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## **1+2 APPROACH: Teaching Young Japanese Learners in Scottish Primary Education**

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### **Abstract**

We focus on the Japanese language provision in Scottish primary education, with its 1 + 2 approach. The first paper (Roberson) gives an overview of Scottish Education, focusing on Languages policy, qualifications and development, and national priorities, and discusses approaches to developing Japanese as a second additional language (L3). The second paper (Matsumoto-Sturt) focuses on Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), and we will pay particular attention to its impact on curriculum design and accompanying learning and teaching package development. The third paper (Iori) argues for *Yasashii Nihongo* (Easy Japanese) as a key concept for a sustainable multicultural society in Japan. Drawing on the framework of *Yasashii Nihongo* for JSL children, we will consider how far this is possible for JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) children in Scotland and beyond.

**Keywords:** Japanese (JFL) for young learners, Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence, 1+2 Approach, *Yasashii Nihongo*

【キーワード】 年少者向け日本語教育、国定教育政策<Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)>、言語政策<1+2 Approach>、〈やさしい日本語〉

[Paper-1]

### **Ichi + Ni = Japanese? Developing Japanese in the Scottish context**

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### **Abstract**

The Scottish Government 1+2 Languages policy has seen the integration of 1, 2 and increasingly 3 additional languages into and across Scottish primary schools from the

Early years upwards. This ongoing transformational change has seen extensive teacher training, resource development and partnership collaborations as teachers develop their skills and schools grow and adapt to deliver the policy. Now, at the mid-way point of the policy implementation, what unique role can Japanese have as schools seek to raise attainment across learning, improve literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, close the poverty gap and develop employability? How do we develop Japanese as an L3 or L4 language in schools and support staff to develop their skills? This paper will share feedback from practitioners, officers and education leaders in Scotland and explore the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead in the development of Japanese learning for young Scottish learners

**Keywords:** 1+2 Languages, Japanese, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Scotland, education

**【キーワード】** 言語政策<1+2 Approach>、日本語、国定教育政策<Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)>、スコットランド初等教育

## **1 1+2 Languages Policy Development in Scottish schools**

The 2011 Scottish Government Languages Working Group report, ‘Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach’ produced 35 recommendations for Scottish Local Authorities, schools and further and higher education institutions to meet the manifesto commitment which stated that: ‘We will introduce a norm for language learning in schools based on the European Union 1 + 2 model - that is we will create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This will be rolled out over two Parliaments, and will create a new model for language acquisition in Scotland’ (Scottish Government manifesto commitment, 2011). To support this development, £21.2 million of Scottish Government funding has been allocated of since 2013 to present date. A national Languages Strategic Implementation Group was also convened in May 2013 to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the recommendations. Further Scottish Government support is provided by the Scotland’s National Centre for Languages (SCILT) and the national schools education agency, Education Scotland.

## **2 1+2 Languages Development – Primary Languages and L3**

The Scottish Government Languages Working Group makes a number of recommendations for primary schools which have required significant change and development in their approaches to language learning since 2011. L2 languages, those being taught from primary 1 (P1) onwards, are usually one of French, Spanish or Scottish Gaelic, with French being the most common. This language is expected to be embedded in all aspects of classroom practice and taught by the classroom teacher as part of their daily learning and teaching development. L2 learning should provide continuous progression into secondary schools and onto accreditation at later stages. In terms of progress with implementation, the ADES 1+2 evaluation report states that, ‘31 Local Authority submissions (those submitted by September 2015) state that they are on track for implementation of a first additional language (L2) from P1 to P7 by 2020’ (ADES, 2016).

The point of introduction of the L3 language can be decided by schools and Local Authorities but should be ‘no later than P5’ (Scottish Government Languages Working Group, 2011). L3 development is distinct in that it is characterised by a degree of flexibility and is designed to enhance language learning by exploring transferable skills and links between languages. It does not necessarily need to provide progressive routes to accreditation, although the guidance states that this would be preferable. ‘There is no expectation that the secondary school offer the same L3 as was studied at the primary stages, although this would be ideal’ (Education Scotland, 2017). The policy affords, therefore, a large degree of flexibility in the both L3 language choice and its curricular structure and organisation.

The sample languages identified from the ADES 1+2 evaluation report lists Spanish, German, French, Mandarin, Gaelic, British Sign Language, Italian, Scots, Latin, Polish, Russian, Urdu, Arabic and Makaton as they languages reported to be in development by Local Authorities. Japanese was not identified at the point of the survey taking place (March 2016). Three potential approaches, are outlined in detail in the 2017 updated L3 guidance from Education Scotland. These are:

- The same additional language taught over the whole of P5 to P7 through a regular slot each week
- A different L3 each year, to fit in with the resources available locally at that time or the themes being delivered.’
- ‘An additional language introduced as part of an interdisciplinary (IDL) project over a number of weeks.’ (Education Scotland, 2017)

This offers an opportunity to engage with a wider range of languages beyond those which are part of the secondary school accredited suite of languages and allows schools to engage with the language of interest to and or spoken by their learners. It also provides sufficient flexibility for 1+2 to become 1+3, 1+4 or 1+5 with multiple language learning experiences being developed in both primary and secondary schools. There are currently schools where these multiple language learning experiences are being developed, so for example two European languages (e.g. French and Spanish) plus Japanese.

