

Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) and for Foreign Students in Japanese Elementary and Junior High Schools*

– A Comparison with Korea Focusing
on the Japanese Language (*kokugo*) Subject

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I. Introduction

The increase in the number for foreigners in Japan during the 1990s and 2000s created new demands for education as the number of foreign children

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attending Japanese schools increased. The national curriculum was, and still is, designed with the monolingual and monocultural assumption that the children and their parents are Japanese. This naturally assumes that children will be exposed to the Japanese language at home and that they will learn the complex Japanese writing system that makes use of 2,136 officially recognized Chinese characters. Foreign children, defined as children whose parents are both not native-born Japanese, however, find themselves in a different position because both parents are not native speakers of Japanese and have varying levels of proficiency in the Japanese, particularly in Chinese characters. The lack of Japanese language input at home thus makes it more difficult for foreign children to acquire literacy in Japanese at the same rate as Japanese children, which in turn creates new challenges for teachers, particularly teachers of Japanese as a national language (*kokugo*).

In this paper, I will investigate various measures taken by teachers, schools, and educational authorities in Japan to meet the complex needs of foreign children in the schools system. I will then discuss the relevancy of the situation in Japan for Korea where the issue of foreign children in Korean schools has been largely ignored as attention has been focused on “multicultural families” in which one parent, usually the father, is a native-born Korean. The paper will dispense with a detailed discussion of teaching of Korean to children of multicultural families because these issues are beyond the purview of the paper. As the population of foreigners in Korea continues to diversify, the number of foreign children attending Korean schools will increase, which will create new challenges for teachers and schools, particularly in the development of literacy skills in Korean. An investigation of the situation in Japan will offer insight into what possible

measures Korea might take (or avoid) to deal with similar issues. The discussion in the paper is limited, however, by a lack of primary research in both countries on the outcomes of educational efforts, particularly over time, for foreign children.

II. Background Information on the Japanese Educational System

Before looking at foreign children in Japanese schools, background on the Japanese educational system and the foreign population in Japan is in order. This discussion will provide a context for understanding relevant issues related to foreign children in Japanese schools.

1. The Japanese Educational System

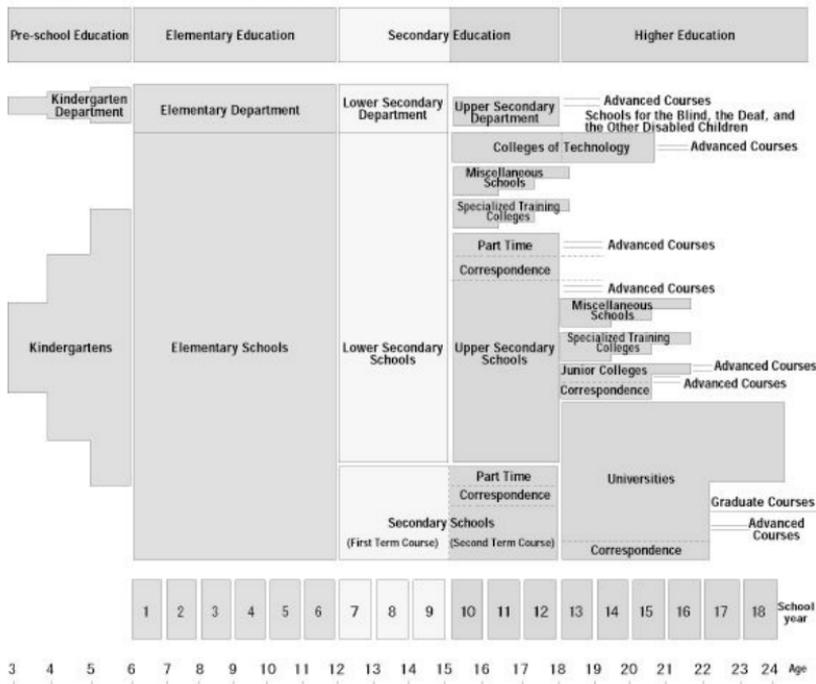
Responsibility for education in Japan is divided among three levels of government: the national government represented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science and Technology (referred to as MEXT henceforth), prefectural governments, and local governments (the discussion in this section draws heavily on MEXT, 2006 and MEXT, 2008). MEXT is responsible for setting the national curriculum which all approved schools, whether private or public, must follow. MEXT also distributes national government funds for education to prefectural and local governments. MEXT is also responsible for approving textbooks, a process that has created continuous controversy with Korea and China with respect

to history textbooks. Textbooks that have not been approved by MEXT cannot be used in subject classes. At the prefectural and local levels, boards of education administer school systems. Boards of education and local schools are free to develop their own curriculum by using special periods not devoted to subjects in the curriculum.

