
GRADUATES' USE OF JAPANESE LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE¹

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ABSTRACT

Underscoring a series of government initiatives promoting language education in Australia and New Zealand, particularly Asian language education, is the presumption that the study of a language will lead to greater employment opportunities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some university Japanese language learners anticipate using their Japanese language skills in the workplace and/or that their language skills will help them gain employment. Yet, no research specifically addresses these questions.

This article discusses the results of a 2017 online survey of graduates of Japanese language from Australian and New Zealand universities between 1997 and 2016. Responses were received from 67 graduates, 60 of whom had used their language skills in at least one role post graduation. In almost 30% of cases this role was located in Japan. The discussion covers the degrees completed by all respondents, the reason(s) why they studied Japanese at university and whether they expected to use their language skills in the workplace at the time of graduation. Interestingly, improved employment opportunities was not the primary reason for graduates studying Japanese. Discussion also covers the specific language skills used, as well as the regularity of use. Discussion of spoken skills also covers the level of skill used. The results show that spoken skills are the most commonly used skill in the workplace, followed by reading and writing. Almost 80% of graduates who used their spoken skills did so at the basic or advanced level, and almost 74% used their spoken skills on a daily basis.

A number of graduates' comments on the use of Japanese language skills in the workplace are also discussed. Graduates recommend that language students undertake professional/technical studies in addition to their language studies. The results have implications for careers advisers, university marketers and degree administrators.

1 This project was funded through a LHA Challenge Grant. It has UOW Ethics Approval (2017: 308).

INTRODUCTION

Anecdotal evidence from university language classrooms—especially at the advanced level—suggests that a number of language learners hope to use their linguistic skills in their post-graduation employment and/or believe that their language studies will provide them with an added advantage in seeking employment. Yet, little research has considered whether or how graduates use their language skills in the workplace. This is despite many of the Australian Federal Government's language policies over the last three decades or so being instrumentalist in nature and predicated on the idea that language skills—especially Asian language skills—would lead to employment opportunities. The former Federal Labor Government's now archived "Australia in the Asian Century White Paper" (hereafter, 'Asian Century White Paper'), for instance, suggested that Asian language skills would be useful for "building capacity" for Australia's engagement with its regional neighbours, and that the development of Asian language literacy would lead to employment opportunities for speakers of Asian languages (PM&C 2012). The Joint Australia-Japan Working Group's "Strengthening Japanese Language Learning and Support for the Australian-Japanese Business Academic Relationship" report (2010) recommended improved support for career opportunities and incentives for Japanese language learners, but few new initiatives have emerged. The one notable exception is the inclusion of an internship in the Federal Government's flagship New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program (The New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2018 n.d.), although this is, understandably, not restricted to Japanese language learners. The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) in its 2015 "Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture" report, highlights various sectors (e.g., science) where engagement with Asian countries would benefit from language development (ACOLA 2015) but does not address the issue of how languages are used at present.

Due to the dearth of research into the employment of language graduates, irrespective of the language, it is largely unknown how university language graduates are using their language skills in the workplace. One exception is Ward (2016), who discusses the level of skill and regularity of use of Japanese language in the workplace by graduates in the five years post-graduation. According to Ward, graduates with both majors and minors in Japanese were most likely to use their Japanese language skills in their first position post graduation, in most cases using only their spoken skills and at a basic/beginner level (2016, 156). Ward recommends that further research be undertaken into the field. In line with this recommendation, a questionnaire was developed to investigate graduates' motivations for studying an Asian language at university, whether they used their language skills in the workplace and whether they expected to use their language skills in the workplace at the time of graduation.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND THE USE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

The teaching of Japanese in Australia has a long history. James Murdoch was appointed to concurrently teach Japanese at the University of Sydney and the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1917 (Sissons 1986). Until the 1980s, enrolments in Japanese language classes tended to be low compared to European languages but from late that decade, as the Japanese economy expanded rapidly, there was a "tsunami" of enrolments (Lo Bianco 2000). However, the collapse of the Japanese economy in the 1990s had an adverse effect on enrolments. As an indication, enrolments in Japanese at Australian universities stood at 6,387 in 1990, but by 1993-1994 had risen to 9,697, which constitutes an increase of 51.8% in four years (The Japan Foundation 1992, 1995). By 1998, enrolments had fallen slightly to 9,593, but by 2003 were down to 8,520 or a fall of 12.1% since 1993-1994 (The Japan Foundation 2000, 2005, 1995). Whilst enrolments recovered to register 9,682 in 2012, there was a sharp decline to just 6,420 in 2015 (The Japan Foundation 2013, 2017).² In New Zealand, 965 students were enrolled in a Japanese language course as part of a bachelor's degree in 2010, but by 2018 enrolments had declined to 690 (Education Counts 2019). The fall in enrolments in both countries occurred despite the appeal of Japanese popular culture (e.g., *anime* and *manga*) as a motivational factor encouraging students to learn Japanese. According to one survey of language educators, 54% believed that an "interest in manga, anime, J-Pop etc" was a reason for their students learning Japanese (The Japan Foundation 2013, 6). This is broadly in line with a Northwood and Kinoshita Thomson study, which found that the third most common reason given by students for continuing their language studies was that they "enjoy reading manga, watching anime and drama" and that 76% of advanced level students express an interest in those activities (2012, 341). From a different perspective, Armour and Iida (2016) show that consumers of Japanese pop culture were interested in learning Japanese, but this interest did not necessarily mean studying in a formal setting.

