

Ethnologue: Languages of Japan

Twenty-sixth edition data

David M. Eberhard, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, Editors

Based on information from the *Ethnologue*, 26th edition:

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2023.
Ethnologue: Languages of the World. Twenty-sixth edition. Dallas, Texas:
SIL International. Online: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
DBS	Deaf Bible Society
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
DOOR	Deaf Opportunity Outreach
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
SIL	SIL International
SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCPRD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf

How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Japan that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) provides detailed information on the 34 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Japan. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

Primary language name [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Map*: Map page. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

The “Language Map” (page 20) shows the locations of the listed languages. If the location of a language is given on a map, the *Map* element of the language entry indicates the page number of the map. If the language is identified on a map by name, but that name differs from the primary name in the language entry, the name on the map is given in parentheses. If the language is represented on the map by an index number, rather than by its name, the index number is given following the page number (with a colon as separator).

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 21) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 24) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by

Prefecture” (page 28) lists the top-level administrative subdivisions of Japan and the languages located within each. “Languages by Family” (page 29) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 30) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 31) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 45 unique names are associated with the 34 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography” (page 33). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author’s or editor’s surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source’s first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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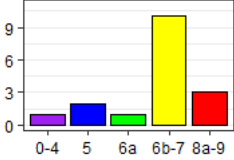
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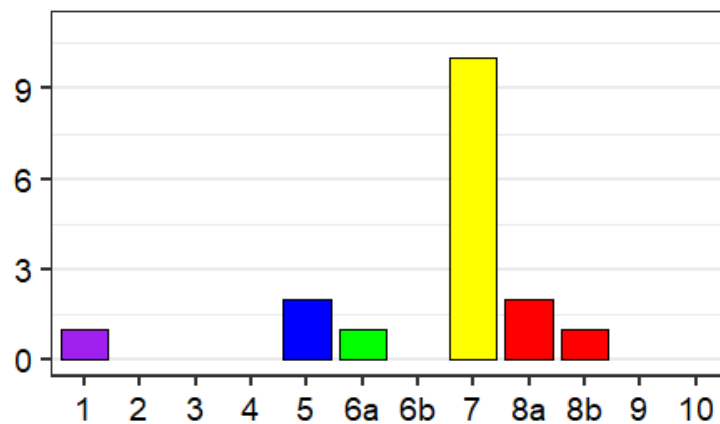
Country Overview

Name of country	Japan												
Other names	Japan												
Population	125,836,000 (2020 World Bank)												
Principal language	Japanese												
Literacy rate	99% (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina 2018)												
Deaf population	24,000–300,000												
International conventions	CSICH (2004), ICCPR (1979), UNCPRD (2014), UNDRIP (2007)												
General references	Campbell and King 2011, Shibatani 1990, Wurm and Hattori 1981												
Language counts	<p>The number of established languages listed for Japan is 17. All are living languages. Of these, 16 are indigenous and 1 is non-indigenous. Furthermore, 1 is institutional, 2 are developing, 1 is vigorous, 10 are in trouble, and 3 are dying. Also listed are 17 unestablished languages.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Language Vitality Counts for Japan</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Vitality Category</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6a</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6b-7</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8a-9</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Vitality Category	Count	0-4	1	5	2	6a	1	6b-7	10	8a-9	3
Vitality Category	Count												
0-4	1												
5	2												
6a	1												
6b-7	10												
8a-9	3												

See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Japan with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 24) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Japan. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Japan and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Japan by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 21) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

Table 1: Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
100,000,000 to 999,999,999	1	5.9	5.9%	122,000,000	98.26231	98.26231%
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	1	5.9	11.8%	1,180,000	0.95041	99.21271%
100,000 to 999,999	2	11.8	23.5%	951,000	0.76596	99.97868%
1,000 to 9,999	5	29.4	52.9%	24,700	0.01989	99.99857%
100 to 999	2	11.8	64.7%	1,750	0.00141	99.99998%
10 to 99	1	5.9	70.6%	20	0.00002	100.00000%
1 to 9	2	11.8	82.4%	6	0.00000	100.00000%
Unknown	3	17.6	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0		124,157,476	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Japan by their status in terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 24) for a listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level reported here is for the status of the language in Japan. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