In terms of progress with L3 development, the ADES report states that: ‘While plans for implementation of the second additional language (L3) are at varying stages across the country; almost all local authorities are confident that the 2020 deadline will be met’ (ADES, 2016). Main aspects of development for both L2 and L3 include: (1) Staff development, particularly in language skills, (2) Learning and teaching resource development, (3) Partnerships, (4) Engagement with native speakers, and (5) Communications.

### **3 Development of Japanese Language Learning in Scotland**

#### **3.1 Progress to date**

Japanese education networks are beginning to develop in Scotland including the Japan Language Group Scotland with representation from the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, national agencies, schools, higher education, and national partners. Further to this, in February 2017, a group of 20 educational leaders including local authority officers, head teachers and teachers attended a one-week educational engagement visit to Japan organised and supported by the Japan Foundation. This has enabled the creation of a network of education leaders and teachers across Scotland, with an interest and enthusiasm for developing Japanese in their schools and with a first-hand experience of Japan and Japanese culture. This network has enabled sharing practice between regions, developing partnerships and sharing new and information about developing Japanese in schools. Japanese is being developed to some extent in 8 out of 32 local authorities in Scotland. Most notably, progress has been made in City of Edinburgh and in Orkney. In Orkney, there has been development of Japanese language in schools arising from renewables industry business links. This has led to school partnerships being established with reciprocal visits Orcadian and Japanese school students and a sharing of cultural and language. Reflecting this growing interest, events have taken place in Scotland designed to promote engagement in Japanese language

culture such as young JFL conferences, cultural events and teacher network events.

Japanese is now offered at 8 of the 15 Scottish universities. In 2017, the University of Edinburgh has led the development of the *Japanese for Young Learners project* (Matsumoto-Sturt & Robertson, 2017) which has focused on the development and trialling of Japanese learning and teaching materials and pedagogical approaches specifically for the purposes of the Scottish curriculum and context. This project has produced a range of learning materials designed to support classroom development of Japanese and to support teacher development. They have been shared with schools across Scotland and developed in line with wider 1+2 Languages approaches designed to support teachers with limited language knowledge to engage with and facilitate language learning in their classrooms. Approaches were piloted in partnership with an Edinburgh primary school who also hosted a short introduction to Japanese course for secondary and primary teachers. The project hosted a conference attended by a range of key stakeholders including teachers, school leaders, local authority officers and national partners. The above developments indicate that Japanese language and culture in Scottish schools is beginning to develop and establish networks, developing in both secondary and primary schools, sharing of learning and teaching materials, teacher development opportunities and partnerships.

#### **4 What next for Japanese?**

##### **4.1 What next for Japanese? Opportunities for development in the Scottish context**

L3 development within 1+2 Languages creates an opportunity for Japanese in Scottish primary and secondary schools. This was reflected in teachers and education leaders' answers when asked about the opportunities for developing Japanese in their schools: 'In primary and secondary as add-ones to being with and then increasingly reaching more learners once an interest has been developed' (*Japanese for Young Learners Project*, *ibid.*, 2017).

Nationally, literacy and numeracy attainment are priorities for school improvement given recent decline or no improvement in performance according to both the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) (Scottish Government, 2016) and the international PISA data (Scottish Government, 2016). Given the nature of Japanese literacy, it is perhaps worth exploring its potential impact further. Engaging with a visual writing system which is syllabic has the potential provide learners with a "flipped" or alternative experience of reading and writing. It is interesting to consider

what the opportunities are in for this in terms of improvement in attainment but also in improving literacy and language confidence and cognitive development (Harwood, 2007). Furthermore, learning to recognise kana and match characters to sounds can lend itself to visual activities and interactive game playing. This provides opportunities to explore pedagogical approaches synonymous with CfE (e.g. collaborative and active learning) and poses questions around the potential positive impact on learner engagement and confidence. Similarly, with numeracy, Japanese presents opportunities to explore other approaches to numeracy and number systems and to provide young people with an opportunity to, again, have an alternate experience of learning, achieving and attaining. When we compare the regular and predictable nature of Japanese counting systems with the more complex and irregular English system (Cankaya, LeFevre, Sowinski, 2012) it again presents questions around the potential impact on supporting young learner's numeracy development. This also creates opportunities to engage with Japan numeracy pedagogy and to explore practice which according to the latest TIMMS data (TIMMS, 2015) contributes to one of the highest numeracy attainment rate in the world.

Elsewhere in the curriculum, Japanese culture presents a broad range of opportunities for Scottish curriculum development across aspects of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) such as Health & Wellbeing, Interdisciplinary Learning and Global Citizenship. Themes such as Japanese food, family and school in Japan, martial arts, origami, fashion, religion and beliefs and earth forces all provide Scottish schools with a rich range of engaging learning themes. Furthermore, upcoming sporting events such as the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2019 Rugby World Cup create an immediate opportunity to develop current and relevant learning.

