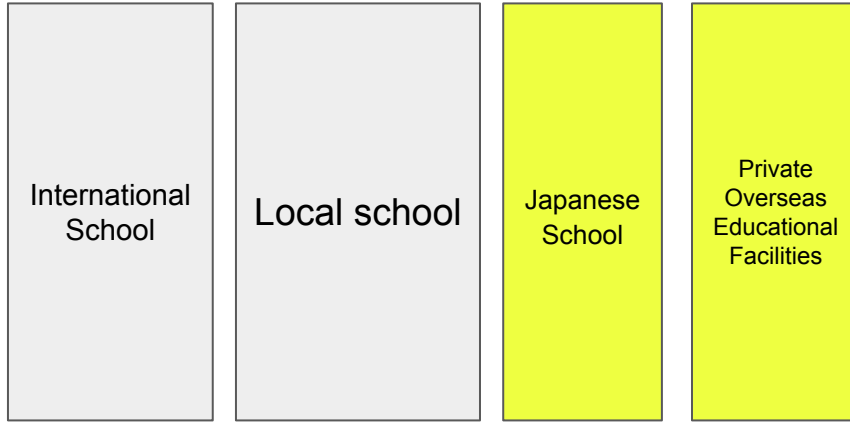


An Educational Practices in Japanese Language Group in Wien -Perspectives of Parents in Supplementary School-

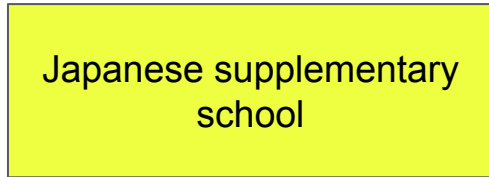
Japanese language group chairwoman Ayami Yokomatsu
Okayama University of Science Mitsuhiro Kimura
Northern Arizona University Seiji Takahashi

Children attending overseas educational facilities

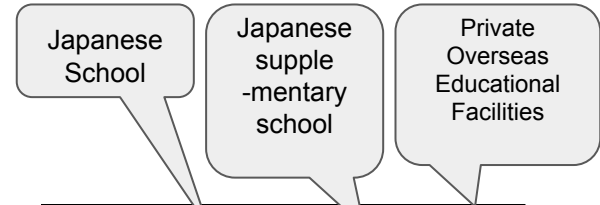
Full-time



Saturdays and weekdays after school



Overseas Educational Facilities



	日本人学校	補習授業校	私立在外教育施設
Asia	41	27	1
Pacific	3	24	
North America	4	89	2
Middle/South America	14	12	
Europe	21	77	3
Middle East	8	6	
Africa	3	7	
	94	242	6

Figure: Number of overseas educational facilities (as of April 1, 2024)

Compiled by the author based on data published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The supplementary schools include three that are temporarily closed.

Source: Edited and created by the author based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website
 (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/world_school/index.html)

Supplementary School

Facilities for Japanese students attending local schools abroad or international schools to receive education in some subjects, such as Japanese language and math, using Japanese textbooks on weekends and after school hours.

Important points to consider when promoting overseas educational facilities

- Guaranteeing the learning of Japanese children
- Creating a learning environment equivalent to that in Japan
- Enhancing unique education at overseas educational facilities

2-1 Practices in Japanese Language Group in Wien

- Established in April 1983
- 2018: Received government subsidy
- 2023: Become certified as an overseas educational facility
- 50 households and approximately 60 students attending once a week



Management and class organization



Hiragana Katakana

The organization is made up of volunteer parents.

- 5 officers (president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, academic affairs)
- Class representatives and those in charge of planning and running events, etc.
- The association's work is diverse, including daily operations, accounting, negotiating facilities (renting a community university), and dealing with problems, placing a heavy burden on parents.

Class organization (3 kindergarten classes, 4 primary classes)

- Kindergarten: learning hiragana and katakana, speaking Japanese, singing songs, crafts, etc.
- Primary school: Using Japanese textbooks, lessons are conducted according to the level of each grade.

*Teachers: Most of the teachers are parents who have previously sent their children to the supplementary school, or parents who currently send their children to the supplementary school (regardless of whether they have a teaching license or not).

Challenges



Kanji (Chinese characters)

Differences in use of Japanese at home

The majority of the children who attend the supplementary school have multicultural roots, with either their father or mother being native Japanese speakers.

