

# オーストラリアの大学における日本語課程の開発 －日本研究課程との関連で

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## 【要 旨】

大学によって組織面での体制は異なるが、オーストラリアでは、日本語課程は日本研究課程とは別になっているのが一般的である。本発表では、まず、主にモナシュ大学を事例とし、可能な場合には他大学の事例も参照しながら、オーストラリアの大学で日本語課程と日本研究課程がどのように開発されてきたかをまとめる。次に、近年、日本語課程に導入されてきた新しい試みを紹介する。例えば、通訳・翻訳などのスキルを中心にしたコースや、日本研究的な内容を取り入れた内容中心のコースなどがある。内容中心のコースは、日本語教育にたずさわる教員によって、日本語教育の専門性と研究面での専門性を活用しながら、または、日本研究専門の教員との協力で、開発されてきた。

日本語課程と日本研究課程は、4年次であるオナーズ課程において統合される場合が多い。オナーズ課程は選択制であるが、大学院の研究課程への進学や、特定の専門職に就くことを希望する学生にとっては、様々な意味で重要な1年間である。学部学生の教育でオナーズ課程への進学に必要な教育・訓練ができていないか否か、この機会に検証する必要があるだろう。

## The development of Japanese Language in relation to Japanese Studies in Australia

Although there are different organisational structures across universities in Australia, Japanese Language courses have often been, or are usually, separate to Japanese Studies courses. Drawing mainly upon Monash University as a case study, but also referring to data from other universities, where available, I will briefly outline how Japanese Language and Japanese Studies courses developed in the past. I will then introduce some of the changes which have been introduced into Japanese Language courses in recent years, including skill-based courses, such as interpreting and translation, and content-based courses, which may draw upon the intellectual content of Japanese Studies to some extent. The development of content-based courses has often been undertaken by Japanese language or combined Japanese language/studies staff, drawing upon their own expertise in language teaching and in research, and sometimes in conjunction with Japanese studies staff.

In Australia, Japanese Language and Studies courses typically merge at the optional fourth year, Honours level, which, in many ways, is a critical year if students are to proceed to further research or to certain professional positions. We should thus use this opportunity to examine how successful we have been in training our students at the undergraduate level for their participation in the Honours year.

## 1. Introduction

In this paper I will briefly outline the context for the teaching of Japanese language and Japanese studies in Australian universities. I will also describe how these courses have developed, drawing mainly upon Monash University (MU) as a case study, supplemented with data from the University of Queensland (UQ) and the University of New South Wales (UNSW), where available<sup>1</sup>. After that, some of the innovations which have been introduced into Japanese language courses in recent years will be described, and the relation of these developments to Japanese studies also outlined. Finally, I would like to reflect upon the current state of some of our optional Honours year, where, traditionally, there is a merging of language and studies.

Many of the larger Australian universities offer programs in both Japanese language and Japanese studies, though some of the smaller or regional institutions offer only Japanese language courses. Irrespective of the nature of the offerings, typically, these courses are available in Arts/Humanities degrees which are three years in length, though increasingly, students enrolled in other – including combined or double - degrees are also undertaking some study of Japanese. Larger programs have usually offered a further Honours (fourth) year to high performing students who wish to proceed to certain professional positions or to higher degree research.

In the Australian context, Japanese studies subjects generally refer to those subjects that cover Japan content (fully or partially) and which, in the past, have been taught in English, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Sometimes these Japanese studies courses are situated within Japanese administrative units, which themselves are often named as “Japanese Studies” and which offer both language and studies courses. In recent years many amalgamations have seen Japanese programs merge into other much bigger units (eg. School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies, School of Languages and Linguistics). An alternative model found in a few (or some) universities is for Japanese studies specialists to be located within their disciplinary unit, such as History, and to offer courses from that base.

Where the dual provision of Japanese language and Japanese (and/or Asian) studies exists, student enrolments in the language generally far exceed those in Japanese studies. A number of factors have influenced university provisions in these courses over time, as reflected in the periodic reports on Japanese language and studies programs around the country (The Japan Foundation, 1997, 2004).

The objective of this panel is to examine strategies for promoting the collaboration between Japanese language and Japanese studies, providing us with the opportunity to reflect upon some of the substantial changes and developments which have taken place to date over recent decades, and to use this as a basis for planning future developments. This opportunity comes at a time when many basic issues relating to language teaching across all languages at the higher education level in the US and elsewhere are being re-examined (cf. Byrnes 2006, 2007, 2008), including the relationship of language and non-language courses, and their basic goals and purposes, and the Standards movement, amongst other issues. Within the profession in the

Australian context, the interrelationship between Japanese language and Japanese studies has also been central to much of the theorizing about what and how we teach, and this situation is unlikely to change in the future.