The school system is divided into three levels: elementary, junior high school, and high school as shown in Figure 1. Elementary is for six years and junior high school and high school are for three years each. Japanese children are required by law to attend elementary and junior high school and there are no school tuition fees for public schools. High school is not required, and 96.3% of students attended high school in 2009 (MEXT, 2011a). All students pay tuition fees to attend high school, though public schools charge less than private schools. Tertiary education consisted of 406 two-year colleges and 733 four-year colleges and universities in 2009 (MEXT, 2011a). As in many Asian countries, high schools and four-year colleges in Japan are ranked hierarchically based on historical reputations and entrance into prestigious institutions is highly competitive. In recent years, a number of elite private schools have developed common curriculums for junior and senior high school to help their students be more competitive in university entrance examinations.

Figure 1. Organization of the School System in Japan (Source: MEXT, 2006)

Organization of the School System in Japan



The Japanese national curriculum focuses on a broad education in a number of subjects. The curriculum is revised every ten years on average, and the current curriculum is based on revisions in 2008 and 2009 (for high school) (MEXT, 2008a, 2008b). As in many other countries, literacy in the national language, Japanese, occupies an important place in the curriculum, particularly at the elementary school level. Japanese occupies more than a third of school time in the first two years and more than a fourth in the next two years, thus dominating the first four years of school. The following table gives the time allotments for the current elementary school

curriculum.

Table 1. Time Allotments by Grade for Elementary School

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Subjects	Japanese Language	306	315	245	245	175	175
	Social Studies			70	90	100	105
	Mathematics	136	175	175	175	175	175
	Science			90	105	105	105
	Life Environment Studies	102	105	0	0	0	0
	Music	68	70	60	60	50	50
	Drawing and Handicrafts	68	70	60	60	50	50
	Homemaking/Family	0	0	0	0	60	55
	Physical Education	102	105	105	105	90	90
Moral Education	34	35	35	35	35	35	
Foreign Language Activities	0	0	0	0	35	35	
Periods for Integrated Study	0	0	70	70	70	70	
Special Activities	34	35	35	35	35	35	
Total		850	910	945	980	980	980

The time allotment for Special Activities can be used for various school or class activities, or adding additional class hours to other subjects. The time allotment for Periods for Integrated Study can be used for activities related to subjects that are to be taught through interdisciplinary activities. The Foreign Language subject is designed for activities to introduce students to English. Officially languages other than English may be taught, but the curriculum advises schools to consider the junior high school curriculum, in which English is *de facto* required, when choosing the language.

The junior high school curriculum has similar subjects as the elementary school curriculum, but time devoted to Japanese language is noticeably lower (MEXT, 2008b). Indeed, time allotted for Japanese in the third year falls below that allotted for foreign language (English), and a number of other subjects, such as mathematics, science, and social science. The following table gives the time allotments for the current junior high school curriculum.

Table 2. Time Allotments by Grade for Junior High School

		1	2	3
Subjects	Japanese Language	140	140	105
	Social Studies	105	105	140
	Mathematics	140	105	140
	Science	105	140	140
	Music	45	35	35
	Art	45	35	35
	Health and Physical Education	105	105	105
	Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70	70	35
	Foreign Language	140	140	140
Moral Education		35	35	35
Periods for Integrated Study		50	70	70
Special Activities		35	35	35
Total		1015	1015	1015

High school is not required in Japan, as noted earlier, and the curriculum thus differs from the elementary and junior high school curriculums. There are also a number of specialized high schools that follow specialist curriculums. Unlike elementary and junior high school, Japanese is taught in a number of subjects in high school, and the range of subject offering

differs according to the character of the type of high school. A detailed discussion of the high school curriculum will be omitted because relatively few foreigners attend Japanese high schools, an important point that will be addressed later in this paper.

Children of foreigners living in Japan have the right to attend Japanese public schools at any age. Unlike Japanese children, they are not required by law to attend school. Private schools have their own admission standards and procedures. Foreign children are not charged tuition fees for public elementary and junior high school, and they pay the same fee for public high school as Japanese students. International schools, which follow curriculums of various foreign countries, are not official approved by the MEXT and are thus beyond its jurisdiction. These schools typically charge more than private schools in Japan. Korean-language schools run by the Chōsen Sōren, the pro-North Korean residents association, fall into the same category, though, unlike international schools, many universities recognize high school degrees as equivalent to degrees from regular Japanese for university entrance procedures (students who graduate from international schools are admitted through special admission procedures).

2. The Japanese Language Curriculum

As discussed above, Japanese as a national language, or *kokugo*, receives the greatest time allotment in elementary school and is a core subject in junior high and high school education (information for this section comes from the official curriculum as described in MEXT, 2008a, 2008b). The curriculum is divided into elementary, junior high, and high school. The

stated goal of the elementary school curriculum is as follows (MEXT, n.d.): “To develop in pupils the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language, to increase the ability to communicate, to develop the ability to think and imagine and sense of language, to deepen interest in the Japanese language, and to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.” Goals for the junior and senior high school curriculums are similar in the focus on developing literacy and national identity.”

