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Toward critical, constructive assessments of CEFR-based language teaching in Japan and beyond

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日本内外におけるCEFRに基づいた言語教育の 批判的・建設的評価

要旨：本稿は、言語教育におけるヨーロッパ言語共通参照枠（CEFR）の利用を評価する研究プロジェクトの紹介ある。その目的は、CEFRに関連した原理と実践の教育上の導入に関して批判的かつ建設的評価を提供することである。このプロジェクトは事例研究をもとに行われ、出版物にまとめられる予定である。まず、本プロジェクトが立ち上げられた背景を説明するため、第2節ではCEFRの全般的な紹介を行い、次に、これまでの日本におけるCEFR利用の試みをレビューする。その上でプロジェクトの理論的根拠と目的を説明し、プロジェクトの核である評価のための鍵となる質問について解説する。評価のための鍵となる質問は、現在行われている実践を応用し、他の文脈で導入する際のアイデアを生み出す基盤となることが期待される。最終節ではプロジェクトの中間報告を示す。

Keywords: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR); Language Teaching Pedagogy; Action Research

1 Introduction

In recent years there has been a vivid discussion in Japan and elsewhere about language learning curriculums and frameworks, especially the Council of Europe's 2001 *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). This topic of this research note is a research project¹⁾ which assesses use of the CEFR in language education. This project runs from April 2014 to March 2017. This research note, written by the principal investigator, reports on preliminary progress. The aim is to provide critical and constructive assessments of pedagogical implementation of the principles and practices related to the CEFR. This will be done through case studies, which will be collected in an edited volume. So as to set the scene, section two generally introduces the CEFR, before reviewing previous efforts of using the CEFR in Japan. I then explain the rationale and purpose of the project. A set of key questions, which

¹⁾ The working title of the project is "Critical, constructive assessments of CEFR-based language teaching in Japan and beyond". This work is supported by a Kakenhi Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (26370624) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and coordinated by members of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT) Framework & Language Portfolio Special Interest Group (FLP SIG).

are at the centre of the project, are then explained. It is hoped the key questions will provide a basis for generating ideas of current practice that can be adapted and implemented by others. The final section presents some preliminary results of the project.

2 Setting the scene for critical assessments of the CEFR

A central benefit of applying the CEFR in language education is that it provides a way of aligning individual achievement to global standards. Parmenter & Byram (2013) note that this is often how policy-makers, keen to be seen to be achieving high standards, engage with the CEFR. The CEFR is seen as a 'common language' that can be shared by language educators internationally. It also provides clear goals and measurable achievement by reference to the levels. As a result, those involved in language education, who are 'shopping around' globally for answers to their problems, often turn to the principles of the CEFR as a solution. Byram & Parmenter (2013: 6) note this is especially relevant in cases beyond Europe, such as Argentina (Porto 2012; Porto & Barboni 2012) and Japan (Sugitani & Tomita 2012).

The coherent use of the CEFR adheres to the principle that the CEFR is descriptive, and should not be applied in a prescriptive or formative way (Council of Europe 2008: 9). A criticism of the CEFR is that the framework lacks validity and reliability in empirical and statistical terms (Coste 2007: 42). He advises to be wary of unhelpful "attention to psychometric technicity" as well as a tendency to adopt the CEFR levels too readily. This is particularly relevant to applying the CEFR to classroom language education, where effective contextualization of *can do* statements is key. Further Council of Europe recommendations include: the CEFR is not exhaustive, and "further elaboration and development" are welcome; the CEFR can be a common language for stakeholders to evaluate existing practices, and to situate their efforts in relation to others; the CEFR can contribute to the promotion of basic educational values such as learner autonomy and lifelong learning (2008: 9). In contextualising use of the CEFR, Coste (2007: 42) identifies some important tendencies in applying the CEFR, including the tendency to simplify the CEFR by working with the six levels, and ignoring the CEFR scales fully, and limiting possibilities of contextualization. He recommends that the CEFR becomes useful when it is accepted as a shared point of reference (not a standard), to compare contextual choices. This project, in part, tries to elaborate on possible choices, in specific contexts.

It is important to first review previous attempts to use the CEFR in Japan. Nagai & O' Dywer (2012) demonstrated three major applications of the CEFR into the Japanese educational context: the score interpretation of high stake proficiency tests, attempts to create Japanese proficiency standards for foreign languages, and various pedagogical uses of *can do* descriptors to improve foreign language education as well as to promote autonomous learning. I briefly summarise these three areas below.

