This paper will discuss the three set themes of the Roundtable: Standards/Curricula, Language Testing and Agenda Setting informed by developments in intercultural language teaching and recent curriculum and syllabus innovation in Australia.

Specifically, the author will discuss curriculum innovation, testing and general agenda setting drawing on the following three developments in language education:

• The Languages other than English framework of the Essential Learning Standards for Victoria (2005);
• The Asian Languages Digital Learning Objects project of The Learning Federation of Australia (2003–2005); and more generally on
• Recent policy developments in culture and language teaching in Australia, specifically the national Asian languages intercultural teaching guidelines.

The paper will use these developments to exemplify the impact that new thinking about culture as expressed in ordinary language is having on what education systems, teachers, and the community in general are coming to regard as acceptable and assessable achievements for compulsory language learning. Specifically, the paper asks whether in English-dominant nations the increased interest in intercultural language learning is having the effect of lessening interest in measurable language proficiency as an outcome of schooling in preference to cultural insight and intercultural awareness.

Culture in language education is undergoing a period of rapid and deep re-conceptualization (Lo Bianco and Crozet 2003) stimulated by seminal work from Claire Kramsch (1993) in the United States, Michael Byram in the United Kingdom and Genevieve Zarate in France.

Language and culture intersect in ordinary speech as well as at all other levels of language and its usage. Intercultural language teaching has arisen as a term to cover the ways in which practices of communication are seen as culturally particular and to encourage teachers to make information about culture in language increasingly explicit to learners. The emerging pedagogy of intercultural language teaching may also reflect the new ways in which languages themselves are starting to be imagined. Typically it has been national authorities, classically the “owners” of national languages, who engage in “representation” of culture. Under globalization, languages have become increasingly loosened from their national state connections. Classically foreign language teaching materials, syllabi, and the operations and discourses of national cultural
institutions that do the promoting of national languages, have been the “sites” where cultural information about target languages was identified and promoted.

After all, it has been languages identified as *national*, that is, expressive of unique nationally bounded cultures, that have been most taught, based on dominant notions that nations are bounded entities comprised of distinctive or unique peoples. But national languages are precisely that segment of the communicative continuum whose “separate” existence linguists and sociologists are now increasingly contesting, mostly concluding that this separate existence is either only politically determined, or the outcome of cultural processes that are politically generated. National states too are probably the level of cultural formation most challenged by globalization and the unregulated flows of culturally forming practices, as well as the new information and material that globalization, and specifically the Internet, make possible. We can see these effects very widely. To take only a few examples, Sommer’s *Bilingual Aesthetics: A New Sentimental Education* (2004) throws light on the humor, trouble and delight that this global world of interaction, hybridity, errors and negotiation makes inevitable in the multilingual states that the global world offers. Language use is less rigidly tied to bounded and authorized national languages like at no other time since the rise of the dominant national state. Rampton’s (2005) micro-interactional analyses show one effect of this hybridity in children’s talk, the “crossings” or code switching. Rampton interprets this as a kind of “talking back” that learners do to the authorizing systems that desire no mixing, no switching, and not so much hybridizing.

Alongside these developments, it is also clear that many people are gaining multiple but partial competencies in languages. Increasingly we all encounter diverse languages for small amounts of time, or in specific settings and domains, or for limited functional purposes. The result is a kind of complex nesting of proficiencies in a range of languages, such as unequal comprehension and production skills that are variably located across different languages for different purposes with different interlocutors and different times.

There is also a growing sensitivity to the idea that learners of foreign languages and native speakers tend to produce a “third place” when they communicate. This notion refers to a dynamic interaction between the two in which the norms of communication are often an amalgam, a compromise, or a hybrid of the two interacting base linguistic and cultural systems. This notion is now also encountered in curriculum documents and it too may have an impact on what standards are set, how standards are thought about and assessed.

This paper will discuss dilemmas arising from these critiques, tendencies and practices on how to theorize standards in language teaching and learning.

