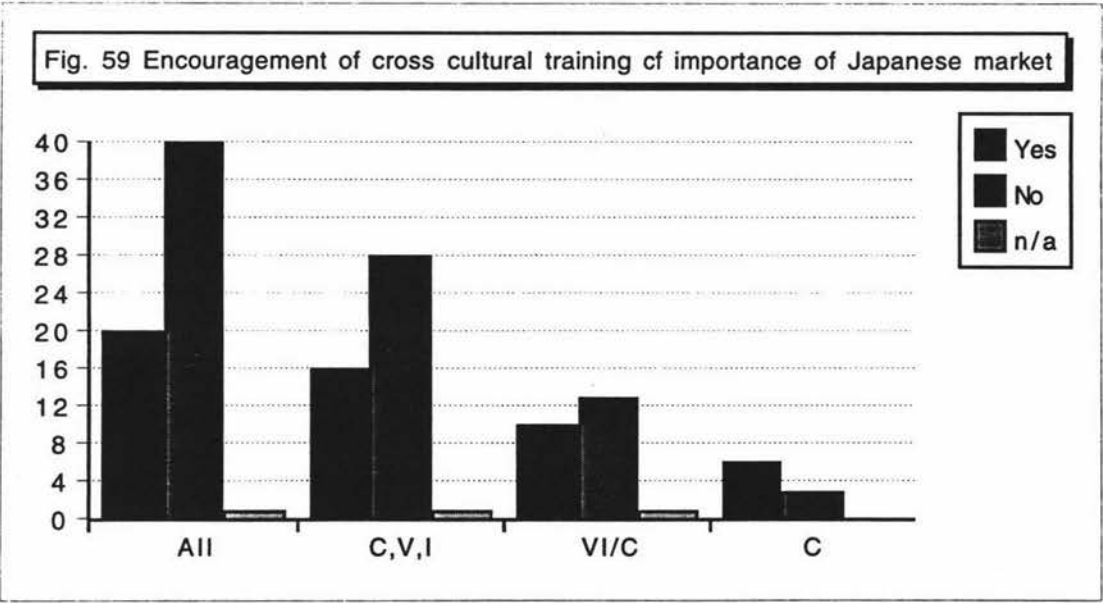
5.2.6.4 Training opportunities

In the tourism industry one might expect that in some positions, a knowledge of some basic greetings and commonly used phrases may be useful for staff dealing with Japanese visitors who can speak little English. One could imagine that staff could learn such phrases and greetings with a minimum of effort and would not need to reach a high level of overall proficiency in order to communicate effectively in a clearly

defined situations. In response to a question about whether staff were encouraged to engage in language training, it was found that of the total sample approximately one in three businesses (34.3%) do encourage such training, as opposed to the other 60.9% which don't. When correlated with the importance of the Japanese market, it is clear that this willingness to encourage training increases proportionate to the market importance. (see Fig. 58)

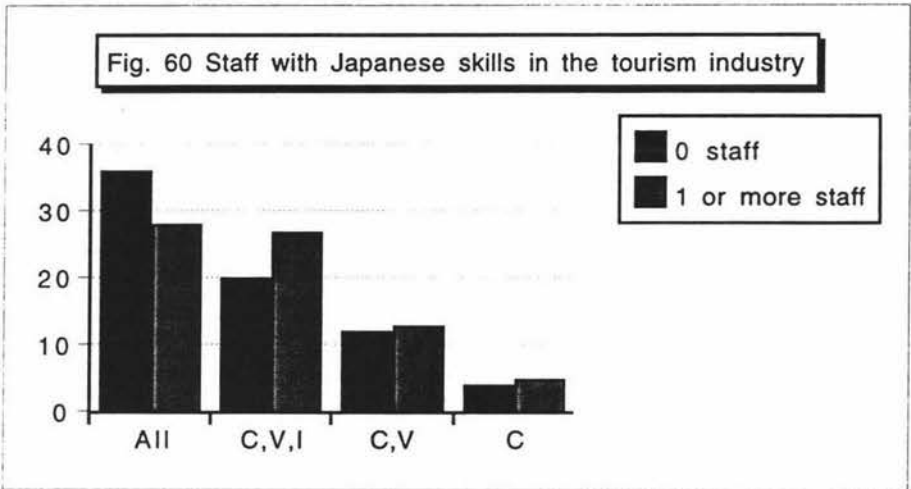


Although one may expect more companies to encourage cross cultural training than language, in view of the shorter time requirement and lower cost, a similar proportion (31.2%) stated that this was encouraged, while the majority (62.5%) said that it was not encouraged. Again there is a correlation with the importance of the Japanese market, and the more important the market, the more businesses encourage such training. (see Fig. 59)



5.2.6.5 Current staff and their Japanese language skills

Respondents were asked the following question:
16. *How many of your permanent staff have some Japanese language skills?* ____
Of the total sample, just over half (56.2%) had no permanent staff with Japanese language skills and just less than half (43.7%) had at least one permanent staff member with Japanese language skills. There was a general tendency for the number of staff with such skills to increase proportionately as the importance of the Japanese market increased. (see Fig. 60)



The staff with Japanese skills were most commonly employed in retail businesses, accommodation and food and beverages. See Table 61.

Table 61. Numbers of businesses employing staff with Japanese skills, by industry