There is a large focus on standardized testing in Japan with long-standing concerns about the distortion of the curriculum to accommodate such high-stake testing. Tests will try to link to the CEFR to obtain recognition. Advances in popular tests that change to use scaled *can do* descriptors (TOEIC) or the general *can do* method (EIKEN) are positive and will hopefully contribute to improved learner outcomes. However, it is preferred that the linkage of the CEFR and tests has an impact on the design of the test. Research does not support the view that standardised testing can be relied on alone to raise standards while contextualized formative assessment has been shown to improve learning. Score interpretations of popular proficiency tests in terms of *can do* descriptors will have one positive effect on English education in Japan if they are used properly for formative assessment of learners and help the wider society interpret and understand that value.

The CEFR drew language researchers' and educators' attention and then prompted them to create foreign language proficiency which fits Japanese educational context because of its global nature. The CEFR provides a universal measure (intended as Pan-Europe but recognized more widely beyond Europe). Language educators and researchers in Japan felt urge to create their own language proficiency standard without being left from the global race of education. As the contextualization of the CEFR to Japanese educational context proceeds, it becomes clearer that detailed specification of the original scaled descriptions is necessary. Examples of such specification include the CEFR-J and JFS. The CEFR-J is a framework from the CEFR that is contextualised for English Language Teaching in Japan (Tono & Negishi 2012). Tono & Negishi demonstrate in the CEFR-J project that a finer division of proficiency level may be necessary to reflect actual learning pace of average Japanese learners of English for instance. The JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education (JFS), released by the Japan Foundation in 2010 is a standard of six levels, common with CEFR, and described in the form of "*can do* statements". The JFS proposes a portfolio approach and values learners' self-management of their own learning and assessment. The JFS suggests much detailed specification of tasks assigned to each language activity and conditions of performance in the scaled descriptors are necessary when they are used as self-assessment checklists as well as goals of a language course. These two examples touch upon one challenge of using such a framework: the local standard based on the CEFR should match the original CEFR proficiency levels. The suitable and relevant addition of parameters and illustrations to extend the CEFR without challenging its validity for that original purpose is needed.

The CEFR has the most widely applied to curricula and courses improvement, resulting in positive effects on language education in Japan. The CEFR, more specifically *can do* schemes which describes expected learning outcomes in observable behavioural terms, is making a growing influence on foreign language education in Japan. The development of foreign language curricula based on the CEFR brought about much transparency and coherency in language programs through identifiable learning outcomes.

However, the implementation of such curriculum in institution-wide occasionally faces difficulty. Case studies indicate the amalgam of top-down and bottom-up implementation with a strong leadership is necessary.

One of the most challenging and ambitious adaptation of the CEFR is the curriculum development of an entire language program in an institution. The first instance of this on an institution-wide context was in 2005. The achievement goals for language programmes in each of the 25 foreign language programmes of the Osaka University (Majima 2010). A more down-sized but successful adaptation of the CEFR to a number of language programs at a tertiary institution is observed in the Muroran Institute of Technology, Hokkaido (Krause-Ono 2010). While reforms of foreign language programs at a tertiary level proceed, English language programs have been renovated with reference to the CEFR. Inefficiency of English education in Japan has been focus of much debate and criticism and a number of reforms of English curriculum at a tertiary level have been conducted. One such example comes from Ibaraki University (Nagai 2010). Case studies shown above indicate that the implementation of the CEFR-based language curriculum reform is not easy. Especially when the implementation was forced top-down without much adaptation of the CEFR to a particular Japanese educational context, the good intention of the language reform may result in vain. Keio University's attempt may be such a case (Horiguchi et al. 2010). The project developed a learning and assessment framework based on the CEFR for the elementary school, three junior high schools, five senior high schools, and ten university departments in Keio. It was not considered a great success, as it was implemented in a top-down fashion. In the case of Keio, reform in foreign language education is likely to occur not in a top-down manner but through gradual innovative steps that occur at the classroom level through the actions of individual teachers. Practices should be left ambiguous and flexible, so that teachers can add things as they like.