Table 2: Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
1	1	5.9	5.9%	122,000,000	98.2623	98.2623%	122,000,000	122,000,000
5	2	11.8	17.6%	951,000	0.7660	99.0283%	475,500	475,500
6a	1	5.9	23.5%	20	0.0000	99.0283%	20	20
7	10	58.8	82.4%	1,206,450	0.9717	100.0000%	120,645	4,050
8a	2	11.8	94.1%	4	0.0000	100.0000%	2	4
8b	1	5.9	100.0%	2	0.0000	100.0000%	2	2
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0		124,157,476	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) name 4 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

Table 3: Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Japonic	12	70.6	123,206,450	99.2	10,267,204	4,900

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Koreanic	1	5.9	825,000	0.7	825,000	825,000
Language isolate	1	5.9	2	0.0	2	2
Sign language	3	17.6	126,024	0.1	42,008	20
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0	124,157,476	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

- Ainu** [ain] (Ainu Itak). *Users*: 2 (2008 A. Vovin). Ethnic population: 13,000 (2019 E. Jozuka). *Location*: Hokkaido prefecture: Kuril and Tsushima islands. *Status*: 8b (Nearly extinct). *Class*: Language isolate. *Dialects*: Sakhalin (Saghalin), Taraika, Hokkaido (Ezo, Yezo), Kuril (Shikotan, Tsushima). There were at least 19 dialects. The last speaker of Sakhalin Ainu, Take Asai, died in 1994. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; case-marking; verb affixes mark person, number; aspect; 12 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; non-tonal. *Lg Use*: Elderly only. Shifted to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Newspapers. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 1897. Small numbers of young people are learning Ainu in classes; revival efforts underway (Bradley 2007a). *DLS*: Emerging (0.11). *Writing*: Katakana script, primary usage. Latin script. *Other*: Ainu [aib] in China is a different, unrelated language.
- Amami Koniya Sign Language** [jks] (Amami-Oshima Shuwa). *Users*: 4 (2020 Y. Osugi). One family. *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: Amami island, Koniya town. *Status*: 8a (Moribund). *Class*: Sign language, Shared sign language. *Lg Use*: Centered around one family with several deaf members, with their friends, neighbors, and associates (2020 Y. Osugi). Older adults only. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.
- Amami-Oshima, Northern** [ryn] (Northern Amami-Osima, Oosima, Oshima, Osima). *Users*: 9,800 (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: north Amami-Oshima and northwest Okinawa islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Northern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialects*: Naze, Sani. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.
- Amami-Oshima, Southern** [ams] (Southern Amami-Osima). *Users*: 1,800 (2004). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: south Amami-Oshima, Kakeroma, north Okinawa, Uke, and Yoro islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Northern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialects*: None known. Inherent intelligibility low with other Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Grammar. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.
- Bengali** [ben]. *Users*: 69,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Outer Languages, Eastern, Bengali-Assamese. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head both initial and final; 3 genders: male, female, neuter; content q-word initial and final; clause constituents indicated by case-marking (5 cases) and word order; verb affixes mark person, number; definite article affix; tense; passives and voice; causatives; comparatives; non-tonal; 35 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; stress on first syllable. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1832–2016. *Writing*: Bengali (Bangla) script, primary usage. Braille script. Newa script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bangladesh, India. Also established in:

Nepal, Singapore. Unestablished in: Australia, Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Chinese, Mandarin [cmn]. *Users*: 549,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; 6 full (concrete meaning) word classes; no articles; passives; 24 consonants, 8 vowels, 6 diphthongs; tonal (4 phonemic tones). *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1874–1983. *Writing*: Bopomofo script, used since 1913, revised in 1920 and 1932, mainly used in Taiwan. Braille script. Han script, Simplified variant, used since 1956, official in Mainland China (1956) and Singapore (1969), also used elsewhere. Han script, Traditional variant, used since mid-19th century, official in Taiwan, also used elsewhere. Latin script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,138,222,350 (as L1: 939,237,350; as L2: 198,985,000). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: China. Also established in 17 other countries and unestablished in 60 more.

