

## The Foreign Language Education Policy in Japan

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This paper describes the current features and highlights several points of the issue of foreign language education in Japan. It is now carried out under the provisions of the 'Course of Study' or National Standard of Curricula, which is based on the report submitted to the Minister of Education by the Central Education Council.

This paper first refers to how the foreign language education policy is made in Japan, and then traces the history of foreign language education in the reports of the Council and the Course of Study from 1947 to the present day, and divides it from the point of the internationalization into three periods; the period in which to make students understand English speaking people, the period in which to require each student to establish themselves as a Japanese and the period in which to make them acquire international understanding and communicative ability in foreign languages.

Then it discusses how foreign language education should be when the world is rapidly shrinking. Further more, it discusses whether the prevailing policy of 'English Only' in present foreign language education is adequate or not, even though American English has become a world language; what kind of English among various 'Englishes' should be taught at schools as correct English, and whether practical communication, which is the current main objective of English education, will be achieved if students have only to acquire the grammatical skills necessary to use English.

The author suggests that from the situation in which Japan is located, other foreign languages including Chinese, Korean and Russian should be taught at least as electives in the curriculum of lower and higher secondary schools, and points out several difficulties which teachers of English will encounter when they try to accomplish the difficult objective of fostering practical communication ability at those schools.