**References:**


It is presumptuous for an outsider to offer recommendations for a language initiative of such importance as is the project on “Standards and Testing for Overseas Japanese Language Education.” Nevertheless, there may be some value in the perspectives of policy makers, pedagogues, and researchers from around the world who have experience with such efforts. In the United States, a country with a traditionally poor record in foreign language education, the importance of language ability for the nation has reached unprecedented status as a result of globalization and the events of September 11, 2001. It is now the case that the need for linguistically competent U.S. citizens has been generally accepted, and significant resources are being directed to expanding the language capabilities of the country, particularly in the federal government. Therefore, it is with these perspectives in mind that I offer the following remarks.

The need for new standards and testing for Overseas Japanese Language Education is evident, as it stems from the growing popularity of Japanese language education around the world as well as from the developed understanding of language standards and testing that has resulted from implementation in various countries over the past two decades. This deepened understanding includes:

1. a definition of proficiency in a second language that is based on what people can do with the language as opposed to what they know about it;
2. communicative competence assuming a prominent role in language education, as opposed to the traditional focus on reading;
3. standards for language proficiency that communicate a clearly demarcated progression from no ability to full fluency;
4. testing procedures and instruments that in a valid and reliable way document the level of proficiency reached at any given moment by a language learner;
5. shifting from norm- to criterion-referenced testing;
6. guidelines for performance among younger learners that provide clear direction for teachers and educational administrators on curriculum design, materials development and selection, and teacher education;
7. early attempts at assessment of performance as described in performance standards.

While these developments provide a strong basis for the development of standards and testing for Overseas Japanese Language Education, there are important questions that the proposed project must address and for which there is little or uncertain precedent. Among them are:

8. What is the intended function of a global proficiency test? For example, is the determination...
of the level of language ability on a common scale meant to be used in assessing job performance or educational advancement? Is it intended to incentivize students to continue study and/or visit Japan? Does it have a clear formative evaluation function by providing feedback to students and to schools that can be of value in improving learning, teaching, and programming?

9. What are the basic terms of reference of such standards? E.g. Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing vs. Interaction, Presentation, Interpretation?

10. Will the standards reflect a graduated (5-point?) scale, or will it focus on a thresholds?

11. What are the relevant differences between child, adolescent, and adult performance, and how do they relate to standards for general proficiency or to a single proficiency test?

12. What are the intended and unintended “wash-back” effects of a new global test? Is it intended to shift instructional emphasis to proficiency and communication? How can it be misused and can anything be done to mitigate any such misuse?

13. What are the cultural values that such standards will be designed to convey, and what attitudes towards Japan will it foster?

14. What resources are or will be available to support the changes in materials, curricula, and teacher education that such a test will require?

15. How does the global variation in student native language and motivation affect the content of a global proficiency test?

16. What design considerations can assist in the articulation of Japanese language programs in elementary, secondary, and higher education?

17. Should dialect and register variation be included in proficiency standards and testing, or should these standards and testing focus exclusively on the standard language of educated native speakers?

18. How can a global proficiency test be fairly applied to learners with cognate native language or inherited Japanese skills or knowledge as well as to those without these advantages?

19. What issues concerning test security will arise with a test that receives strong approbation and implementation around the world?

20. How can such a set of standards and test be promulgated around the world in a way that will acknowledge the prerogatives of the host country as well as the investment of the Japan Foundation?

It must be said that many other questions could, and will, be raised in the course of this project. It will, however, not be possible to address in a satisfactory way even those raised above. However, an attempt will be made here to frame these issues and questions in a way that is helpful to the Roundtable discussion and to the design and development of “standards for the Japanese-language in the world.”
Introduction
The standards-oriented approach evident in the language education policy of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) is based on official curriculum guidelines for secondary education and is embodied in the criteria applied to the foreign-language components of the national College [University] Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). The aim of this paper is to outline this approach to language education in South Korea through a description of the educational goals stipulated in the curriculum guidelines and the standards applied in formulating university entrance examinations.

Curriculum guidelines
The key features of the South Korean government’s language education policy are clearly apparent in its official curriculum guidelines for secondary education. Various foreign languages are taught at the secondary-school level in South Korea, including English, Japanese, Chinese, German, French, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic. Among the goals of language education stipulated in the Seventh Curriculum Guidelines (currently in effect), communicative competence is identified as a crucial skill for all languages. Particular emphasis is given to foreign-language education focusing on communicative competence, and great importance is placed on speaking.

