Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Japanese in Sydney

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Introduction

In the last couples of decades the tie between Australia and Japan has become stronger for mainly pragmatic reasons. As a result, the number of Japanese people living in Australia has increased dramatically, and their language has become one of the major languages taught in Australian educational institutions, with the strong help of the Australian National Language Policy in 1987. Various problems have accompanied this social change, however, including language maintenance among members of the second generation and communication gaps or conflicts between the Japanese and other groups in business settings. Following the rapid boom of Japanese language learning, we now need to study the present circumstances of how Japanese is used in Australia and how Japanese language maintenance among Japanese adolescents can occur.

The term "ethonolinguistic vitality" was used by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) to refer to three factors in language maintenance: status, demographic concentration and institutional support. Status is related to the status of a speech community in the region, of the community

members' language and of its culture. Demographic concentration is strongly related to the birthrate and the rate of immigration. Institutional support refers to how people can enjoy formal and informal representation in their language in such institutions as schools, churches, local government offices and private companies. By assessing ethnolinguistic vitality, we can predict the possibility of language maintenance and language shift. The higher the vitality, the more likely a group and its languages are to survive as a distinctive entity (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1981). Also, perceived ethnolinguistic vitality may be crucial in determining inter-group attitudes and in accounting for individuals' attitudes towards their own languages. This paper discusses how Japanese groups and non-Japanese Australians, mostly Anglo-Celtic Australians, cognitively represent some of their own societal forces in Sydney, and how they evaluate each other. Specifically we examine how the subjective vitality perceived by Japanese is different from the objective vitality perceived by non-Japanese Australians, and vice versa. We also compare the results with research on other ethnic groups in Australia such as the French, Greek, German and other populations.

Background

Japanese immigration to Australia dates back to the late 19th century, and by 1901, 3,593 Japanese had settled in the country. Most of them lived in Western Australia and Queensland, where the majority of them were engaged in the pearling industry or in sugar production. (Murphy, 1993). Even though the number of Japanese declined during World War II, it gradually increased in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s, not because of migration, but because of large increases in

Japanese companies in Australia. As a result, by 1986 there were 11,160 Japanese residing throughout Australia (NNLIA, 1994), and by 1992 the number had risen to 20.161, of which approximately 47% were living in New South Wales (NSW), especially in Sydney (MFA, 1994). From this data, we can see that Japanese constitute a very small ethnic group in Australia and NSW (0.1% in Australia, 0.16% in NSW) compared to other major ethnic groups. On the other hand, Japan is the biggest source of visitors to Australia, accounting for 23.9% of all visitors in 1991-1992, followed by New Zealand (18.2%), USA (11.2%) and UK (11.0%). During the1980s, a serious decline in second language education and the extinction of many Aboriginal languages impelled professional groups and ethnic groups to call for national actions to counteract those trends (Bianco, 1990). As a result, in 1987, the "National Policy on Languages" was released. The policy had three principles for education: English for all, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and learning one language other than English for all. The last principle includes mainteining the first language for ethnic children and learning a second language for English-speaking children. Japanese was chosen as one of nine major second languages, and the number of individuals learning Japanese has increased dramatically since then. In 1991 about 86,000 students studied Japanese throughout Australia, and in 1993 the total reached 182,683 (primary level 32%, secondary level 58%). There were 2,358 Japanese teachers and 1,160 educational institutions for learning Japanese nationwide (Shimazu, 1994). Although there are no daily Japanese newspapers published in Australia, there are 3 monthly newspapers, the *Nichigo Press*, the *Business News* and the *Japan Press*. TV broadcasting is having a great impact on language; although every independent channel broadcasts in English, there is a multicultural TV channel funded by

the government. This channel, SBS, offers films and other programs in more than 30 languages, with English subtitles. In 1986 - 1987, there were 77.16 hours of programs in Japanese, accounting for 2.47% of all programming (Clyne, 1991). In 1995, SBS began broadcasting Japanese news made by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) for thirty minutes each week. Japanese videos are easily available through some of the video shops in Sydney. There are about five Japanese associations in Sydney; each normally has a monthly meeting and a variety of activities such as sports, parties, excursions and other cultural events throughout the year. In 1991 the Japan Foundation established the Language and Cultural Center in Sydney. It has supported Japanese teachers by operating a library lending service, holding special shows of well - known Japanese films and training Japanese language teachers. There is one Buddhist mission in which two priests are engaged, but there is no temple.