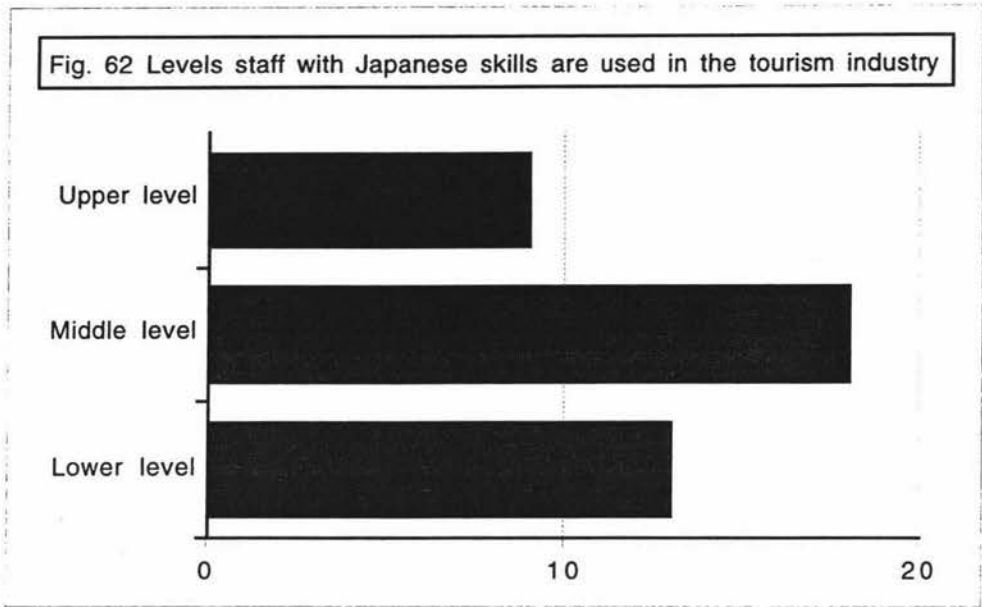
Food and beverages	6 (50%)
Leisure	9 (43%)
Accommodation	9 (50%)
Retail	11 (61%)
Transport	6 (35%)

Of those who employed staff with Japanese language skills, 13 of the 28 (46.4%) had at least one member of staff who was native Japanese.

Level

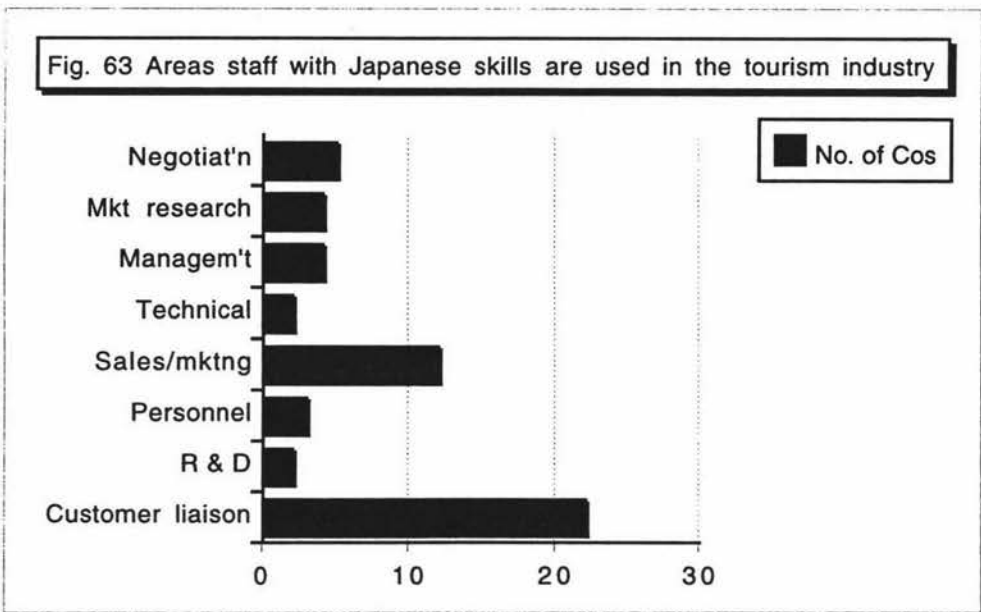
The staff with Japanese language skills were used at all levels but primarily in so-called middle level positions. Six of the respondents noted that these staff were used at both upper and middle levels and three noted that they were used at all levels. See Fig. x
This question is clearly open to interpretation as the perception of what constitutes a particular level is rather subjective. However, it is interesting to note that there is a much wider spread than in the export industry. This may also explain why a higher

proportion of businesses are willing to recruit those with Japanese skills, since they can be used from the time they enter the firm. (see Fig. 62)



Functional Area

In terms of functional area, staff with Japanese skills were most commonly employed in customer liaison as one might logically expect. Though no definition was given, one would assume that this would include front-line staff working in hotel reception, tour guides, waiters and waitresses, and so on. The second area where staff with Japanese skills were most commonly employed was sales and marketing. Presumably this would cover shop assistants as well as marketers. (see Fig. 63)



While the different functional areas would require different levels of proficiency, one might expect that oral Japanese skills would be more important than an ability to read and write Japanese, given that the tourism industry necessitates considerable face to face contact with customers. In fact all companies which employed staff with Japanese skills considered that oral Japanese skills were more important than written skills in their industry. This has important ramifications for language education.

When asked whether a lack of Japanese language skills among employees had ever negatively affected the success of the company, approximately one in six (17.1%) considered that a lack of such staff had negatively affected their success.