While communicative competence is referred to mainly in terms of the four basic language skills, competence in understanding linguistic behavior figures particularly prominently. In regard to the elements of communicative competence, the guidelines stipulate specific functions, including exchanging greetings, conveying information, making requests, communicating attitudes, and developing conversations.

In regard to education in languages other than English, the guidelines stress understanding of other cultures. Particularly in the case of Japanese, emphasis is placed on teaching appropriate attitudes in cross-cultural interactions. South Korea can thus be said to be thoroughly committed to foreign-language education geared to international and intercultural exchange. The approach to language education taken in the curriculum guidelines is manifested in detail in the CSAT.

College Scholastic Ability Test
In order to gain admission to any four-year university in South Korea, applicants are required to submit their scores received on a standard, national examination called the College Scholastic
Ability Test. At some universities, applicants’ results for this exam are the sole criterion for admission, while at others they are combined with results of essay-style examinations. In any case, CSAT scores are thus a deciding factor in the university entrance system. Tests on Japanese and other foreign languages were reincorporated into the CSAT in 2001, and in anticipation of that change a report on guidelines for formulating the exam was compiled in December 1999. Since then, the questions on the CSAT have been devised in line with those guidelines.

Communicative competence
The term “communicative competence” denotes knowledge of the relevant language system and the ability to apply that knowledge in actual communicative situations. A language system is a set of language rules—phonology, morphology, syntax, and so on—and the pragmatics of the language consist in the application of those rules. The categories of pragmatics include sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence, conversational competence, and strategic skills.

Test-setting guidelines for testing communicative competence
The elements of evaluation of communicative competence in the CSAT are based on Lussier (1992, p. 53). According to Lussier, communicative competence includes linguistic competence, sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence, conversational competence, and strategic skills, among other skills. In order to attain the goals of evaluation of these skills, it is preferable to conduct tests focusing on problem-solving in actual communicative situations. However, given the constraints of the university entrance exam context, in the case of the CSAT an indirect evaluation methodology must be adopted. Accordingly, the foreign-language proficiency components of the CSAT cover such areas as ability to distinguish between different elements of pronunciation, breadth of vocabulary, grammar comprehension, comprehension and application of communicative functions, and understanding of other cultures.

Dual classification table of evaluative goals
The dual classification table of evaluative goals consists of a content field and an activity field, comprised as follows:

1. Content field
   (i) pronunciation and notation (10%)
   (ii) vocabulary (10%)
   (iii) grammar comprehension (10%)
   (iv) comprehension and application of communicative functions (60%)

2. Activity field
   (i) listening
   (ii) reading
   (iii) speaking
   (iv) writing

In the activity field, each skill is broken down into knowledge, understanding, and application.
The composition of questions in the activity field is 40% on listening and speaking, 50% on reading, and 10% on writing.

**Delineation of levels**
At present, the system delineates two levels of language proficiency, Levels 1 and 2. Level 1 corresponds beginner level and Level 2 to the intermediate level. However, except in regard to the number of words in the prescribed vocabulary, these levels remain ambiguous due to the lack of distinguishing criteria. This can be attributed to the fact that foreign-language study in secondary education does not go beyond the beginner level.

**Future challenges**
Studies are currently under way toward establishing standards for language education and applying the characteristics of each language’s distinctive linguistic milieu.

**References:**
The Council of Europe’s Standards of Language Proficiency

Johanna Panthier

The Council of Europe scales of descriptors have been drawn up on the basis of the results of a Swiss National Science Research Council project which took place between 1993 and 1996. This project was undertaken for the Council of Europe as a follow-up to its 1991 symposium on coherence and transparency in language learning, teaching and assessment. The aim was to develop scales of proficiency for the different parameters of the descriptive scheme in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

According to this descriptive scheme, any form of language use and learning could be described as follows:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.

Given the complexity of language use and learning, it is obvious that every communicative language activity has its own characteristics and that the definition of general language proficiency is a very difficult task.