The main focus of the elementary school is on teaching basic Chinese characters that are required for minimal literacy in Japanese. The Japanese language contains a large number of Chinese characters, of which 2136 are officially approved for use in public documents. By tradition, the media and publishers follow these guide lines, which means that literate Japanese adults need to know almost all of the characters on the list. The list of official characters, or *jōyō kanji*, is organized into a list of 939 characters for each grade level of elementary school, with the remaining characters to be learned in junior and senior high school (MEXT, 2008a). The most frequently used and easiest to write characters are taught in elementary school and a list of characters to be taught in each grade is given in the national curriculum. Textbooks and teaching materials follow the list carefully. The following table shows the characters introduced at each grade level in elementary school.

Table 3. Elementary School Chinese Characters by Grade Level

Grade	No.	Characters
1	80	一右兩門王音下火花貝學氣九休玉金空月犬見五口校左三山子 四糸字耳七車手十出女小上森人水正生青夕石赤千川先早草足 村大男竹中虫町天田土二日入年白八百文木本名目立力林六
2	160	引羽雲園遠何科夏家歌画回会海絵外角楽活間丸岩顔汽記婦弓 牛魚京強教近兄形計元言原戸古午後語工公広交光考行高黄合 谷国黒今才細作算止市矢姉思紙寺自時室社弱首秋週春書少場 色食心新親図数西声星晴切雪船線前組走多太体台地池知茶昼 長鳥朝直通弟店点電刀冬当東答頭同道読内南肉馬売買麥半番 父風分聞米歩母方北每妹万明鳴毛門夜野友用囉來里理話
3	200	惡安暗医委意育員院飲運泳馱央横屋温化荷界開階寒感漢館岸 起期客究急級宮球去橋業曲局銀区苦具君係輕血決研庫庫湖向 幸港号根祭皿仕死使始指齒詩次事持式実写者主守取酒受州拾 終習集住重宿所暑助昭消商章勝乘植申身神真深進世整昔全相 送想息速族他打对待第題炭短談着注柱丁帳調追定庭笛鉄転 都度投豆烏湯登等動童農波配信箱畑発反坂板皮悲美鼻筆氷表 秒病品負部服福物平返勉放味命面問役業由油有遊子羊洋葉陽 様落流旅兩緑礼列練路和
4	200	愛案以衣位圍胃印英菜塩億加果貨課芽改械害街各覚完官管関 觀願希季紀喜旗器機議求泣救給拳漁共協鏡競極訓軍郡徑型景 芸欠結建健験固功好候航康告差菜最材昨札刷殺察參産散殘士 氏史司試兒治辞失借種周祝順初松笑唱燒象照賞臣信成省清静 席積折節説淺戦選然争倉巢束側続卒孫帯隊達單置仲貯兆腸低 底停的典伝徒努灯堂働特得毒熱念敗梅博飯飛費必票標不夫付 府副粉兵別辺変便包法望牧末滿未脈民無約勇要養浴利陸良料 量輪類令冷例歴連老勞録
5	185	庄移因永營衛易益液演応往桜恩可仮価河過賀快解格確額刊幹 慣眼基寄規技義逆久旧居許境均禁句群経潔件券険検限現減故 個護効厚耕鋤構興講混査再災妻採際在財罪雜酸賛支志枝師資 飼示似識質舎謝授修述術準序招承証条状常情織職制性政勢精 製稅責績接設舌絶錢祖素総造像増則測厲率損退貸態団斷策張 提程適敵統銅導德独任燃能破犯判版比肥非備俵評賃布婦富武 復復編編弁保墓報豊防貿暴務夢迷綿輸余預容略留領
6	181	異遣域宇映延沿我灰拈革闊割株干卷看簡危机揮貴疑供吸胸郷 勤筋系敬警劇激穴絹権憲源厳己呼誤后孝皇紅降鋼刻殺骨困砂 座濟裁策冊蚕至私姿視詞誌磁射捨尺若樹収宗就衆從縱縮熟純 処署諸除將傷障城蒸針仁垂推寸盛聖誠宣専泉洗染善奏窓創装

		層操藏臟存尊宅担探誕段暖值宙忠著斤頂潮賃痛展討党糖届難 乳認納腦派拌背肺俳班晚否批秘腹奮並陸閉片補暮宝訪亡忘棒 枚幕密盟模誤郵優幼欲翌乱卵覽裏律臨朗論
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Because these characters are the most frequent in the Japanese language, knowledge of them is critical for development of literacy in Japanese. Japanese language classes thus spend a large amount of time on teaching how to read and write the characters. Mastery of characters introduced in each grade is critical to success in other subjects because textbooks introduce the characters in accordance with the official *jōyō kanji* list.

The curriculum for Japanese language describes the objectives and contents of instruction for two grades level (first-second grade, third-fourth grade, fifth-sixth grade). The objectives are described in general terms, whereas the contents are more specific terms. The contents are divided into three main sections: speaking and listening, writing, and reading. A separate section on “traditional language and culture and characters of the Japanese language” concludes each description. This section offers a list of recommended ways to include metaknowledge of Japanese language and culture in Japanese language classes. The description of the curriculum concludes with a general discussion of teaching methods and, as appendix, the list of Chinese characters.

