

Draft Report on the Fact-finding Survey Related to the Establishment of a Comprehensive System for Regional Japanese Language Education in Yokohama City Area (Summary Version)

Fact-finding Survey Summary

● Purpose and characteristics of the Survey

- A survey was conducted to understand the actual conditions surrounding regional Japanese language education (Japanese language study support) in the city area and the intentions of the main entities involved, in preparation for the formulation of “Yokohama City Action Plan for Promoting Local Japanese Language Education”.
- For this survey, we conducted a new survey targeting learners in local Japanese language classes. With the cooperation of the International Lounges and local Japanese language classes and study support classes, we received 926 responses for the adult survey and 242 responses for the child survey. The plan was based on the needs of the learners and was made possible by the network of supporters of Japanese language learning in the city, and it was an opportunity to confirm the characteristics of the local Japanese language education promotion system in Yokohama City.

● Survey Items

- Profile of learners and each organization / Purpose of learning Japanese, methods and contents of learning Japanese / Status of cooperation over Japanese language learning, etc.

● Subject of survey, implementation and collection results

For individuals

Classification of survey	① Survey of Japanese Language Learners (Adult and Child Surveys)
Subject of survey	Adults generally 18 years of age or older studying at Japanese language classes in the city, and children from 4th grade elementary school to high school age equivalent studying at learning support classes. *Questions differ slightly between the adult and child surveys.
Survey method	Questionnaires held and collected in classrooms (questionnaires in Japanese, Chinese, English, Vietnamese, and Nepali) A website was set up for the survey, with the option to respond via web form.
Period	September 2-October 6, 2024
Number of distributed surveys	Adult: 2,363 Child: 484
Number of valid surveys collected	Adult: 926 Child: 242
Effective collection rate	Adult: 39.2% Child: 50.0%

For groups

Classification of survey	② Survey of local Japanese language classes	③ Survey of establishments employing foreigners	④ Survey of Japanese language institutions	⑤ Survey of Japanese language teacher training institutes	⑥ Survey of International Lounges
Subject of survey	Classes listed on the Database of Japanese Language and Study Support Classes (Yokohama)	Establishments with advanced foreign employment * Not on a corporate basis, but on an individual establishment basis	Japanese language institutions for non-native Japanese speakers (Japanese language schools, vocational schools, language schools, universities, etc.)	Educational institutions with Japanese language teacher training courses (universities, graduate schools, Japanese language schools, etc.)	International Lounges
Survey method	By postal mail	By postal mail	By postal mail	By postal mail	e-mail
Period	A website was set up for the survey, with the option to respond via web form.				
Period	August 19- September 13, 2024				
Number of distributed surveys	139	462	58	8	13
Number of valid surveys collected	87	81	26	3	13
Effective collection rate	62.6%	17.5%	44.8%	37.5%	100.0%

★How to Read the Survey Results

- 'n' refers to the sample size, and 'MA' refers to multiple-answer questions (asked to choose more than one option). In the case of single-response questions, the notation is omitted.
- In the text, the distribution of responses is given in approximate numbers (rough percentages)
- The total may not add up to 100% due to rounding to the second decimal place.

Summary of the Survey Results

① Learners of Japanese (Adult survey n=926, Child survey n=242)

◇Those who want to live in Japan permanently or for a long time are majority

<Adults> Employed people and dependent family members are majority

• Nearly 90% of respondents to the adult survey were up to their 40s, with 36% in their 30s, 26% in their 40s, and 25% in their 10-20s. The status of residence is as follows: 34% are Permanent Resident /Long-Term Resident, 35% are employed, and 25% are Dependent, with employed and dependent together accounting for about 60%. Students accounted for 6% of the total.

* Reference: Foreign residents in Yokohama city as of September of the same year: 51% permanent/long-term residents, 28% employed, and 11% dependent family members.