According to a glossary developed by ALTE members, language proficiency corresponds to the knowledge of a language, and degree of skill in using it. However, the CEFR descriptive scheme makes it clear that, in spite of a good knowledge of a language and a high level of skill in using it, contexts, conditions and constraints may influence the proficiency at a particular moment, which may also vary according to themes and domains. Learning and user strategies may also be developed by some persons more than by others, and may vary according to several parameters.

However, to promote coherence and transparency in language learning, teaching and assessment it is important to have common standards. Therefore, the purpose of the CEFR is to offer a descriptive scheme and a common scale of language proficiency.

The scale is composed of six ascending proficiency levels couched in terms of outcomes. The number of levels was determined in order to be adequate to show progression in different domains, whilst allowing for reasonably consistent distinctions to be made. However, a ‘hyper-text’ branching approach is proposed to define finer levels and categories to suit local needs and yet still relate back to a common system.

The CEFR presents scales for three of the metacategories in the descriptive scheme, i.e.
Communicative activities, Strategies and Communicative language competences.

These ‘can do’ descriptors were scaled in the Swiss National Science Research Council project through a combination of intuitive, qualitative and quantitative methods following a detailed analysis of the scales of language proficiency in the international public domain or obtainable through Council of Europe contacts in 1993. There was no particular level used as a ‘starting point’.

The validity of these scales has been confirmed by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) through a self-assessment questionnaire completed by 10,000 learners as well as by a calibration project using a series of anchor items. The correlation between the ALTE and the CEFR descriptors was of 0.97.

The validity has also been confirmed by DIALANG, a language assessment system for diagnostic purposes based on the CEFR. A calibration study confirmed a reliability indice of 0.899.

The scales of language proficiency in the CEFR are meant to be illustrative and open for further developments. A bank of descriptors for the European Language Portfolio (based on the CEFR) has been set up and is freely available.

The existence of the scales for the different communicative language skills (listening, reading, oral production, oral interaction and writing) allows for clear learning objectives to be set and achievements to be assessed, for modular courses to be organised and for the development of the plurilingual competence of citizens.

A Manual for Relating language examinations to the CEFR is currently being piloted by the Council of Europe and illustrative material to accompany it is under development.

Reference:
Clear content and performance standards allow teachers and students to focus on specific teaching and learning goals. Standards also make it possible to measure student performance in a rigorous manner and then to interpret test results in a meaningful way. This paper will discuss how online testing makes it possible to reflect performance data back to teachers and students to create a positive feedback loop in which assessment informs instruction which prepares students for success on the assessment.

Traditional testing features a one-way flow of information: from the student to the testers. In the current Japanese Language Proficiency Test, for example, students provide voluminous amounts of information in the form of test answers. What they receive back, however, is just one number (1, 2, 3, or 4). One of the great advantages of online testing is that student performance data resides on a central server, where it can be analyzed and accessed by students, teachers, researchers, or parents. This process of providing stakeholders with assessment performance information is called Reflective Online Assessment.

Unless students, teachers, and administrators have a basic understanding of assessment and data, they may not be able to interpret this data correctly, however. It is essential, therefore, that teachers and administrators have a high degree of assessment literacy and that test designers present information clearly and educate them on how to interpret results in a meaningful manner.

Educators with assessment literacy can practice empirical pedagogy: the process of adjusting curriculum and instructional practice according to student performance data. Empirical pedagogy allows teachers become more student-centered by focusing on student performances rather than curricular inputs. In this sense, standards and assessments hold the key to student-centered education.

This paper will present an example of a standards-based reflective online assessment: the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP). Particular emphasis will be placed on reporting mechanisms that provide students and teachers with performance data. It will also discuss how these data reports have been used by teachers in the U.S. to improve instruction, communicate with parents, and advocate for language programs.

The implications for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test are potentially profound. If clear standards can be articulated, JLPT results could go beyond its current function of sorting students into gross levels and provide nuanced diagnostic data to programs and individual teachers. The effect on Japanese language instruction—not just assessment—could be significant.
England’s National Languages Strategy, published in December 2002, makes clear that language competence and inter-cultural understanding can no longer be seen as ‘optional extras’. They are an essential part of being a citizen. Language skills are not just vital to the economy, but to so many aspects of our lives—broadening career prospects; improving understanding between people in our own country and in the wider world; and supporting global citizenship by breaking down cultural and language barriers.