Chinese, Min Nan [nan]. *Users*: 75,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese. *Type*: SVO; tone sandhi, tonal. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Dictionary. Grammar. *Bible*: 1933. *Writing*: Bopomofo script, used since 1998, used in Taiwan. Han script, Simplified variant. Katakana script, used between 1895–1945, once used in Taiwan. Latin script, used since 1850. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 50,312,390 (as L1: 49,909,390; as L2: 403,000). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: China, China–Taiwan. Also established in: Brunei, Cambodia, China–Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States.

Chinese, Wu [wuu]. *Users*: 7,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese. *Type*: SVO; tone sandhi, tonal. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1908–1914. *Writing*: Han script, Simplified variant, used since 1981. Han script, Traditional variant. Latin script, used since mid/late 19th century. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 83,421,190 (as L1: 83,353,940; as L2: 67,250). Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: China. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, China–Hong Kong, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, United States.

Chinese, Yue [yue]. *Users*: 36,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives, relatives, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; noun classifiers; no articles; 18 consonants, 7 vowels; tonal (6 tones: 3 level, 3 contour). *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1894–1981. *Writing*: Braille script, used in Hong Kong. Han script, Simplified variant. Han script, Traditional variant, official usage in Hong Kong and Macau, also used elsewhere. Latin script, used since mid-19th century. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 86,633,370 (as L1: 86,116,370; as L2: 517,000). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: China, China–Hong Kong, China–Macao. Also established in 12 other countries and unestablished in 18 more.

English [eng]. Autonym: English. *Users*: 10,973,000 in Japan, all users. L1 users: 73,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). L2 users: 10,900,000 (2020). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, English. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; word order distinguishes subject, object, indirect objects, given and new information, topic and comment; active and passive; causative; comparative; consonant and vowel clusters; 24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress; phrasal verbs. *Lg Dev*: Taught as subject in all primary and secondary schools. Fully developed. *Bible*: 1382–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Ireland, United Kingdom. Also established in 168 other countries and unestablished in 15 more.

French [fra]. Autonym: français. *Users*: 6,300 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Gallo-Romance, Gallo-Rhaetian, Oil, French. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final for common adjectives, numbers, possessives, but most attributive adjectives come after the noun; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonant and 14 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; syllable-timed stress. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1530–2000. *Writing*: Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Monaco, Switzerland. Also established in 96 other countries and unestablished in 23 more.

Japanese [jpn]. *Users*: 122,000,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 1 (National). De facto national language. *Class*: Japonic. *Dialects*: Eastern Japanese, Western Japanese, Zu-zu-ben. Possibly related to Korean [kor]. Zu-zu-ben dialects unintelligible to other Japanese, and dying out as standard Tokyo Japanese takes over. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; demonstrative, numeral, adjective, possessive, relative clause, proper noun precedes noun head; adverb precedes verb; sentence final question particle; no articles; passives; tense and aspect; causatives; 15 consonants, 5 vowels, 3 diphthongs; non-tonal; pitch-accentuation pattern. *Lg Dev*: Taught in all primary and secondary schools. Taught in all tertiary schools. Fully developed. *Bible*: 1883–2018. *DLS*: Thriving (1.00). *Writing*: Braille script. Han, Hiragana, and Katakana scripts, primary usage. Latin script. *Other*: Buddhist, Shintoist. *Map*: 20. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 123,445,570 (as L1: 123,285,670; as L2: 159,900). Also established in: Australia, China–Taiwan, United States. Unestablished in: American Samoa, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China–Hong Kong, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Guam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom.

