



Japanese Language Policy

1 Enhancing Policy Related to the National Language

The deliberating issues regarding the Japanese language have this far been led by the National Language Council, which has launched many initiatives for their resolution. Regarding Japanese writing system, this council has established unofficial guidelines or standards for everyday life, including “the Jōyō Kanji table, “modern kana usage”, and the notation of borrowed foreign words.

In January 2001, the Japanese Language Council was reorganized to the subdivision on National Language of the Council for Cultural Affairs. At present, the Council for Cultural Affairs is discussing the inquiry from Minister of

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on “making substantial guideline concerning honorifics”, and “Kanji policy that corresponds information era” on March, 2005.

Moreover, necessary steps are being taken to deepen the entire Japanese public’s interest and understanding of the Japanese language, including the holding of experimental workshops to think about “words”.

In addition, the National Institute for Japanese Language (an IAI) is studying the use of hard-to-understand foreign words and proposing replacement words.

◆Major Reports and the Status of Their Implementation

① The reports concerning Cabinet notification or directive

National Language Council

Inquiry	Cabinet notification or directive at the time of inquiry	Report	Current Cabinet notification or directive
Specific strategies for improving national language policy (Jun 1966)	The Tōyō Kanji table (Nov. 1946) Table of On and Kun Readings for Tōyō Kanji (Feb 1948) Table of Tōyō Kanji Character Fonts (Apr 1949) Guide to Use of Okurigana (Jul 1959) Modern Kana Usage (Nov 1946) Others associated with the above	The Jōyō Kanji table (Mar 1981)	The Jōyō Kanji table (Oct 1981)
		Revised Guide to the Use of Okurigana (Jun 1972)	The guide to the Use of Okurigana (Jun 1973)
		Revised Modern Kana Usage (Mar 1986)	Modern Kana Usage (Jul 1986)
		Notation of Borrowed Foreign Words (Feb 1991)	Notation if Borrowed Foreign Words (Jun 1991)

② The reports not concerning Cabinet notification or directive

National Language Council

Inquiry	Report
Ideal national language policy to suit a new era (Nov 1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Honorific Expression in Modern Society ● Characters Not Listed in the Jōyō Kanji Table ● The Optimum Response of the Japanese Language to the Global Society (The above three reports were completed in Dec 2000)

National Language Subdivision, Council for Cultural Affairs

Inquiry	Report (Council for Cultural Affairs)
Demands on national-language proficiency in future eras (Feb 2002)	Demands on national-language proficiency in future eras (Feb 2004) (Measures for acquiring national-language proficiency to meet future needs) ① Optimum approach to national-language education ② Optimum approach to reading activities
Making the substantial guideline regarding honorifics Kanji policy that is applicable to information era (Mar 2005)	Under deliberation

2 Promoting Japanese Language Education for Foreigners

In response to the significant increase in Japanese-language students both in Japan and overseas and the diversity of reasons for studying Japanese as a second language, there is growing need to revive the study of the Japanese language as a means of communication and to actively promote Japanese-language education as a foundation for disseminating Japanese culture. ACA is carrying out the measures as follows.

Name of policy	Overview
Improvement of the Curricula and Language Teachers	Conducts various activities to address the diversifying needs of Japanese-language study, including fact-finding surveys on Japanese language education and meetings of such groups as the Advisory Council for Japanese-language Education.
Support Program for local Japanese education	To enhance the Japanese language education in local districts which is mainly conducted by volunteers, the agency invites a public participation in the 4 projects and requests for submission of the project planning. The projects are the implementation of training course, establishment and management of Japanese language classes, preparation of teaching materials, and promotion of a closer cooperation between related organizations.
Support for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and the Japanese Language Teaching Aptitude Test	The tests measure the Japanese-language proficiency of those who want to study Japanese and judges whether the knowledge and ability of Japanese education is enough or not. These tests are implemented by Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.
Japanese education commission fund for refugees	ACA implements Japanese education for the refugees who were recognized by the treaty and want to reside permanently at non-residence institution. ACA carries out follow-ups, such as the support for volunteer organization and consultation on Japanese education, for the refugees from Indochina and the refugees recognized by the treaty who already left the institutions.
Japanese-language education for returnees from China	Supports the Japanese-language studies of Japanese returnees from and extended stay in China by such means as producing and distributing materials for studying Japanese and reference books
Comprehensive Network System to Support Japanese-Language Education(run by the National Institute for Japanese Language)	Extends professional cooperation to the Association of International Education, JAPAN(AIEJ),which administers the Japanese Language Proficiency Test to measure the proficiency of foreigners and the Japanese-language Pedagogical Proficiency Test to measure the knowledge and proficiency pf Japanese language instructors.

◆Shift in the Number of Japanese language Teachers, Students and Schools in Japan