Anecdotal feedback from schools is indicating that young people are engaging with Japanese language and culture, often out with school and in their own time. Teachers have pointed to young people learning Japanese using online videos such as Youtube and engaging with Japanese youth culture such as J-pop, anime and manga. This poses interesting questions around the possibilities of autonomous language learning. Do schools have a possible role in developing, supporting and facilitating this kind of learning and if so how? What is the possible impact on learner choice, engagement and attainment? Furthermore, this presents an exciting opportunity to engage with student voice and to learn from our young people about how and what they are learning out-with school and curriculum contexts.

In terms of the employability agenda, according to Scottish Government data, 'there are 85 businesses in Scotland who have parent companies registered in Japan, with 210

local sites employing 6,250 and a turnover of £1.489bn This represents an increase of 520 local employees on 2015 figures and an additional £187m Scottish turnover' (Scottish Government, ONS, 2016). The Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW, Education Scotland, 2014) agenda requires Scottish schools to consider employability as part of curriculum planning and so the presence of Japanese business and industry in Scotland offers opportunities to create employer and economic links and partnerships. These businesses, which are listed by Scottish Development International as largely being from STEM industries (e.g. renewables, electronics, digital health, life sciences, biotechnology) and food and drink (e.g. whisky, seafoods) have the potential to provide real, local employment opportunities linked to Japanese language. The Orcadian-Japanese example provides a possible model for linking industry, STEM subjects, language and inter-cultural exchange. Considering exports, Scottish Government export data shows that food and drink sales to Japan reached £98.7 million in 2015, up 9% from the £90.3 million in 2014. Whisky sales alone accounted for 77% of this total (Scottish Government, 2017). Through evidence gathered as part of the *Japanese for Young Learners Project* (Matsumoto-Sturt & Robertson, 2017), teachers also cited employability as an opportunity for Japanese development in Scotland\*

- 'Opening young people/children's opportunities to explore the language and country, possibly leading to career opportunities in the future.'
- 'Diversification of languages and deepening awareness of other cultures. Enhancing skills for the world of work' (ibid., 2017)

There are also opportunities to further develop cultural links with Japan and to build on existing and developing partnerships for example through the JET programme, university student partnership programmes and partner links with schools. The Japan Foundation are active in Scotland and offer school support programmes, staff development, learning and teaching resources and funding opportunities for schools. SCILT also offer support to schools and have established business partnership programmes such as Business Brunches and Business Language Ambassadors, which have the potential to extend to Japanese firms.

Improving access to digital technology for all learners is one of 4 key objectives set out in the Scottish Government Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016). This development of ICT in Scotland is already well-established, with example of schools where learners have access to a personal device e.g. I-Pad, which is provided by the school. Other schools have a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy where learners are encouraged to bring tablets or laptops to school for the purposes of enhancing their learning and enabling engagement with ICT. These approaches offer an opportunity to



develop language learning, develop partnerships and engage with the wide range of online learning materials available in Japanese.

#### 4.2 What next for Japanese? Considerations for future development

Some key considerations in developing Japanese in the Scottish context can be summarised below:

- In Scotland, there are established and developing Japanese networks but no one single dedicated strategy for supporting and driving development. A strategic plan for national development of Japanese could support local authorities, schools and teachers to develop Japanese learning.
- Responsibility for the delivery of language learning at classroom levels sits with the primary teacher. To support staff development and upskilling in new language, local authorities have provided local training opportunities and encouraged and supported access to development funding. Learning and teaching development has focussed on highly supportive materials which are designed to support teachers both in terms of pedagogical approaches and with language through modelling and audio files to support accuracy in pronunciation.
- The geography of Scotland can present challenges in supporting staff training and development for remoter regions. How do we create solutions which meet the needs for Scotland as a whole? What role can networks and partners play in supporting this development and where does the strategic leadership sit?
- Accreditation remains a key consideration as there are currently no Scottish qualifications available for learners of Japanese, with no plans for development. How do we ensure that we provide meaningful experiences of Japanese for young people and what are the opportunities to provide accreditation at later stages, for those who require it?

## 5 Conclusions

1+2 Languages L3 development offers a unique opportunity for Japanese development in Scotland. The policy offers flexibility and the opportunity to explore languages for a range of reasons. There is an opportunity for further research linking Japanese to the Scottish context, particularly looking at learner engagement, raising attainment and pupil equity. Networks, sharing and development around culture,

employability and partnerships provide opportunities for a rich curricular experience linked to the pedagogies, policies and practice of Curriculum for Excellence and key improvement frameworks and priorities. Strategic leadership and planning at a national level could help drive this development and support enhanced communications and professional development. Routes to accreditation for learners remains a key consideration. Further research into learner engagement and autonomous learning of Japanese language and culture could present innovative opportunities for language learning in Scotland.

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**Developing young JFL in the Scottish primary context:  
Japanese for Young Learners Project**

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**Abstract**

In this paper, I give an overview of Scotland's new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) with a focus on the 1+2 Languages Policy. There is an increasing emphasis on cross curricular approaches to teaching and learning in the development of the CfE framework. In other words, this interdisciplinary (IDL) approach involves teaching and learning moving away from traditional subject divides. I will address the impact of IDL approach to the development of Japanese packages for young JFL learners and 1+2 practitioners in the Scottish primary school context.