Japanese Sign Language [jssl] (JSL, NS, NSG, Nihon Shuwa, Nihon Shuwa Gengo, Shuwa,

Temane). *Users*: 126,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimate assuming 0.1% of total population. Other estimates vary widely: 23,900 (2008 WFD); 317,000 (Van Cleve 1986). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2013, Basic Act of Persons with Disabilities), guarantees the opportunity to choose ‘sign language’, but no further details. *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Dialects*: None known. Related to Taiwanese [tss] and Korean [kvk] sign languages. Some regional variation within Japan. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Over 95% of the deaf understand Japanese Sign Language. 107 deaf schools. The first school opened in Kyoto in 1878. Used by all. Also use Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: TV. Dictionary. Bible portions: 1993–2018. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Other*: ‘Shuwa’ (sign language) is the most common name in Japan; ‘Nihon Shuwa’ (NS, Japanese Sign Language) is used primarily by linguists, although many linguists use the English name and abbreviation; ‘Temane’ (gesturing) is a former name, not commonly used today. Signed Japanese is distinct from NS (but not always recognized as such), and is used often in formal situations, lectures, speeches, schools, and for interaction with hearing people. ‘Nihon Shuwa Gengo’ (NSG) is a fairly recent invention by the Japanese Federation of the Deaf that is intended to encompass both NS and Signed Japanese. 80% of the deaf understand fingerspelling.

Kikai [kzg]. *Users*: Ethnic population: 13,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Those under 20 are mainly monolingual in Japanese (1989 T. Fukuda). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: Kikai and northeast Okinawa islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Northern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialect*: Onotsu. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible or very difficult with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.

Korean [kor] (Zainichi Korean). *Users*: 825,000 in Japan (2019 Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs), based on nationality. *Location*: Kyoto prefecture: Gion area; Osaka prefecture: Imazato-Shinchi and Tsuruhashi; Tokyo prefecture: Mikawashima, Okubo, and Ueno areas; Yamaguchi prefecture: Shimonoseki; mainly urban areas. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Koreanic. *Lg Use*: Also use Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1911–1993. *Writing*: Braille script. Hangul and Han scripts, primary usage. Latin script, used for maps and signs. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Buddhist, Christian. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: North Korea, South Korea. Also established in: China, Russian Federation, United States, Uzbekistan. Unestablished in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China–Taiwan, Denmark, France, Germany, Guam, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

Kunigami [xug]. *Users*: 4,900 (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*: Okinawa prefecture: central and north Okinawa island; Ie-jima, Iheya, Izena, and Sesoko islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Southern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialect*: Nago. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, of Ryukyuan languages and Japanese

[jpn]. Ryukyuan languages are 62%–70% cognate with Tokyo dialect of Japanese. Lexical similarity: Ryukyu languages: 62%–70% with Tokyo dialect of Japanese. *Lg Use*: Those under 20 are mainly monolingual in Japanese (1989 T. Fukuda). Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.

Malay [zlm]. *Users*: 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Malayo-Chamic, Malayic, Malay. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Latin script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 19,179,170 (as L1: 16,171,280; as L2: 3,007,890). Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Indonesia, Malaysia. Also established in: Singapore. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, China–Taiwan, Germany, Ireland, Madagascar, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen.

Miyako [mvi] (Miyako-Ikema, Miyakoan). *Users*: Ethnic population: 66,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*: Okinawa prefecture: south; Ikema, Irabu, Kurima, Minna, Miyako, Ogami, and Tarama islands. *Status*: 8a (Moribund). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Sakishima. *Dialects*: Miyako-Jima (Hirara, Ogami), Irabu-Jima, Tarama-Minna. Not intelligible of Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. Dialects listed have noticeable differences, but communication is not impossible. *Lg Use*: Older adults only. Shifted to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.

Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs] (Ehime Oshima Shuwa, Ehime-Oshima Sign Language, Miyakubo Shuwa). *Users*: 70, all users. L1 users: 20 (2020 U. Yano). L2 users: 50 (2020 U. Yano). *Location*: Ehime prefecture: Oshima island, Miyakubo village. *Status*: 6a (Vigorous). *Class*: Sign language, Shared sign language. *Lg Use*: Home, market, social events, fishing boats. Used by all. Used by all deaf people in the community. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.

Nepali [npi]. *Users*: 61,000 in Japan (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Eastern, Eastern Pahari. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; 11 noun classes or genders; no articles; content q-word in situ; 1 prefix, up to 5 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking (4 cases); verbal affixation marks person, number and gender of subject; split ergativity; both tense and aspect; passives and voice; causatives; non-tonal; 29 consonant and 11 vowel phonemes. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1914–2004. *Writing*: Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bhutan, India, Nepal. Unestablished in: Australia, Bahrain, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Okinawan, Central [ryu] (Luchu, Okinawan). *Users*: 1,180,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Ethnic population: 1,200,000 (2000 Y. Uemura). *Location*: Okinawa prefecture: Aguna Islands, Kerama Islands, Kume-jima, southern Okinawa island, Tonaki, and islands east of Okinawa island. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Southern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialects*: Shuri, Naha, Torishima, Kudaka. Inherent intelligibility generally

impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. Ryukyuan languages are 62%–70% cognate with Tokyo dialect of Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Bible portions: 1855–1858. *DLS*: Emerging (0.02).

Writing: Katakana script. *Map*: 20.

Oki-No-Erabu [okn]. *Users*: 3,200 (2004). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: north central Okinawa, Oki-no-erabu island. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Southern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialects*: East Oki-No-Erabu, West Oki-No-Erabu. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. Dialect differences noticeable, but communication not impossible. Ryukyuan languages are 62%–70% cognate with Tokyo dialect of Japanese. Ryukyuan languages are 62%–70% cognate with Tokyo dialect of Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.

Persian, Iranian [pes]. *Users*: 50,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Iranian, Western, Southwestern, Persian. *Type*: SOV; noun head initial; no articles; tense and aspect; causatives; 23 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes; stress on final syllable (or root). *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1845–1995. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, used in Iran. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Iran. Also established in: Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates. Unestablished in: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Portuguese [por]. Autonym: Português. *Users*: 266,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 21 consonants, 13 vowels, 11 diphthongs; non-tonal. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1751–2017. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Portugal, Spain. Also established in 14 other countries and unestablished in 38 more.

Punjabi, Eastern [pan]. *Users*: 70,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Panjabi. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; gender (masculine/feminine); no articles; case-marking (7 cases); verb affixes mark person, number, gender of subject; passives; tense and aspect; 15 consonant and 24 vowel phonemes; tonal (3 tones: high, mid, low). *Lg Dev*: Literature. Radio. Grammar. Bible: 1959–2017. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Gurmukhi script, primary usage. Khojki script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 52,077,070 (as L1: 48,299,070; as L2: 3,778,000). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: India,

Pakistan. Also established in: Fiji, Kenya, Mauritius, Singapore. Unestablished in: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Oman, Réunion, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Spanish [spa]. Autonym: Castellano, Español. *Users*: 168,000 in Japan, all users. L1 users: 108,000 in Japan (Instituto Cervantes 2017). L2 users: 60,000 (2013). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives, relatives after noun heads; articles, numerals before noun heads; adjectives before or after noun heads depending on whether it is evaluative or descriptive; question word initial; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark number, person; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonants, 5 vowels, 5 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on penultimate syllable. Silbo Gomero whistled variety of Spanish used in Canary Islands. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1553–2012. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Gibraltar, Spain. Also established in 40 other countries and unestablished in 32 more.

