
A Long-Term Survey of Japanese Language Proficiency of CLD Children Living in Japan

Yutaka Fukihara¹, Yasuhiko Sukegawa², Franky R. Najohan³

¹) Fukuoka Women's University, Japan.

²) Tokyo International University, Japan

³) Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

^{*)} Corresponding Author: frankynajohan@unima.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

In Japan, there are several areas where Indonesian migrants live in concentration and in such areas, problems arise about children's education at schools. A continuous five-year survey on the children of Indonesian migrant workers was conducted to assess their Japanese language proficiency and language skills which are necessary for academic learning, identifying challenges, and implementing improvements. The survey participants were 21 Indonesian children enrolled in the Japanese language class at A Elementary School in an area with a high population of Indonesian migrant workers. These children were born and raised in Japan, and many had lived in Japan for many years having received Japanese language instruction at school. The survey used the Dialogic Language Assessment for Foreign Students (DLA) to measure the children's abilities. Each year, interviews and tests were conducted to assess their learning progress. Additionally, interviews were conducted with two teachers. There were mainly two findings; (1) Three students who received specialized instruction from elementary school teachers developed reading comprehension and conversational skills comparable to those of native Japanese speakers. (2) Some children showed improvement in their Japanese language proficiency, though they had not yet reached the level of native speakers. Conversely, some children faced serious academic challenges owing to incomplete language proficiency. The survey found out that there was an obvious correlation between reading habits and Japanese proficiency of the children. The study indicated that reading habits apparently contribute to improving language skills.

INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of globalization, the number of culturally linguistically diverse children (hereinafter "CLD children") growing up in multilingual and multicultural environments is increasing. According to the 2023 survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 57,718 foreign students requiring Japanese language instruction were enrolled in public schools across Japan (MEXT, "Survey on the Enrollment Status of Students Requiring Japanese Language Instruction [FY 2023]" [in Japanese]). These children include not only those who struggle with everyday conversations but also many who can communicate in daily life yet lack the academic language proficiency (ALP). Nakajima, who has been engaged in research on CLD children in both Japan and Canada for many years, introduced the educational theory of Jim Cummins, as leading authority on bilingual education theory at the University of Toronto, in his study (Cummins, 1981; Cummins & Nakajima, 2011). Nakajima classified the internal structure of language proficiency into the following three categories: (1) conversational fluency (CF), or the ability to engage in face-to-face conversations in familiar contexts; (2) discrete language skills (DLS), or the ability to understand and apply the rule-governed aspects of language and literacy; and (3) academic language proficiency (ALP). The ALP mentioned here corresponds to the language proficiency proposed by Cummins (1981), which was

formerly referred to as CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). This proficiency requires a high level of cognitive ability as deriving meaning from contextual cues alone is not straightforward. While CF can be acquired within one to two years, ALP takes five to seven years to develop. Studies by Miyajima (2014), Kim (2020), and Kobayashi (2024) indicated specific cases in which a lack of ALP hinders academic learning. Miyajima (2014) stated that although Japanese as an academic language affects all subjects for children, it presents substantial learning barriers. Additionally, the study highlighted the challenges of learning concepts that cannot be easily replaced by universal notions in one's native language. Kim (2020) explored the mechanisms and background of cases where children with foreign roots, who have insufficient Japanese proficiency, are misdiagnosed with developmental disabilities and placed in special education classes. Kobayashi (2024), drawing on Cummins' theory, presented a case study of foreign-born children who transferred to an elementary school. The study highlighted that the ability to engage in context-dependent everyday conversations does not necessarily imply an understanding of decontextualized academic content, such as math word problems found in textbooks. Although the three competencies are interrelated, ALP is often given particular emphasis in the context of CLD children's education as it takes longer to develop. Cummins defines ALP as "language knowledge accompanied by general academic knowledge and metacognitive strategies necessary to function effectively in the school context", which highlights its significance.