Japanese people in Australia are divided into two groups, sojourners and permanent migrants. In Sydney, sojourners accounted for 68% and permanent residents for 32% in 1992. Of the sojourners, 66% are businesspersons and 11% are students (MFA, 1994). The short - term nature of these persons' stays in Australia seems to make the bond with the host country weaker compared with that of members of other ethnic groups. Fifty - eight percent of the working Japanese males are in the managerial or professional categories, which is a very high rate among ethnic groups (NLLIAL, 1994).

Method

The questionnaire used in this survey was originally designed by Giles,

Bourhis and Taylor (1981) to be administered to two cultural groups, the Anglo - Australians and Greek - Australians in Melbourne. In the version we used, questions 20 and 22 were omitted in line with the study of Gibbons and Ashcroft (1995). In order to know about the background of the Japanese subjects, some extra questions were added in accordance with Putz (1991). Also, to elicit attitudes about language held by Japanese adolescents, more questions were added to the questionnaire according to the model by Baker (1993). This questionnaire was conducted with both Japanese and non - Japanese Australian high school students living in North Sydney. Table 1 shows the number and mean age of the informants.

Table 1: Profile of all informants

	number			age (mean)	high schools	
	male	female	total		public	private
Japanese	19	25	44	17.4	56%	44%
non - Japanese	11	15	26	15.8	27%	73%
(total/average)	30	40	70	16.6	42%	58%

Note that many Japanese informants are studying their first language at their schools or at Saturday school and that this survey was conducted in the North Sydney area, where 70% of all Japanese residents in NSW are concentrated.

Table 2: Profile of Japanese informants

birth place		years in Australia	study hours for Japanese	Question: "Are you going back to Japan in the future?"				
Japan	Australia +other	mean	per week	yes	maybe yes	not sure	maybe not	no
89%	11%	4.1years	3.86hours	34%	23%	35%	7%	2%

Table 2 shows that Japanese students were mainly born in Japan and their staying period in Australia is relatively short, 4.1 years. Most of the informants are studying Japanese at their high schools for about 4 hours per week. The majority of Japanese students in Sydney have already completed rather long periods of formal education in Japan, and they are required to master English to survive in their new environment. Nearly 60% expect to return to Japan in the future. The situations in which Japanese is used are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Language choice under different circumstances (%)
Jpn.=Japanese Eng.=English

	always Jpn.	in Jalmost Jpn.	in Jmore Jpn.	more Eng.	almost in Eng.	always in Eng
with parents	83	13	2	-	2	-
with siblings	67	21	7	2	2	-
at school	2	7	16	22	27	27
in neighborhood	-	2	5	14	29	5 -
monologue	22	24	2 -	27	7	-
diary, memo	29	22	2 -	15	2	12

Table 3 shows that Japanese is the major language spoken at home, and English is the major language spoken outside the home, which supports the fact pointed out by Gibbons (1988) that in Australia ethnic languages are rarely used outside the home and neighborhood. The

media is one of the major factors that affects language maintenance and language shift (Clyne, 1991). Table 4 shows the relationship between the media and the choice of language. We can see that Japanese adolescents try to contact their first language by seeing videos and reading books to make up for the disadvantages caused by TV and radio programs mostly broadcast in English.

Table 4: The media and the choice of languages (%)
Jpn.=Japanese Eng.=English

	almost in Jpn.	often in Jpn.	evenly	often in Eng.	almost in Eng.
TV, radio	9	4	18	7	62
video	23	4	29	9	35
CD, cassette	13	16	31	2	38
novel	60	18	16	2	4
newspaper	20	18	36	13	13

Results and Discussion

Table 5 shows the overall rates of English vitality and Japanese vitality in Sydney. In general, English vitality is stronger than Japanese vitality. However, non-Japanese students evaluate Japanese vitality higher than English vitality in areas like birth rate, immigration, marriage within the cultural group, cultural pride and strength in 20 years, while Japanese students evaluate their own vitality lower than English vitality in all these items.