While top-down implementation bring the benefits of integrated, effective decision-making and curriculum control, there is the risk of the loss of both teacher and learner autonomy. Bottom-up implementation of the CEFR based English reforms can bring effective results. The use of *can do* statements as checklists in a course to facilitate learners' self-regulatory learning is wide spread and rather successfully implemented. Sato (2010), among others, demonstrated a great success in improving learners' ability to learn. The main positive impact of the pedagogical use of *can do* statements can be said to be the perceived shift from teacher-centred knowledge driven classes to students-centred communication-oriented instruction. Although, it cannot be said that the CEFR has been the only influence on this shift, it is possible that if the practices and principles inferred by the CEFR and ELP are undertaken in a considered way then this shift will be effectively facilitated for language educators and language learners. For those who would like to see this shift continue there is still a lot of work to do raise awareness and willingness to implement these tools in language classrooms from both directions:

top-down and bottom-up.

The conclusions of Nagai & O' Dwyer in the 2012 publication was that the CEFR will implicitly and explicitly continue to influence language education in Japan. If the JF standards and similar standards of foreign language proficiency are adopted and used on a wide scale then the prospects will be positive. The resulting effects on language pedagogy and possibly language testing will be seen in the future. The adverse effects of language testing may be reversed should a more learner centred pedagogy produce more effective and autonomous learners of language. For such a pedagogy to be advanced in Japan, there needs to be critical and constructive assessments of current pedagogical practices. This, the main purpose of the project in question, is explained in the following.

2.1. The rationale and purpose of the project

The fundamental for progressing this project, is that, up until now, there has been little in the way of critical and constructive assessments of CEFR-informed pedagogical practices in Japan and beyond. Policy issues have been dominant. Mike Byram and Lynne Parmenter co-edited an edited volume on the international influence of the CEFR (Byram & Parmenter 2012), which predominantly presents a policy-maker perspective. The complexity of language policies can be shown in a three-level model. The macro or national-level includes the role of testing and examinations in Japan, and the creation of the CEFR-J as a national reference project. The meso or institutional level features the role of universities and teacher organizations for shaping language policies. The micro-level deals with syllabi and teaching on a lesson level and individual learning. For a thicker description of these processes it is necessary to unfold the complexity of language policy and then reducing it by concentrating mainly on the institutional levels (universities, language centres and to some extent teacher networks).

The basic theme of the project is the implementation of the CEFR in language education institutions, with a focus on generating ideas of current practice that can be adapted and implemented by others. It is important to be aware that the CEFR and its *can do* statements must be adapted and changed to suit the specific context they serve. This project aims to show signs of progress in pedagogical implementation of the principles and practices related to the CEFR, by showing exemplars of use by language educators.

While it is possible for the focus to be pluricentric, the project is centred around Japan. We are also interested in representing developments in other geographically close regions of Asia (e.g. China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam etc.). A logical starting point, in many cases, will also be Europe. A contribution from Bremen University in Germany provides as an example what is going on in Europe, the birthplace of the CEFR. It is useful to show how things have been handled in Europe, where they are heading, and what can be learned. This can be applied to countries that are starting to use the CEFR on a significant level. For example, Vietnam is implementing an ambitious policy for all language education efforts to align to

the CEFR.

In general, contributions address the issue that although the CEFR has been widely applied to curricula and course improvement, resulting in positive effects on language education, implementation is not without difficulty. To adapt the CEFR to the entire language program, teachers and other stakeholders must share its basic philosophy and ideas. The amalgam of top-down and bottom-up implementation with a strong leadership is necessary. One result can show how this leadership, and what specific practices, been implemented.

The edited volume will be made up of contributions that describe how the principles and practices of the CEFR are being successfully applied (there may be some chance to introduce what hasn't worked also). The writers are currently preparing drafts, in a collaborative fashion. This involves exchanging opinions on practices mentioned in each contribution. A tentative deadline for completion of the manuscript is early 2016. It is hoped that the contributions, in a small, humble way, put forward a learner-centred pedagogy to produce more effective and autonomous learners of language. It is difficult to bring about change though, particularly in areas such as textbooks, curricula, and teaching practices. The project will critically, but constructively assess and discuss principles and practices of the implementation of the CEFR in these three inter-related areas. In order to give the whole project a sound theoretical basis, particularly with regard to transfer of elements of one education system to another, we need a central focus for the project and edited volume. This focus is addressed by using key questions. Table 1 presents and explains the key questions.