The curriculum for junior high school is similar to the one for elementary school with two important exceptions. First, descriptions are given for each of the three years, rather than a grouping of years. Second, no list of Chinese characters to be learned in each grade level is given. Instead, the curriculum recommends that students learn 250-300 characters from the official *jōyō kanji* list in the first year and another 300-350 in the second

year. For the third year, further Chinese character study from the official list is recommended, but the number of characters is not specified. The lack of a list of Chinese characters allows for more freedom in choosing reading material for textbooks and class activities.

The high school curriculum differs considerably because, as mentioned earlier, high school is not required by law and was traditionally seen as the highest level of education achieved by the majority of the population. The high school curriculum (MEXT, 2009a) consists of six subjects (the number of credits given in parentheses): General Japanese (4), Japanese Expression (3), Modern Literature A (2), Modern Literature B (4), Classical Literature A (2), Classical Literature B (4). The presentation of the curriculum is the same as for junior high school, but organized by subject instead of by year. Reference to the teaching of Chinese characters is similar to that of the third year of junior high school. Recommendations of specific works for the literature subjects are not given.

The curriculum from elementary school through high school makes no mention of children, foreign or otherwise, who are learners of Japanese as a second. This is perhaps natural given the Japanese cultural and linguistic context, but it differs from descriptions of national language curriculums, such as those for English in many states of the United States, that discuss the needs of second language learners.

III. Foreign Students in Japanese Schools

1. Foreigners in Japan

As of 2009, the population of foreigners in Japan stood at 2,186,121, which represents a slight decrease from the historical peak in 2008. For most of the 20th century, Koreans were the largest group of foreigners in Japan, but Chinese became the largest group in 2007. Koreans began to live in Japan as Japanese imperialism tightened its grip on the Korean peninsula in the late 19th century (for background on Koreans in Japan, or *zainichi* Koreans, see Ryang & Lie, 2009). Numbers increased after annexation in 1910, but the most dramatic increase took place during the 1930s as Korean laborers went to Japan as part of the war effort. Large numbers of Koreans were repatriated immediately after World War II, but political turmoil on the Korean Peninsula caused many to stay, forming the roots of the *zainichi* Korean community of the today. In recent years, many third- and fourth-generation Koreans have taken out Japanese citizenship reducing the number of Koreans in statistics on the number of foreigners in Japan. In recent years, Koreans from South Korea have settled in Japan in larger numbers, creating the term “newcomer.”

The Chinese began living in Japan in the late 19th century and their numbers grew during the 20th century, but at a slower pace than the Korean population (for background on Chinese in Japan, see Maher, 1995). A number of Chinese from Taiwan went to Japan while Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule from 1895–1945. The Chinatowns in Yokohama and

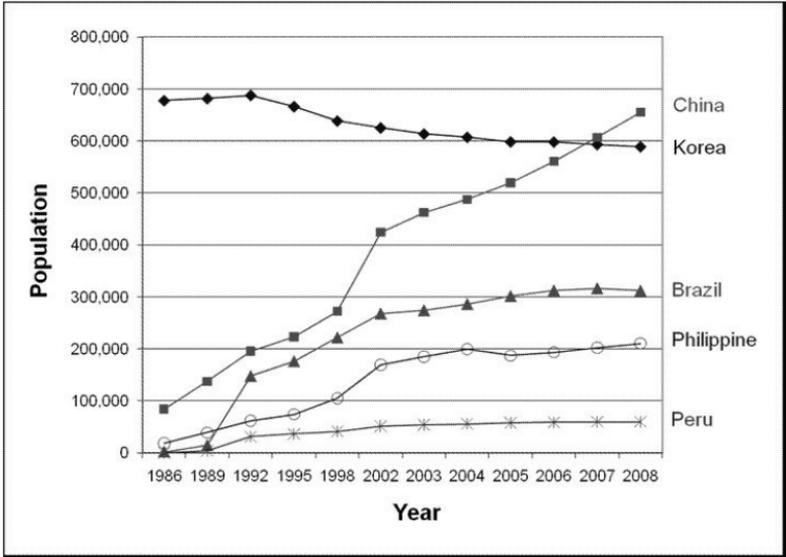
Kobe have their roots in this period, whereas the Chinatown in Nagasaki has its roots in a small Chinese trading post during the Edo Period. Like Koreans, many Chinese in Japan were repatriated after World War II, but enough stayed to maintain a visible Chinese community in Japan. In recent years, the number of Chinese has increased rapidly as more students go to Japan. The number of Chinese students employed in Japanese companies is also increasing as Japan's economic ties with China deepen.

Another important group of foreigners is ethnic Japanese from Brazil and South American countries (for background on Japanese-Brazilians in Japan, see Roth, 2002). As the Japanese economy boomed in the 1980s, the government allowed ethnic Japanese, mostly from Brazil, to work in factories in Japan. Though ethnically Japanese, many Japanese-Brazilians are mixed with other ethnic groups in Brazil and speak little or no Japanese.