**Keywords:** Japanese (JFL) for young learners, 1+2 Approach, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), interdisciplinary approach

【キーワード】 年少者向け JFL 日本語教育、言語政策<1+2 Approach>、国定教育政策<Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)>、教科横断型学習

**1 Curriculum for Excellence - What is it?**

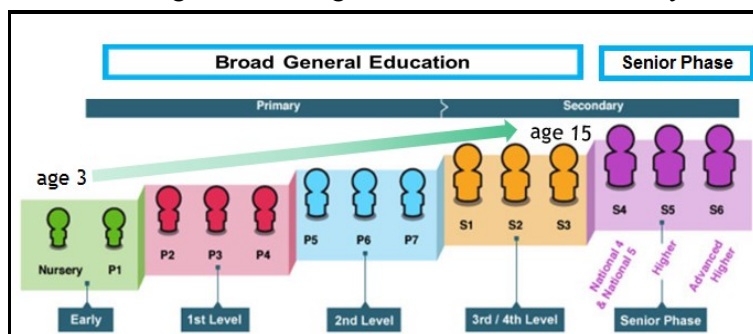
The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the name given to a new national curriculum in Scotland, which was introduced in 2010, for all children and young people (hereafter, young learners) from age 3-18 years at Scottish schools. In a nutshell, CfE refers to a specific programme of change in Scottish education to improve education in Scotland with an aim to raise achievement for all, enabling young learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need in order to succeed in learning, life and work (Education Scotland, 2008). There have been two key priorities (i.e. aims) for CfE (Education Scotland, 2016) – (1) ensuring the best possible progression in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for every child and young person, and (2) closing the (poverty-related) attainment gap<sup>1</sup>.

It is apparent by now that CfE is not a prescriptive curriculum for teachers (i.e. it does not tell teachers what to teach, how to teach or when to teach each subject) as its aim is to provide a coherent framework for young learners in Scotland, and the centre of learning provision is placed on the needs of young learners:

The purpose of the curriculum is to help children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (the four capacities). The framework therefore puts the learner at the centre of the curriculum ('building the curriculum framework: summary', Education Scotland, 2008).

The 'four capacities' define the purpose of CfE, and govern the entire curriculum at five stages of learning (see Figure-1) within the broad general education phase (ages 3-15) and the senior phase (ages 16-18).

**Figure 1:** 'Five stages of learning' in the Scottish education system



(Based on *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: An introduction* by BBC, Scotland)

## 2 Curriculum for Excellence - The curriculum framework

The curriculum framework or the 'Building the Curriculum' series includes 'four contexts for learning': (1) curriculum areas and subjects, (2) interdisciplinary learning, (3) ethos and life of the school and (4) opportunities for personal achievement. The specified eight curriculum areas are Expressive arts, Health and wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and moral education, Sciences, Social studies, and Technologies. Here, we will be concerned with 'Languages' at the 2nd level (ages 8-10) of broad general education in the primary context. I shall come back to this point later.

For teachers, there are two resources available for planning learning, teaching and

assessment within the framework. First, ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ (Es+Os) - a set of statements on children’s learning within each level, and progression in each curriculum area. Teachers use these to plan learning and to assess progress. Second, ‘Benchmarks’ - Benchmarks are a streamlined set of learning resources and provide a progression framework from First to Fourth levels for Modern Languages. They are designed to support teachers in making professional judgements for each curriculum level.

### **3 Young JFL in the Scottish context**

From this section, our focus shifts to one specific curriculum area of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), namely, ‘Languages’ in the primary context. The two following sub-sections aim to set up the Japanese provision within a Scottish framework for language learning called ‘Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach’, launched in 2012. In the previous paper, Robertson fully discusses the development of the 1+2 language policy in Scottish schools. She establishes how two different routes of L2 (foreign language 1) and L3 (foreign language 2) could be taken up by schools, and she concludes that ‘L3 development within 1+2 Languages creates an opportunity for Japanese in Scottish primary and secondary schools.’ I will, therefore, further discuss her concluding remark in the more concrete context of the *Japanese for Young Learners project*.

#### **3.1 Policy into practice**

The rationale behind the 1+2 languages policy is to give every child the opportunity to learn two other languages in addition to their mother tongue. The Scottish Government Languages Working Group recommended ‘enhanced partnership working between primary and secondary schools, closer collaboration across all sectors of education, more extensive and more effective use of technology and regular access to native and fluent speakers to stimulate young people’s interest in language learning and other cultures’ (Scottish Government, 2012: 3). Local Authorities in Scotland have been implementing the 1+2 language initiative to all publicly funded schools across Scotland. From 2020, every child in Scotland will be entitled to learn an additional language (L2) from primary one (4-5 years old) onwards, and a second additional language (L3) by primary five (8-9 years old). This entitlement continues until the end of S3 (13-14 years old) in their six years of secondary school.