A central element of the National Languages Strategy is to introduce a voluntary recognition system to complement existing qualification frameworks, and give people credit for their language skills. This new recognition scheme—The Languages Ladder—is designed to endorse competence in foreign language learning, it will allow learners to progress in one or more language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) in one or more languages.

Each of the 6 stages (covering Entry to Level 8 in the National Qualifications Framework and A1-C2 in the Common European Framework) is externally assessed, the can-do statements for each skill within each stage can be used for formative assessment and can be endorsed by the tutor.

By 2006 external assessment will be available in more than 20 languages at Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate stages (which are the first three stages) and there is a staged development programme for the introduction of the Advanced, Proficiency & Mastery stages & for the provision of additional languages.

Key features of the Languages Ladder are:
• Can-do statements for each grade in each skill;
• Discrete assessment for each of the four skills;
• Learners can be assessed & progress in one or more skills in one or more languages;
• External assessment at the interface between ‘stages’;
• Development of online & just-in-time testing;
• Possibilities for tutor assessment at each grade within each ‘stage’ and
• Equivalence to existing national and international qualification levels.

The can-do statements can be used by learners, teachers and tutors to monitor progress and benchmark achievement in one or more language skills in any language.

The teacher-assessed model allows teachers/tutors to monitor progress and endorse Grade Awards using classroom materials plus a core set of tasks related to the can-do descriptors for each grade at each skill—all tasks in the receptive skills will have been pre-tested. Teachers/tutors wishing to use this scheme will have taken part in training activities and, having successfully completed this training, subsequently endorsed as Accredited Teachers to ensure
that they are familiar with and can recognise the standards required at each level.

The external tests in each skill relate to the can-do statements for the whole set of grades within each stage. All receptive skill tasks will have been pre-tested and all productive skill tasks trialled. The external qualifications are currently being piloted in the primary, secondary and adult education sectors in French, German and Spanish at the Breakthrough, Preliminary & Intermediate stages. The national launch takes place in May 2005 and assessments in eight initial languages—Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Panjabi, Spanish and Urdu—will be available in the academic year 2005/6.

At present the specifications for the pilot qualifications describe the content in terms of language functions and broad context areas although these relate to the national curriculum for modern foreign languages for secondary schools.

The specification of content will be reviewed following the pilot phase.

At present there are a discrete set of tests for the primary sector and a general secondary/adult version, although specific materials for adult learners are in development.

There is also the possibility of developing tests in work-related contexts eg leisure and tourism, health and social care and business.
The Advanced Placement (AP) program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities, principally in the United States. Since its inception in 1955, the Program has provided motivated high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses in a high school setting. The program offers rigorous curricular guidelines with a reliable common assessment in multiple disciplines, including world languages. The current offerings in French, German, Latin, and Spanish will be augmented in the coming years by new courses and exams in Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and Russian. The design process for these new subjects follows an Evidence Centered Design model to ensure that each AP course’s objectives, and therefore the evidence elicited by each exam, match the curriculum of the corresponding college course in a way that can be appropriately implemented in secondary schools.

A task force comprising college and university faculty and master teachers at the high school level determines the specifications for each new course and exam. In addition to linking their work to college curricula, the Chinese Language and Culture, Japanese Language and Culture, and Italian Language and Culture task forces, working independently, have each oriented their exam in different ways to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning were developed in the late 1990’s by a coalition of professional organizations serving language teachers in the United States, and subsequently implemented in various ways by individual state departments of education, where curricular authority resides. The Standards focus on five goal areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The principle components of the Standards explicitly reflected in the new AP world language exams are the Communication and Culture goals.