Measurement of proficiency

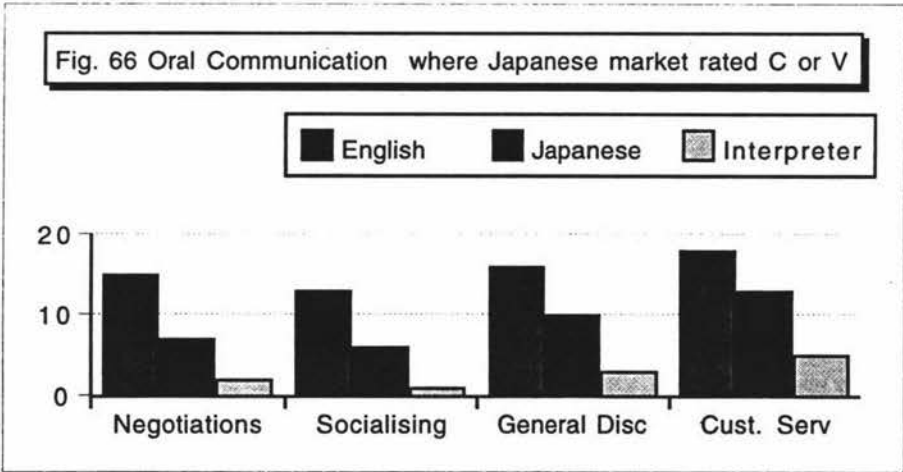
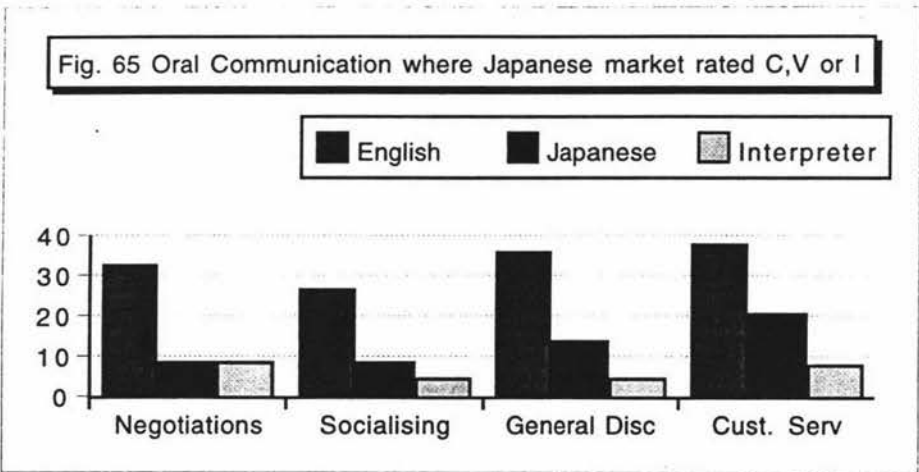
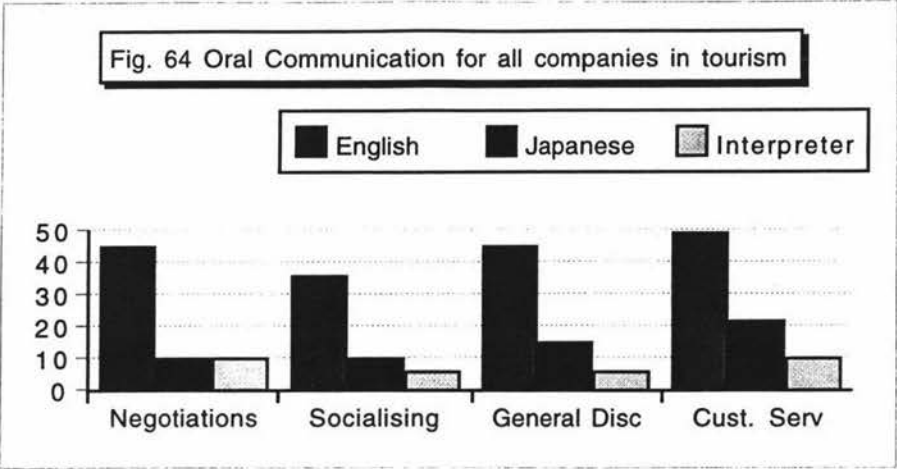
Respondents who had recruited staff with Japanese language skills employed a variety of methods for assessing proficiency. Several companies stated that they only employ Japanese nationals, while an equal number stated that they measured applicants ability by their qualifications. The majority of respondents assessed proficiency by means of an interview with one of their Japanese speaking staff, and one company insisted in addition on the applicant having lived in Japan for two years.

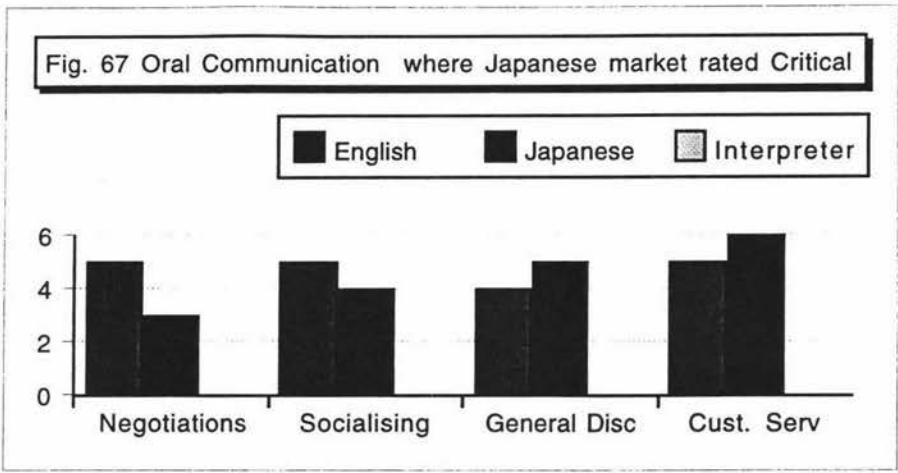
5.2.6.6 Modes of Communication

How do New Zealanders in the tourism industry communicate with the Japanese? For ease of analysis communication was broadly categorised into written communication and oral communication. Oral communication was further broken down into negotiations, socialising, general discussion and customer service, while written communication was divided into general business, advertising, legal documents, proposals and reports.

Oral Communication

In each of the categories of oral communication English was favoured over Japanese by a considerable amount. However, the more important the Japanese market to a business, the greater the proportion of Japanese used, particularly for customer service (see Figs. 64 - 67)





Written Communication

English was the favoured language for written communication, however, again the more important the Japanese market was perceived to be the greater the frequency of Japanese. (see Figs. 68 - 71). Advertising was the one area where a high degree of Japanese was used amongst all respondents.