Unlike the first additional language (L2), L3 can be any language, as L3 is not

required to be carried on into secondary school or to be available as a National Qualification thereafter (Glen, 2017). This gives an answer to our first question - how can Japanese be developed as part of the 1+2 language initiative? Accordingly, the direction for the development of Japanese has been set as a second additional language (L3) to be introduced to the 2nd level (from P5, age 8-9) of broad general education in the Scottish primary context. If the number of young Japanese learners across Scotland is on the increase after 2020 as a result of the promotion of Japanese language as a L3 to primary schools, it will be the first step to encourage the necessity of Japanese qualifications such as National Grade, Higher or Advanced Higher to be set up for the senior phase (ages 16-18) in the secondary education in the future. Meanwhile, we need to deal with current problems such as resource issues, pedagogical issues, and operational issues including teacher training.

#### **4 Japanese for Young Learners project**

##### **4.1 Setting up the project**

In order to tap into key issues for the development of Japanese in the Scottish primary context, I have conducted a pilot study: *Japanese for Young Learners project* at a local primary school in Edinburgh<sup>2</sup> between February and June in 2017. Work in schools began in February 2017 and a weekly 45 minutes lesson took place for six weeks for two P5 (age 8-9) classes: P5A (N=28, 14 males, 14 females) and P5B (N=27, 16 males, 11 females). This was followed by Teacher CPD (Continuous Professional Development) workshops (n=14) for 6 weeks.

This pilot study was designed with two phases. The first phase aimed to gather experience and insight for developing a young JFL course, understanding learning processes and progression. The second phase was designed to explore approaches to supporting schools and training teachers with zero to very little Japanese language learning background. The rationale behind this part of the pilot study was to see whether it would be possible to establish a pedagogical model of teaching Japanese language and culture while developing teachers' additional language skills as novice learners. One question is whether there could be any other way of achieving this, such as employing native volunteer teachers. In this regard, other languages such as German and Chinese have successfully established a scheme involving native speakers working in conjunction with class teachers to deliver language lessons to primary school children. However, currently this model could not be considered for Japanese, since there are no

qualified Scottish teachers of Japanese working in the field, and there is not a large enough native Japanese population<sup>3</sup> to form an inherited language society like Chinese, Polish and Urdu. As a result, I concluded that there is a lack of Japanese volunteer teachers in Scotland for implementation in 2020. Thus, a six-week ‘Teacher CPD workshops for teachers’ was designed to encourage existing modern foreign language (MFL) teachers to take up Japanese as L3.

#### 4.2 Pilot young JFL class

For my pilot young JFL classes, I teamed up with Ann Robertson (the first author of this paper), who has extensive experience in this field as a 1+2 Languages officer. We started the project by looking at a common thematic syllabus, which is not language specific and is also in accordance with the Benchmarks and progression framework. We also made a list of Japanese-specific language and cultural items to be included in the course package.

In total, we have developed six packages at an introductory level. The outcomes of learning include counting from 1-100 in Japanese and Japanese greetings. P5 children learned the rhythms of spoken Japanese through Japanese tongue twisters and songs, and they starting to read *hiragana* letters using an association method with visual and sound cues. I can confirm that they successfully achieved key First/Second level ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ <Listening and Talking> at the introductory level. In particular, the following three First level Es+Os seem important as they can be used to measure a child’s phonological awareness:

- I explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and show understanding verbally or non-verbally. (MLAN 1-01a)
- I am beginning to explore similarities and differences between sound patterns in different languages through play, rhymes, songs and discussion. (MLAN 1-07a)
- I can use my knowledge about language and pronunciation to ensure that others can understand me when I say familiar words and phrases. (MLAN 1-07b)

Generally speaking, all P5 children (age 8-9, n=55) were actively learning authentic Japanese sounds through songs and rhymes and showed verbal or non-verbal understanding (MLAN 1-01a). They tried to pronounce each word as authentically as possible, and understood that Japanese requires situational judgements, in terms of whether to use polite (e.g. *ohayōgozaimasu*) or plain (e.g. *ohayō*) forms. The children also engaged in paired speaking and short role play activities (MLAN 2-05b). This alone must be seen as a remarkable achievement for two 45 minutes lessons. In addition, some pupils showed strong phonological awareness during lessons. For example, a

female pupil asked why she could not hear the vowel /u/ in verbs ending in *desu/masu*. This question demonstrates her understanding that words are made up of small sound units (phonemes), and that she was able to recognize the ending sound in a syllable, and thus understood the phonetic realization of Japanese devoicing in *desu/masu*. Such skills normally indicate a strong reading potential.

#### 4.3 Teacher's role in young JFL class

During the pilot project, Japanese was well linked to other areas of the curriculum such as Social studies and the Expressive arts, offering an opportunity to develop children's language skills and their knowledge of Japanese culture. For teachers and their pupils, learning about Japan and Japanese culture became an important part of the project. For example, in each class the teacher made a Japanese corner (see Figure 2) with items and words linked to Japanese language and culture, to facilitate what children were learning. This whole school approach may be seen as a concrete example of 'the integration of the language into the life of the school and the rest of the curriculum.' (Education Scotland, 2015: 5).