Oarai Town, Higashiibaraki County, Ibaraki Prefecture (hereinafter "Oarai Town"), where the long-term field research has been conducted, had 1,123 foreign residents as of February 2025. The largest group among them is Indonesians, accounting for 529 individuals, which is approximately half of the total foreign resident population. Most of them are Christian migrants from the Minahasa region of North Sulawesi, Indonesia, forming a community with a shared ethnic and cultural background. The majority came to Japan as migrant workers (Fukihara, 2021). Additionally, since many hold residence statuses that allow family accompaniment the number of cases where they either bring their children from their home country or give birth and raise their children in Japan has been increasing. Given this background, A Elementary School has a large number of CLD children enrolled. In recent years, additional teachers have been assigned, and a Japanese language class has been established within the school. As mentioned earlier, most Indonesian children in the Japanese language class at A Elementary School have either been raised in Japan or arrived before entering elementary school. Currently, aside from receiving one to five hours of extraction instruction per week in the language class, they spend their time in the same environment as Japanese children. At first glance, they do not appear to have difficulties in everyday Japanese conversations. However, they face challenges in academic learning and require support. This study aims to assess the language proficiency of children who have lived in Japan for an extended period and are enrolled in Japanese elementary schools using the Dialogic Language Assessment for Foreign Students (DLA), identify challenges, and propose improvements.

Since the 2019 academic year, the authors have conducted annual Japanese language proficiency assessments through dialog for students enrolled in the Japanese language class at A Elementary School. This assessment utilizes the JSL Dialogic Language Assessment for Foreign Students (DLA), which will be described in detail later. DLA stands for Dialogic Language Assessment in English. According to the previously mentioned MEXT survey, among 11,954 schools nationwide, 1,636 schools (14%) determine whether students require Japanese language instruction based on DLA or similar Japanese proficiency assessment methods. Other criteria cited include "assessing students based on their school life and learning behavior" (58%) and "using the period of stay in Japan as the eligibility criterion" (23%). However, evaluations based solely on the period of stay or subjective impressions and observations by specific teachers lack objectivity. "At present, DLA is considered the most effective method for comprehensively assessing children's Japanese language proficiency" (Okazaki, 2022: 97), and its adoption and utilization are expanding. As will be discussed later, in Japanese school education, no assessment method existed before the development of DLA, which evaluated students' Japanese language proficiency with consideration for academic learning. Since DLA is a relatively new assessment method introduced in 2014, research utilizing it remains limited. The novelty and uniqueness of this study lie in its five-year longitudinal tracking of CLD children's Japanese language acquisition and ALP using DLA since the 2019 academic year.

Regarding DLA, a panel session titled "Utilizing DLA in Special Education Curricula" was held at the 2015 Autumn Conference of the Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language shortly after its development. One of the panelists, Suganaga, discussed the application of DLA, stating, "DLA can be used to regularly assess the progress of academic language proficiency. If progress is observed, it indicates that the Japanese language instruction policy is successful. If no progress is observed, a revision of the instructional plan may be necessary" (p.53). Based on this perspective, annual DLA

assessments at A Elementary School have been conducted. At the same 2015 Autumn Conference of the Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language, Majima and Sakurai (2015) presented a study on the five-year development of bilingual proficiency in both the native and Japanese languages among CLD children attending public elementary schools. This study was conducted using assessment tools such as Oral Proficiency Assessment for Bilingual Children (OBC) and Dialogic Reading Assessment (DRA), which can be considered precursors to DLA. Majima and Sakurai conducted three assessments at one-year intervals, targeting Chinese-national children. The results confirmed that both Japanese and Chinese proficiency improved as the children progressed through grade levels. Additionally, they reported a tendency for children with high Japanese reading proficiency to also demonstrate growth in Chinese reading proficiency. The research continued and was later compiled as "A Longitudinal Study on the Bilingual Proficiency of Second-Generation Settler Children" (Majima & Sakurai, 2019). This study, based on assessments of speaking and reading skills, highlighted that even CLD children who were born in Japan or arrived in early childhood still required support at certain stages. Additionally, the study highlighted that even CLD children who appear to have no issues in everyday conversations often struggle to keep up with lessons without support; this underscores the necessity of long-term and carefully tailored support. Sakurai (2018), one of the developers of DLA and a researcher on bilingual reading proficiency in CLD children, emphasized the importance of reading proficiency in cultivating "the power to live" in modern information society (Tanaka et al., 2012) (in Japanese). Furthermore, Sakurai emphasized the importance of providing multifaceted and comprehensive instruction and support to ensure that children can continuously engage with reading both at school and at home, which allows them to progressively develop their reading proficiency. Jim Cummins also emphasized the importance of access to printed materials for children's literacy development in Cummins (2021), supporting Sakurai's previously mentioned argument.