- About 30% of the respondents plan to stay in Japan for "1 year or less" and about 60% for "3 years or less. As for their future stay in Japan, 45% of the respondents plan to stay "forever/preferably forever" and 10% plan to stay "6 years or longer," indicating that more than half of the respondents plan to stay in Japan for a long period of time.

<Children> 90% are elementary and junior high school students attending Japanese schools.

- 52% of respondents to the Children's Survey are attending Japanese elementary schools, 38% junior high schools, 5% high schools, and 3% foreign schools.
- At home, 55% "Not use Japanese much" and 43% "Use Japanese as well", while only 2% "Use only Japanese"
- About 70% of the children came to Japan in their school-age years. About 10% of the children have lived in Japan since birth. As for their hopes for the future, just under 50% of the children said they "want to live in Japan forever/preferably forever", while 30% said they "don't know," 10% "want to live in another country," and just under 10% "want to live in their home country."

◇Adults' purposes for learning Japanese are diverse. The number one purpose is to be able to converse

- About one-third of the adults can hear and speak Japanese at a level comfortable for daily life, and about 10% each have little ability in "listening and speaking," "reading" and "writing". Non-Kanji speakers are slightly more likely to have difficulty reading.
- The percentage of children who cannot "talk/listen" with friends and teachers and "write" sentences is low, but about 20% of the children said they cannot read books and textbooks "very well".
- The primary purpose of adults learning Japanese is to "converse", then "to communicate with Japanese people", "to understand information necessary for daily life" and "for work", and "to read and write". The purposes are varied.

(Table1)

(Table1) Adults: The purposes for learning Japanese(MA) n=926 (%)

Conversation (speaking/listening)	83.0
Communicating with the Japanese	69.3
Understanding of daily life information	65.7
Job (employment/career change/promotion)	57.8
Reading and Writing (Kanji and grammar)	54.6
Understanding of Japanese culture and customs	54.6
Consulting a doctor	44.6
Preparation for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)	42.5
Can participate in community activities	40.3
Can do the contracts and procedures myself	32.7
Parenting and children's education	26.9

◇The main conditions for choosing a class are that the day and time are compatible and that the class is easy to attend.

- The reasons for choosing their current class are as follows: For adults, "Desired day and time" and "Close from home" were chosen by many, while "Comfortable," "Suitable for my Japanese level", and "Free or doesn't cost a lot of money" were also chosen. For children, "Can get help with my homework," "Desired day and time" and "Close from home" were chosen. (Table2) (Table3)

- Less than half of both adults and children walk or ride bicycle/motorcycle to class, and many commute by train or bus.

(Table2) Adults: the reason for choosing the current class(MA) n=926 (%)

Desired day and time	70.6
An easy place to get to	59.9
Comfortable	44.5
Suitable for my Japanese level	44.1
Free or doesn't cost a lot of money	39.0
Can be taught according to my wishes	26.8
One-on-one lessons	25.1
Can talk with other foreigners	23.1

(Table3) Children: the reason for choosing the current class(MA) n=242 (%)

Can get help with my homework	37.2
Desired day and time	32.6
Close from home	31.8
Choice of my family	31.4
The teacher(s) seems nice	29.3
One-on-one lessons	24.4
Friend(s) in class	17.4

◇ **The classes are not only places to improve their speaking, reading and writing skills, but also places to get to know people and for consultation**

- The adults answering as good things about attending classes include “I can now converse in Japanese,” “Studying Japanese is fun,” “Reading and writing in Japanese got improved,” and “It got easier to obtain daily life information”.