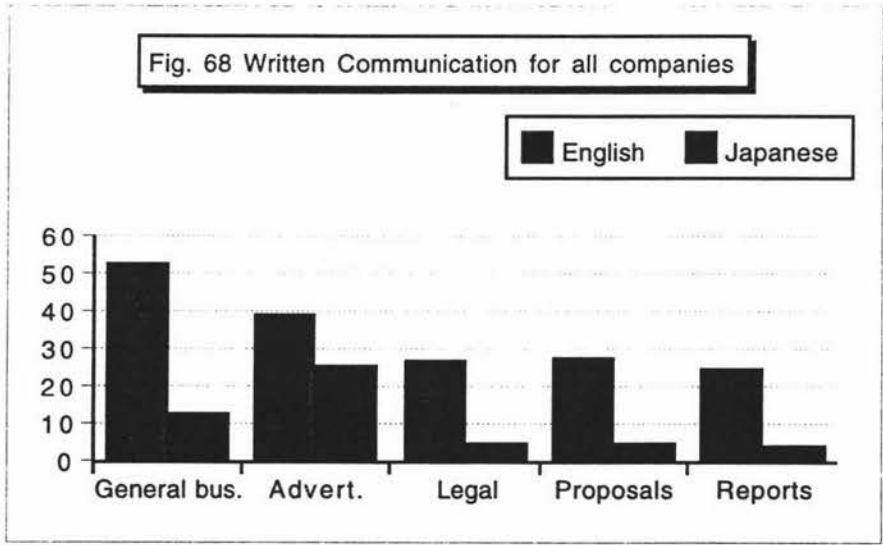


Fig. 69 Written Communication where Japanese market C,V or I

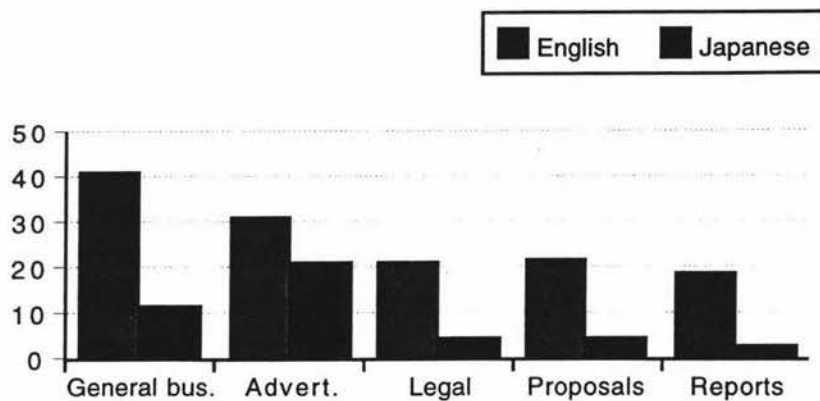


Fig. 70 Written Communication where Japanese market C or V

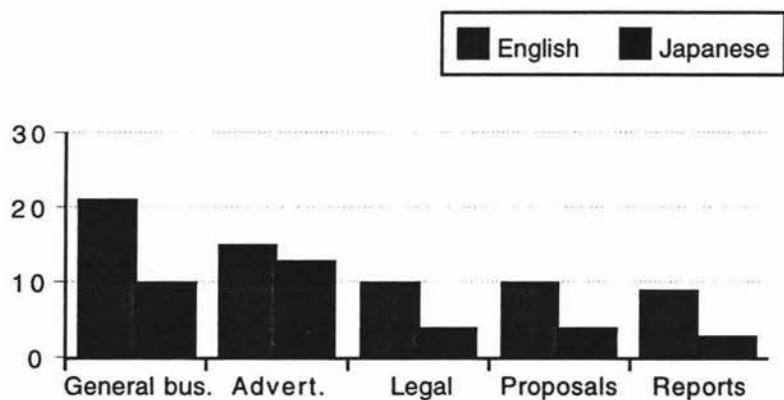
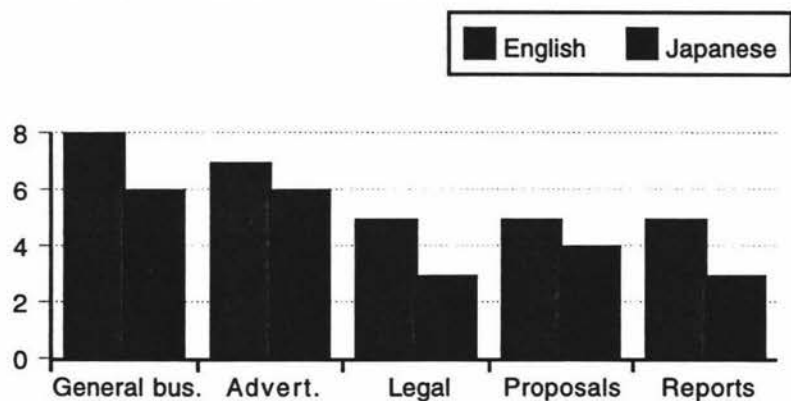
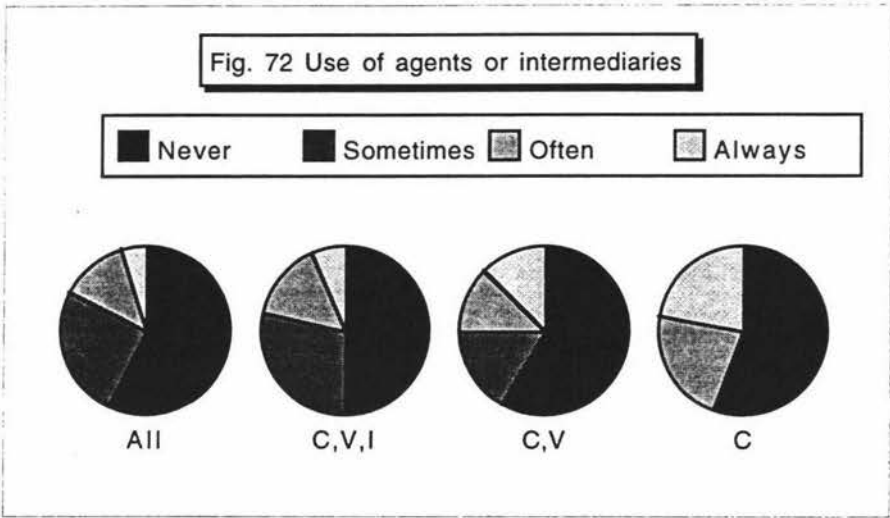


Fig. 71 Written Communication where Japanese market Critical



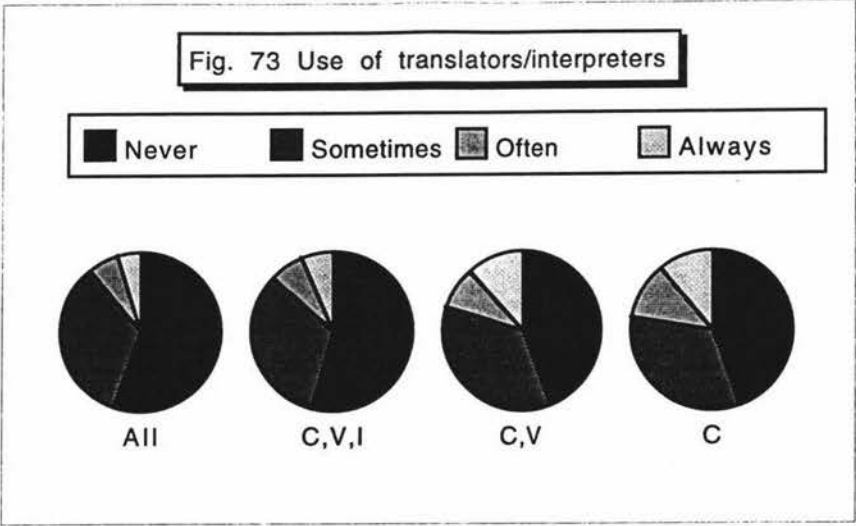
5.2.6.7 Use of agents or intermediaries, interpreters and translators