## **2. Japanese language and Japanese studies programs**

### *2.1 Growth in Japanese programs*

A large proportion of the bigger Japanese language programs which exist today were established during the 1960s and 1970s, when 15 institutions set up Japanese programs, with another six being established in the 1980s, and seven in the two-year period of 1990-1991 (Marriott, Neustupny & Spence-Brown 1994, p.26). By 1992, Japanese language was taught at 32 Australian higher education institutions (Marriott, Neustupny & Spence-Brown 1994, p.26). Other data shows that the number of programs remained at 32 in 2005 (White & Baldauf 2006, p.8). Student enrolments, totalling 2081 EFTSL (Equivalent Full-Time Student Load<sup>2</sup>) in 2001 was only slightly higher by 2005 at 2184 EFTSL. At the Higher Education level, Japanese remains the most widely offered and studied language in Australia, a position it has now held for a number of years.

### *2.2 Early developments at Monash University*

An introduction to the Japanese program at MU provides one illustration of development over time. First established in 1966 by Professor J.V. Neustupny within the then Languages Department, the program started to offer a beginners' first year language subject the following year, which was expanded into a four-year course, including Honours, in the final undergraduate year. From the early stage, Neustupny articulated a model of Japanese language teaching involving the teaching of linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural components, and introduced over time many innovative elements into the language courses (Neustupny 1989). From its inception, staff and students in the Japanese language/studies program also produced considerable research, including student higher degree studies, in topics relating to the teaching and learning of Japanese, and Japanese language use, as well as research based in other disciplines.

Neustupny's clear vision was for students to take a Japanese language major sequence along side a Japanese studies major – in order to learn about Japan through disciplinary-based subjects - and for this purpose, specialists of a variety of Japanese studies areas were recruited over time, to cover such disciplines as history, sociology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, literature, political science, cultural studies and so on, with two or three of such staff employed at any one time. His approach was to offer a combination of Japanese language subjects along side of Japanese studies subjects which were based in social science, rather than literature, as was often the case in numerous traditional language programs, especially in the European languages. In the early years, Japanese studies was a “highly recommended” subject for learners of Japanese to also study. This model, whereby language and studies staff belonged to the same program and subjects in both Japanese language and studies were offered, was replicated at quite a few other institutions in Australia, but not all, as noted above.

To ensure that all Japanese language students encountered some teaching about Japan in English, Neustupny's strategy also included the introduction in 1988 of a "seminar" for second and third-year students and later this led into a subject which prepared students for some theoretical and methodological issues prior to Honours. However, in later years when teaching hours were reduced, this "seminar" disappeared from the language stream.

### *2.3 Significant changes in the educational scene affecting language programs*

Many changes have occurred within the Australian scene over the past 20 or so years. One is the tremendous growth that has taken place in Japanese language teaching at the secondary level, with some expansion to the primary level as well. A complex array of factors has contributed towards this phenomenon (cf. Neustupny 1992). Such growth has meant that tertiary institutions have had to develop a number of different levels of Japanese in order to cater for beginners as well as for those coming in with various amounts of Japanese proficiency. Monash now has six year levels (12 subjects in total, labelled as Japanese 1 to 12), where students who have completed Year 12 at the secondary level often enter at Level 5 (which is equivalent to the third year of the beginners' stream).

Other important features have been the numerous student exchanges (usually of 10-12 months in length, in addition to short term school trips) and study abroad opportunities for Australian secondary and tertiary students in Japan. Some students thus commence university having spent a year at a school in Japan and may have further opportunities during their university course to spend further time studying in formal courses in Japan. In the early days MU encouraged its Honours students to undertake the first six months of their final year in Japan but this scheme was disbanded, mainly due to financial reasons, during the 1990s and other opportunities mainly drawing upon Japanese scholarships are now utilised in conjunction with exchange agreements with certain Japanese universities for students to go at any time during their degree program. At MU, acceleration for some students is further possible through Enhancement Studies (taking first-year level subjects – levels 5 & 6) while still at secondary school and then being able to commence university language study at a higher level, or by spending a summer semester studying in Japan (Monash levels 5 & 6) for others, especially those starting at the beginners' level. As a result of all of these schemes, students are exhibiting increasingly high levels of proficiency during their enrolment in Japanese language programs as well as upon graduation.