(Table4)

- Nearly 80% of the children answered “attending classes was fun”. The reasons include “I can now understand the class at school” and “Studying Japanese is fun. **(Table5)**

(Table4) Adults: good thing about attending the class(MA) n=926 (%)

I can now converse in Japanese	72.6
Studying Japanese is fun	62.3
Reading and writing in Japanese got improved	53.7
It got easier to obtain daily life information	49.7
I made friend(s) to study Japanese with	40.7
I got to know more Japanese people	39.4
I now understand about Japan (Yokohama)	36.2
I now have a place to go for advice when I need it	31.6

(Table5) Children: good things about attending the class(MA) n=242 (%)

I can now understand the class at school	83.1
Studying Japanese is fun	58.7
I got to know the teachers	35.1
I can now talk in Japanese with my friends	33.5
I made friend(s) to study Japanese with	29.3

◇ **Children attending learning support classes hope to “study more Japanese”**

- More than 70% of children say they want to “study Japanese more”, and online learning is desired **(Table6)**

(Table6) How can children “learn Japanese more easily?” (MA) n=242 (%)

If I could study more online	66.9
Easy-access locations	45.5
Interacting with Japanese people and understanding each other's language and culture	36.0
If I could choose more days and times	35.1
If I can study more at school	26.4

◇ Many learners want to participate and interact in the community and contribute to society.

- There is a willingness to participate in exchanges at local events, contribute through work, introduce one's own language and culture, and teach Japanese and about Japan to foreigners coming to Japan. (Table7)

(Table7) Adults “things you want to do or can do for the community” (MA) n=926 (%)

Participate in local festivals and events and interact with a variety of people	50.2
Being more useful through my work	43.0
Introducing my country's culture and language	37.4
Teaching Japanese language, lifestyle, customs, etc. to foreigners who come to Japan for the first time	32.1
Volunteer activities	28.2

② Local Japanese classes (n=87)

◇ Local Japanese classes are operated according to the convenience and needs of the learners.

- The organizational structure of the classes that responded to the survey was over 60%, voluntary organizations and over 30%, NPOs.
- About 60% of the classes are for adults only, 25 percent are for children only, and 10 percent include both.
- As for the locations of the classes, more than 40% are held at “international lounges,” about 30% at “other public facilities (except community centers and community care plazas),” about 20% at “community centers,” and about 10% at “community care plazas”. Some are held at ward offices and school facilities.
- For the classes, 70% are held once a week and 20% for twice a week, but some classes are held three or more times a week. As for hours, less than 40% of the classes are held on weekday mornings, followed by 30% each on weekday afternoons and weekends. Some classes are being held considering those who commute to school/work.
- Roughly half each for the learners bearing some beneficiary burden such as fees or actual costs and those bearing no fee.

◇ Local Japanese classes also play an important role as a point of contact between learners and Japanese society and life in the community.

- The emphasis in Japanese language study support is on “learning basic Japanese” followed by “learning the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life” and “ensuring opportunities to speak with Japanese people. Support for study tailored to individual goals and purposes is also emphasized. (Table8)
- For the form of study, most of the learners are using one-on-one or small group lessons, and one-third of the respondents answered that they are using online usefully. The challenges in using online usefully are the skills of the learning supporters as well as the environment in which the learners use the site.

(Table8) What is emphasized in Japanese language learning support (MA) n=87 (%)

Learning basic Japanese	83.9
Learning the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life	75.9
Ensuring opportunities to speak with Japanese people.	72.4
Learning practical Japanese language skills	71.3
Learning support tailored to individual goals and purposes	57.5
Promotion of understanding of Japanese society and culture	48.3
Support for understanding Japanese society and culture	44.8
Learning of “correct” Japanese	40.2
Preparation for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test	37.9

- In addition to learning support, “responding to consultation for learners” and “giving information on daily life” are also provided. **(Table9)**
- When they have any problems, more than half answered they consult the “International Lounge,” about 20% the “city/ward office,” and 10% the “YOKE”.
- Challenges in running the classes include the shortage of Japanese language learning supporters, skill development, and the aging of the supporters, as well as dealing with the increase in the number of learners, recruiting supporters, securing space, dealing with differences in learner levels, and matching learners and supporters. **(Table10)**

(Table9) Support other than learning support (MA) n=87 (%)