The population of other groups of foreigners in Japan is smaller. Europeans and North Americans are concentrated in Tokyo and other large cities. In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of women from the Philippines went to Japan to marry men in rural areas who had trouble finding Japanese brides. In the 2000s, the number of foreigners from various Asian countries continued to increase with the increase in the number of foreign students. Figure 2 shows changes in foreign population since 1986.

As is the case in many countries, foreigners are concentrated in large cities. Koreans and Chinese, particularly, are concentrated in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka. Europeans and North Americans are concentrated in Tokyo and Yokohama, with smaller populations in Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto. Japanese-Brazilians are concentrated in major industrial cities, many of which are on the outskirts of major metropolitan areas.

Figure 2. Changes in Foreign Population in Japan since 1986 (Source: Wikipedia)



Foreigners living in Japan belong to a number of visa categories depending on their origin and type of activity in Japan. Japan follows *jus sanguinis* definition of citizenship, which means that it gives citizenship based on heritage and not place of birth. Koreans and Chinese whose ancestors went to Japan during the colonial period are given “special permanent residence,” though they are free to apply for Japanese citizenship. Other foreigners who have lived in Japan for a long time may apply for a “permanent residence” visa. Most foreigners have visas of various period of duration related to their activity in Japan.

Taken together, the origin, status, and distribution of foreigners in Japan has important ramifications for discussing foreign children in Japanese schools. The foreign population is diverse, but concentrated in a relatively

small number of locations. Different foreign groups tend to live together, which means that schools within a particular locality will have varying groups of foreign students. The combination of diversity of backgrounds and geographical concentration makes it difficult to develop a simple one-size-fits-all approach to teaching foreign children in Japanese schools.

2. Foreign Children in Japanese Schools

The population of foreign children in Japanese schools reflects the overall population of foreigners in Japan, but with several notable exceptions. The number of foreign students in Japanese schools rose from 18,585 in 1999 to 28,445 in 2008 (MEXT, 2009b). The following table shows the distribution of foreign children by language in 2008 (MEXT, 2009b):

Table 4. Foreign Students in Japan by Native Language

	Elementary	Junior High	High School	Total
Portuguese	45.2%	31.2%	11.6%	39.8%
Chinese	14.1%	31.8%	46.9%	20.4%
Spanish	13.5%	10.9%	11.2%	12.7%
Tagalog	11.3%	12.5%	15.5%	11.8%
Vietnamese	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%	3.3%
Korean	2.9%	3.9%	4.1%	3.2%
English	2.4%	1.4%	0.8%	2.1%
Other	7.2%	4.9%	7.1%	6.7%
Total Number	19,504	7,576	1,365	28,445

The number of students from European and North American backgrounds

is much smaller than the percentage of such residents in the overall foreign population. In general, Europeans and North Americans living in Japan have a higher income and many send their children to international schools. Other nationality groups, however, often have a lower income and thus little choice, but to send their children to Japanese schools. Still others may be more committed to raising a family in Japan, thus finding Japanese schools more attractive than international schools.

In addition to changes in the composition of foreign students, another interesting trend observed in the above table is the decline in number of students in junior high and particularly high school. Himeno (2003) speculated that higher levels of proficiency in Chinese characters among Chinese students helped them to pass entrance examinations for prefectural high school, whereas students from other backgrounds have more difficulty and end up going to lower-level schools, part-time high schools, international schools, and in some cases, dropping out of the education system entirely. Except for some highly prestigious private high schools, prefectural high schools attract college-bound students and require a special examination for foreign students, which is difficult without proficiency in Chinese characters.

IV. Foreign Children and the Japanese as Second Language (JSL) Curriculum

Support for foreign children in Japan takes place at three levels of

government: MEXT (national government), prefectural boards of education, and local boards of education. As discussed above, the MEXT develops the national curriculum and other policies regarding education. It also provides support for local educational initiatives, and support has been given to initiatives to support foreign children in schools. Prefectural boards of education are responsible for administering the curriculum and providing support to schools, and a number of prefectures have taken the lead in developing materials and teacher development programs related to foreign children. Finally, local boards of education have taken the lead in organizing schools to help foreign children more efficiently. Thus, all three levels of the Japanese government have addressed the needs of foreign children in schools to varying degrees. It must be noted, however, that government activity applies only to public schools; private schools are free to develop programs as they wish as long as they follow the national curriculum. The role of private schools is greater at the high school level, where 29.6% of students attend private schools. By contrast 0.4% of elementary school students, and 6.7% of junior high students attend private schools (MEXT, 2006).

1. JSL Curriculum

MEXT initiatives regarding foreign children have focused on the following areas: developing a curriculum for JSL instruction within the regular national curriculum, teacher development programs for JSL teachers, supporting the development of JSL materials, developing guidebooks for parents in a number of different languages, supporting the development of model educational programs, supporting the hiring of school counselors who

speak students' native language (MEXT, 2009b, 2011b). This section will focus on the JSL curriculum because of its importance as the first national effort in curriculum development to address the needs of foreign children.