2 The 2012 figures include 2,445 undertaking a major in Japanese, 6,677 studying Japanese as an elective and 560 as extracurricular studies. In 2015, the figure for students undertaking a major was 1,354, whilst 4,745 were enrolled in Japanese as an elective and 321 as an extracurricular subject.

According to The Japan Foundation, in 2015 Australia was ranked no. 4 in the world in terms of the number of Japanese language learners and had the highest number per 100,000 people (The Japan Foundation 2017). Whilst pop culture may be a factor in students learning Japanese, discussions with learners indicate that at least some of them hope to use their language skills in the workplace; that is, they are aspiring towards what Nakamura (2015) refers to as the “career domain”.³ This anecdotal evidence is supported by research by Curnow and Kohler (2007) who considered secondary school students’ reasons for continuing their language studies, and Northwood and Kinoshita Thomson’s (2012) study of university students’ reasons for continuing their Japanese language studies. According to Curnow and Kohler, a “small” number of secondary students continued with their language studies (albeit not specifically Japanese) “for career-related reasons, although the justification was not related to a particular career goal” (2007, 22). That is, the continuing students think that their language studies “might help in the future” or “can help in a future career path” (Curnow and Kohler 2007, 22). Northwood and Kinoshita Thomson found that 47% of advanced level students thought that Japanese was “useful for my career” (2012, 341) whilst 75% of students “who already spoke another language...indicated that Japanese might be of practical benefit to their career” (2012, 351). Despite learners’ stated interest in learning a language for career purposes, only limited research has focused on whether graduates use their language skills—Japanese or otherwise—in Australian workplaces. According to Enderwick and Akoorie’s study of successful and non-successful exporters in New Zealand, language graduates were employed primarily in “marketing” related roles (1994, 12). Webb’s small-scale study of language graduates from one university in the United Kingdom showed that 96% use their language skills in their employment and 54% held “jobs where foreign languages were essential” (Webb 2010, 32). In their study of Irish exporters, Clarke (2000) found that “[t]he ability to read a communication in a foreign language” was considered the “most important language skill required” whilst “writing ability” was the “least important” (2010, 86). In the Australian context, 79% of the linguistic functions graduates report using at work are “oral” and only 19% were reading (11%) or writing (8%) (Kinoshita Thomson 1996, 27). Ward’s (2016) research also found that oral skills were used more than reading and writing skills.

The lack of research on the use of language skills in the workplace is disconcerting in light of the globalisation of business operations that has led to an increased global recruitment of staff. The British Council report “Culture at Work”, which details the results of a survey of the criteria that employers in nine countries (although not Australia) look for when selecting employees, notes that many consider candidates’ ability in “speaking a foreign language” (2013, 13). However, Phillip (sic) Turner, Director, Global Stakeholder Affairs, Fonterra NZ, commented that “[i]f someone comes into a job interview here and says they’re fluent in a language, does that make me more likely to employ them than someone that doesn’t? (No, it doesn’t)” (Corder, Kawai and Roskvist 2018, 47). From a different angle, Michael Byrne, Chief Executive of Linfox, in his criticism of Australia’s education standards commented that his company was increasingly hiring staff from Asia because they “speak four or five languages” (SBS News 2014). Yet, one of the respondents to this survey commented that “[i]n my experience, there are limited jobs in Australia where language ability is a requirement. But students with a passion for languages can find opportunities—or make their own.” Irrespective of whether this respondent’s experience is common or not, too little research has focused on whether, or how, graduates use their language skills in the workplace. Moreover, as Bashfield (2013, 11) indicates, there are “few recognisable measures of the success” of policies outlined in documents such as the Asian Century White Paper. Without research, such measures cannot be developed.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

In order to understand if employment opportunities figured in graduates’ reasons for studying an Asian language at university and whether they expected to use their language skills in the workplace at the time of graduation, a short questionnaire was developed and made available online. The target population was graduates who had completed a major or a minor⁴ in an Asian language in Australia or New Zealand between 1997 and 2016. The questionnaire was available for about four weeks from late August 2017 and a total of 128 responses were received. This paper deals only with the 67 responses received from graduates of Japanese. The questionnaire comprised a series of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Some questions were compulsory (for example, questions relating to degree completed and the industry sector where they used their language skills) whilst others were optional. The questionnaire specifically asked graduates to answer in terms of the role/position in which they had used their language skills the most. That is, respondents were asked to focus on only one role/position post graduation. Questions addressed sex, the industry sector of the role/position and the role/position

3 Nakamura’s (2015) use of “career domain” is loosely based on Unemori et al’s “career/education” thematic self category.