Responding to consultation for learners	64.4
Providing information on daily life	48.3
Referral to consultation services	40.2
Explanation of documents	36.8
Support for consultation of parents	27.6
Support for various procedures	18.4

(Table10) Challenges in running the classes (MA) n=87 (%)

Lack of Japanese language learning supporters	51.7
Improvement of Japanese language learning supporters' skills	46.0
Aging of Japanese language supporters	46.0
Inability to cope with the increase in the number of learners	31.0
Effective recruitment of Japanese language supporters	24.1
How to secure a place	24.1
Difficulty in dealing with level differences among learners.	19.5
Difficulty in matching learners with supporters	19.5

③ Establishment employing foreigners (n=58)

◇ Nearly 90% of the establishments employing foreigners consider Japanese language proficiency a condition for employment.

- Of the establishments that responded, 58 currently employ foreigners, in the following order: “nursing care,” “construction,” “food and lodging,” “manufacturing and cleaning,” and “professional services,” with “professional/technical,” “technical,” and “customer service” being actual job categories.
- 80% of foreign employees are in their 20s and 30s, and the main countries and regions of origin include Vietnam, Myanmar, and China, but also from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Nepal.
- 50% percent of the establishments employing foreigners chose “Japanese language ability as one of the requirements” and about 40% chose “Japanese language ability as an essential requirement. As for the level of Japanese language proficiency required, about 50% chose “daily conversation,” 30% for “can read hiragana and katakana” and “JLPT N3 or higher,” and more than 10% for “N2 or higher.”

◇ More than 80% of establishments employing foreigners believe that their foreign employees and their families need to learn Japanese that necessary for daily living.

- Support for Japanese language learning among foreign employees is mainly on “daily communication in the workplace” and on-the-job training. Holding classes at workplaces and using Japanese language education institutions are limited. **(Table11)**

(Table11) Support for foreign employees to learn Japanese (MA) n=58 (%)

Encouraging people to talk to each other on a regular basis in the workplace	48.3
Guidance and support by employees are incorporated into work (on-the-job training).	24.1
Classes are held in some way within the workplace.	22.4
No specific support is provided.	22.4
Some kind of support for study at Japanese language institutions	17.2
Some kind of support for taking the Japanese Language Proficiency Test	13.8

- Only a few establishments introduce local Japanese language classes to support family members in learning Japanese.
- For Japanese language learning necessary for the daily lives of foreign employees and their families, “Feel the need for it” was chosen by 45% and “Very much needed” by less than 40%. The answer of “Not sure” was also chosen by more than 10%.
- Slightly less than half of the establishments are aware of information on Japanese language education institutions and local Japanese language classes in the city, and 70% responded “would appreciate it” or “would love to have it,” indicating a need for information on places where Japanese language can be learned.

④ Japanese Language institution (n=26)

⑤ Japanese language teacher training institutes (n=3)

◇ Japanese Language institutions are facing a shortage of teachers, a diverse student population, and the need to respond to changes in the system.

- About 90% of the students who study at Japanese language institutes are in their 20s, and in addition to students such as “language students,” “employees,” “spouses of employees,” and “people preparing for employment” are also studying at these institutions. The main purposes of studying Japanese are “Preparation for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test,” “Preparation for school entry and entrance examinations,” “Preparation for certification acquisition,” “Occupational necessity,” etc.
- At Japanese language institutes, emphasis is placed on the acquisition of understandable(practical) **(Table12)**
- The main learning format is lecture-style.
- Japanese language education institutions cite “lack of teachers,” “diversification of learners' Japanese language levels,” and “adapting to new curricula” as the main challenges of schools. **(Table13)**

(Table12) Things emphasized in Japanese language education (MA) n=26 (%)