In 2003, MEXT (2003a, 2003b) developed a JSL curriculum for elementary school and junior high school that focused on helping foreign children attain the necessary level of proficiency in Japanese to follow subjects taught in the regular curriculum, or *manaburyoku*, or "power to learn." The elementary curriculum (MEXT, 2003a) is organized around "activity units" in four curricular areas: Japanese language, social studies, mathematics, and science. Each subject area has a described goal of JSL education. Activity units help teachers teach the necessary Japanese language skills for the given subject area by focusing grammatical patterns and expressions used in those areas.

"Activity units" are developed around "activity cards" that contain Japanese grammatical patterns and expressions necessary for participating in particular activities. The cards help teachers check Japanese ability of students while giving them concrete linguistic items to teach students if necessary. The figure shows an example of an activity card:

Of interest is that the activity cards focus on grammatical patterns and expressions rather than on vocabulary. This is designed to help link the language used in activities with what students learn in special JSL classes. Apart from regular subjects, the JSL curriculum also calls for special instruction in Japanese as a second language. The amount of JSL instruction would most likely vary depending on the level of Japanese ability, but the overall goal of the curriculum is integrate foreign children into regular subjects, so the time for special instruction would most likely be reduced as children acquire more Japanese language skills.

Figure 3. Example of a JSL activity card

AUとAUカード

学習活動の各局面を構成する活動単位 (Activity Unit (AU))
ごとに、それぞれの活動を行うために必要な日本語表現のバリエーションを組み合わせた「AUカード」により、教師による子どもの実態に合わせた授業づくりを支援する。

AU 経験を確認する② 「経験の有無を確認するー1」 よく使う言葉 (動詞た)、こと、どこ、前に、いつ	基本形 バリエーション	働きかけ・発問の表現 ○～したことがありますか？ ○～したことがわかりますか？ いつ、どこでしましたか？ ○いつ～をしましたか？ どこですか？ ○前に、(場所)で～しましたか？	応答の表現 ○はい、(いつ/どこで/何回/だれと)したことがあります。 ○はい、あります (いつ/どこで)しました。 ○(いつ)しました。 (どこ)です。 ○はい、しました。
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The junior high school JSL curriculum (MEXT, 2003b) follows the same principles as the elementary JSL school curriculum, but focuses more closely on linking JSL instruction with the subject being taught. Instead of “activity cards,” teachers use worksheets that contain glosses of Chinese character pronunciations in *hiragana*. A list of important vocabulary for each is given in seven languages commonly spoken by foreign children in Japan. In addition, goals for the JSL curriculum are given for the following subject areas: Japanese language, social science, mathematics, science, and English.

The development of the JSL curriculum is a response to problems that developed from *kokusai kyōshitsu*, or “international classrooms,” that isolated foreign students into JSL classes. These classes were developed beginning in 1992 as the number of foreign children became noticeable in Japanese

schools; any school with at least five foreign students can request a JSL teacher. The problem, of course, is that 80% of schools have fewer than five foreign students, and cannot create an “international classroom” (Himeno, 2003). According to the Japanese General Institute for National Education and Culture (cited in Himeno, 2003), 86% of “international classrooms” separate foreign students from Japanese students. Another problem is that the classes focus on JSL at the expense of regular subjects 81% of class time is spent on Japanese, and only 14% on regular subjects (Himeno, 2003). Kojima (2009) conducted an in-depth survey of foreign students in schools in the city of Yamato in Kanagawa Prefecture which borders Tokyo, and found that teachers are frustrated with “international classrooms because they are viewed as “extra” to the main activities of the schools. Kojima (2009) also reported that teachers emphasized the importance of accomplishment to help students develop self-confidence to overcome their feeling of isolation resulting from a sense of alienation in Japanese society and lower level Japanese language skills.

Despite efforts like the JSL curriculum, integrating foreign students in Japanese has not been easy. Ogawa (2001) discussed problems facing foreign students from the perspective of the need to preserve their native language and culture so as to reduce stress in learning and help them develop a more positive attitude toward learning Japanese and participating in Japanese society. To do so, teachers fluent in various native languages of students would need to be hired. To date, however, native-language maintenance has received almost not attention in official circles because the emphasis has been on developing proficiency in Japanese, a stance that mirrors similar official stances in other advanced nations with large migrant and immigrant

populations.

2. Other Support Programs

As mentioned above, MEXT has also focused on teacher development programs for JSL teachers, supporting the development of JSL materials, developing guidebooks for parents in a number of different languages, supporting the development of model educational programs, supporting the hiring of school counselors who speak students' native language (MEXT, 2011b). These forms of support have developed ad hoc as awareness of the problems that foreign children face in Japanese schools. Much of this support takes the form of competitive grants to prefectural and local boards of education to develop programs and hire staff in relevant areas. Prefectural and local boards of education, however, have initiated programs before MEXT has become involved, and some of these have applied for support later.