Advanced Placement (AP) World Language Exams

David Baum
German Language Tests—Goethe-Institut’s Best Practice

Katharina von Ruckteschell

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany. It operates world wide and has subsidiaries in more than 80 countries. One of its main goals is to foster the German language abroad in order to support communication and enhance cultural exchange between Germany and the various countries in the world. Being in charge of the foreign cultural and educational policy of Germany, it might be surprising, that also running language courses and offering language tests is part of the Goethe-Institut’s mission, as this is naturally more a commercial business than a political one. Actually there are three reasons why the Goethe-Institut is developing and marketing German language tests:

1) The Goethe-Institut offers language courses with the target to not only teach students the German language but also to provide a leading edge model for teaching foreign language. The consequence of course is that you need tests to measure the results. As the Goethe-Institut in many countries was the first and only provider of German language courses, it naturally also was the first and only one to develop tests. Very quickly these tests became internationally known and accepted. They finally became the official certificates for German language knowledge. It might be interesting to mention, that the first official tests where not for the basic levels but for the highest ones which you would now describe as the C2 or even C2+ level of the CEFR.

2) The Goethe-Institut not only advanced being a language teaching operation, but also a department for research and development, where apart from teaching and training materials also the needed tests for the different levels are produced. Having now the CEFR and being a member of the ALTE the certificates now all are based on these levels from A1 to C2.

3) As the funding of the government has constantly been reduced over the last 10 years, the Goethe-Institut more and more needs to market its products with the aim to cover the costs. Otherwise it would have to reduce its operations drastically. It is astonishing that especially certification is a growing market. In a globalized world it is obviously not enough to have special knowledge but to proof your qualification with certificates. No wonder students not only want to learn a language, but also to pass an examination to own a paper proving their abilities.

I wouldn’t say that the commercial interest of the Goethe-Institut collides with its official mission, as long as it sticks to its quality standards. Speaking about language certification therefore means talking about quality control systems in all areas: development, practical doing and marketing. For this you need a name and an expertise which the Goethe-Institut earned in the last 50 years. How this quality standard looks like and how the Goethe-Institut operates in this field will be the contents of the speech during the roundtable discussion.
Certifications of French as a Foreign Language of the French Ministry of Education: DELF, DALF and TCF

Bruno Mègre

The French Ministry of Education proposes to non-french speakers (adults and teenagers) a complete variety of official certifications of French as a foreign language that are recognized all over the world by more than 160 countries. The CIEP (Centre international d’études pédagogiques) is the international administration body of the Ministry in charge of the development, the administration and the commercialisation of such certifications.

Since 2002, the CIEP is a well-recognised certification institution and member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).

Two kinds of certifications in French as a foreign language (FLE) are proposed to the public, in France and abroad:

- Diplomas:
  - DELF (Diplôme d’études en langue française > Certificate in French Studies)
  - DALF (Diplôme approfondi en langue française > Certificate in Advanced French Studies)

- Test:
  - TCF (Test de connaissance du français > Test of Knowledge of French)

The diplomas (DELF and DALF) and the test (TCF) are the official certifications of the French Ministry of Education recognized by all the universities in France and also by the Education Authorities of Belgium and Switzerland.

Now, all the certifications in French as Foreign Language proposed by the Ministry of Education (DELF, DALF and TCF) are in perfect alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and ALTE standards.

1. DELF and DALF

Since 1985, DELF and DALF certificates have been proposed in 3 levels:

- DELF (First degree): the candidate needs to achieve 4 test reports to get this diploma.
- DELF (Second degree): the candidate needs to achieve 2 supplementary test reports.
- DALF: the candidate needs to achieve 4 supplementary test reports.

There is no time limit to get the reports.

Since 1985, 2.7 millions candidates have taken either one of the 10 assessments (about 350 000 candidates each year for the last 4 years).

From September 1st, the system will change to 6 different levels: 6 different diplomas in perfect alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and ALTE. Therefore 4 different diplomas for DELF and 2 for DALF:

- DELF A1
• DELF A2
• DELF B1
• DELF B2
• DALF C1
• DALF C2

Each exam will have specific content that relate to the Can-do statements of the European Framework:
• The 4 skills are assessed in each exam
• The candidate can take any level exam in accordance to his level
• The candidate needs 50 % of the points to pass the exam and get the diploma
• The certificate has no time validity

The first levels (DELF A1, A2, B1, B2) exist in two versions: one for adults and one for teenagers.

Candidates can take DELF or DALF in one of the 960 examination centres around the world (60 in France and 900 abroad). DELF and DALF exams are organized under the responsibility of French Embassies overseas (Cultural services). The examination centres are usually as follows: Instituts français, Centres culturels français, Alliances françaises, University, Departments of Foreign Languages.