**Figure 2:** Japanese corner



As part of interdisciplinary learning, the willingness of the two class teachers to support lessons was clearly reflected in their teaching materials and in the outcomes of the pupils work. For example, Japanese lessons were linked to themes that were being covered in other class activities, such as 'expressive art' and 'the world around us', and children were encouraged to consolidate their learning through planned activities. For example, pupils were inspired (see Figure 3) by a work of Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* painting and their reproductions of this artwork were on the display during the pilot project.



**Figure 3:** Reproduction of Hiroshige's artwork 'Plum Estate, Kameido'

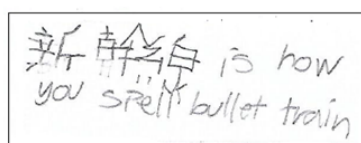
Both class teachers confirmed that they had no prior knowledge of the Japanese



language. Yet a class teacher introduced Japanese writing activities to her pupils. The teacher used Japanese themed teaching materials (e.g. ‘Japanese writing Activity sheet’ presenting five kanji 愛・友・幸・竜・命) from the online educational publishing house Twinkl (twinkl.co.uk), along with her own writing activity sheets. I witnessed young JFL learners’ enthusiastic engagement in their Japanese writing activities through their portfolios (see Figure 4).

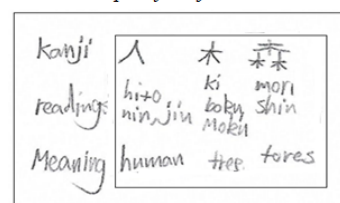
**Figure 4:** Samples of kanji taken from pupils’ learning portfolio

*What is Bullet Train? from Note Taking activity sheet*



Written by a male P5 pupil

*How do Japanese children learn kanji? Draw a sample of kanji in the box below.*



Written by a female P5 pupil

P5 children’s positive attitude and their ability in learning kanji has made me think that I should not completely rely on my existing perceptions of typical JFL learners – many JFL and JSL learners of Japanese from a non-kanji orthographic background consider ‘kanji one of the most challenging aspects of Japanese learning’ (Mori, 2012). However, young JFL learners here do not show reluctance to learn multiple readings of given kanji (see readings of three kanji 人・木・森 in Figure 5) or copying out a visually complex compound kanji 新幹線. Given that literacy is one of the key priorities for CfE (Education Scotland, 2016), such enthusiasm among young JFL learners would make the Japanese presence stand out in terms of having a kanji-kana mixed writing system.

I also noticed that language learning was strongly associated with the development of reading and writing skills in English (L1 for majority of pupils). For example, a teacher used Kids Web Japan (<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/housing/q1.html>) to create ‘Report Writing and Research’ activity sheet. For a question - *What is the traditional dress of Japan?*, the teacher wrote a tip (It’s under the heading ‘Clothes’) to guide children to the relevant part of Kids Web Japan. All pupils identified the required information, and many of them just copied the relevant part, and some pupils digested the content and wrote the answer in their own words. Both cases involved children learning punctuation and appropriate vocabulary, and provided handwriting practice. Although Japanese learning must be at the introductory level (Level 1) as L3, such target culture information gathering activities could be achieved with Literacy-related Es+Os at Level 2 – e.g. ‘By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant

information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. (LIT 2-26a)'

#### 4.4 Pilot 6 week teacher training course

The course was delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and the Japan Foundation, London, and the Edinburgh City Council, between April and June in 2017 for 6 weeks. The aim of the course was for participants to build their confidence and to enjoy teaching Japanese language and culture while developing their additional language skills as learners. Each workshop had two parts: (1) weekly theme learning activities, including preview and evaluation of the Teaching/Learning package (50min), and (2) hands-on Japanese activities - 'Learn by doing!' session (35min). Two additional focus group discussions were organized during the course to improve Japanese teaching/learning materials that had been created for *Japanese for Young Learners project*.

##### Course description:

The course was designed to introduce a balance of theoretical and practical ideas, and activities were based on pedagogic research in the field of Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language. The aim of the course is to focus on developing skills and understanding relating to: Foundation level Japanese language, Techniques for teaching pronunciation, Japanese IME and the use of technology in Japanese classes, key points for running a Japanese calligraphy art class, Fun classroom activities such as Japanese songs, crafts and games, JFL teaching methods for the Scottish context.

##### Focus group feedback:

Timing of the course is important for busy teachers. The timing (1.5 hour sessions from 16.30 on Thursdays) was judged to be appropriate. Both groups found the creative and practical parts of the course very useful and enjoyable. They also appreciated the many IDL tips and the online resources. For the next step, some teachers suggested a Japan club, and Taster classes for the development of Japanese in the curriculum. For their future CPD training, they would like more language classes with practical lesson plans, and many expressed interest in an immersion morning workshop.

It is worth noting that the language learning part was felt to be more challenging. The teachers in both groups wanted more encouragement and focus on basic language and common phrases for use in classroom setting, rather than having a formal introduction of Japanese sounds and the structure of the language. This is a topic for future

development. With this CPD course, I tried to see whether it would be feasible to ask MFL teachers to teach Japanese as an additional language as novice learners themselves. I judge that their professionalism can be trusted, as they clearly identified what will be needed to run a Japanese class by themselves during focus group sessions.