Table 5: Overall rates of English vitality and Japanese vitality
(EV= English vitality, JV= Japanese vitality)

Questions	Non - Japanese Australians		Japanese	
	EV	JV	EV	JV
(1)proportion of population	4.30	2.74	5.02	1.85
(2)local language status	6.58	3.73	6.58	3.98
(3)international language status	6.15	4.81	6.51	3.81
(4)language in government service	6.50	2.81	6.66	2.66
(5)birth rate	4.60	4.68	3.98	3.95
(6)group's economic control	5.23	5.23	4.88	4.83
(7)mass media	6.73	3.12	6.77	2.89
(8)perceived group status	5.65	4.04	5.23	4.79
(9)local population	5.29	4.13	5.44	3.80
(10)language in schools	6.96	5.24	6.66	4.84
(11)immigration	3.65	5.50	4.23	3.57
(12)marriage within group	4.00	5.08	5.21	4.00
(13)group political power	5.48	3.44	6.09	2.91
(14)language in business	5.72	5.40	6.50	4.68
(15)emigration	3.92	3.52	3.62	3.33
(16)cultural pride	4.46	5.54	5.86	5.07
(17)language in religion	6.12	3.16	6.63	2.05
(18)group cultural representation	5.00	4.48	5.56	3.81
(19)group activity and strength	4.96	4.12	5.93	3.74
(20)group's strength in 20 years	4.44	5.68	5.07	4.60

Another general tendency is that Japanese students think there are greater differences between the two groups' vitality compared with the attitudes of non - Japanese students. Both groups agree that English vitality is far stronger than Japanese vitality in the areas of language in religion, language in government service, language in the mass media and group political power. As for language in government service, it is in fact rare to see a Japanese translation in government documents such as the residential tenancy agreement, while other languages, e.g., Chinese are often seen in such documents. This is closely related to the government language policy based on demographic factors. Language in religion is the next area where there is a big gap between English vitality and Japanese vitality. Religion plays an important role for members of some ethnic groups by allowing them to maintain their language through churches and church - related activities. According to the data we collected, it appears to be difficult for Japanese parents to count on religion in order to maintain their children's first language. Language use in mass media is another area where both groups perceive the English dominance over Japanese, even though there are a few Japanese TV and radio programs broadcast in Australia. Local language status is also an area in which English vitality is very strong compared with Japanese vitality. As Callan et al (1987) mention, we might conclude from language use in mass media and local language status that Australia is a strongly monolingual society, even though it is often said to be the most multicultural society in the world. The areas in which Japanese think their vitality is relatively high are; the cultural group's economic control (4.83), perceived group status (4.79), language in schools (4.84), language in business (4.68), cultural pride (5.07) and strength during the next twenty years (4.60). The areas where there is a big discrepancy in the evaluation of Japanese vitality

are birth rate, immigration, marriage within the cultural group, language in business and strength and activity during the next twenty years, all of which are areas where non-Japanese Australians evaluate Japanese vitality relatively higher than do the Japanese themselves. In particular, Japanese immigration perceived by non-Japanese Australians is rated far higher than that perceived by Japanese. This might be caused by an image created by the increase in Japanese tourists and Japanese-related business in recent years. The fact that this research was conducted in an area of Sidney where a high concentration of Japanese live might be one of the reasons for giving non-Japanese Australians that impression of a rapid increase in the number of Japanese people. Also, non-Japanese Australian students think Japanese is used in business settings as often as English, while Japanese students rate their language as not being used to such a great extent. Considering a report that the official language of Japanese companies for day-to-day communication is English, and the use of Japanese is limited to telexes, letters and formal meetings for Japanese top management (Clyne, 1991), it seems likely that non-Japanese Australians' view toward Japanese in business is amplified, though the reason is not known.

There are areas where Japanese respondents estimate the gap between the two ethnic vitality ratings to be greater than that estimated by non-Japanese Australians. Those areas are shown in Figure 1. The areas in which Japanese students overestimate English vitality and underestimate Japanese vitality compared to non-Japanese Australians are (1) population, (3) international language status, (13) group political power, (14) language in business, (17) language in religion, (18) group cultural representation and (19) group activity and strength. In other words, non-Japanese Australians overestimate Japanese vitality

in these areas compared to English vitality. On the contrary, in (8) perceived group status, the Japanese group rate their vitality higher and English status lower than do non - Japanese Australians. The similar, but stronger tendency can be recognized in the Greek community in Melbourne, where Anglo - Australians rate English vitality at 5.77 and Greek vitality at 3.84, while members of the Greek community rate English vitality at 4.68 and their own vitality at 4.81 (Giles, et al, 1985). It appears that ethnic groups tend to rate their own status higher than their status perceived by the dominant group.