A. Specifically, in regard to Curricula, some key questions include:

1 - What type of implementation has been adopted? - What specific practices have been implemented? - What practices have been seen to be effective?

To generate ideas of current practice that can be adapted and implemented by others.

2 - How are all stakeholders involved? - Can the people engaging in CEFR-based teaching and learning develop a sense of ownership? How?

The *can do* statements of the CEFR are unwieldy if not contextualised effectively. The focus of this question is that teachers and learners should engage with the *can do* statements (and the general principles of the CEFR and ELP), contextualising the *can do* statements for individual classes and learners. In this way, they may develop a sense of ownership of the practices.

3 - Has the CEFR promoted a system for in-house evaluation of curricula and learning targets? - Do curricula and courses include transparent and concrete learning objectives, with accepted *can do* statements at the centre? How?

This question is in response to the prevalent focus on testing (e.g. teaching to the test) and language knowledge over language use in language curricula in Japan. It is possible by focusing curricula on the competencies put forward by the CEFR, classroom learning may be focused and improved.

- Is it possible to compare the results of instruction in different classes?

This is particularly relevant for tertiary level, where in many cases individual teachers work alone, with little coordination between classes. There is little relationship what learners undertake in a first year class and second year class, for example. There is also the issue of lack of links between what is learned at high school and university. Scaffolded, CEFR-informed curricula could be one solution.

B. Classroom instruction. Key questions specific to this area include:

1 - Do can do checklists serve as the key reference point for processes of reflective learning in which self-assessment plays a central role? How?

This is based on the viewpoint of Little (2010), that initiatives in the university context “are most likely to succeed if generally accepted “I can” checklists serve as the key reference point for processes of reflective learning in which self-assessment plays a central role”. Reflection and self-assessment are important practices in which learner autonomy can be developed. Learning to learn is an important concept. Learners can find out how to get to their desired learning “destination”. It is thought that the effectiveness of reflection and self-assessment can be improved if they are combined with the learning progress mapped out in the CEFR self-assessment grid and can do checklists that “explode” a global scale or *can do* statement of the CEFR. An example of such a step includes learners aiming to write to the B2 level define the elements that contribute to “*expanding and supporting points of view at length*” (Council of Europe 2001: 61). If the *can do* checklists are used as reference points, then the learners are guided toward an appropriate learning “destination”.

2 - What are the interpretations, of teachers, students and other stakeholders, of the philosophy and ideas of the CEFR?

Some initiatives have been pushed down from the “top-down”, with little effort to engage teachers and others from the bottom-up. It is important that those pushing initiatives consider those involved with language learning at other levels in the institution in question. This is directly related to question 4 below also.

3 - Are the CEFR-based materials (textbooks, teaching content etc.) action-oriented, and easily applicable by both teachers and students? How?

Putting a CEFR stamp on the back of a book, or a *can do* statement at the top of a chapter opening page may not be the most effective way to implement a CEFR-based programme. Appropriate learning outcomes should be at the centre of learning efforts.

4 - Can all readily see the benefits of the CEFR-based approach for their own teaching/learning?

5 - Is autonomous learning beyond the specified materials (e.g. textbooks) supported and encouraged? If so, how?

Autonomous learning is central to the lifelong view of learning that the CEFR and ELP movement promotes.

Table 1 The key questions of the edited volume

These questions can be used to assess how the CEFR is currently used in language education in the specified contexts. The contributors centre their discussion around the relevant questions in their context, in order to highlight the choices that they have made, and why. I will explain the rationale behind these key questions in a little detail here. It is often suggested the Council of Europe's 2001 *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) has been misused, both within and outside Europe. Many focus on the *can do* descriptors and CEFR scales to create attainment levels, and for validation purposes. The original purpose of the CEFR includes promoting multilingualism and action-based learning for the purpose of developing autonomous, interculturally competent citizens (Parmenter 2014: 203). The CEFR needs to be contextualised in a suitable way, based on current conditions and salient issues in specific contexts. The CEFR can become a shared point of reference, not a standard, to compare contextual choices (Coste 2007: 42) in areas such as language policy, curricula decisions, teaching methods, textbook development, assessment, etc. Some of the conclusion of this edited volume will present some of the factors, and salient issues, that affect the contextual choices when using the CEFR. In such ways, this publication contributes toward the ongoing debate on the use of the CEFR. The adverse effects of language testing (e.g. teaching to the test) may be reversed should a more learner centred pedagogy produce more effective and autonomous learners of language. The most widely recognized tool of the CEFR is probably the 6 level proficiency scales and their *can do* descriptors. Depending on the usage of *can do* scheme, the result may be positive or negative. Positive results generally occur when implementation focuses on the original aims of the CEFR mentioned above. This volume attempts to create some critical and constructive assessments of current pedagogical practices, so such a pedagogy can be advanced in Japan and elsewhere. These assessments refer to how the CEFR is currently used in language education in the specified contexts. This touches upon issues such as the processes involved in the use of the CEFR, and accounting for factors which contributed to institutions using the CEFR in a certain way. The purpose of this process is to allow for others to be able to make informed decisions about practices that may be relevant to their contexts. This includes those who currently use the CEFR in some form, and would like to evaluate their own practices. I now address the several elements of this