2. TCF®

The TCF was created by CIEP in 2002. 70 000 persons have been assessed ever since. After its first year TCF was awarded the international quality certification ISO 9001, version 2000.

The TCF places candidates in one of the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for language learning, teaching and assessment. This official test is reliable and rigorous: all items are pre-tested and analyzed before validation and calibration (only pre-tested items are used in the tests).

The TCF has a compulsory section that is easy to administer: 80 multiple choice items (30 for listening comprehension, 20 for language structure and 30 for reading comprehension):

**Compulsory tests** (duration: 1h30): Listening, Language structures, Reading.

**Optional tests:** Speaking (duration: 15 minutes), Writing (duration: 1h45).

The marking is centralised by the CIEP and TCF report forms are issued, 2 weeks later, once results have been obtained:
• On the front of the test report appears a score and the overall language level plus detailed can-do statements for each language skill tested.
• On the back of the test report appears the Council of Europe’s comprehensive and detailed six level proficiency scale.

The TCF has a two year validity. It is the only official test for the Ministry of Education for foreign non-French speaking students that for any reason do not have a DALF diploma, thus rendering TCF obligatory for all students applying to French Universities.
As for DELF and DALF, TCF testing centres are French Embassies, Instituts français, Centres culturels français, Alliances françaises or language departments of universities (about 150 countries thus nearly 500 centres). In France, all universities are official testing centres.
China’s Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, known as the HSK or the Chinese Proficiency Test is a standardized test at the state level designed and developed to measure the proficiency of nonnative Chinese speaker, including foreigners, overseas Chinese and the Chinese national minorities.

HSK has four levels: Basic, Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Chinese Proficiency Test. Both oral and written tests are included in the Advanced HSK. Test administration is held regularly in China and other countries each year. Certificates of proficiency are issued to those who achieve the minimum score and above. So far, HSK has established 59 testing centers in 33 cities within China and 92 testing centers in 33 countries. In 2004, 92,995 foreigners take part in HSK test; 32,423 took the test at an oversea testing center and 60,572 took the test at a testing center in China. In 2004, there are also approximately 120,000 minorities took part in Chinese Proficiency Tests.

Using the development of ACTFL guidelines in US and ALTE/CEFR in Europe as a model, HSK has established or is working on its own standards based on various research and considerations. These research and considerations are as follows:

1. Developed and published a *Graded Character and Word Syllabus For Chinese Proficiency*. 2905 Chinese Characters and 8822 Chinese words were graded in A,B,C,D 4 levers, A is easy and D is difficult. (for characters: A 809, B 804, C 601, D 700, for words: A 1033, B 2018, C 2202, D 3569) The grading procedure combines objective frequency statistics of large scale corpus and subjective judgment by experienced scholar and Chinese teachers. This syllabus is played a very important role in the development of HSK. This syllabus undergoes continuous revision. The first edition of this syllabus was published in 1992. A revised version was published in 2001. Another revised version for minorities in China was published in 2003.

2. Developed and published a *Graded Grammar Syllabus For Chinese Proficiency*. 1168 Chinese grammar items were graded in A,B,C,D 4 levers of difficulty, while A 129, B 123, C 400, D 516.

3. Working on a *Graded Communication Function Syllabus For Chinese Proficiency*. We have already established a rough language function list including 42 items, such drawing information via reading an listening, evaluation, narration, persuasion, expression of emotion, expressing ideas with strategy, etc.

4. Combine with the validation of HSK tests, we are working on richer interpretation of HSK test score. Enlightened by *CAN DO GUIDE* of TOEIC, we conducted some empirical investigations and research, such as investigations regarding the communication...
One of the important functions of HSK is to measure whether the candidates applying for a university in China receive sufficient Chinese language proficiency. Respectively, HSK Grade 3 is set as standard in the field of science and HSK Grade 6 in the field of literature. We use various empirical standards setting methods to establish a reasonable cut-off score for HSK, such as Angoff’s Procedure, Borderline Groups Method and Contrasting Groups Method, etc.

5. Working on establishment of standards for Chinese learners with different purpose. While developing the new test batteries such as HSK (for Business), HSK (for Secretaries), HSK (for Tourism), we are developing new vocabulary and communication function list for these new test batteries.