4 A minor typically constitutes four consecutive language subjects.

title. In terms of the use of spoken skills, the questions addressed the regularity and level ('Basic', 'Intermediate' and 'Advanced') of use. The definition of the three levels was based on The Japan Foundation's 'JF Standard' (Japan Foundation 2015). Questions on the use of graduates' Japanese reading and writing skills also addressed the same issues, but after the survey had gone live it was found that the descriptions for intermediate- and advanced-level reading and writing skills were incorrectly uploaded. Consequently, discussion on reading and writing refers only to whether the graduates used their reading and writing skills and the regularity of use, and not the level of use.

At the end of the questionnaire, the graduates were given the option to leave a comment for present and future Japanese university language learners about employability using language skills. Over half of respondents left comments. A number of these comments are discussed below.

SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

An invitation to participate in an anonymous online questionnaire was sent by email to graduates of the Chief Investigator's (CI) own institution as well as to coordinators of Japanese at other Australian and New Zealand universities to forward to their graduates. In addition, the invitation was posted on the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) Facebook page and to a number of other organisations (e.g., the JET Alumni). The invitation encouraged recipients to forward the invitation to their contacts. Through this modified cascade approach, a total of 67 responses were received from graduates of Japanese.⁵ Of these, 61 (91.04%) were graduates of Australian universities and six (8.96%) were graduates of New Zealand universities (Figure 1). In terms of Student Type, 92.54% were domestic students and 7.46% were international students (Figure 2). All but one of the international students were female and had studied in Australia. The fifth international student was male and had graduated from a New Zealand university. For brevity, the respondents from both Australian and New Zealand universities and the domestic and international student cohorts are discussed together. Almost all graduates (66) had completed a major in Japanese, with only one graduate (1.49%) completing a minor.

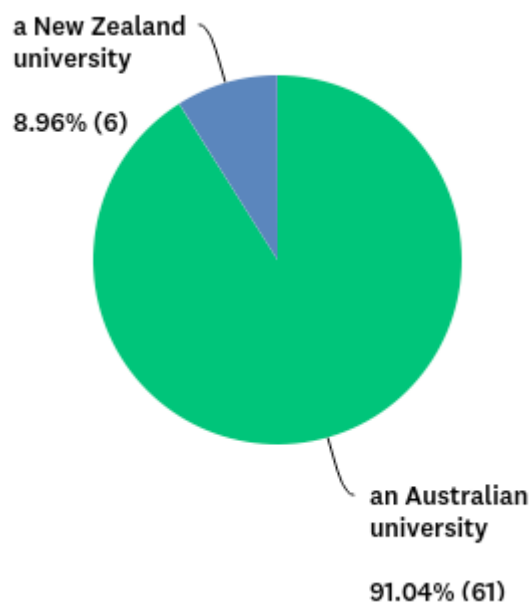


Figure 1: Respondents by Australian and New Zealand university

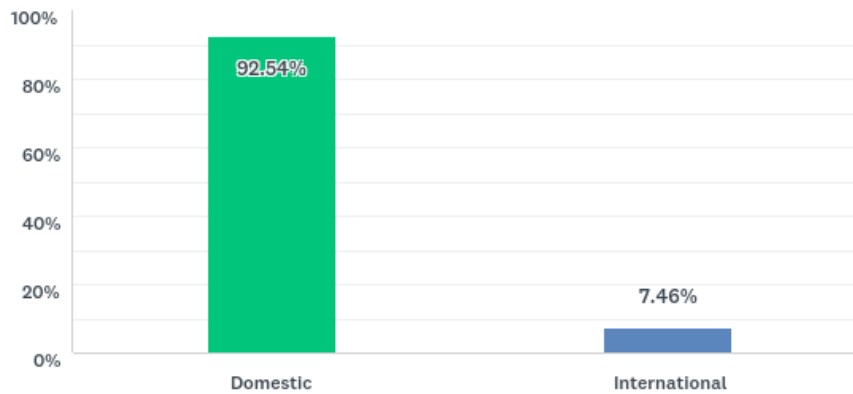


Figure 2: Student Type: Domestic or International

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (41 or 61.19%) were female and 26 (38.81%) were male (Figure 3). It is unclear how accurately this breakdown reflects the female/male Japanese language major and minor cohort, but anecdotally in many universities female students outnumber male students at the upper levels.