Diversification of the overall student body can be listed as a further major characteristic of Japanese learners in Australian tertiary institutions. In some language programs, students from Asia now make up a large proportion of some classes, especially those at the beginner level. More students are also enrolling in Japanese as an elective as part of a non-Arts/Humanities degree (eg Business/Economics, Science etc), or as part of a double or combined degree. Law-Arts is a long-established double degree in Australia, but other newer combinations have also emerged in recent years, eg Art-Business. One effect of this variety in the student body is that not all are able to complete three years of Japanese language, even if they wish, and many others would not be able to also fit in Japanese studies subjects as well, even if they wanted to do so.

In the meantime, at the secondary level, in a number of language areas – including Japanese, different streams have been set up for first language and second language speakers. This is partly the result of still a smallish, but growing number of individuals in Australia with Japanese background, usually as a result of immigration or international marriages. A few Japanese youth will also purposely leave Japan to complete their secondary education in Australia (or elsewhere) and then proceed to university in the overseas context. Sydney and Melbourne are two cities in particular which have such heritage or background speakers and more efforts are being made both at the secondary and tertiary levels to better cater for such learners (cf. Yoshimitsu 2007, 2008).

#### *2.4 Significant factors affecting Japanese studies offerings*

At those universities offering a separate minor or major in Japanese studies, it was also often possible for students in a language program to include one or two studies subjects into their language major. For instance, UQ offered a double major in Japanese (now called an extended major) which included two non-language subjects. However, following the Bachelor of Arts Review in 2006-7, the number of subjects required to obtain an extended major was reduced from 32 down to 24. As a result, the Japanese extended major was reduced to language only. Now, fewer Japanese studies subjects (eg Japan and the World, Japanese Popular Culture, Modern Japanese Literature and Society) or Asian studies subjects (Women in Asian Literature, Asian Visual Cultures) are available there, and these are offered only in alternate years.

Major structural change has also taken place at UNSW in recent years. The old Japanese major sequence consisted of a combination of four core communication (language) subjects, one core studies subject plus two electives. The restructured major now contains four consecutive gateway (communication/language) subjects, two contextual Japanese studies subjects for students in their second and third years (e.g., Cultural Survey of Japan: From Gods to Gadgets, Japan and Korea, Talking Japanese Pop Culture, Cultural Studies and Japan, Contemporary Japan), two electives (such as Learning Japanese by Reading *manga*, Japanese Grammar) plus one capstone subject in the third year. Students who enter with a higher level of language proficiency, complete two gateway subjects, two professional electives (eg Approaches to Japanese Discourse, Language and Literature in Japanese, Japanese Sociolinguistics, Commercial Japanese), two contextual subjects, two electives plus one capstone subject. Despite structural changes, the philosophy of the Japanese program at UNSW remains that students' communication skills are only achieved through acquisition of communication/language in addition to study of the culture and society of Japan.

Significant rationalization of teaching within many universities has led to a reduction in the number of Japanese studies now offered at a number of institutions. For example, at MU there has been a trend to develop and expand courses to cover Asia or present more of a global focus rather than a concentration on Japan alone. This kind of broadening of some subjects often reflects the changing interests of Japanese studies specialists themselves, but it also represents a response for the need to reduce the number of subjects on offer and it aims to enrol larger numbers of students. It is probably reasons such as these that have contributed to the tendency for Japanese

studies teaching to be reduced somewhat in certain institutions over the past five or so years.

### **3. More recent developments in Japanese language courses**

The theoretical underpinnings of a number of Japanese language and studies programs tend to differ markedly from the positions shared by many of those in European languages, where culture, notably literature, occupy the main goals of many programs. In the last decade or so, the introduction of Japanese content-based language courses seems to relate to current language teaching paradigms, particularly in relation considerations concerning the intellectual and critical content of courses, and beliefs about how languages are best learned.

Both Nagata (1997) and Spence-Brown (2001) have argued persuasively for the incorporation of Japanese studies content into Japanese language courses through such means as content-based approaches. Spence-Brown suggests that course planners should give adequate consideration to three components: the kinds of knowledge that is targeted in terms of relevance and interest to students and staff, as well as coherence; the skills students acquire to continue to develop their knowledge and analyse information and situations; and, the development in students of a positive attitude toward learning more about Japan and other societies.