The previously mentioned findings have been reported in prior studies. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has conducted DLA assessments over multiple years for all CLD children enrolled in a Japanese language class at the same elementary school and tracked the longitudinal changes. Analyzing the results of the five-year DLA assessments that were conducted revealed substantial individual differences over time, indicating that the patterns of change were not uniform. This paper examines the implications of the multi-year DLA results for CLD children. The objective of this survey is to elucidate the CLD children in question's language proficiency, to discover the causes which improve and impede their second language acquisition. The findings will definitely contribute to develop better language education method for such children facing serious difficulties in learning both the second language and subject learning.

METHOD

As mentioned earlier, since the 2019 academic year, DLA assessments for CLD children enrolled in the Japanese language class at A Elementary School have been conducted. The DLA is a scaffolded assessment tool designed to measure the Japanese language proficiency of CLD foreign students through one-on-one dialog-based interactions. This tool was introduced in 2014 as part of a project commissioned by MEXT to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for developing a Japanese proficiency assessment method available for use in schools. The DLA is designed to maximize children's cognitive engagement in situations where their Japanese language proficiency is limited. It aims to identify the highest level of ability a child can demonstrate while also serving as an opportunity for further language development (The International Education Division of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, MEXT, 2014). A key feature of the DLA is its approach of viewing the assessment process itself as a learning opportunity. Since this method is a comprehensive assessment tool that evaluates not only oral proficiency but also literacy and writing skills, it was selected for this study.

The following section provides an overview of the items assessed by the DLA, its structure and content, implementation procedures, and assessment methods. The content described here is based on the descriptions in the previously mentioned JSL Dialogic Language Assessment for Foreign Students published by The International Education Division of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, MEXT, and is also available online. The DLA consists of "First Steps," which includes an introductory conversation and a vocabulary check, along with assessments of the four language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Each test is designed to measure language proficiency as outlined in Table.1.

The DLA is conducted in a one-on-one format, emphasizing dialogue throughout the assessment. The estimated total duration is 45–50 minutes. "First Steps" is conducted to build rapport and ensure that the child can demonstrate their full potential. Additionally, this step is used to determine whether the

four language skills can be assessed. The assessor decides which language skills to evaluate. Additionally, when the DLA is conducted, recording or video recording is used with the consent of both the child and their guardian. With the development of the DLA, children's Japanese language proficiency was categorized into six stages, forming the JSL Overall Evaluation Reference Frame, which provides a comprehensive and multidimensional description of their abilities (Table 2).

Table 1. What is evaluated by the DLA?

Measuring ability Test names	① CF: Conversation Fluency	② DLS: Discrete Language Skills	③ ALP: Academic Language Proficiency
Introductory conversation*	○		
Vocabulary check*		○	
DLA: Speaking	○	○	○
DLA: Reading		○	○
DLA: Writing		○	○
DLA: Listening			○

*Activities with asterisk are included in First-Step activities.

Table 2. JSL overall evaluation reference frame

Stage	Relationship between enrollment and class participation of school-aged children	Stages of support
6	Understand topics related to subject content and be able to actively participate in class	Supported autonomous learning stage
5	Understand topics related to the subject content and be able to participate in class with some support	
4	Understand everyday topics and be able to participate in class activities to some extent	Individual learning support stage
3	With individualized learning support, students can understand everyday topics and participate in class activities to some extent	
2	With support, progress is made in acquiring the Japanese language necessary for school life	Initial support stage
1	Learning the Japanese language necessary for school life begins	

Additionally, the JSL Evaluation Reference Frame (By Skill) was developed for each of the four language skills. This framework is designed to comprehensively assess the stages of Japanese language development by considering factors such as classroom behavior and test results, helping to determine the level of support needed in the future. After the skill-specific assessment has been conducted, the performance level is scored and evaluated using the corresponding diagnostic sheet for each skill. Based on the obtained results, the stage is determined by referring to the stage descriptors in the JSL Evaluation Reference Frame "By Skill".

As mentioned earlier, since the 2019 academic year, DLA assessments were conducted with CLD children enrolled in the Japanese language class at An Elementary School. These assessments were conducted by three members of our research team and took place over three days each November of the academic year. The assessments included "First Steps", "Speaking", and "Reading." The decision to assess only "Speaking" and "Reading" was based on two factors. First, each DLA session needed to be completed within one elementary school class period (45 minutes or less). Second, as previously mentioned, Majima and Sakurai (2015) focused on evaluating "Speaking" and "Reading" when using OBC and DRA, the precursors to DLA. The participants ranged from first to sixth grade, and since enrollment in the Japanese language class varied over time, only 31 out of the 50 children who had undergone DLA participated for three or more consecutive years. For this study, 21 Indonesian children were selected as the subjects of analysis, excluding those who had difficulty maintaining consistent concentration during the DLA assessments. The DLA results were categorized into Stages 1–6 based on the previously mentioned JSL Overall Evaluation Reference Frame (Table 3). From the perspective of "stages of support," the classifications are as follows: Stages 1 and 2: Initial Support Stage; and Stages 3 and 4: Individual Learning Support Stage; Stages 5 and 6: Supported Autonomous Learning