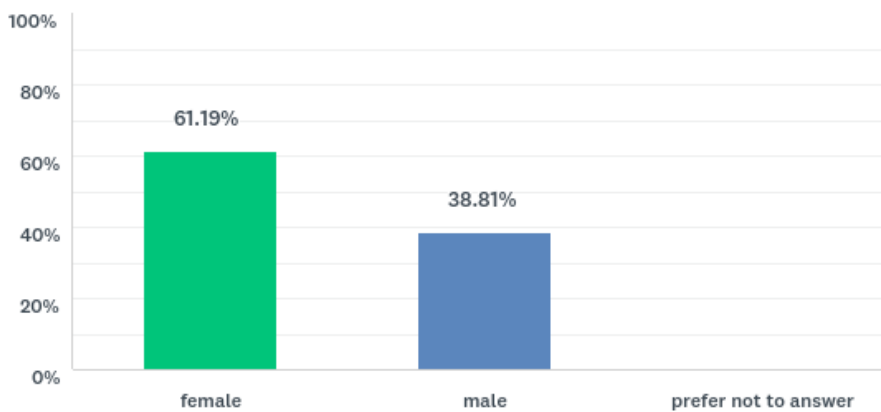


Figure 3: Respondents by sex

In terms of the degrees which the respondents had completed, the highest proportion had completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) (41.79%), with combined degrees (32.84%) the next most common (Figure 4). One student also completed a Diploma of Languages, which is usually studied concurrently with another degree program. No graduate completed a single degree in Engineering or Science, although two completed a BA/Bachelor of Science, one completed a BA/Bachelor of Medical Science and one completed a Bachelor of International Studies/Bachelor of Science (Honours). The most common combined degrees completed were the BA/BCommerce (four graduates) and the BA/BEducation (also four).

Over two-thirds of graduates (67.16%) had completed a double major as part of their degree. The most common major other than Japanese was Politics and International Relations (4), whilst Asian Studies (4) and Asia-Pacific Studies (2) accounted for another six graduates. An additional eight graduates completed a major in another language (two in French and one each in Italian, Korean, German, Chinese, Spanish and Indonesian). Of the seven graduates who had completed an Honours program, three replied regarding the discipline of their Honours program: one completed an Honours in Japanese Literature, one in Japanese Studies and one in Science.

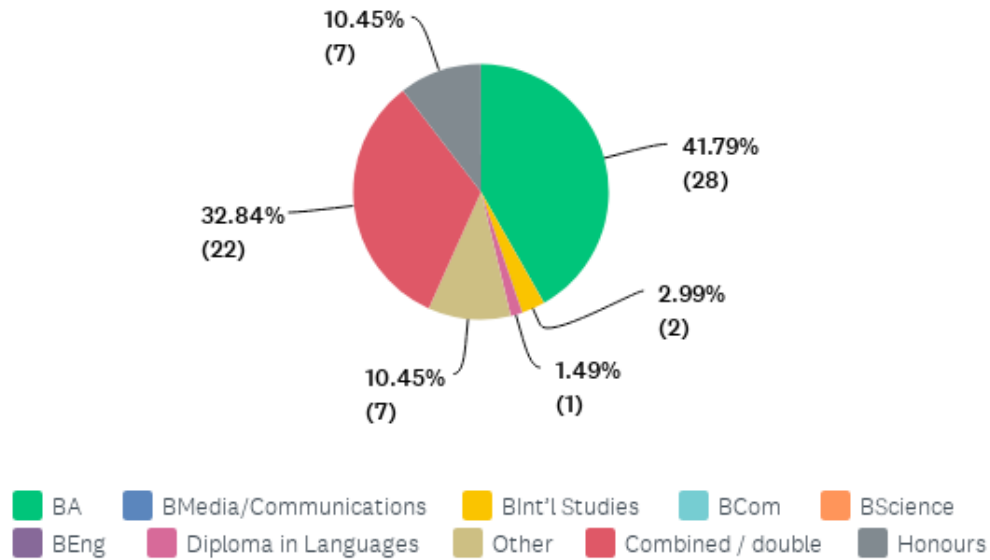


Figure 4: Respondents by degree(s) which they completed

As it was anticipated that graduates may have had more than one reason for studying Japanese, the question relating to the reason(s) for studying Japanese at university allowed for multiple answers. The most common reason (88.06%) was 'General interest' which was followed by 'Belief in ability to speak more than one language' (55.22%) and 'I thought that it would help me get a job' (50.75%) (see Figure 5). That is, just over half of respondents believed that studying Japanese would be beneficial for their employment opportunities. A minority of graduates (9 or 13.43%) studied Japanese because a language was a requirement of their degree. Similarly, despite anecdotal evidence that the number of students with at least one parent born in Japan had increased over the two decades covered by the survey, less than 3% replied that they studied Japanese for 'Heritage' reasons. The 11 respondents who indicated that they had studied Japanese for 'Other' reasons included three who had returned from exchange in Japan and one who replied that they wanted a "qualification to go with their language ability". This indicates that a small number of graduates had lived in Japan prior to commencing their Japanese language studies at university. It is unclear whether their language background provided these graduates with more opportunities in the workplace than those who began their language studies at university.