In practice, there are sometimes considerable difficulties to achieve effective integration of language and studies content, due to such issues as the disciplinary and language divide between language and studies staff, and the independent nature of teaching where a staff member is typically in charge of a particular subject. The staffing programs is strongly influenced by the paradigms held by those in power at any particular time, and an on-going tension between appointment of highly active researchers in the area of Japanese studies as against the recruitment of skilled language teachers often surfaces. Both Nagata (1997) and Spence-Brown (2001), however, refer to the practice of “dual-skilling” and “multiskilling” of staff, as well as the benefits of working in teams involving both language and studies staff (Spence-Brown 2001). Undoubtedly, it is also their involvement in research that has led a number of staff to integrate more studies-type content into their language subjects at some Australian institutions during the past decade. Here I will introduce some developments at MU and UQ.

#### *3.1 Development of content-based subjects*

Around 2001 to 2002, some extraordinary funding was available from MU’s Faculty of Arts for curriculum development. Using this opportunity, the upper four levels of the Japanese language course, Levels 9 to 12, were developed or redeveloped as a means of better providing for the students with higher language proficiency. Together with a team of Japanese language teaching staff, Alison Tokita led the initiative to incorporate more Japanese studies-type content and activities into content-based subjects, which are delivered in Japanese. Extensive planning involved consideration of the sequencing and complementarity of the subjects, but in the end, these four advanced subjects do not involve any particular sequencing order, as is the case with all the other lower subjects.

Under the titles of Japanese Popular Culture, Japanese Interpreting and Translation (regarded more as a skills-based subject, see below), Current Issues in Japanese Media, and Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region, these subjects have continued to evolve since their inception as staff have changed, but nevertheless, they remain important advanced-level content-based subjects. For instance, in Japanese Popular Culture (Level 9), the lecture, and in some years also the tutorial, were delivered in Japanese by one lecturer, with another conducting the seminar which contained more of a focus on language development. The oral assessment was a series of debates at the end of the semester, and students also undertook an oral presentation with a PowerPoint slide presentation. When Level 11, Current Issues in Japanese media, was originally developed, the book *Parasite Singles* was used as the text, but as this became out of date, other materials have been utilized. Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region (Level 12) commenced with a strong theme of translation as well as a geo-political focus – Japan’s relations with China in the premodern period and with the West in the modern, covering the role of translation in broad and narrow senses in both. (However, the translation emphasis was gradually dropped as the assessment proved excessively burdensome.)

In subsequent years, the teaching hours at MU were reduced from six hours per week to four for language subjects (in line with university changes), and thus the proficiency reached by students after completing Level 8 was insufficient for many students to proceed smoothly to Level 9. As a result, two optional reading units were introduced, and now further planning is being undertaken to select content which better problematizes issues connected with Japan, though it is acknowledged that such a goal is more difficult to achieve in the case of the reading subject at the intermediate, rather than at the advanced level. There is also discussion of the need to introduce another year level of language teaching between the current Levels 7/8 and the content-based Levels 9/10. A further issue which constantly surfaces in relation to course planning is the wide variety in student backgrounds and their different proficiency levels, for example, as a result of secondary school study of Japanese and/or study in Japan, or due to prior exposure because of background or heritage factors.

At UQ, first-year Japanese language subjects are available for two streams: beginners or secondary school graduates of Japanese language. These two streams are kept separate in the second year, and a slightly more content-based approach is used for the ex-secondary school cohort. Of the third and fourth year language subjects, some are said to be more content-based (eg Talking Japan, Advanced Literary Texts, Teaching Japanese, Japanese Language and Society), whereas others are more language-focused though with some studies-type content (eg Business Japanese, Representing Australia, *Anime* Japanese, Multi-Media Japanese, Polite Style). The orientation of the subject often depends to a large degree on the training and interests of the individual staff member.

Some of the above-listed innovative subjects at UQ use both Japanese and English. For instance, Japanese Language and Society is for advanced language learners where English is partly used. It aims to deepen students' understanding of the intellectual and social context of language in Japan, and provide students with academic reading and writing skills in Japanese, in addition to developing the research and analytical

skills they need to undertake Honours. Contemporary cultural issues relating to Japan are introduced in Talking Japan, which is based on a collection of interview accounts by people living in Japan who are from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, gender, age and religion. The purpose of the subject is to enrich students' experience of the target culture, and also develop their understanding of informal spoken features and conventions. The subject, Modern Literary Texts, offers intensive study of advanced Japanese textual styles through contemporary literary material, while Japanese Language Teaching: Language, Socio-cultural Knowledge and Methodology for Language Teaching develops students' linguistic and content knowledge relevant to foreign language teaching.