One of the most active areas is developing JSL materials and annotating materials used in regular subjects to make them more accessible to foreign students. This need is related to difficulty of acquiring proficiency in Chinese characters and hence literacy in the Japanese language. The problem with literacy is particularly difficult in Japanese language and social studies (particularly history) subjects. To deal with this issue, some prefectural and local boards of education have annotated textbooks or have provided translations of the textbooks in several languages that are common in the foreign student population. Many of these materials are free and available on the Internet. One such example is supplementary materials for

Japanese Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science developed by the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education (Saitama-ken Kyōiku Inikai, 2006). The materials contain translations of Japanese terms and expressions into Chinese, English, Portuguese, and Spanish. They also contain guides for teachers to Japanese expressions used in daily life and common classroom language.

As noted in the preceding discussion on the JSL curriculum, many foreign students in Japanese schools receive special JSL education. Prefectural and local boards of education have also produced materials, many of which are used for special JSL classes. The Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education has developed a set of materials in 22 languages (Tōkyō-to Kyōiku Inikai, 1993-2009). The following figure shows an example of the Korean-language version materials.

Figure 4. Sample of Korean-Language Materials Used in Extra JSL Classes in Tokyo

日本語指導テキスト

たのしい がっこう



(韓国語・朝鮮語)

東京都教育委員会

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1. あいさつ と へんじ	(인사의 대명)	2
2. からのの ちゅうし	(발령장)	6
3. たのむとき たずねるとき	(부탁할 때, 물을 때)	10
4. がっこうの いきかた	(학교에 오고가기)	14
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よく できましたね。

잠 잘랐군요

がんばりましたね。

열심히 했어요

もう下しだから がんばろう。

조급한 디 열심히 할게다

たいへん よくおりました。

매우 좋아졌읍니다.

— 1 —

A number of local non-governmental organizations have formed to help foreign students. The most common form is a prefectural-based NPO (non-profit organization). NPOs are registered with as legal entities with prefectural governments. One example of an NPO is the “NPO Hamamatsu Foreign Children Education Support Organization.” The group gives JSL tutorial classes at several elementary and junior high schools in the city of Hamamatsu, a city in Shizuoka Prefecture with a large population of migrant workers, mostly Brazilians of Japanese descent. The group also runs native-language maintenance classes in Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese (<http://www.ac.auone-net.jp/~tomo2/index.htm>). On the national level, the Association for Japanese-Language Teaching sponsors short-term teacher development programs to train teachers to teach JSL classes to foreign students (<http://www.ajalt.org/>). Together, the efforts of local boards of education and NGO groups are linked more closely with local needs and offer interesting insight into the problems that schools and communities face in integrating foreign students into school life.

V. Conclusions: Implications for Korea

The Republic of Korea ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Article 28 of the Convention (United Nations General Assembly, 1989) states that “States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity...,” thus guaranteeing foreign children

in Korea the right to an education. Like Japan, the Korean government does not require foreign children to attend school, but it gives them the right to do so, provided that they get permission from the principal of the school. It must be emphasized here, that children of “multicultural families” are, in most cases, Korean citizens, and are thus required to attend to school through the end of the middle school. The discussion here focuses on children whose parents were not born in Korea and who use a language other than Korean at home.

To date, there has been little discussion in the literature on foreign children in Korean schools. Jo (2002) discussed foreign children in international schools in Seoul, but made no reference to children in Korean schools. In recent years, Korea has experienced an increase in the number of foreign children, creating similar challenges to the ones that Japan has been facing. The lower level literacy skills on the part of foreign children makes it difficult for them to keep up with Korean students. Knowledge of Chinese characters is not required to become literate in Korean, but the lack of Korean language input at home and support from parents with variable Korean language skills puts foreign children at a disadvantage.

The heart of problem is that foreign children, like their parents, are viewed as temporary residents of Korea. Children of multicultural families, by contrast, are viewed as permanent members of the community because one of their parents, usually the father, is Korean. To fill the gap, special “alternative schools” (*daean hakkyo*) for foreign children have developed in recent years. In Seoul, the Jiguchon Kukje Elementary School opened in March 2011, and is the first school in such alternative school in Seoul (Kim, 2011). It is open to foreign children and children of multicultural families.

At present, foreign children in Seoul and other selected areas of Korea have access to three types of schools: expensive International schools, free regular Korean schools (up to middle school), and free or inexpensive alternative schools. The situation in Korea now mirrors that of Japan in that foreign children have a similar set of choices. In Japan, government policy has focused on improving Japanese-language education for foreign children attending regular Japanese schools. International schools are not under the jurisdiction of MEXT and government policy makes little mention of them. Alternative schools are also not under the jurisdiction of the MEXT, but receive more varying degrees of support from prefectural and local governments. The problem for alternative schools, of course, is that they are out of the system and are essentially insecure. Children who attend them are *de facto* taking themselves out of the system and thus risk becoming members of an undereducated underclass. Arudou (2007), for example, noted that 20-40% of Brazilian (most Japanese-Brazilian) children are not attending school, and that the lack of education and lack of literacy in Japanese limits what children can do and that many drift into the underclass.