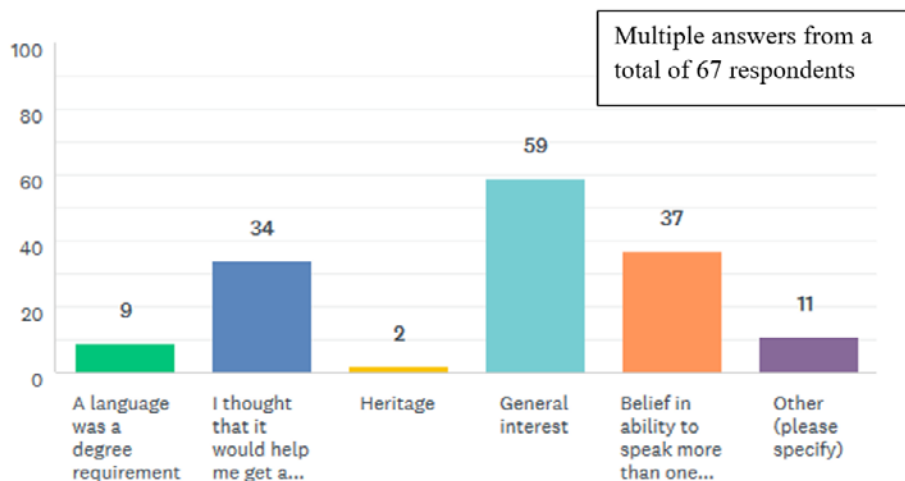


Figure 5: Reason(s) for studying Japanese at university

Interestingly, an overwhelming majority (91.09%) of graduates indicated that at graduation they expected to use their language skills in the workplace (Figure 6). As discussed below, whilst only six graduates did not expect to use their language skills, in practice seven did not use any language skills (see Figure 8). Of the six graduates who did not think they would use their language skills, four left a comment. Three replied that they had "changed their career goals", "pursued a career related to the other degree" or similar. The fourth replied that they had "not attained a high enough standard". These responses indicate that some students change their career aspirations after they commence their tertiary studies. More

research on this issue as well as on skill achievement levels is required. On the latter issue, an interviewee in a recent New Zealand report on languages commented that “I think it is questionable what you can do with the Japanese language that you have learnt only for a few years at university” (Corder, Kawai and Roskvist 2018, 47). That is, university level language studies are not necessarily sufficient for language proficiency.