The examples of the development of content-based courses, outlined above, or the skills-based course described in 3.2 below, have principally – but not exclusively – been undertaken by Japanese language staff, drawing upon their own expertise and knowledge of language teaching developments, and on their own research, or staff who combine Japanese language and a studies speciality (such as SLA, where the studies speciality is applied linguistics), or sometimes in conjunction with Japanese Studies staff. It can also be observed that through research, some language teaching staff also move into content-based language as well as studies teaching.

### *3.2 Development of skills-based subjects*

The successful development of a skills-based subject in Japanese Interpreting and Translation at Level 10, which is very different from the older type of translation classes that were sometimes conducted, is another innovation at MU was also undertaken along side of the above-described three content-based subjects, and has met with strong student approval (Takimoto and Hashimoto 2008). Developed by the Masato Takimoto who is a professional interpreter as well as educator, in conjunction with another staff member, the subject introduces Japanese mainly through interpreting and translation and is considered a very appropriate way to teach advanced-level language subjects. Because the subject involves use of both Japanese and English, it also includes background and native speakers of Japanese, thus providing a dynamic context for learning for various cohorts of students.

Some evaluative comments from students are as follows:

This unit (subject) provided an insight into the application of language to real life situations. The assignment tasks were a good way to use previously acquired language skills.

I've probably learnt the most Japanese vocab and grammar in my entire university life from this subject. This is how Japanese should be taught, through real life examples and constant teacher student interaction ... instead of lectures and rubbishy textbooks.

(Takimoto and Hashimoto 2008, pp. 14, 20)

At the same time, for some students, this subject is very challenging. For instance, one reports as follows:

I didn't really think I'd be that bad at it. But I was.... Although I knew that my speaking wasn't very good, it made me realise...to convey something in English into Japanese was probably my weakest part of everything... I always thought that maybe *kanji* was my weakest you know. Now I don't think so at all, like I think definitely it's my speaking.

A positive feature of the development of this subject is the involvement staff in an iterative process whereby analysis of the teaching and learning feeds back into the teaching itself (see 5. below).

#### **4. Honours programs**

An Honours program typically consists of 50% advanced language training, in some form or other, and 50% research for a dissertation/thesis. The 1992 report on Japanese language teaching in Australia found that enrolments at both the Honours and the Postgraduate levels were quite low overall, with a national enrolment of just 48 students in the Honours year in 1992, despite the big increase in enrolments at the undergraduate level which had taken place in the preceding years (Marriott, Neustupny & Spence-Brown 1994, p.29). The postgraduate cohort was also low, but as students may belong to other disciplinary units, I will not cover this level here. The report concluded: "Given that Japanese language and area studies are taught at 32 Australian institutions, a postgraduate cohort to this size cannot support the current, yet along the future, needs of academic staffing requirements. Nor can this number adequately provide the public and private sectors with expertise in Japan and Japanese language" (Marriott, Neustupny & Spence-Brown 1994, p.31).

It is hard to claim that positive improvements have been made in recent years, at least at some institutions. MU, for instance, has witnessed a slow decline in the number of students undertaking Honours, and is increasingly have to cope with students who come with insufficient disciplinary training, either through having taken too few or no Japanese studies subjects, or who have had insufficient disciplinary training outside of the Japanese studies program. The pre-requisites for students to enter Honours probably need to be re-set so that in their earlier years students prepare better for this later study. Alternatives to the traditional research dissertation, such as a translation project, have also been implemented in an attempt to rectify the situation.

Restructuring and rationalisation has resulted in all language programs at UNSW now combining to offer a combined Honours program in the School of Languages and Linguistics, but students still take two subjects in the program discipline during their Honours year, in addition to writing a thesis of 20,000 words, generally on a topic relating to Japanese studies. Given a reduction in the overall number of Honours students in the School, consideration is now being given to the introduction of an alternative new program, eg, MA, which could also provide a pathway to the PhD, but no decisions have been made at this stage.

Honours remains essential if students are to progress to graduate training, which is undertaken either in Australia or, as is often the case, in Japan. Structural impediments such as student charges for their Australian undergraduate degrees and

opportunities for work in Japan are but two further factors which seem to contribute to the current situation.