Figure 1: Perceptive gaps between two groups

(△ = by non - Japanese Australians, ○ = by Japanese)
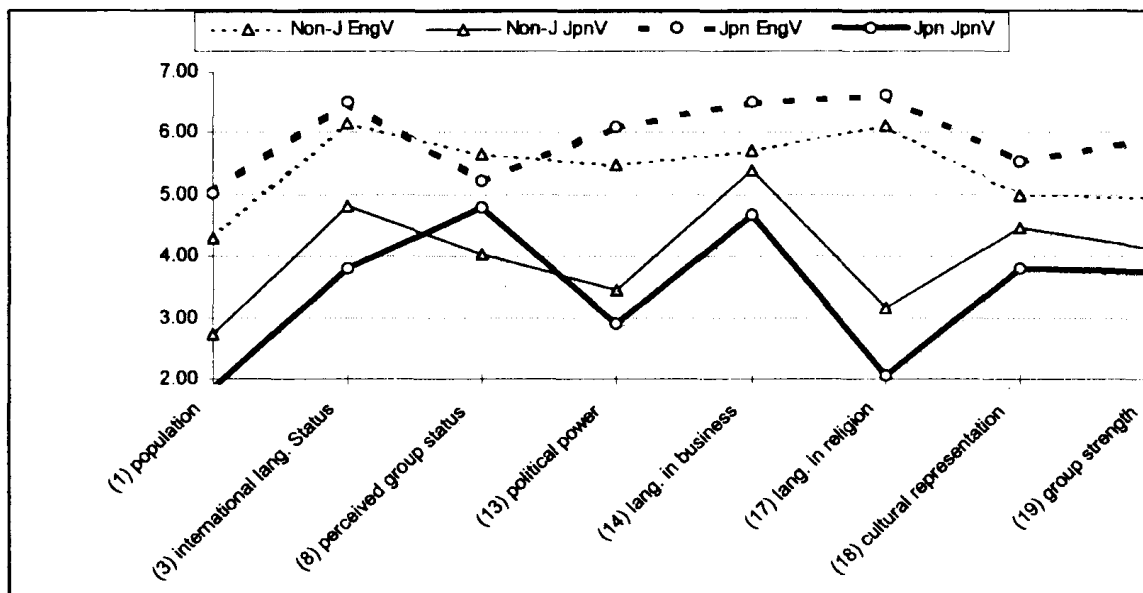
Next we examine how each group perceives its own vitality in accordance with three categories, namely, status, demography and institutional supports, compared with Italian vitality perceived by Italian students living in Sydney (Gibbons & Ashcroft).

Table 6: Status

	Non - J EV	Japanese JV	Italian IV
(2) local language status	6.58	3.98	4.60
(3) international language status	6.15	3.81	4.46
(8) group status	5.65	4.79	4.50
(16)cultural pride	4.46	5.07	6.32
total	5.71	4.41	4.97
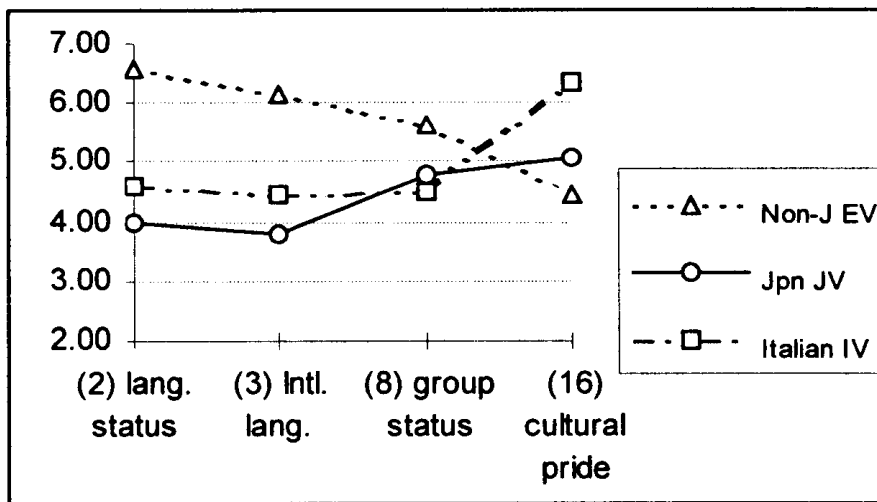
(Non - J=Non - Japanese, EV=English vitality, JV=Japanese vitality, IV=Italian vitality)

As we can see from Table 6, Japanese respondents rated their own status lower than that of Italians, except for group status. Even after Japanese has become a popular second language taught at high schools, Japanese students think their languages has a lower status both in local and in international settings. Italians show strong cultural pride, and non - Japanese, or Anglo - Australians, show the lowest cultural pride. This may be one of the examples of a lack of identity among Anglo - Australians. A strong cultural pride can be seen in the

perceived Greek vitality in Melbourne, 6.45 points (Giles, *et al*, 1985). In total, Japanese perceived status is lowest among the three groups.