Companies were questioned regarding the frequency they used the services of agents or intermediaries. In the tourism industry one would imagine that the use of agents would vary considerably depending on the type of business concerned. One would assume that intermediaries or agents would be most commonly used to set up package deals, bookings in advance and so on as opposed to acting for individual tourists. While the majority of companies avoided using agents, they were used to a considerable degree. There did not appear to be any significant correlation between the importance of the Japanese market and the use of agents. (see Fig. 72)



Use of interpreters and translators

The services of outside translators or interpreters were not frequently used when dealing with the Japanese. Of the total sample, 35 (54.6%) stated that they never used such services, and 32.8% stated that they sometimes used them. Although almost one in three businesses (31.9%) which rated the Japanese market as important, very important or of critical importance stated that they sometimes used these services, just over half (53.2%) said that they never used them. However, there appeared to be a correlations between the use of interpreter or translator services and the importance of the Japanese market. The more important the Japanese market, the more likely these services would be requested.



5.2.7 Summary

In the tourism industry it would appear that while the majority of employers believe that it is important for those who deal with Japanese tourists to understand Japanese culture and language , fewer had actually sought to recruit people with such skills. Where there was economic benefit to be gained, however, it was more likely that these views had been acted on. Language skills were taken into account in the majority of new recruitments although other skills were considered more important. Extra pay or promotional opportunities were offered in fewer than half the cases even where the Japanese market was considered critical, although the more important the Japanese market the higher the proportion who rewarded such skills. Training in both language and culture was generally encouraged.

Staff with Japanese skills were most commonly used for customer liaison and to a lesser extent in sales and marketing. Oral skills were clearly far more important than written skills. While this may suggest that these skills were predominantly used in low level positions, the survey results suggested otherwise. A higher proportion of respondents stated that staff with Japanese skills were used in the middle level than in the lower level positions.

6. Conclusion

The hypothesis to be tested in this thesis was that students' expectations conflict with the perceptions of business in the trade and tourism area regarding the importance of language skills which in turn differ from the expectations of government with regard to the value of language skills.

The review of the literature suggested that in English speaking countries language skills are not highly valued by either businesses or students despite research which suggests that there is a link between the use of such skills and export success. They are however, seen as an advantage when combined with other skills.

The New Zealand government has invested considerable resources into increasing the number of opportunities for New Zealanders to learn a second language. Under the restructured education system, the final decision regarding which language, is delegated to the community, and whilst there are still problems finding suitable staff in some cases, nevertheless progress is being made. Numbers of students who begin studying a second language have been steadily increasing over the past fifteen years. Those choosing Japanese as their second language have dramatically increased overall but, like other languages, retention rates are very low. There is a steady decline in numbers throughout high school and numbers at tertiary level show the same tendency. Because of the difficulty posed by Japanese for native speakers of English, progress is much slower than in a European language and as a result, New Zealand produces very few people who have achieved a good useful level of proficiency in Japanese. The majority of those who do continue to advanced tertiary level view Japanese as a marketable skill and an advantage when seeking employment.

The survey results are consistent with much of the literature. In industry, Japanese language skills are seen as an economic resource in areas where the Japanese market is of considerable importance. Being driven by economic necessity, businesses will naturally only take on people with such skills if the benefits outweigh the costs. This gives rise to the situation in which companies which rate the Japanese market as highly important invest in people with language skills while those for whom the market is not of significant importance rely on English to communicate. While this may be seen as a logical decision, it may also serve to prevent further expansion of business to the Japanese market and thus result in a self-perpetuating cycle.

There are clear differences between the needs of the tourism industry for language skills and the needs of exporters. The level at which these skills tends to be employed also differs significantly. Despite the huge investment of time and energy required to achieve proficiency in Japanese, it is clear that language skills alone are not considered sufficient in any industry. Students of Japanese must be prepared to invest time in obtaining other skills to complement their Japanese ability.

7.1 Recommendations

1. **That greater emphasis should be placed on oral skills in language education at all levels.**
With the exception of those who continue on to become language specialists, the overwhelming majority of people rated oral skills as more important than written skills. Given the complexity of written Japanese, this is one area where time can be better used. Much of the literature regarding Australian language policy also supports this view.
2. **That an explicit languages policy be developed with input from both specialists in applied linguistics and with the cooperation of representatives from business and industry.**
3. **That further research be conducted into the communication methods employed by companies which deal successfully with non-English speaking countries.** It may also be useful to further research the communication methods of non-English speaking companies which are successful internationally.
4. **That a national system of verification of foreign language proficiency be established.** This would necessarily involve the training of accredited assessors and the formulation of standards. By enlisting the help of similar bodies in Australia this task could be accomplished quickly and efficiently. Funding to institutions could be linked to the extent to which students achieve minimum standards of proficiency in such tests.
5. **That the demand for courses in Japanese for special purposes be researched.** Courses focusing for example, on language for tourism, would provide those interested in that area with an opportunity to add to their skills.
6. **That education leaders liaise with industry to discover the needs and requirements of industry in terms of language skills.** It may be necessary to coordinate the provision of such education on a national level to maximise the use of resources.
7. **That business leaders and language educators seek ways to provide training in cross-cultural communication for staff.**
8. **That language educators liaise closely with educators in the business field in order to design integrated courses that meet the needs of industry and business.** Inevitably such course will take longer than traditional courses and

provision must be made for the inclusion of intensive language training for a certain period of the course.

- 9 **That further research is conducted into the best time to begin learning languages.** The common belief that "the younger the better" needs to be thoroughly researched.
- 10 **That advances in information technology be applied to language learning.** Educational institutions should capitalise on advances in information technology and increase the use of satellite TV, electronic mail, computer aided learning and so on in their language programmes. This requires a considerable investment of resources for both the equipment and the training for staff, but is most appropriate particularly for learning languages that take considerable time to master such as Japanese.