project.

The textbook-related element of the project will analyse texts in relation to the correlations to the CEFR, and implementation in terms of a connected pedagogy aligned to the principles and practices of the CEFR (e.g. action-oriented, reflective learning). The action research perspective of the contributions will suggest improvements that future textbooks can incorporate. In terms of CEFR-informed language education, there is little action research. Contributors in the project are encouraged to pursue an action-reflection cycle (McNiff & Whitehead 2009: 20): observe what is going on; think about how they can improve it; act; gather data to show the transformational nature of the actions; test and modify existing thinking and practices; communicate the significance of what they are doing; try new ways of acting; which lead to a new action-reflection cycle.

The chapters in the edited volume will be a mix between case studies and regular book chapters, i.e. start with comprehensive case studies, which also then include a section which examines and outlines how the case study and chapter address and provide critical assessments, based on the key questions. Each chapter follows the same basic outline: 1 Introduction 2 Context (Details important for readers to know about the context) 3 Details of practices (Description of important practices) 4 Discussion (How practices relate to and address the key questions).

2.2. The outcome of this project: Assessment grid for learning programmes

This is a very incipient idea at the moment, but one anticipated outcome of this project is a grid that assesses what language learning institutions are doing in terms of learning outcomes. This is learning-oriented, with the outcomes placed in terms of what language learners will receive as a result of receiving tuition at the institution. The case studies presented in the book will be assessed in terms of this grid. It is hoped that the positive points of each case study can be presented together, which will form an exemplar for those that wish to use CEFR-informed practices in their own context. Table 2 present the grid in its current form.

Language learner can receive tuition informed by the following	*	**	***
In-house evaluation of curricula and learning targets, informed by the CEFR.			
It is possible to compare the results of instruction in different classes.			
People engaging in CEFR-based teaching and learning develop a sense of ownership			
All stakeholders are involved			
Classroom instruction			
<i>Can do</i> checklists serve as the key reference point for processes of reflective teaching/ learning in which self-assessment plays a central role			

Teachers, students and other stakeholders, are emerged to the philosophy and ideas of the CEFR (i.e. learner-centred, forward-looking assessment)			
All can readily see the benefits of the CEFR-based approach for their own teaching/learning			
Autonomous learning beyond the specified materials (e.g. textbooks) is supported and encouraged			

Table 2 Assessment grid for learning programmes

An important consideration is that many factors will be context-dependent, and it is not reasonable to expect a use of the CEFR that fits all situations. The case studies can present some of the factors that affect certain types of use of the CEFR in an institutional context.

3. Anticipated results of the project

As mentioned, the main focus of the project will be an edited volume. A one day conference, followed by a writer's workshop, was held in May 2014. The results of this are being brought forward to the edited volume, and are reported below. A conference consisting of workshop-type activities is tentatively set for the academic year starting April 2016. In the edited volume (other editors, alongside the writer, include Noriko Nagai, Alexander Imig, Naoyuki Naganuma, Gabriela Schmidt and Morten Hunke) we will first concentrate on Japan, and present an overview, on national-, institutional- and individual levels, of CEFR-informed developments in Japan so far. Yukio Tono and Masashi Negishi will overview the development of the CEFR-J. This framework was created and validated through a series of empirical studies, with resources such as Wordlists, ELP Descriptor Database, and an Inventory of English. This development creates a better environment for implementation of the CEFR in classrooms in Japan. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology- Japan (MEXT) initiatives future facilitate this, by mandating learning attainment targets in the form of "*can do* lists" for junior and senior high schools. Tomoko Takada reports on a teacher training project for a group of high school English teachers who developed and used such *can do* lists. Not all teachers are ready for this, and teacher training is an important consideration. Another challenge they faced is that students need a great deal of specific help and guidance for reflection. The challenges for the education system as a whole are can be seen in these details.