Tagalog [tgl]. Autonym: Tagalog. *Users*: 499,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Greater Central Philippine, Central Philippine, Tagalog. *Type*: Prepositions; no articles; ergativity; tense and aspect; comparatives; 16 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1905. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Tagalog script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Philippines. Also established in: Canada, Guam, Sweden, United States. Unestablished in: American Samoa, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Brazil, Cayman Islands, China–Hong Kong, China–Macao, China–Taiwan, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom.

Thai [tha]. *Users*: 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Kra-Dai, Kam-Tai, Tai, Southwestern. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; no articles; comparatives; 20 consonants, 18 vowels, 14 diphthongs, 3 triphthongs; tonal (5 phonemic tones: 3 level, 2 contour). *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1883–2011. *Writing*: Braille script. Thai script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 60,830,110 (as L1: 20,823,610; as L2: 40,006,500). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Cambodia, Thailand. Unestablished in: Australia, Austria, Canada, China–Taiwan, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States.

Toku-No-Shima [tkn]. *Users*: 5,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: northern Okinawa, Toku-no-shima islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-

Okinawan, Northern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialect*: Kametsu. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Younger generation has passive understanding but cannot speak it (Okamura 2010). Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.

Turkish [tur]. Autonym: Türkçe. *Users*: 3,650 in Japan (2010 census). *Status*: Unestablished.

Class: Turkic, Southern, Turkish. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; indefinite articles; case-marking (6 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; causatives; comparatives; 19 consonant and 8 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; stress on final syllable; vowel harmony; evidentiality. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1827–2006. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Braille script. Cyrillic script, used in Bulgaria. Greek script, no longer in use. Latin script, used since 1928 or 1929, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 90,028,000 (as L1: 84,010,500; as L2: 6,017,500). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey. Also established in: Germany, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Syria, Uzbekistan. Unestablished in: Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Vietnamese [vie]. Autonym: Tiếng Việt. *Users*: 14,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status*:

Unestablished. *Class*: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Viet-Muong, Vietnamese. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; classifiers and numerals precede noun heads; possessor noun phrases and adjectives follow noun heads; noun classifiers; no articles; passives; comparatives; 25 consonants, 11 vowels, 20 diphthongs, 4 triphthongs; tonal (6 tones); inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1916–2008. *Writing*: Braille script. Han (Hanzi, Kanji, Hanja) script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 85,807,700 (as L1: 85,023,700; as L2: 784,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: China, Vietnam. Also established in: Cambodia, Thailand, United States. Unestablished in: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, China–Taiwan, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Laos, Malaysia, Martinique, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Vanuatu.

Yaeyama [rys] (Yayeyama). *Users*: Ethnic population: 46,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Location*:

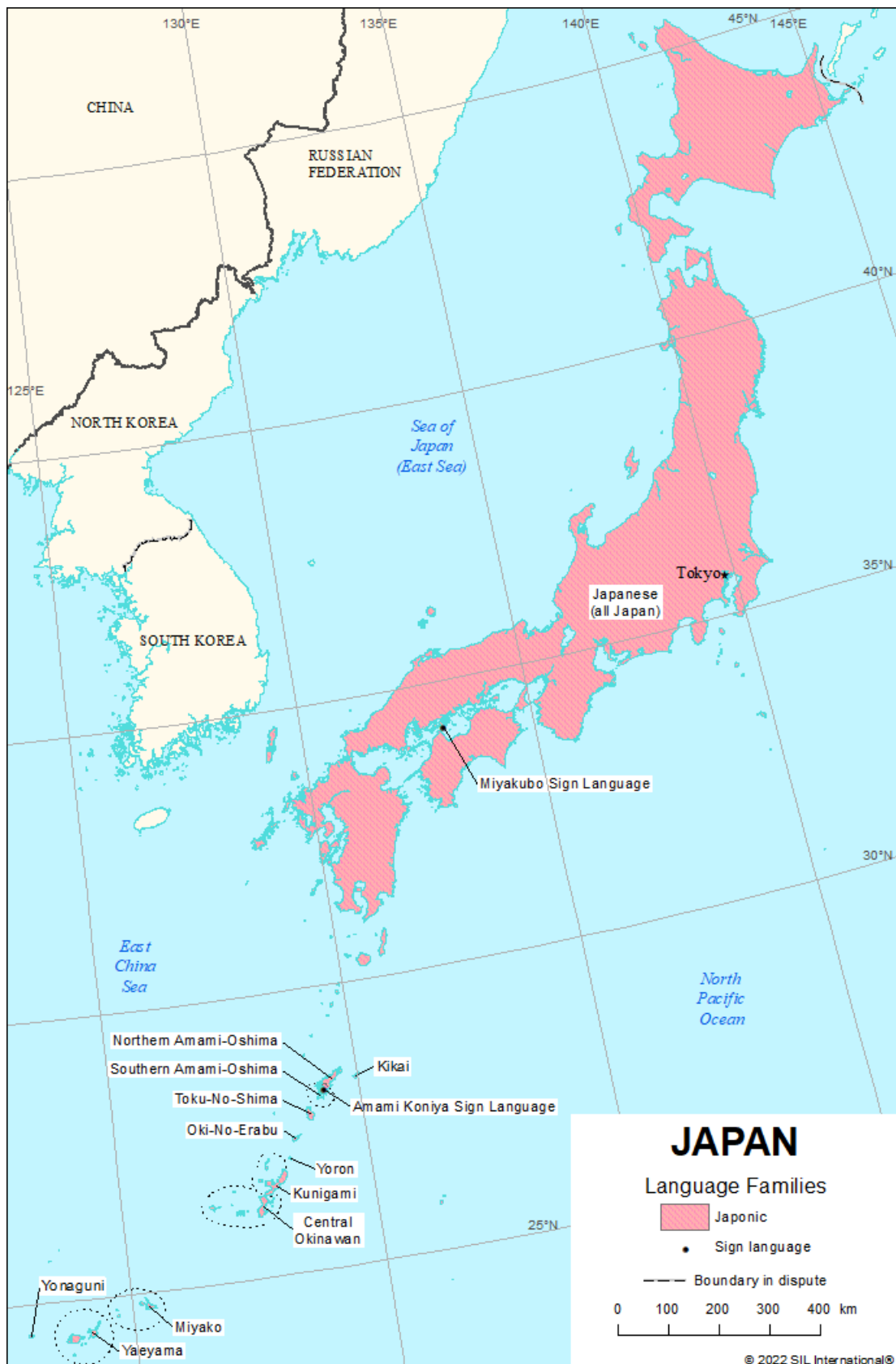
Okinawa prefecture: Aregusuku, Hateruma, Hatoma, Iriomote, Ishigaki, Kohama, Kuroshima, and Taketomi islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Sakishima. *Dialects*: Ishigaki, Kabira, Shiraho, Taketomi, Kohama, Hatoma, Sonai, Kuroshima, Hateruma. Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, of Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.

Yonaguni [yoi]. *Users*: 800 (2004). *Location*: Okinawa: south; Yonaguni island. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Sakishima. *Dialects*: None known. Inherent

intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Map*: 20.

Yoron [yox]. *Users*: 950 (2004). *Location*: Kagoshima prefecture: north central Okinawa, Yoron islands. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Southern Amami-Okinawan. *Dialects*: Inherent intelligibility generally impossible, or very difficult, with Ryukyuan languages and Japanese [jpn]. *Lexical similarity*: Ryukyu languages 62%–70% with Tokyo dialect of Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *DLS*: Still. *Map*: 20.

Language Map



Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Japan are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

100,000,000 to 999,999,999

Japanese [jpn] *Users:* 122,000,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 1 (National). De facto national language. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 123,445,570 (as L1: 123,285,670; as L2: 159,900).