## 6 Conclusion

Topic-based learning activities in the project proved to be fun, and provided an effective IDL approach for deepening children's learning experiences, while introducing a new culture and its language at an introductory level. However, as Pete (2014) pointed out for a similar project in Chinese, the lack of a progressive programme of language learning is a concern that must be considered for the future development of Japanese, as 'it is important to move children from words into short phrases and sentences, including mini conversations' (Pate 2014: 4).

The next paper (Iori) will show the initial blueprint for the possible development of *yasashii nihongo* ('easy Japanese') in the Scottish JFL context. His main objective for adult immigrants in the Japanese society - urgently develop linguistic 'ability to express in (easy) Japanese what they can say in their mother tongue' - may also be suitable for Scottish young JFL learners. In particular, a 'downsized' grammatical syllabus for beginners could be employed for a progressive programme of Japanese learning for Scottish young JFL learners and their teachers. Indeed, our guest discussant at the EAJS panel, Makoto Netsu (the Japan Foundation, London) drew our attention to a likely situation where more and more young JFL learners abroad will be making direct contact with Japanese people through digital media such as E-mail and blogs, and their communication may be based on *yasashii nihongo*. So far, *yasashii nihongo* has not been concerned with the context of young JFL abroad, but the establishment of *yasashii nihongo* for young JFL learners in the Scottish context should become a useful learning experience for their future life and work situations.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For further discussion, see Robertson in this paper
- <sup>2</sup> I am grateful to the City of Edinburgh Council for arranging my pilot Japanese class at Liberton primary school.
- <sup>3</sup> The native Japanese population across Scotland is only 1,564 according to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.  
[http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_ja/zairyuhojinsuu.html](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/zairyuhojinsuu.html)

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[Paper 3]

## Essentials of *Yasashii Nihongo* and its applicability to JFL context

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### Abstract

In this paper, I briefly introduce essentials of *yasashii nihongo* (easy Japanese), which should contribute the construction of linguistic policies inevitably needed when Japan, which has not officially adopted immigration, changes its present position. *Yasashii nihongo* has two types: one of which has the purpose of making safe places for foreign residents and the other one as a bypass. The former is for adult immigrants and the latter is for their children. "To be able to express in (easy) Japanese what immigrants can say in their mother tongue" is one of the purposes of *yasashii nihongo*, in which grammatical syllabi play important roles. It is also suggested that such essentials should contribute to Japanese language education in the JFL context.

**Keywords:** immigration, *yasashii nihongo*, grammatical syllabus, sustainable multicultural society, JFL context

【キーワード】 移民、〈やさしい日本語〉、文法シラバス、多文化共生社会、JFL 環境

## 1 Introduction: Japan as an upcoming multicultural society

There are about 2.1 million foreign residents in Japan, comprising 1.8% of the population, and they are growing in number. With the country suffering the dual effects of low birth rate and high longevity, it seems incumbent on Japan to encourage immigration; however, the Japanese government has never officially adopted this position<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, the topic of how to guarantee human rights to the increasing number of foreign residents is gaining importance, in anticipation of immigrants playing a more prominent role in Japanese society in the near future.

I am leading our research group in the challenge to address this issue from a linguistic viewpoint, in which *yasashii nihongo* is a key concept. In this paper, I will provide a brief introduction to *yasashii nihongo*, an indispensable concept for Japan to grasp in order to become a sustainable multicultural society, keeping in mind its applicability to JFL context such as Scotland<sup>2</sup>.

## 2 The origin of *yasashii nihongo*

*Yasashii nihongo* was first used as a technical term after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995. In this disaster, 6,434 people died, more than 40,000 were wounded, and about 250,000 houses were destroyed. Many foreigners formed part of these figures. Life after the disaster was very hard for those foreigners who had little command of English or Japanese, because most information was published in those two languages, thus doubling their suffering.

Some researchers, many of whom were sociolinguists, stood up and took action: they started researching how to convey the necessary information in times of disaster, to foreigners who have little command of English or Japanese. They showed that employing simplified Japanese in media communications is feasible and useful: they called the construct *yasashii nihongo*. It was in the context of their research that *yasashii nihongo* was first used as a technical term (Sato 2004).

It goes without saying that *yasashii nihongo* can serve as a useful means to convey indispensable information in times of disaster. However, information relating to daily life is equally indispensable, and foreigners must be able to access this information in order to live comfortably in Japan. Therefore, the aim of our research is to examine “*yasashii nihongo*” in the context of daily life<sup>3</sup>.

## 3 Two types of *yasashii nihongo*

There are two types of *yasashii nihongo*, each of which will be introduced in this and



#### 4 *Yasashii nihongo* as a bypass

In the previous section, I argued for *Yasashii nihongo* in terms of making safe places for foreign residents, where the main target learners are adult immigrants. I will argue in this section “*Yasashii nihongo* as a bypass”, which is for their children whom I call “foreign-rooted children (FRC)” henceforth.

As discussed in Section 2, our research started from the question of how, from a linguistic perspective, to guarantee human rights to foreign residents: thus, the target of our research has been adults. However, as our research progressed, we became aware that our objective would not be fulfilled without considering the problems of the children of these adult foreign residents (i.e. FRCs). These children will need the most support if Japan is to become a sustainable multicultural society, or *tabunka kyousei shakai* in Japanese, since, in contrast to their parents, they did not choose to live and grow up in Japan<sup>9</sup>.