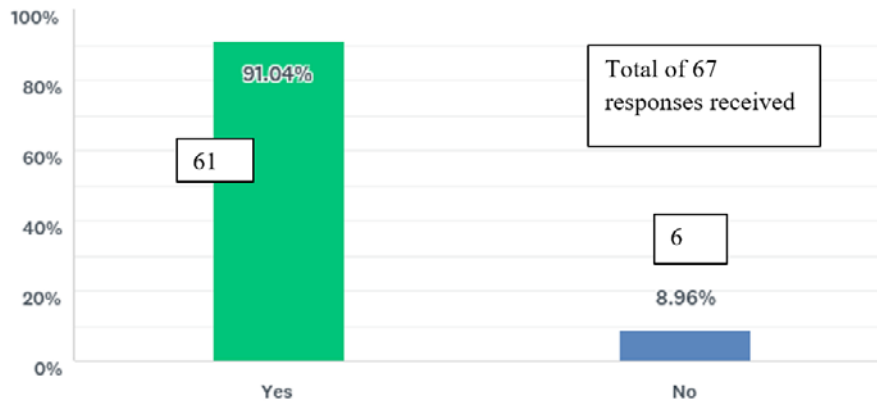


Figure 6: Expect to use language skills in employment at the time of graduation

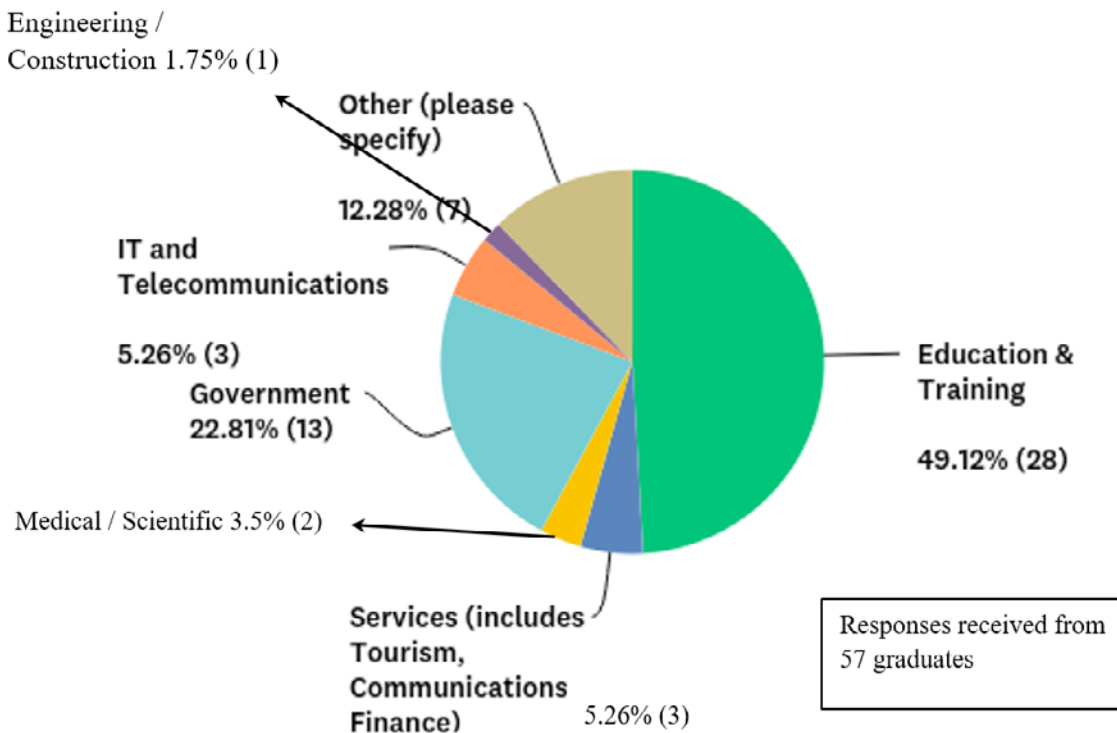


Figure 7: Industry sector of position where Japanese was most used

The ‘Education & Training’ sector was the most common industry sector where the graduates’ role/position using their Japanese skills was located (Figure 8). In terms of position type, 25 (43.86%) of the respondents described their position as ‘Educator/Trainer’ whilst 12 (21.05%) described their role as ‘Administrative’ and 10 (17.54%) described it as ‘Technical/Specialist’ (Table 1). The number of respondents working as an ‘Educator/Trainer’ (25) is lower than those employed in the ‘Education & Training’ Sector (28), which means that not all graduates working in that sector are educators. Yet, it is unclear whether the high proportion of respondents working in the ‘Education & Training’ sector reflects the reality for Japanese language graduates or whether it is a reflection of the dissemination of the survey by Japanese-teaching related organisations, such as the Japanese Teachers’ Association of NSW (JTAN) and JET Alumni (JETAA). Members of associations such as JTAN are primarily employed in either primary or secondary schools and this would have an impact on the results, especially in terms of the level and regularity of use. For example, primary school teachers are unlikely to use ‘Intermediate’ or ‘Advanced’ level skills, although they may use their skills on a daily basis. Of the 25 who worked as an ‘Educator/Trainer’, ten (40%) indicated that the role was in Japan. However, more research is needed to better understand where language graduates—Japanese or otherwise—find employment post graduation.

Position Type	No. of responses	Percentage
Administrative	12	21.05%
Educator/Trainer	25	43.86%
Management	2	3.51%
Technical/Specialist	10	17.54%
Other	8	14.04%
<i>Total</i>	57	100%

Table 1: Role/Position description

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Of the 67 graduates of Japanese who responded, 60 or 89.55% used their language skills in at least one role/position after graduation (Figure 8). This proportion is significantly higher than in Ward's (2016) pilot study but is one less than the number of graduates who at the time of graduation expected to use their language skills. Of the 58 respondents who replied regarding the location of the role, 37 (63.79%) replied that it was in Australia, two (3.45%) that it was in New Zealand and 19 (32.76%) that it was in another country. Of the latter, 17 (29.31% of all respondents) replied that the role was in Japan. That is, almost 30% of the graduates who used Japanese at work, did so in Japan. It is possible that a number of graduates worked in 'Teaching in Japan' roles, including those on the JET Program.

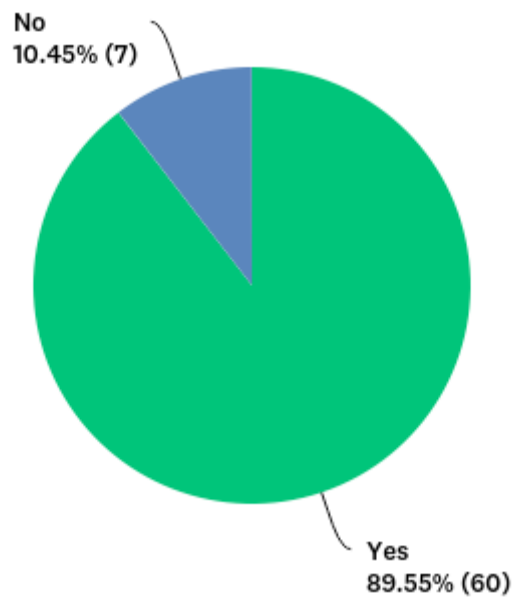


Figure 8: Proportion of graduates who used any Japanese language skill in the workplace

Five of the seven graduates who had not used their language skills left a comment as to the reason: one wrote that "the job nature does not require the language. Does not coincide with my other degree"; one wrote that language skills were "not recognised/valued"; another wrote "not required"; one wrote they were "not relevant, and my language skills were not high enough for the type of jobs I would have liked to apply for"; and the other wrote "no jobs".