Stage. Additionally, to share the DLA results with the elementary school, individual evaluation sheets were created for each participant, as exemplified in Figure 1. These evaluation sheets include detailed results from DLA as well as a comprehensive written assessment provided by the DLA assessors. Furthermore, based on the shared evaluation sheets, interviews with two teachers responsible for instruction in the Japanese language class were conducted. The collected data were then utilized in the analysis. This study aims to measure the maximum potential of children's abilities using DLA, incorporate qualitative insights from teachers who provide daily instruction, and propose solutions to address identified challenges. If the DLA result exceeds stage 5, the child can be considered to be on the stage of autonomous learning with support, and can generally be considered to have acquired the language ability for academic studies appropriate to the grade level. Then, the pros and cons of continuing to remove the child from the original class should be considered.

DLA Evaluation Sheet																										
Name	:																									
Age (Grade)	: years months (..... year)																									
Age at Enrollment	: years																									
Period of Stay	: years months																									
Date of Implementation	: ○ year ○ month ○ day																									
Recorded by	Yutaka Fukihara																									
Native Language	Japanese/Indonesian																									
DLA実施レポート																										
語彙力チェック	日本語	100% (55/55)				母語																				
DLA<話す>	実施タスク	基礎タスク(○) 対話タスク(○) 認知タスク(○)																								
	得点	1 3 3.6 5																								
DLA<読む>	実施テキスト	A ・ B ・ C1 ・ C2 ・ D ・ E ・ F *ことりと木のは																								
	得点	1 3 3 5																								
DLA<書く>	実施課題	W1 ・ W2 ・ W3 ・ W4 ・ W5 ・ W6 ・ W7 ・ W8																								
	得点	1 3 5																								
DLA<聴く>	実施DVD	A1 ・ A2 ・ A3 ・ B4 ・ B5 ・ B6 ・ B7 ・ B8																								
	得点	1 3 5																								
DLA採点表 <全体評価>																										
ステージ	DLA<話す>					DLA<読む>					DLA<書く>					DLA<聴く>		JSL評価参照枠(全体)	支援の段階							
	話の内容とまとまり	文・段落の質	文法的正確度	発音・流暢度	話す態度	総合	読解力	読書行動	音読行動	語彙・漢字	読書習慣・興味・態度	総合	内容	構成	文の質・正確度	語彙・漢字力	書字力・表記ルール			書く態度	総合	聴解力	聴解行動	語彙・表現	総合	
6																										支援付き 自律学習 段階
5	○	○	○			●																				
4				○	○	○	○	○		○	○	●													●	個別学習 支援段階
3									○																	
2																									初期支援 段階	
1																										

Figure 1. Evaluation sheet

FINDINGS

Table 3 summarizes the DLA “Speaking” and “Reading” results for A Elementary School. The 21 participants analyzed in this study are identified by numbers 1–21. First, “Starting Grade” indicates the grade level at which each child first took the DLA assessment. Next, “Period of Stay in Japan” represents the number of years the child had lived in Japan at the time of their first DLA assessment. Among the 21 participants, 13 children (62%) were born and raised in Japan, and except for one student (No. 9 in the table), all had been living in Japan before entering elementary school. The following five columns display the DLA “Speaking” and “Reading” results for each academic year from 2019 to 2023, categorized into Stages 1–6. For example, the child labeled No. 1 in the table was born and raised in Japan and demonstrated steady progress in DLA results from second grade (2019) through fourth grade. Furthermore, by fifth grade, the student graduated from the Japanese language class and fully returned to their original class.