Table 7: Demography

	Non - J EV	Japanese JV	Italian IV
(1) population	4.30	1.85	3.88
(5) birth rate	4.60	3.95	4.52
(9) local population	5.29	3.80	5.12
(11) immigration	3.65	3.57	4.40
(12) in - group marriage	4.00	4.00	5.30
total	4.37	3.44	4.64
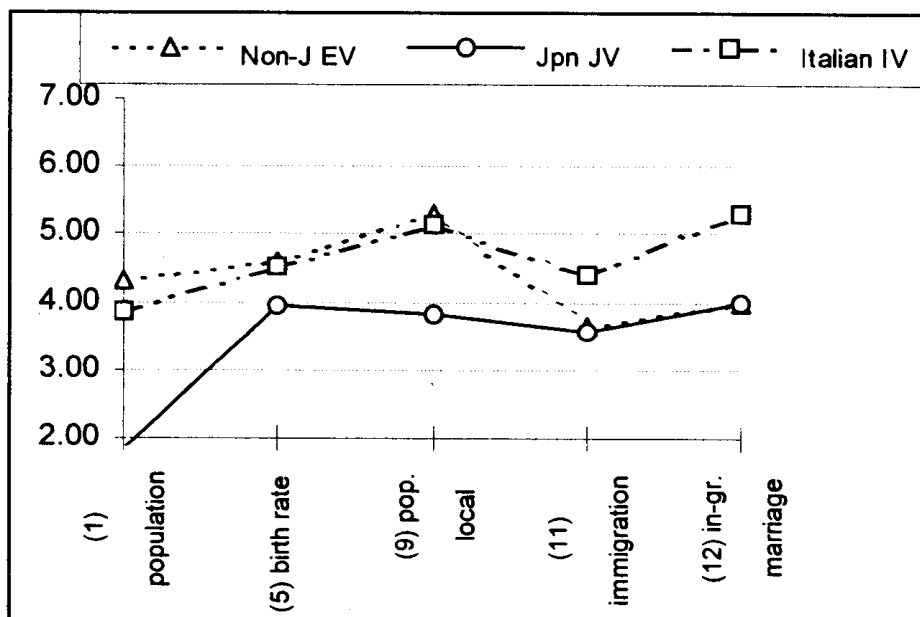
In terms of demography, it is not surprising that Japanese vitality is low in almost every area. In particular, the population size is graded far lower than that of other groups, even though this research was conducted in an area of Sydney where many Japanese live. In the demog-

raphy field, we can say that Italian people have established a more healthy community than have the Japanese.