Since they normally attend local schools (where the national language is German), so the children's use of Japanese is mainly through conversations with their parents.

However, there are many families where one of the parents does not speak Japanese, so there are differences in Japanese proficiency even among children of the same age.

Continuing Japanese language studies in upper primary level

In Austria, primary school is for four years, after which a student's future path is decided based on their grades, aptitude and aspirations.

As a result, after graduating from primary school, academic work tends to become busier and longer.

As children advance to higher grades in Japanese language studies, it becomes more difficult to study kanji and read and write long texts, making it difficult for more children to balance both.

Challenges

Should language skills come first, or should students learn together with their peers?

Although priority is the grade-based instruction, there are sometimes discussions about teaching language according to their ability regardless of age.

Most parents have no experience of attending supplementary schools, so it is difficult to grasp the situation of their children.

Few parents have experience attending supplementary schools, and many have received normal education in Japan. Therefore, it is difficult for them to imagine the situation of their children growing up in a different environment from their own.

As a result, there are many worries and difficulties to help their child's language development.

Studying Japanese once a week is not enough and supplementary school is just one part of the learning process. It is important to combine with learning at home.

Supplementary schools exists as a place where parents can support each other and find solutions.

2-2 Previous Research

There will be 230 supplementary schools all over the world in 2022 (MEXT, 2023).

The original purpose was to enable students to study in Japanese to adapt the society in Japan.

However, many families do not intend to return to Japan because of international marriages etc.(Aoki and Hagino, 2010), and these children now became the majority at some supplementary schools.

The students who don't intend to return to Japan have little motivation of study. And they drop out without attending their supplementary school for long periods, so it leads some supplementary schools to struggle encouraging students attendance.

→It is important to develop Japanese community to promote the diplomacy.

2-2 Previous Research

Management aspects

In most supplementary schools, differentiation for students of international background are required, and there are large differences in language ability within classes (Kaneko, 2023).

2-2 Previous Research

Educational aspects

Fujimori (2006) reported that 67% of supplementary school teachers have never studied "Japanese language education for teaching foreigners."

A survey of supplementary schools students in the US revealed that 75.0% of those planning to stay permanently and 43.2% of those planning to return to Japan, they wanted to quit supplementary school due to homework etc. highlighting the difficulties of studying at a supplementary school while attending a local or international school (AG5 Steering Committee Member, 2018).

Non-permanent residing family regards the ability to write and read as important than permanent residing family (Aoki et al., 2010).

2.3. Research Questions

What the parents want children to learn at supplementary school in Wien.

Objectives

- To identify how parents expect their children to use Japanese in the future.
- To identify the challenges of children in their language use.

Survey Date	2025. Feb
Participants of the questionnaire	5 person

3. Methodology -Questionnaire-

The questionnaire was developed by this research team and included the following items:

1. Mother tongue of parents who is sending their children to supplementary schools.
2. Whether children plan to return to Japan in the future.
3. The reason why supplementary school students stay in Austria.
4. What is the most suitable reason for learning at a supplementary school?
5. Do you have any rules with your children regarding language use?
6. How do you want your child to use Japanese in the future?
7. Are there any challenges in interacting with children?

It was able to get responses from five parents.

Table 1: Language status of children attending supplementary schools and their parents (n=5)

4. Result -Questionnaire-

Many have no plans to return to Japan and they are staying because of their parents' marriages or work.

In addition to "To learn Japanese language," other reasons include "To have a connection with Japan," suggesting that "exchanging information" is also important.

Also, while many people try to speak Japanese with their children. The language environments are different in each family.

1. Mother tongue of parents of children attending supplementary schools	
The first language of either or both parents is Japanese	5
2. Whether children attending supplementary schools plan to return to Japan in the future	
No plans to return to Japan	3
Planning to return to Japan within 3 years	1
Not sure	1
3. Please tell us why your child is staying in Austria.	
Parents' Marriage	2
The occupation of one (or both) of your parents	3
4. The reason for learning Japanese at a supplementary school (multiple answers possible)	
To let students learn Japanese	4
To avoid any problems when returning to Japan	2
To make Japanese speaking friends	1
To let them experience Japanese events	1
Exchange of information between parents	1
5. The rules about language use with your child? (Written answer)	
Speak Japanese as much as possible	4
A father speaks in German	1
Don' t try to mix Japanese and German	1
none	1

Table 2: Responses regarding children's future language use (n=5)

4. Result -Questionnaire-

We asked about their plan to use Japanese in the future.