Of the graduates who used their language skills, just over 95% used their spoken skills (Figure 9). This makes spoken skills the most commonly used skill, which is in line with the studies undertaken by Kinoshita Thomson (1996) and Ward (2016).

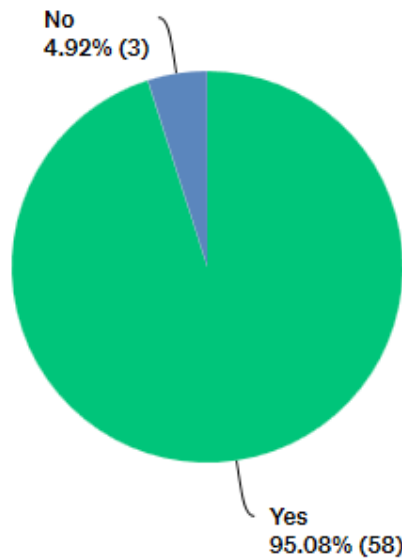


Figure 9: Respondents who used their Japanese spoken skills

In regards to the frequency of use, most graduates used their spoken skills 'On a daily basis' (73.68%) whilst 10.53% of the graduates used their spoken skills 'Once a week' (Table 2). An additional 15.79% (nine out of 57) used them 'As required' or on an inconsistent basis.

Regularity	No. of responses	Percentage
On a daily basis	42	73.68
Once a week	6	10.53
Once a month	0	0
As required	9	15.79
<i>Total</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2: Regularity of use of spoken skills

In terms of the level of Japanese spoken skills used, 42.11% of respondents used their language skills at the 'Basic' level whilst 36.84% of respondents used 'Advanced' level skills (see Table 3). The high proportion of graduates who used 'Advanced' level skills is encouraging and indicates that there is not only a significant number of graduates with this level of skill but they are also using their skills. More research on the contexts where advanced-level skills are being used is needed. Interestingly, intermediate-level skills were used by the least proportion of graduates. In terms of the combination of sectors and skill level, of the 24 who used their skills at the 'Basic' level, 15 were employed in the 'Education & Training' sector. That is, more than half of the respondents who used basic-level spoken skills were employed in that sector. This is a probable reflection of the level of skills taught in that sector and/or the possibility that they taught English.

Level	No. of responses	Percentage
Basic (e.g., participate in conversations on common work-related topics in informal context)	24	42.11
Intermediate (e.g., summarise and/or describe issues raised at meetings)	12	21.05
Advanced (e.g., give presentations on specialist topics, adapt language appropriately for different audiences, be interviewed in the language)	21	36.84
<i>Total</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3: Level of spoken skills used

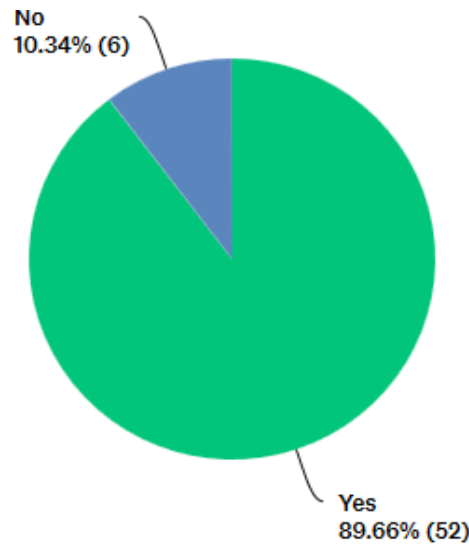


Figure 10: Use of reading skills

In regards to the use of their reading skills, almost 90% (52 of 58) used this skill (Figure 10). The proportion of graduates using this skill is significantly higher than in both the Kinoshita Thomson (1996) and Ward (2016) studies. This result could be partially explained by the high proportion of graduates employed in the 'Education & Training' sector. In terms of the regularity of use of their reading skills, 37 (72.55%) used them 'On a daily basis' whilst nine (17.65%) indicated that they used them 'As required' (Table 4). The use of graduates' reading skills on a daily basis is far higher than the results of the Ward (2016, 156-157) study which showed that less than half of the respondents with a major used their Japanese reading skills on a daily basis.