Table 8: Institution

	Non - JEV	Japanese JV	Italian IV
(4) lang. ingovernment	6.50	2.66	3.54
(6) economic control	5.23	4.83	3.80
(7) mass media	6.73	2.89	3.96
(10) lang. at school	6.96	4.84	5.48
(13) political power	5.48	2.91	3.02
(14) lang. in business	5.72	4.68	4.26
(17) lang. in religion	6.12	2.05	5.16
(18) culture represent	5.00	3.81	5.52
total	5.97	3.58	4.34
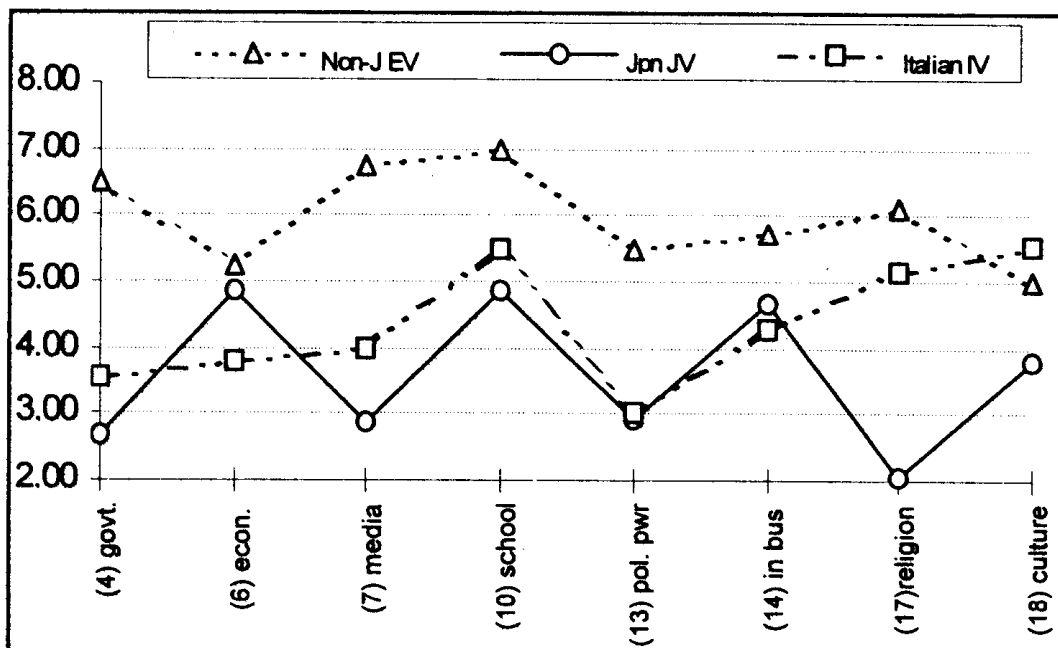
Institution is the field in which some informants rate Japanese vitality is as superior to Italian vitality. Institution includes a group's economic control and language in business. As we have seen before, the religious factor is of little use for Japanese people to maintain their language. In contrast to that, religion plays an important role for Italian people. In this area, Greeks in Melbourne rated their own vitality much higher, at 5.71. Cultural representation of Italian people is perceived as much higher than that of Japanese people.

Within each group, Japanese vitality is strong in status followed by institutional support. English vitality is strong in institutional support followed by status, and Italian vitality shows its strength in status followed by the demographic factor.

Conclusion

Japanese vitality is strongly related to the country's strong economy in the last couple of decades. With the strong economical motivation to learn Japanese, a boom called 'tsunami' happened in the late 1980s (Clark, 1994), and Japanese vitality has increased in the areas of language status and institutional factor. From this, and the fact that many of the Japanese second-generation individuals are children of businesspersons who stay in Australia for a short period, we can conclude that these children's parents do not have to worry about their children's language shift or maintenance at the moment. Other positive factors supporting Japanese language maintenance include the possibility of Australian society's strong connection with Asian countries (Bodi, 1994), and the supportive language policy in Australia and NSW (Clarke, 1994).

However, when we think about the fact that the strength of Japanese vitality is limited to some specific areas and that a lot of negative facts are occurring due to a long recession in the Japanese economy, e.g., the decrease in the number of Japanese learners at high schools throughout Australia, there is no guarantee that Japanese vitality will continue to be strong enough for Japanese second-generation persons to maintain their first language in the future. And, as the number of Japanese permanent residents increases or more mixed marriages take place in the future, due to the weakness of Japanese vitality in such areas as cultural representation, cultural pride, language in religion and so on, language maintenance of Japanese children will be focused on as a more serious problem. To get a clearer picture of language maintenance in Japanese adolescents living in Sydney, we need to not only conduct follow-up surveys in the area but also collect a lot of data about Japanese throughout the world.

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Appendix (A)

Questionnaire for Japanese vitality in Sydney

(A) Background information

1. Your age? _____   2. Your sex? M_____   F_____
3. Where were you born? Japan ____ Australia ____ Other _____ (Name of the country)
4. For how long have you been living in Australia?   _____ years
5. What kind of school do/did you go to?   state school _____ private _____
6. What are the first languages of your parents? Father _____ Mother _____
7. What is your language proficiency?