7.2 Outlook

In the context of an increasingly integrated world economy, New Zealand has been forced to reconsider its position in the Asia-Pacific region and how changes in the global economy impact on all levels of society - government, education and private enterprise. These changes, in combination with enormous progress in technology making interaction with people of other nations a common occurrence, have called into question just how well-prepared New Zealand is, to survive and succeed in this new world. Given the central role that information and communication has assumed, language issues have become increasingly important.

Recent changes to the education system include many positive developments, in particular the introduction of the Curriculum Framework and Unit Standards. However, there are still many areas where New Zealand lags behind. New Zealand must learn from the experience of other countries, both English speaking and non-English speaking, if it is to advance further.

APPENDIX ONE

Survey of Tertiary Students of International Business and Japanese

Student Profile			
Sex Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Age Under 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 25 <input type="checkbox"/>	Study record First year student <input type="checkbox"/> Second year student <input type="checkbox"/> Third year student <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
Qualification sought: _____			

- 1 How important is it for companies involved in international business to communicate with their non-English speaking clients and business contacts in the client's native language?
 Not important ☐ Not very important ☐ Quite important ☐ Very important ☐

- 2 Rate the following in terms of their importance in the job market. (1 = very important; 5 = not very important)

Functional skills (communication skills, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal qualities (attitude, personality, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to speak a foreign language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of foreign cultures	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 3 In which industries do you think that language skills are most important?

Service <input type="checkbox"/>	Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/>	Forestry <input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>
Trade <input type="checkbox"/>	Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____
Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Fisheries <input type="checkbox"/>	

- 4 In which areas within an industry do you think language skills are most important?

Customer Interface/Liaison <input type="checkbox"/>	Sales and Marketing <input type="checkbox"/>	Market Research <input type="checkbox"/>
Research and Development <input type="checkbox"/>	Technical <input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiation <input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel <input type="checkbox"/>	Management <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify) _____		

- 5 Do you think language skills are an advantage when seeking employment?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

- 6 Would you expect people with language skills to receive extra pay or promotional opportunities for their skills?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

- 7 At which level of an organisation are language skills most useful?
 Lower level ☐ Middle level ☐ Upper level ☐

- 8 Which do you think is more useful in international business?

Foreign language ability <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of cultural differences <input type="checkbox"/>

- 9 Do you believe it is valuable for students in New Zealand to study foreign languages?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

- 10 Have you ever studied a foreign language?
Yes ☐ No ☐
- 11 Do you believe it is valuable for students in New Zealand to study Japanese?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐
- 12 What is the main reason students in New Zealand study Japanese?
Interest ☐ Broadens the mind ☐
Travel ☐ Marketable skill ☐
Good for NZ ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- 13 Do you study Japanese?
Yes ☐ (go to number 14) No ☐ (go to number 15)
- 14 What are the main reasons you are studying Japanese?
Interest ☐ Broadens the mind ☐
Travel ☐ Marketable skill ☐
Good for NZ ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- 15 Why did you choose not to study Japanese?
No interest ☐ Takes too long to become proficient ☐
Little value in the job market ☐ Too difficult ☐
Other subjects too demanding ☐ Never did languages at school ☐
Other _____
-
- 16 Do you think there are sufficient opportunities available in New Zealand for people to acquire Japanese language skills?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐
- 17 Do you think there are sufficient opportunities available in New Zealand for people to use Japanese language skills?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐
- 18 Do you believe that Japanese language skills taught at New Zealand educational institutions prepare students adequately for the workforce?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐
- 19 In which industry do you hope to find employment once you have graduated?

- 20 Would you like to make any other comments on the value of foreign language skills?

Thank you for your time.

Survey of Canterbury Exporters

Company Profile		Activities your business is involved in	Turnover range applicable to your business
Number of staff			
1 - 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distribution/Agent	<input type="checkbox"/>
51 - 200	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 200	<input type="checkbox"/>	Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Retailing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Wholesaling	<input type="checkbox"/>
			\$0 - \$250,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$250,001 - \$500,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$500,001 - \$1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$5,000,001 - \$20,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$20,000,000+ <input type="checkbox"/>

- How would you rate the importance of the Japanese market to your business?
 - Critical importance ☐
 - Very important ☐
 - Important ☐
 - Marginal importance ☐
- How often does your company engage the services of an intermediary or agent for its business dealings with Japan?
 - Never ☐
 - Sometimes ☐
 - Often ☐
 - Always ☐
- How often does your company engage the services of outside Japanese interpreters or translators when dealing with Japanese?
 - Never ☐
 - Sometimes ☐
 - Often ☐
 - Always ☐
- In which language(s) do the following activities take place in your company's dealings with Japanese clients?

	English	Japanese	Through Interpreter
Negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- In which language(s) is written information exchanged?

	English	Japanese
General business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- How important is it for staff who deal with Japanese clients or associates to know about Japanese business etiquette and have an understanding of Japanese culture?

1 2 3 4 5

Not important , Very important
- How would you rate the importance of communicating with your Japanese clients/associates in their native language?

1 2 3 4 5

Not important Very important

Please see over

8 Have you ever sought to recruit people with Japanese language skills?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
 If yes, how is linguistic competence measured? _____

9 When recruiting employees do you take into account their foreign language skills?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

10 Do language skills carry any extra pay or promotional opportunities?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

11 Please rank the following in terms of their importance when hiring staff. (1 = Very important; 5 = Not very important)

Functional skills (communication skills, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal qualities (attitude, personality, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to speak a foreign language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of foreign cultures	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 12 Do you encourage staff to engage in language training? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 13 Do you encourage staff to engage in cross-cultural training? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 14 Do you believe it is valuable for NZ students interested in international business to study Japanese?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
- 15 Please elaborate on your reasons for your answer to number 14.

16 How many of your permanent staff have some Japanese language skills? _____

17 In your experience, has a lack of Japanese language skills among your employees negatively affected your company's success?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
 If you do not employ any staff with Japanese skills please go to number 22.

18 How many of your staff with Japanese language skills are Japanese nationals? _____

19 At which level of the organisation are these skills used?
 Lower level ☐ Middle level ☐ Upper level ☐

20 In which particular areas are the staff with Japanese skills used?

Customer Interface/Liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sales and Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Market Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Product Development	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) _____

21 In your industry are oral Japanese skills more important than an ability to read and write Japanese?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Equally important ☐

- 22 Would you be happy to discuss this survey with the researcher?
 Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered YES, please complete the following details so you can be contacted.