Two parents responded about communication with family and relatives, and the other responses were about friends and books.

To be able to enjoy reading in Japanese or read kanji is also stated.

It is likely that there are multiple intention to use Japanese in the future and variety of motivations for students to learn Japanese.

6. How do you want your child to use Japanese in the future?

To be able to enjoy reading Japanese books

To be able to read kanji at the primary school graduation level.

To be able to communicate with relatives in Japan without any problems.

To be able to cherish the friends and experiences through Japanese.

To inherit the Japanese language to their grandchildren at a level to understand what is talked about.

To be able to communicate with family and relatives in Japan.

To improve their language and academic skills as much as possible not to pace problems studying in Japan.

4. Result -Questionnaire-

Some issues are raised by the responses.

"Speaking a mixture of Japanese and German sometimes" and "Even when speaking in Japanese, he replies in German" .

Parents are teaching Japanese based on experiences and states as follows.

"Children will not become bilingual automatically, so they are making an effort".

Table 3: Responses regarding challenges in language use (n=5)

7. Are there any challenges in interacting with children?

.....
My child sometimes speak a mixture of German and Japanese.
.....

While I want them to develop both skills, I am worried that having a conversation with both of them will cause problems later on.
.....

Just because a mother's native language is Japanese does not automatically mean that they will be bilingual. Family effort is essential.
.....

If my child read a folk tale in Japan and it is not explained in English, he/she will not understand words that I do not normally use.
.....

Even if I speak in Japanese, my child reply in German
.....

We tell students to speak in one language per sentence, so that they don't develop the habit of mixing multiple languages in one sentence.
.....

5 Discussion

Previous research has pointed out that whether students plan to return to Japan is a major factor in motivating them to study Japanese at supplementary schools, but the parents' wishes and efforts are also important factors for students to study Japanese language.

Also, regarding language inheritance, it is necessary to reveal and support the learning of students who try to respond to the wishes of their parents from academic perspectives.

In addition, some parents were worried about their children mixing Japanese and English which is called code switching.

In most cases, there is no need to be apprehensive the code switching (Saito, 2022), but the opinion of parents should be considered.

6 Conclusion

This study presented the perceptions of parents of supplementary schools.

Regarding their children's use of the language, the survey suggested that there were some anxieties and concerns about mixing languages. And students were learning at supplementary schools with the of their own aim, and parents makes efforts to learn both German and Japanese.

Future research directions

We hope to gather information about a wider variety of situations through questionnaire surveys and interviews, and to paint a picture of the actual language situation in supplementary schools using a greater number of examples.

Reference

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology website (2023) "About teachers dispatched to overseas educational facilities (Ishida Yoshiaki)" from the "1st Prefectural Private School Management Department Section Chiefs Meeting for FY2022" on (viewed on February 7, 2023) .

Aoki, Maiko, and Hagino, Sachiko (2010) "Japanese residents in Australia's attitudes towards mother tongue education: what we can learn from the results of a questionnaire survey at a Japanese language supplementary school" Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education, Hokkaido University, 110, 1-22.

Kaneko, Koichi (2023) "A study on the current state of supplementary schools based on a questionnaire survey: the facilities and systems of each school and the current state of Japanese language classes," Mother Tongue, Heritage Language, and Bilingual Education (MHB) Research, 19, 44-58.

Yamashita, K. (2009) "Education and management at supplementary schools," Records of teaching practices at overseas educational facilities, 31, 243-246.

Fujimori, Hiroko (2006) "Survey and consideration of the actual situation of Japanese language instructors at overseas educational facilities," Journal of the Japanese Language Education Center for International Students, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 32, 123-137.

AG5 (Overseas Educational Institutions' Advanced Global Human Resource Development Center Project) Steering Committee (2018) "Report on the Survey of the Learning Status of Students at Supplementary Schools"

<https://ag-5.jp/cms/ag5/common/pdf/theme4/Gakushujokyochosa.pdf> (Accessed: February 20, 2025)

Sito, Y. (2022). "Should Code-switching by Young Bilingual Children be a Concern?— A Discussion Based on Research in Speech-language Pathology and Neurolinguistics —", World Family's Institute of Bilingual Science (IBS), <https://bilingualscience.com/introduction/2022071901/>