Section 2 presents critical, constructive assessment of CEFR-informed language teaching textbooks. We begin with a summary of a research project that developed English language integrated skills textbooks that suitably adapt and apply the CEFR for the higher education context in Japan.

These textbooks also develop supplemental learning materials such as a language portfolio, and autonomy informed resources, to support learner and teacher autonomy and to support the classroom implementation of the text. We then turn to Japanese language education. Noriko Yokoyama (2014) describes the characteristics of a series of coursebooks that illustrate the use of JFS in classroom practice. Each level consists of two volumes and offers the following two different types of learning: (a) Implicit learning through listening and speaking for communicative language activities, and (b) explicit learning of grammar and vocabulary for communicative language competences. Lämsisalmi also uses these textbooks in the University of Helsinki. As a result of this contribution from Finland, and other perspectives from China, the following question could be a key issue: How can the common European yardstick, the CEFR can do formulations, be applied to languages such as Japanese and what kind of interpretations of the philosophy and ideas of the CEFR do active or aspiring Japanese language instructors actually have in a European language teaching context?

Section 3 addresses implementation of the CEFR in curricula. In Japan, we see a distinct movement to use the CEFR as a tool to provide coherence and transparency. Mark de Boer (2014) relates the implementation of curricula and classroom instruction based on the general measures of CEFR for university-wide English education. the implementation of curricula and classroom instruction based on the general measures of CEFR. The initiatives are designed to help develop *communicative language competencies, provide context, support language activities and language processes, text, domain, strategies, and tasks* (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 9-10).

Shimo & Ramirez (2014) explain a context-specific *can do* framework, based on the CEFR with the purpose of providing specific goals and simple assessment tools for both students and teachers, implemented in a university-level language curriculum. Another group of case studies come from the Bunkyo University Group (Bower et al. 2014) that outline an alignment of a curriculum to the CEFR-J alignment, curriculum mapping and development of related self-access materials. Procedures involved in the curriculum alignment project included teacher education and training workshops, rewriting the curriculum goals based on CEFR-J descriptors, writing detailed *can do* statements for all lesson handouts to serve as a reference for teachers, receiving expert feedback on the lesson *can dos*, mapping the existing curriculum against the CEFR-J grid, writing simplified *can do* descriptors for students and placing them in checklists at the beginning and end of lesson handouts, and recreating learning activities in the Self Access Learning Center based on the CEFR-J. A second stage of curriculum renewal is also described. This offers hints for the application of action research in CEFR-informed practices.

The final results of the project will be a synthesised assessment of learning programmes in this volume, as discussed in section 2.2. above. By outlining the positive points of all of the chapters into this the assessment grid, we can provide an exemplar for future initiatives.

There is a great dilemma when contextualizing the CEFR: the more it is adapted to a specific context, the greater the possibility that the original language proficiency scales of the CEFR will be altered in an unhelpful way. The localization of the CEFR proficiency levels means a departure from the CEFR global standards and raises issues such as how closely the localized scales are related to the CEFR scales. The localization must be done to fit each language course but should be done in principled ways so that the original scales are kept intact. This project will attempt to suggest the ways in which the CEFR should be contextualized (i.e. how the use of the CEFR can reflect local learning needs and circumstances).

There is certainly scope for investigation of the role of such organizations in the globalizing of educational and cultural policy. Teacher associations seem to be important networks all over the world. Parmenter & Byram (2012) note one example is the role of the American Association of Teachers of German in promoting the CEFR in the United States. Another example, which is interesting in terms of its border-crossing role, is the influence of the Association of Japanese Teachers in Europe on debates on the CEFR within Japan. This project, coordinated by a teacher organization (JALT Framework & Language Portfolio SIG), is further example of the role of these networks. The conclusion of the project can focus on the role of universities, teacher organizations and individuals in shaping and implementing language policies, and the importance, on the institutional level, of the amalgam of top-down and bottom-up implementation.

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