Japanese	Native like			In-ter-me-diate			Be-ginner		Na-tive like			In-ter-me-di-ate			Be-ginner
speaking								speaking							
listening								listening							
reading								reading							
writing								writing							

8, What percentage is it for you to go back to Japan to live in the future?
100%( )   75%( )   50/50% ( )   25%( )   0%( )
if so, do you   feel uneasy when you think about life in Japan?
very uneasy ( )   rather uneasy ( )   a little ( )   not so much ( )   not at all ( )

9, Which language do you use in the following situations?

	all Japanese	almost Japanese	More Japa-nese	more English	almost English	all English
with father						
with mother						
with brother/sisters						
at school						
at neighbourhood						
monologue to pet						
diary, memo,						

10, Which language do you use to enjoy following media.

	all Japanese	almost Japa-nese	more Japanese	more English	almost English	all English
TV radio						
Video						
CD Cassette						
novel book						
newspaper,						

11, How long do you study Japanese per week? (   ) hours
12, Do you   study Japanese outside your school? eg. Saturday school, or by private teacher Where?
    (   )
How long hour per week? (   )hours
13, do your parents often encourage you to study Japanese?
    very often ( ) often ( ) sometimes ( )   not so often ( ) not at all ( )

(B) Here are some statements about the English and other languages. Please say whether you agree or disagree with these statements. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Answer with ONE of the following:

SA = Strongly Agree (tick SA);   A = Agree (tick A);   NAND = Neither Agree Nor Disagree (tick NAND);
D = Disagree (tick D);   SD = Strongly Disagree (tick SD)

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
1. It is important to be able to speak English and another language					
2. To speak English is all that is needed					
3. Knowing English and Japanese makes people cleverer					
4. Children get confused when learning English and Japanese					

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
5. Speaking both Japanese and English helps to get a job					
6. Speaking two languages is not difficult					
7. I feel sorry for people who cannot speak both English and Japanese					
8. I like hearing and speaking Japanese					
9. My mother tongue plays a vital role in the cohesion between the members of our own family?					
10. Japanese is not a difficult language to learn					
11. I am not considered an Australian if I speak Japanese					
12. As an adult, I would like to marry a Japanese speaker					
13. If I have a children, I would like them to be able to speak Japanese					
14. It is favourable to see a lot of signboards or posters written Japanese in town.					
15. Australia is multicultural and multilingual country.					
16. There is no racial discrimination in school or Australian society.					
17. More languages should be taught by taking more time.					
18. Australia gives equal chances to everyone living there.					
19. The last war is a big barrier when establishing a good relationship between the Japanese and Australians.					

(c) In the next questionnaire, we are interested in what you know about certain groups in Sydney. You may feel that you have insufficient information at your immediate disposal to answer these questions, yet it is your impressions that we are interested in. Please make sure that you answer EACH question by ticking like √

1. Estimate the proportion of the Sydney population made up of the following groups:	100%	People of Japanese descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| People of British descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	0%
2. How highly regarded are the following languages in Sydney?	extremely highly	Japanese |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| English |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	not at all
3. How highly regarded are the following languages internationally?	extremely high	Japanese |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| English |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	not at all
4. How often are the following languages used in Sydney government services (eg., health clinics, social welfare etc.)?	exclusively	Japanese |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| English |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	not at all
5. Estimate the birth rates of the following groups in Sydney.	increasing	People of Japanese descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| People of British descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	decreasing
6. How much control do the following groups have over economic and business matters in Sydney?	exclusive	People of Japanese descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----| People of British descent |-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|	not at all

7. How well-represented are the following languages in the Sydney mass media (eg., TV, radio, newspapers)?	extremely well	Japanese |----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----| English |----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
8. How highly regarded are the following groups in Sydney?	extremely highly	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
9. In all parts of Sydney where the following groups live, to what extent are they in the majority or minority?	very large majority	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	very small minority
10. How much are the following languages taught in Sydney schools	exclusively	Japanese |----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----| English |----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|	not at all
11. How many of the following groups immigrate into Sydney each year?	very many	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
12. To what extent do the following marry only within their own groups?	exclusively	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
13. How much political power do the following groups have in Sydney?	complete	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
14. How well-represented are the following languages in Sydney business institutions (eg. company restaurant, shops hotel)?	exclusively	Japanese |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| English |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
15. How many of the following groups emigrate from Sydney to other countries each year?	very many	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
16. How proud of their cultural history and achievements are the following groups in Sydney?	extremely	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
17. How frequently are the following languages used in Sydney churches, temples and other places of religious worship?	exclusively	Japanese |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| English |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
18. How well-represented are the following groups in the cultural life of Sydney (eg., festivals, concerts, art exhibitions)?	extremely	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
19. How strong and active do you feel the following groups are in Sydney?	extremely	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all
20. How strong and active do you feel the following groups will be 20 to 30 years from now?.	extremely	People of Japanese descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----| People of British descent |----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|	not at all