Company name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____
 Contact person _____

Thank you for your time.

Survey of Canterbury Companies in the Tourism Industry

Company Profile		Activities your business is involved in	Turnover range applicable to your business
Number of staff			
1 - 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
51 - 200	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 200	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retailing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Food and beverages	<input type="checkbox"/>
			\$0 - \$250,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$250,001 - \$500,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$500,001 - \$1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
			\$5,000,001 - \$20,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/>

- 1 How would you rate the importance of the Japanese market to your business?

Critical importance ☐
 Very important ☐
 Important ☐
 Marginal importance ☐

- 2 How often does your company engage the services of an intermediary or agent for its business dealings with Japan?

Never ☐
 Sometimes ☐
 Often ☐
 Always ☐

- 3 How often does your company engage the services of outside Japanese interpreters or translators when dealing with Japanese?

Never ☐
 Sometimes ☐
 Often ☐
 Always ☐

- 4 In which language(s) do the following activities take place in your company's dealings with Japanese clients?

	English	Japanese	Through Interpreter
Negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 5 In which language(s) is written information exchanged?

	English	Japanese
General business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 6 How important is it for staff who deal with Japanese clients to know about Japanese business etiquette and have an understanding of Japanese culture?

1 2 3 4 5
 Not important Very important

- 7 How would you rate the importance of communicating with your Japanese clients in their native language?

1 2 3 4 5
 Not important Very important

8 Have you ever sought to recruit people with Japanese language skills?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
 If yes, how is linguistic competence measured? _____

9 When recruiting employees do you take into account their foreign language skills?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

10 Do language skills carry any extra pay or promotional opportunities?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

11 Please rank the following in terms of their importance when hiring staff. (1 = Very important; 5 = Not very important)

Functional skills (communication skills, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal qualities (attitude, personality, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to speak a foreign language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of foreign cultures	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 12 Do you encourage staff to engage in language training? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 13 Do you encourage staff to engage in cross-cultural training? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 14 Do you believe it is valuable for NZ students interested in the tourism industry to study Japanese?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
- 15 Please elaborate on your reasons for your answer to number 14.

16 How many of your permanent staff have some Japanese language skills? _____

17 In your experience, has a lack of Japanese language skills among your employees negatively affected your company's success?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
 If you do not employ any staff with Japanese skills please go to number 22.

18 How many of your staff with Japanese language skills are Japanese nationals? _____

19 At which level of the organisation are these skills used?
 Lower level ☐ Middle level ☐ Upper level ☐

20 In which particular areas are the staff with Japanese skills used?

Customer Interface/Liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sales and Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Market Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Other (please specify) _____

21 In your industry are oral Japanese skills more important than an ability to read and write Japanese?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Equally important ☐

22 Would you be happy to discuss this survey with the researcher?
 Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered YES, please complete the following details so you can be contacted.

Company name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____
 Contact person _____

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX TWO



PRIME MINISTER

13 October 1994

Carolyn Shaw
Japanese Division
School of Languages
Christchurch Polytechnic
PO Box 22095
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Carolyn Shaw

New Zealand's economic relationship with Japan is of great importance and it was with considerable interest that I read your letter, of 3 October 1994, outlining your proposed research into "Japanese Language Skills as an Economic Resource in New Zealand."

You rightly point out that the Government has been actively involved in the promotion of both Asian studies and Asian languages. This has stemmed, not only from the Government's recognition of the need to build our relationship with Asian countries, but also a demand from businesses requiring employees skilled in Asian languages and customs. The establishment of the ASIA 2000 Foundation is part of this move to build on New Zealand's relationship with its Asian neighbours.

Your research into perceptions and the utilisation of Japanese studies and language skills among students and the business community should provide useful information for planning Japanese language programmes.

I wish you well with your research project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. B. Bolger", written over a horizontal line.

Rt Hon J B Bolger
Prime Minister



MINISTER *for* TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

MINISTER *for* INDUSTRY, MINISTER *of* COMMERCE

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

Telephone (04) 471 9982 Fax (04) 473 7199

11 October 1994

Carolyn Shaw
Japanese Division
School of Languages
Christchurch Polytechnic
PO Box 22 095
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Carolyn Shaw

I was delighted to receive your letter of 1 October 1994 outlining your project to investigate perceptions of the Japanese language among different groups, and the utilisation of and value placed upon Japanese skills by businesses in the Canterbury region.

Closer knowledge of and links with Asia are critical to New Zealand's future prosperity. The Asian region is New Zealand's fastest growing export destination, and Japan is our second largest market (NZ\$2.87 billion New Zealand exports in the year to June 1993). Japanese are also our third major source of tourists. Thus, equipping New Zealanders with a skill in Japanese, as well as other Asian languages, is a valuable resource for the trade and tourism sectors.

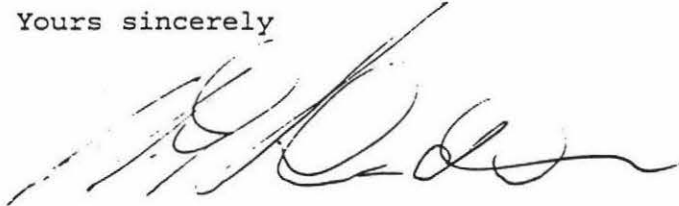
As you may be aware, the ASIA 2000 Foundation was recently established by the Government to promote and assist activities that increase mutual understanding and constructive linkages between the different countries of Asia and New Zealand. The Foundation would, I am sure, have an interest in your project, and may have relevant material. You may like to contact Yvonne Oomen, ASIA 2000 Foundation, PO Box 10 144, Wellington, Ph: 04-4712-320, Fax: 04-4712-330.

Although Japanese has been taught in New Zealand for the past 25 years, only since the late 1980s has enthusiasm for the language 'taken-off' in secondary schools to become the fastest growing foreign language. It is,

therefore, timely that a project such as yours will assess the impact of this linguistic skill within the business community and the level of importance it is given by employers and staff. The results of your research will, no doubt, be of keen interest to educationalists, industry and policy makers.