Table 3. Changes over time of 21 subjects

	Starting grade	Period of stay in Japan	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	2	BGJ	S5 R4	S6 R5	S5 R5	original class	
2	2	BGJ	S5 R4	S6 R5	S6 R6	original class	
3	3	BGJ	S5 R6	S5 R5	S6 R5	S6 R5 → original class	
4	1	BGJ		S6 R6	S5 R5	S6 R6	Absent
5	1	4y11m	S4 R4	S5 R6	S5 R5	S5 R6	S6 R6
6	1	2y6m	S3 R2	S5 R4	S5 R4	S5 R5	S5 R5
7	3	BGJ	S4 R4	S4 R3	S5 R4	S5 R5	
8	2	BGJ	S5 R5	S6 R6	S5 R5	S6 R6	S6 R6
9	4	Arrived 8yo	S4 R4	S5 R5	S6 R6		
10	4	Unknown Elem. School in Japan	S4 R4	S5 R4	S5 R5		
11	4	BGJ	S3 R3	S5 R5	S5 R5		
12	3	BGJ		S5 R6	S6 R5	S5 R4	S6 R5
13	1	4y8m		S5 R5	S5 R5	S5 R5	S5 R5
14	1	6y		S3 R4	S5 R3	S6 R5	S6 R5
15	1	6y4m		S5 R5	S5 R3	S5 R5	S5 R5
16	2	BGJ		S3 R2	S2 R2	S5 R3	S3 R3
17	1	BGJ		S4 R2	S5 R3	S4 R NA	S3 R3
18	1	BGJ		S4 R4	S5 R5	S4 R3	Absent
19	2	BGJ	S4 R4	S4 R4	S4 R4	S4 R4	S3 R3
20	3	BGJ	S5 R3	S4 R3	S4 R4	S4 R3	
21	1	Arrived 2 yo			S4 R3	S4 R4	S4 R4

*Abbreviations: BGJ stands for “Born and grew up in Japan, S stands for speaking and R stands for reading, “Arrive 8yo” means arrived in Japan at the age of 8 years old, respectively.

Here, the results are presented. First, during the five-year study period, three children (Nos. 1–3 in the table) graduated from the Japanese language class and fully returned to their original class. Regarding participation in the Japanese language class, the preferences of both the children and their guardians were respected. However, students who returned to their original class exhibited certain characteristics in their DLA evaluations. Specifically, after taking DLA for three or more consecutive years, all these students had reached Stage 5 or higher in both “Speaking” and “Reading.” The remaining students (Nos. 4–21) were classified into three groups based on the shading intensity in the table. First, Nos. 4 and 5 exhibit a similar trend to Nos. 1–3. Next, Nos. 6–15 fall into the category of cases where stages progressed relatively smoothly. Conversely, Nos. 16–21 represent cases where stage progression stagnated.

DISCUSSIONS

A discussion based on the results was presented in the previous section. As mentioned, after completing the DLA assessments each year, our research group shared the results with A Elementary School using the DLA evaluation sheets and engaged in verbal discussions with the Japanese language instructors regarding each student. This paper incorporates these insights into the discussion.

First, during the study period, the three students (Nos. 1–3 in the table) who fully returned to their original class demonstrated distinct characteristics. At the time of their first DLA assessment, all three had achieved Stage 5 in “Speaking” and Stage 4 or higher in “Reading”, which indicates that they had already possessed grade-level speaking abilities. Furthermore, after acquiring writing skills, they gained confidence and successfully graduated from the Japanese language class. Following them are two students (Nos. 4 and 5 in the table). Except for No. 4’s first assessment, both students had achieved Stage 5 or higher in both “Speaking” and “Reading.” By their final DLA assessment, they had reached Stage 6 in both skills. As a result, the school had no objections to their graduation from the Japanese language class. However, owing to their strong personal preference, they continued to attend the class for one hour per week. These five students (Nos. 1–5) exhibited steady progress and were evaluated as having Japanese proficiency comparable to that of their Japanese peers. Therefore, they would be categorized into the same evaluation group. A common characteristic among these five students was their fondness for reading as they could discuss the titles and content of the books they read. No. 3 particularly enjoyed nature observation and excelled in math and science, in addition to the love for reading.