The important question, then, is why children and their parents take themselves out of the system in the first place? Arudou (2007) and Kyodo News (2010) have noted a number of reasons, but two appear to be the most prominent: language difficulties and alienation. Parents and children note that learning Japanese is difficult and that foreign children have trouble competing with their Japanese classmates. As discussed earlier, the large number of Chinese characters exacerbates this problem. The sense of alienation comes from how other Japanese students interact or refuse to

interact with foreign students in class. Rumors of bureaucratic negligence and bullying spread rapidly in the foreign community, creating a negative image of Japanese schools (Johnston, 2008). Negative experiences with and perceptions of Japanese schools create a situation in which alternative schools are the only practical choice available to foreign children.

To date, policies relating to foreign children in Japanese have addressed the problem of language through the development of JSL and related programs discussed above, but they have yet to address the more difficult problem of alienation. This situation offers important insight for educators in Korea because it underscores the difficulty of integrating “people of difference” into culturally homogeneous schools (for a discussion on various minorities in Japanese schools, see papers in Tsuneyoshi, Okano, & Boocock, 2010). To date, Korea’s efforts regarding language have focused on Korean language teaching for multicultural families in which one parent is Korean. Efforts to deal with alienation, though not yet adequate, have also focused on children of multicultural families.

The focus on multicultural families in Korea has left foreign children out of the debate, but it has also paved the way for addressing the more difficult issue of alienation. As the number of foreign children continues to grow, Korea will be able to apply experiences from efforts to support multicultural families to supporting foreign children and their parents. Korea can learn much from Japan in developing KSL programs for foreign children so that they can succeed in Korean schools. Japan, however, can learn from Korea in developing a framework for addressing the deeper issue of alienation. For researchers and educators in both countries, the relationship between language skills and alienation needs further research. Do

lower-level language skills cause alienation? If so, to what extent? And, from the opposite perspective, does alienation contribute to low-level language skills? Finding answers to these questions will help policy makers target their efforts more effectively to help foreign and multicultural children succeed in school and, by doing so, improve their life chances.*

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■ 국문초록

일본 초·중등학교 외국인 자녀를 위한 교육적 지원 현황

— 국어 교과와 例를 중심으로 한국과 비교

Robert J. Fouser

1990년부터 일본 초·중학교를 다니는 외국인 자녀의 증가에 따라 일본 교육계에 새로운 변화가 요구되었다. 기존의 교육과정은 단일 문화 및 단일 언어의 전제하에 설계되었기 때문에 교육계는 이러한 변화에 대응하는 데에 어려움이 있다. 일본어의 읽기, 쓰기 기능은 습득하기가 쉽지 않고 더군다나 외국인 자녀들은 가정에서 일본어를 사용하는 경우가 많지 않기 때문에 일본인 학생에 비해 습득 속도가 떨어지는 경우가 많다. 이러한 현상으로 교육 현장에 있는 교사, 특히 일본어(국어) 교사의 경우 학생들을 지도하는 데에 어려움이 많다.

이 논문에서는 일본 교육 정책 당국들이 취한 각종의 조치들을 검토하여 현재 연구가 활발하지 않은 한국에서의 외국인 자녀를 위한 한국어 교육 방안을 대조·비교 관점에서 마련하는 것이 목적이다. 특히 일본어(국어)를 포함한 각 중요한 교과목의 ‘학습 능력을 갖추기 위해 필요한 일본어 능력을 향상하는 JSL(제2언어로서의 일본어)교육과정을 중심으로 검토하고자 한다. 결론적으로 말하자면 일본어 교육이 자국민 중심으로 이뤄지고 있기 때문에 외국인 자녀 관련 교육 정책은 외국인 학생들이 느끼는 소외감과 같은 사회적 문제에 대한 대처가 미흡하다. 한국의 다문화 가정과 성격이 다른 외국인 자녀의 경우에도 한국어 교육을 강화하는 것은 ‘학습 능력’을 개발하고 고취시키는 데에 도움이 된다.

[주제어] 제2언어로서의 일본어, 일본 학교에서 취학하는 외국인 자녀, 일본 국어 교과, 한국의 다문화 가정, 한국 학교에서 취학하는 외국인 자녀

■ Abstract

Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) for Foreign Students in
Japanese Elementary and Junior High Schools

– A Comparison with Korea Focusing on the Japanese Language
(*kokugo*) Subject

Robert J. Fouser

The increase in the number for foreigners in Japan during the 1990s and 2000s created new demands for education as the number of foreign children attending Japanese schools increased. The lack of Japanese language input at home thus makes it more difficult for foreign children to acquire literacy in Japanese at the same rate as Japanese children, which in turn creates new challenges for teachers, particularly teachers of Japanese language (*kokugo*).

In this paper, I investigated various measures taken by teachers, schools, and educational authorities in Japan to meet the complex needs of foreign children in the schools system. The paper focused particularly on the development of the JSL curriculum to help foreign children develop language skills needed in important school subjects. I then discussed the relevancy of the situation in Japan for Korea where the issue of foreign children in Korean schools has been largely ignored as attention has been focused on “multicultural families” in which one parent is a native-born Korean.

[Key words] Japanese as a second language (JSL), foreign children in Japanese schools, *kokugo*, multicultural families in Korea, foreign children in Korean schools