I wish you well in your research and would be interested to receive a copy of your findings.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Philip Burdon', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Philip Burdon

Head Office
Level 18 Pastoral House
25 The Terrace Wellington 6001
Box 10 341 Wellington 6036 New Zealand
Telephone (04) 499 2244 Facsimile (04) 473 3193

10 October 1994

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

JAPANESE LANGUAGE SKILLS AS AN ECONOMIC RESOURCE
IN NEW ZEALAND

This memorandum is to confirm the interest which Tradenz has in the research project to be carried out by Carolyn Shaw on the above topic.

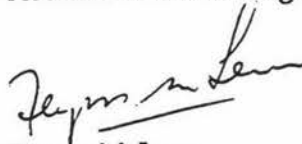
As the principal organisation concerned with encouraging and supporting the expansion of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings, Tradenz is constantly aware of the importance of language skills to our exporting efforts, especially those relating to Asia.

While it is true that there are now a large number of New Zealand students learning Japanese, it is not yet clear as to the extent to which the final graduates from this learning process are able to obtain work in foreign exchange earnings related areas of the New Zealand economy.

While it is relatively easy to expound on the need for New Zealand to enhance its Asian language skills for the purpose of increasing the capability of New Zealand to earn foreign exchange, we fully realise that there are many aspects to this question as far as employers are concerned. Above all they need to obtain value for money and best possible impact for the skills which they are paying to employ.

Therefore we will await with keen interest the results of Carolyn Shaw's research. They will be valuable to Tradenz and to the organisations involved in education in New Zealand in helping to show whether the training for Japanese language skills now being provided in New Zealand needs to be adjusted in any way to make the graduates more suitable for employment in areas relating to New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings.

We would strongly encourage New Zealand exporters to assist Carolyn Shaw in the research which she is going to undertake.



Fergus McLean
General Manager
Overseas Markets Coordination Unit

23/6/1



NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY
TOKYO

25 October 1994

Ms Carolyn Shaw
Japanese Division
School of Languages
Christchurch Polytechnic
P O Box 22-095
CHRISTCHURCH 8001

Dear Carolyn Shaw

Thank you for your letter of 1 October, in which you outlined the research project you are intending to undertake on perceptions of Japanese language skills, and utilisation of those skills by New Zealand companies.

I apologise for the delay in responding to your request for support for the project. I have been out of the office in Kyushu, and in New Zealand, for most of the past two weeks, and we have also had a very full programme of visitors from Wellington.

I imagine that you have also been in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Wellington, and the ASIA 2000 Foundation, about your project. Here in the Embassy, we judge that your research has the potential to make a useful contribution to the debate on the place of language skills in the workplace. We wish you luck. I would be happy to offer you the names of some Japanese-speaking New Zealanders currently working in New Zealand, whom you might wish to contact during the course of your project, if that were of interest.

I don't know how far you have already progressed in designing your project. If you have not completely finalised your outline, I wonder where you are not limiting your sample somewhat by restricting yourself to contacting companies in Canterbury. I can appreciate the practical reasons why you might wish to do this, but there are undoubtedly numbers of Japanese-speaking New Zealanders employed in Wellington and Auckland, and elsewhere, who might be willing to respond to some questions.

You might be interested to know that the question of employment of the existing pool of Japanese-speakers was raised in the context of the recent Joint Meeting of the Japan/New Zealand Business Council in Auckland. You might also wish to contact the Council Secretariat (Mr Rob McLagan, Director-General).

Two further observations. Firstly, coming back to Tokyo after an absence of nine years, I am struck by the number of young Japanese-speaking New Zealanders living here. We have employed some of them in the office. That resource was not available in earlier years. Its growth is a reflection of the effort that has already gone into learning Japanese in New Zealand, and the support offered by the Monbusho and Japan Foundation and others.

Secondly, I can understand the reluctance of employers to take someone on simply because of language skills. What is often needed is the combination of a professional skill and a language. In the six months or so that I have been back in Japan, I have met young New Zealand linguists (of varying ability I might add, and that is another matter - quality control), who also have law, accountancy, or engineering degrees. This, to me, seems the best way to proceed, to assure quality employment in a profession. Of course, there is a wide range of other possibilities, most notably in the tourist industry, but even there, some tourism industry skills would be essential, I would imagine.

Thank you again for letting me know of your endeavour. I look forward to hearing how it progresses.

Yours sincerely



(Maarten Wevers)
Ambassador



Japan/New Zealand Business Council (Inc.)



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AMP House
109 Featherston Street
Wellington, New Zealand

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Wellington, New Zealand
Telephone 64-4-471 2340
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6 October 1994

Ms Carolyn Shaw
Japanese Division
School of Languages
Christchurch Polytechnic
PO Box 22-095
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Ms Shaw

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 1994, re Japanese Language skills as an economic resource in New Zealand business.

I believe that your proposed research project should provide valuable insights into the manner and extent to which New Zealand businesses are utilising the Japanese language skills of New Zealanders.

As you note, the rapidly increasing emphasis which New Zealand is placing on Asian markets makes it imperative that we increase our understanding not only of Asian languages but also of cultural aspects.

On behalf of the Japan/New Zealand Business Council I wish you well in your project. If the Council or its members can be of any assistance to the project, please do not hesitate to contact me again. We certainly look forward with interest to the results of your project when it is published.

Yours sincerely

ff. Andrew Meehan
Chairman

8 November 1994



Research Committee of
the Academic Board
Christchurch Polytechnic

Re: Carolyn Shaw

I understand Carolyn is keen to become involved in a research project which focuses on Japanese language skills in New Zealand businesses.

Three areas of particular interest to the Japanese Language Advisory Committee are:

- 1 status of Japanese within the business community
- 2 development of job opportunities for your students
- 3 relevance of language as a valued skill within the business community

There seems to be very little information available on student and employer perception of the value of Japanese language skills in business, or how these skills are currently utilised.

The research project which Carolyn is proposing should be extremely valuable for establishing a base of research information, and would also be of considerable value to my committee, as they seek to assist the Polytechnic to promote this language as a relevant skill in the workplace today.

I wish to commend Carolyn on her initiative and fully support her research proposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Wilson', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ross Wilson
Chairman
Japanese Language Advisory Committee

COVENTRY STREET
CHRISTCHURCH 8001
NEW ZEALAND
PO Box 22095
TEL: 64-3-379 8150
FAX: 64-3-366 6544

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