Learning practical Japanese language skills	57.7
School Admission, Transfer, and measures for entering higher education	53.8
Learning of “correct” Japanese (Grammar etc.)	50.0
Preparation for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test	50.0
Learning the Japanese language skills necessary for work	50.0
Support for understanding Japanese society and culture	50.0
Learning the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life	42.3
Learning support tailored to individual goals and purposes	38.5
employment measures	30.8

(Table13) Main challenges for schools (MA) n=26 (%)

Lack of teachers	46.2
Diversification of learners' Japanese language levels	38.5
Adapting to new curricula	30.8
Responding to changing learning needs	26.9
Improvement of teachers' qualifications and abilities	26.9
Excess of applicants for admission (unable to meet requests)	23.1
Development of post-graduation career paths	19.2

◇ There are only a limited number of places in the city where Japanese language institutions affiliated with.

- Although 30% of Japanese language education institutions provide information on local Japanese language classes in the city to their students, and 20% say they have students studying at classes in the city, answers they “do not know or have no idea” about the involvement of students and graduate with classes in the city are not a few.
- As for contacts and collaborations in Japanese language education and support for learners, 30% of the respondents answered “other Japanese language schools,” and 20% each answered “international lounges,” “YOKE,” “city and ward offices,” and “national and prefectural government agencies. 35% of the respondents answered “nothing in particular”
- Japanese language education institutions indicated as what they can cooperate and collaborate in local Japanese language education by “holding Japanese language classes for local residents” and “dispatching lecturers to training courses for Japanese language learning supporters.

⑥ International Lounge (n=13)

◇ International Lounges serve as an entry point for Japanese language study and Japanese language learning support, as well as bases for training support personnel.

- The main consultation topics from learners and prospective learners are “new application” and “introductory level”. Both “Application for Japanese language volunteer” and “interest in supporting Japanese language study” from supporters and prospective supporters, and “lack of study supporters” and “skill improvement of learning supporters” from organizations are many. (Table14) (Table15)

(Table14) Consultation from learners and prospective learners (MA) n=13 (%)

New application	61.5
Introductory level	53.8
Children's learning support classes	53.8
Beginner to intermediate level	38.5
Referrals for certification test support classes	23.1
Children's Japanese language classes	23.1

(Table15) Consultation from learning supporters and prospective learning supporters (MA) n=13 (%)

Application for Japanese language volunteer (individuals)	72.7
Interest in supporting Japanese language study (individuals)	45.5
Lack of study supporters (organizations)	45.5
Skill improvement of learning supporters (organizations)	45.5
Interest in activities other than Japanese language classes (individuals)	18.2
Methods of recruiting new learning supporters (organizations)	18.2

- For the projects related to local Japanese language education, many answered “Japanese language volunteer training courses,” “Japanese language volunteer brush-up courses,” and “holding Japanese language class liaison meetings.”

Comparison of increase/decrease over the last 5 years or so (each surveyed classification)

- The number of foreign employers at establishments and Japanese study consultations at international lounges both answered “increased,” while a certain number answered that the number of people studying at Japanese language education institutions and local Japanese classes either remained the same or decreased. (Table16)

(Table16)

Comparison of increase/decrease over the last 5 years or so (each surveyed classification) (%)

	Increased	Slightly increased	About the same	Slightly decreased	Decreased	Non-response
Number of learners in local Japanese language classes (n=87)	23.0	24.1	32.2	5.7	11.5	3.4
Number of learning supporters in local Japanese classes (n=87)	11.5	31.0	26.4	17.2	6.9	6.9
Number of foreign employees in the establishments employing foreigners (n=58)	48.3	10.3	32.8	3.4	5.2	0.0
Number of students in Japanese language institutions (n=26)	38.5	7.7	38.5	7.7	3.8	3.8
Consultation from learners and prospective learners to international lounges (n=13)	46.2	15.4	23.1	7.7	0.0	7.7
Consultation from supporters and prospective supporters to international lounges (n=13)	30.8	38.5	23.1	0.0	0.0	7.7