The next category consists of students No. 6–15 in the table. In this group, “Speaking” progressed ahead of “Reading,” but both skills improved steadily. Additionally, “Reading” did not stagnate at Stages 3 or 4, and all students eventually reached Stage 5 or higher. Students No. 6–9 remained in the Japanese language class for 1–2 hours per week at their own request. Among four of them, students No. 7, 8, and 9 were recognized as avid readers not only through self-reporting but also by their Japanese language instructors. Student No. 7 had previously graduated from the Japanese language class. However, they chose to return owing to having many friends in the class and feeling comfortable with the individual and small-group instruction style. Student No. 8 stated that they did not feel any significant difficulties with Japanese but still chose to attend the Japanese language class for 1–2 hours per week. This student demonstrated a strong interest in reading, purchasing novels worth nearly 2,000 yen per book with own allowance. Furthermore, they ranked first in their grade level in the Japanese language section of an academic achievement test conducted during the school year. Student No. 9 moved to Japan at age 8 with no prior Japanese knowledge and transferred into the second grade. Since 2019, their DLA results have shown consistent improvement, with both “Speaking” and “Reading” advancing by one stage each year. By sixth grade, they had reached Stage 6 in both skills and progressed to junior high school. This student also had a strong passion for reading, actively choosing to read books from a wide range of genres and recognizing how this practice enhanced their comprehension skills. Similarly, students No. 10–15 reached Stage 5 in both “Speaking” and “Reading” by their final DLA assessment. Although their proficiency in individual subjects varied, the improvement in Japanese language skills was confirmed.

Conversely, students No. 16–18 in the table exhibited a different trend from the categories discussed so far. Looking at their longitudinal progress, while many had reached Stage 5 in “Speaking,” their “Reading” skills either showed a lack of motivation or remained at Stage 3 for those who were able to complete the assessment. Among elementary school students, when asked whether they “like reading,” most responded with “I like it” or “I do not dislike it.” However, students in this category, as well as those in No. 19–21, had not developed reading habits and displayed a passive attitude toward reading. Finally, the most concerning cases were students No. 19–21, who appeared to be in the most critical situation. Among them, students No. 19 and 20 were born and raised in Japan, while student No. 21 arrived in Japan at six months old. However, all three have remained at Stage 4 in both “Speaking” and “Writing,” continuously staying within the Individual Learning Support Stage. Additionally, their Indonesian language proficiency has not fully developed. While they can understand the general meaning of what their parents say in Indonesian, they struggle to produce coherent speech in their native language. Given these factors, concluding that they have developed sufficient ALP in either Indonesian or Japanese is difficult, which suggests that they are in a state of “double-limited bilingualism.” This is particularly concerning as they prepare to enter junior high school, where the academic content becomes significantly more challenging, potentially exacerbating their learning difficulties. As mentioned above, when students reach stages 5 or 6, the question of whether or not to remove them from their original class arises, and this is the stage at which pull-out classes in the Japanese language classroom will be stopped, taking into account the wishes of the students and their guardians. On the other hand, the last group, 16 to 21, have not shown any improvement over time in either “speaking” or “reading”, and remain at the individual learning support stage below stage 4. Due to the difficulty of subject content increase as the students advance in grade, this is a case that raises concerns about their future.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined and discussed the DLA results at A Elementary School. Various factors likely influence the development of ALP, but the most significant factor identified is reading. The previously mentioned JSL Dialogic Language Assessment for Foreign Students includes the "DLA Scoring Sheet (Overall Evaluation)." This overall evaluation consists of five elements: "Reading comprehension", "Reading behavior", "Oral reading behavior", "Vocabulary and kanji", "Reading habits, interests, and attitudes." The findings suggest that forming reading habits, interests, and attitudes, along with the quality and quantity of daily reading, is crucial. This observation aligns with the findings of Majima and Sakurai (2015), Sakurai (2018), and Cummins (2021), as discussed in previous studies. Mitsuya and Yada (2025) takes up extensive reading of Japanese as one practice in heritage language education in Australia. They state, "In order to prevent heritage language children from disliking Japanese, it is important to avoid selecting books based solely on the language level and to create opportunities for them to be exposed to books of as wide a variety of genres as possible. Even if the Japanese is somewhat difficult, if the content is interesting, it is expected that they will develop a reading habit and their Japanese will improve accordingly." In the future, we would like to carry out activities to promote ALP using reading as a clue.

However, in our study, it was impossible to fully verify each student's exact reading volume or the content of the books they read. What was obtained was only information from students who self-reported enjoying reading and actively discussed book titles and content. Moving forward, it is planned to strengthen collaboration with the Japanese language instructors at A Elementary School to collect data on students' reading habits. Additionally, it is aimed to support the development of ALP through reading by creating reading materials that align with academic subjects. Regarding the development of reading materials, it is intended to incorporate insights from Japanese language education. In particular, it is strongly likely that extensive reading (*tadoku*)-oriented materials will be highly beneficial. Specifically, it is planned to focus on the following points: utilizing ample illustrations and pictures to enhance visual comprehension; limiting the number of characters per page to ensure readability; repeating key vocabulary words throughout the text; and incorporating cultural comparisons between Japan and other countries.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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