For this purpose, it is indispensable to create a linguistic method to decrease the absolute gap between FRCs and their Japanese counterparts, which is the reason why “*Yasashii nihongo* as a bypass” is needed<sup>10</sup>.

In order to make this bypass effective, it is essential to create a consistent grammatical syllabus for intermediate and advanced levels, in addition to steps 1 and 2, as well as the renewal of the methodology of teaching kanji (see Iori 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2018 in press b, Iori and Hayakawa 2018).

#### 5 Essentials of *yasashii nihongo* and its applicability to the JFL context

So far, I have briefly introduced the essentials of *yasashii nihongo* and its necessity in Japanese society. I will now discuss, based on the argument, the applicability of *yasashii nihongo* to the JFL context, taking the Scotland case discussed in the papers by Robertson and Matsumoto-Sturt as an example.

As is discussed in their papers, projects are under way to introduce a Japanese language teaching course to the teachers within the Scottish Primary Education system, and the characteristics of those projects are as follows:

(2) a. Japanese language teaching is not necessarily the main purpose of the system.

b. Time is very limited for teaching.

c. It is not necessarily possible for the course to be designed for teaching the Japanese language itself.

Although these may be “burdens” in terms of designing the course, the essentials of *yasashii nihongo* should help as the discussions below show.

As for (2a), it is of course possible that learners will “eventually” start learning Japanese for academic purposes. However, the main purpose of the course should not be academic-oriented. Very similar situations are found in Japanese language courses in Japanese universities, and concepts of *yasashii nihongo* are important for “centers for student exchange (*ryuugakusei sentaa*)<sup>11</sup>” to survive in their rapidly changing circumstances (Iori 2018 in press a, 2018 in press b).

Situations in (2b) and (2c) are very similar to the ones in which FRCs are located in primary and junior high schools in Japan. FRCs do not have a guaranteed right to compulsory education in Japan, and consequently their Japanese language education is conducted in “pickup” courses (or *toridashi jugyou* in Japanese), not in regular ones, which are managed by teachers having few skills for Japanese language teaching.

It is indispensable, in these unsatisfactory situations, to create new teaching materials and methodologies for the Japanese language education for FRCs, based on the concept of *yasashii nihongo*, as discussed in the previous section (cf. Shimura et al. 2015), which suggests the effectiveness of the essentials in JFL contexts such as Scotland.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have introduced the essentials of *yasashii nihongo*, giving important viewpoints for the solution of linguistic problems which must be seriously considered when Japan will officially open its door to immigrants, and for the Japanese language teaching in JFL context.

## Note

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on the problems caused by this position, see Iori (2016b) and Menju (2017).

<sup>2</sup> For more details on *yasashii nihongo*, see Iori (2015c, 2016b).

<sup>3</sup> In Japanese, “*yasashii*” has multiple meanings: “easy,” as shown in (a), and “kind,” “gentle,” or “soft,” as shown in (b) and (c):

(a) *Kono tesuto wa yasashii.*

This test TOP easy. (TOP: topic)

This test is easy.

(b) *Kare wa josei ni yasashii.*

He TOP women to kind

He is kind to women.

(c) *Kanojo wa yasashii koe de hanasu.*

She TOP soft voice in speak

She speaks in a soft voice.

This polysemy is why I have decided to retain the Japanese *yasashii nihongo* instead of providing an English translation, which would inevitably limit its meaning.

<sup>4</sup> There are three functions in this type of *yasashii nihongo*: 1) *Yasashii nihongo* as a syllabus of official primary Japanese language education programs for immigrants, 2) *Yasashii nihongo* as a common language in local communities, 3) *Yasashii nihongo* as a basis for grammatical syllabi for Japanese language teaching in local communities (for more details of each, see Iori, 2016b).

<sup>5</sup> Iori (ed.2010, 2011) are textbooks covering all of the grammatical items in step1 and step 2, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Attaching *ka* to declarative sentences makes them into question sentences, which is common to all types of sentences.

<sup>7</sup> TOP means topic, POL means polite.

<sup>8</sup> *Ko*-series points to those who/which is/are near the speaker, *so*-series points to those who/which is/are near the hearer and *a*-series points to those who/which is/are neither near the speaker nor the hearer.

<sup>9</sup> The other and more essential reason is that, for a society to become a safe, mature and sustainable multi-cultural society, it is indispensable that FRCs are, if they make a necessary effort, guaranteed chances to compete with their native counterparts, and get the jobs that they wish to do. Lack of such social liquidity fixes them to a lower class in society, which easily causes the so-called “homegrown terrorism” as we can see in recent cases in western countries.

<sup>10</sup> “*Yasashii nihongo* as a bypass” is also needed for Japanese language teaching for deaf children. For more



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details on this, see Iori (2016b), Iori and Oka (2016).

<sup>11</sup> Although most of the names of “centers” in Japan have been changed, I use this term to cover the departments managing the Japanese language courses in universities.

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