Regularity	No. of responses	Percentage
On a daily basis	37	72.55%
Once a week	4	7.84%
Once a month	1	1.96%
As required	9	17.65%
<i>Total</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 4: Regularity of use of reading skills

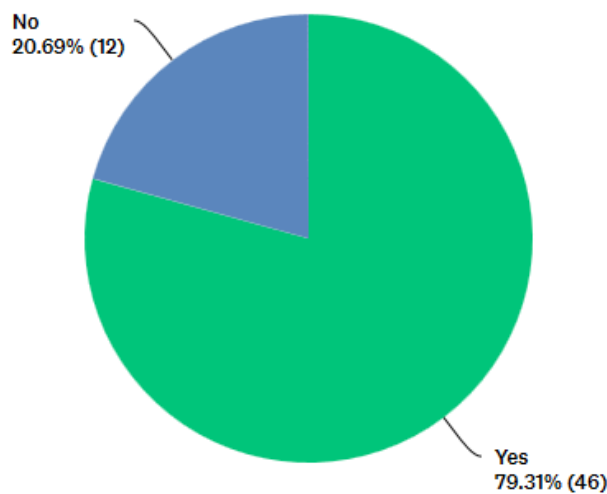


Figure 11: Use of writing skills

In terms of writing skills, 79.31% of respondents reported using this skill. However, in comparison to the use of reading skills, twice as many did not use their writing skills. In regards to the regularity of use, 29 of the 44 graduates who use their writing skills reported using them 'On a daily basis' whilst seven (15.91%) reported using them 'Once a week' (Table 5). The remaining eight (18.18%) used their writing skills 'As required'.

Regularity	No. of responses	Percentage
On a daily basis	29	65.91%
Once a week	7	15.91%
Once a month	0	0
As required	8	18.18%
<i>Total</i>	44	100%

Table 5: Regularity of use of written skills

Finally, more than 35 graduates left comments/suggestions for present or future university Japanese language learners regarding employment using language skills. One common theme was the need for students to undertake technical/professional studies in addition to the study of Japanese. The following two comments are examples:

Language is essential to differentiate yourself in a tight labour market but tends to be icing on cake – so ensure you have a technical qualification as well eg economics or law or science.

Language/culture by itself will not be enough for employment beyond something like the JET program or academia. You must have another qualification or interest under your belt that is not language-related (i.e. public policy, accounting, audit, law, finance). Find the industries in which your country/language are strong in Australia. Examples include mining, engineering, and professional services such as financial advisory, law, audit or something similar. In short, your foreign language/culture skills will be of use in the long run, but you MUST have a professional skill or qualification (the plus-alpha as they call it in Japan) to offer a prospective employer.

The above comments are broadly in line with comments mentioned in Ward (2016). Other graduates noted the importance of the skills that language learners develop in the process of language learning (e.g., 'soft' skills such as intercultural understanding) and the need for ongoing engagement with the language to maintain proficiency. Examples include:

It isn't all about employability, it is about understanding others who are not like you. Learning a language opens up a world of culture, difference, acceptance and richness.

Actively look for ways to engage with native Japanese speakers on a regular basis. Since graduating, as I haven't had the chance to use my Japanese language skills my level of Japanese has dropped back to a beginner's level unfortunately.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show a complexity as to how university graduates use their Japanese language skills in the workplace and why they chose to study Japanese. Significantly, the results show that a high proportion of graduates are using their language skills in the workplace in at least one role post graduation. Moreover, in line with Kinoshita Thomson (1996) and Ward (2016), speaking is the most commonly used skill, followed by reading and writing in that order. Importantly, a high number of graduates use their spoken skills at an advanced level and, compared to both the Kinoshita Thomson (1996) and Ward (2016) studies, a higher proportion of graduates use their reading and writing skills. This latter difference could be due to the high proportion of responding graduates employed in the 'Education & Training' sector where the teaching of reading and writing skills is an essential element of the curriculum. The results also show that a number of graduates use their skills on an 'As required' basis, which indicates that they are not used regularly. Such a scenario could potentially have a negative impact on graduates' ability to maintain their linguistic skill levels. The results also show that whilst over 50% of graduates study Japanese because they think it will be useful for their employment prospects,

an even higher proportion do so for 'General interest' or because of a 'Belief in ability to speak more than one language'. That is, perceived employment opportunities are not necessarily the main reason for graduates to have studied Japanese. Importantly, a high proportion expect at the time of graduation to use their language skills in the workplace and, for the most part, this expectation is met. However, in nearly 30% of cases, the role is located in Japan. Whilst such a situation indicates that graduates of Australian and New Zealand universities are successful in gaining employment in Japan, it could indicate that there is a lack of 'value' placed on language skills by Australian (and possibly New Zealand) businesses. Yet, it could also be a reflection of graduates' strategic use of a sojourn in Japan to improve their language skills.

These considerations clearly indicate that more research is needed on the employment of language graduates. Research incorporating interviews which specifically addresses how graduates use their language skills would provide greater clarity on the employment by industry sectors, location of the role as well as the regularity and level of use. Research on graduates' comments about their language skills being "not valued/recognised" by business is also needed. Finally, whilst not specific to language graduates, research into students' changing career aspirations during university studies would be of use to university teaching staff and administrators.

The results of this study have implications for career advisers, university marketers and degree-structure administrators, particularly in terms of the need for students to develop technical or professional skills in addition to their language skills. The results also have implications for policy makers; government programs encouraging and/or supporting language studies are important, but business needs to be engaged more so that opportunities for language graduates (or even internships) are available and there is greater recognition of the value of language skills.

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