6. There are both oral and written sections in the Advanced HSK. The rating of oral and written tests must be based on clearly defined standards. In regard to ACTFL and ALTE standards, we formulated detailed standards for rating oral and written test performance. Some typical answers by examinees at different ability levels were carefully selected as benchmarks.

7. While establishing test standards is certainly difficult, keeping the standards stable is equally difficult. Equating is a very important measure in keeping the standards. We have paid great effort on test score equating.

8. After more than 10 years of continuing efforts, HSK item bank based on Item Response Theory (IRT) and supported by a computer test form generation system was put in actual operation in 1998. An important aspect of generating test forms automatically by computer from the item bank is to control the linguistic features of the test. We have given attention to the balance of the test content in addition to the statistical parameters. We defined three linguistic parameters for every item in the item bank. These are as follows: the linguistic skills to be evaluated, the content of knowledge, and the related linguistic functions.
The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) is a test administered simultaneously in many countries and to a wide variety of examinees. Efforts have continuously been made to improve and ensure the validity and reliability of the test by means of self-evaluation as well as the transparency of the test in terms of information disclosure.

In 1984, the first JLPT was administered simultaneously to roughly 7,000 examinees in various countries around the world. Since then, the number of examinees taking the test has steadily grown. In 2004, a total of 302,198 examinees—58,956 in 18 cities in Japan and 243,242 in 99 cities in 39 countries and regions overseas—sat for the twenty-first annual JLPT.

The JLPT is given at four proficiency levels (Levels 1–4), each level consisting of three sections (characters-vocabulary; reading-grammar; and listening). After taking the test, examinees are notified of their scores for each section and their aggregate score for the test as a whole. Those with passing scores—at least 70% for Level 1 and at least 60% for Levels 2, 3, and 4—receive Certificates of Proficiency.

Efforts have been made to disseminate information about the JLPT and maintain the transparency of the testing system. Under the title Shutsudai kijun [Test Content Specifications], a syllabus was published in 1994 as a guide for those involved in compiling the test questions. These guidelines came to be regarded as providing a degree of standardization in Japanese-language education and have influenced actual classroom practice in a variety of ways. Except for the first few years of the JLPT’s implementation (1985 to 1989), each year the test questions have been subsequently made available as a printed publication. In addition, as part of the self-evaluation, an analytical evaluation report (titled Bunseki hyoka ni kansuru hokokusho) has been compiled every year since the first year the test was administered. Presenting the findings of item analyses and analyses conducted from various other perspectives, the report examines the test’s validity and credibility. Published since 1990, the report has become a reference in research relating to Japanese-language testing.

Various issues have been raised about the JLPT since the 1984 report on the test’s first round. In light of recent scholarship in this field, in 2004 work began on revising the test so as to reorient it toward measuring task accomplishment and communicative abilities required in various contemporary social situations. The first round of the revised JLPT is scheduled to be administered in 2008.

Twenty or so years ago, most Japanese-language teachers shared a tacit understanding of beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of language proficiency—that is, a general idea of standards based on experience—and the standards for the four levels of the JLPT were formulated.
on that basis. Since then, however, those standards have lost currency and applicability. This is because the testing standards applied so far have been based entirely on the experience of university preparatory education and thus are no longer suitable to the diversifying needs of today's JLPT examinees.

Accordingly, the JLPT administration is considering incorporating criterion in the form of “can-do statements” so that today’s increasingly diverse JLPT examinees can be informed what they can do with their Japanese-language abilities, thus making the test more useful to their subsequent studies. In other words, it is looking for ways to reorient the testing criteria away from a grammar/structure syllabus toward a task-based syllabus. While the CEFR system and other proficiency standards for other languages are being studied as precedents in this regard, it is expected that kanji (Chinese characters) will be an important factor in the formulation of standards for measuring Japanese language proficiency. The administration is also considering a reshuffle of the test subjects, the feasibility of testing for proficiency in speaking and composition, and the adoption of a graded scoring system. Although pre-equating by means of preliminary tests is not currently carried out, discussions are under way toward incorporating some form of equating into the new test system.