## **5. The interrelationship of research and teaching/ teaching and research**

In a Japanese studies program, research, including that of an applied linguistics nature but not limited to this, can directly inform the teaching (either of language or of studies) that is undertaken. For example, when asked how research at MU has fed into the language teaching, Spence-Brown reports as follows:

It is probably good to think of this as a two-way exchange, as teaching also feeds into research topics and directions. Those of us who do research relating to language acquisition and teaching clearly experience strong connections in both directions. My PhD research on language assessment was motivated by observations from teaching, and has informed my assessment practices subsequently. My research project with Kokken on resources and environments in Japanese language education helped me to think more about the needs of learners and the impact of resources and environment, and this has been reinforced by the student research I have supervised since, particularly relating to out-of classroom use and use of ICT. This prompted me to re-evaluate and adjust things like the teaching of kanji and the introduction of word processing in Japanese 1 & 2, and to work with Sarah [Pasfield-Neofitou] to develop the Bebo project<sup>3</sup>. Of course, my research also feeds into my postgraduate teaching.

My own research on intercultural contact informs my teaching of sociolinguistics, a Japanese studies subject, where an underlying theme is interaction in contact situations (Marriott 1997). Such a focus is on benefit to learners of the Japanese language who interact or will interact with speakers of Japanese in different geographical locations, especially Australia and Japan, employing either the Japanese or English languages or both. I also hope that my research into the acquisition of academic literacy by overseas students in the L2 English tertiary environment informs my postgraduate teaching and supervision, at least to some degree (Marriott 2003, 2004). Similarly, the recent research of Pasfield-Neofitou at Honours and PhD level on ICT usage in naturally occurring Japanese learner-native speaker dyads has many implications for teaching programs (Pasfield-Neofitou 2007, 2008), as does the research of Kurata (2007a, 2007b) on language learning and use opportunities in learner's informal networks.

Innovative PhD research into Japanese interpreters' behaviour in multi-party interpreting situations is now influencing the interpreting curriculum prepared by Takimoto himself and thus benefiting the students of those courses (Takimoto 2008, in press). In addition, ongoing research by Takimoto and Hashimoto on various aspects of the teaching and learning within the Level 10 subject on Japanese interpreting and translation has led to improvements in the teaching of that subject (Takimoto & Hashimoto 2008; Hashimoto & Takimoto 2009).

The nexus between teaching and research, and research and teaching is aptly illustrated by Hashimoto, who writes as follows:

Teaching former exchange students in Japanese language classes made me interested in the language acquisition and attrition of high school exchange students. The research was useful for the development of an ‘accelerated course’ for such students years ago and my subsequent teaching at Monash.

My research and personal interest in transnational movement of people and their identity allowed me to develop my module ‘Japanese overseas and foreigners in Japan’ in a unit on ‘Debating Japan’.

Most recent example with XX is teaching Japanese 10 and the feedback from students (very different experience from other units, lots of interaction, relevance etc) started us doing research on J10 students’ learning. I believe that careful reading of students’ feedback and longitudinal interviews with students informed us to better teach J10 and better understand the dynamics in the classroom in general.

The backgrounds of Japanese heritage and overseas/international students along with their acquisition of English academic competence has been the focus of Yoshimitsu’s (2007, 2008, in press) recent research and in turn, this research will inform the curriculum development of a new content-based language stream for Japanese background speakers, which is now commencing at MU.

## **6. Concluding discussion**

For a variety of reasons, more effective collaboration between Japanese language and Japanese studies seems to have occurred during the past decade, perhaps due to the maturing of programs and changing paradigms of language teaching, the role of research by staff and graduate students, and also because of the higher levels of students’ language proficiency. As a result, there are now more content-based courses which could lead us to argue that there is actually some blurring of the former language/studies dichotomy. This blurring also characterizes some staff profiles, especially where staff who commenced as language teachers develop expertise in studies as well as language teaching.

Continual examination of the goals of our teaching, whether of language or studies, and ongoing consideration of how best to utilize the interdisciplinary strengths that lie in many Japanese programs will be necessary. Engaging in this debate at the local institutional level, as well as on national and international levels, is likely to help us reformulate different aspects of our programs’ planning and implementation.

## **Notes**

1. Special thanks are due to Sumiko Iida (UNSW), Yuriko Nagata (UQ), and Alison Tokita, Hiroko Hashimoto and Robyn Spence-Brown (MU) for supplying some data used in this paper.
2. EFTSL or Equivalent Full-Time Student Load is the national method used to measure student load in Higher Education. This figure may roughly be equal to around 8000 plus students.
3. Bebo project. See separate presentation, this conference by Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, Mari Morofushi & Robyn Spence-Brown (this conference).

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