1,000,000 to 9,999,999

Okinawan, Central [ryu] *Users:* 1,180,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Ethnic population: 1,200,000 (2000 Y. Uemura). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

100,000 to 999,999

Korean [kor] *Users:* 825,000 in Japan (2019 Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs), based on nationality. *Status:* 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000).

Chinese, Mandarin [cmn] *Users:* 549,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,138,222,350 (as L1: 939,237,350; as L2: 198,985,000).

Tagalog [tgl] *Users:* 499,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000).

Portuguese [por] *Users:* 266,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

Japanese Sign Language [jsl] *Users:* 126,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimate assuming 0.1% of total population. Other estimates vary widely: 23,900 (2008 WFD); 317,000 (Van Cleve 1986). *Status:* 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2013, Basic Act of Persons with Disabilities), guarantees the opportunity to choose ‘sign language’, but no further details.

Spanish [spa] *Users:* 108,000 in Japan (Instituto Cervantes 2017). 168,000 in Japan, all users. L2 users: 60,000 (2013). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).

10,000 to 99,999

Chinese, Min Nan [nan] *Users:* 75,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished.

Worldwide: Total users in all countries: 50,312,390 (as L1: 49,909,390; as L2: 403,000).

English [eng] *Users:* 73,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). 10,973,000 in Japan, all users. L2 users: 10,900,000 (2020). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Punjabi, Eastern [pan] *Users:* 70,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished.

Worldwide: Total users in all countries: 52,077,070 (as L1: 48,299,070; as L2: 3,778,000).

Bengali [ben] *Users:* 69,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880).

Nepali [npi] *Users:* 61,000 in Japan (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

Persian, Iranian [pes] *Users:* 50,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000).

Chinese, Yue [yue] *Users:* 36,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 86,633,370 (as L1: 86,116,370; as L2: 517,000).

Vietnamese [vie] *Users:* 14,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 85,807,700 (as L1: 85,023,700; as L2: 784,000).

1,000 to 9,999

Malay [zlm] *Users:* 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 19,179,170 (as L1: 16,171,280; as L2: 3,007,890).

Thai [tha] *Users:* 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 60,830,110 (as L1: 20,823,610; as L2: 40,006,500).

Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn] *Users:* 9,800 (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Chinese, Wu [wuu] *Users:* 7,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 83,421,190 (as L1: 83,353,940; as L2: 67,250).

French [fra] *Users:* 6,300 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030).

Toku-No-Shima [tkn] *Users:* 5,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Kunigami [xug] *Users:* 4,900 (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Turkish [tur] *Users:* 3,650 in Japan (2010 census). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 90,028,000 (as L1: 84,010,500; as L2: 6,017,500).

Oki-No-Erabu [okn] *Users:* 3,200 (2004). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams] *Users:* 1,800 (2004). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

100 to 999

Yoron [[yox](#)] *Users:* 950 (2004). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Yonaguni [[yoi](#)] *Users:* 800 (2004). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

10 to 99

Miyakubo Sign Language [[ehs](#)] *Users:* 20 (2020 U. Yano). 70, all users. L2 users: 50 (2020 U. Yano). *Status:* 6a (Vigorous).

1 to 9

Amami Koniya Sign Language [[jks](#)] *Users:* 4 (2020 Y. Osugi). One family. *Status:* 8a (Moribund).

Ainu [[ain](#)] *Users:* 2 (2008 A. Vovin). Ethnic population: 13,000 (2019 E. Jozuka). *Status:* 8b (Nearly extinct).

Unknown

Kikai [[kzg](#)] *Users:* Ethnic population: 13,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Those under 20 are mainly monolingual in Japanese (1989 T. Fukuda). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Miyako [[mvi](#)] *Users:* Ethnic population: 66,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 8a (Moribund).

Yaeyama [[rys](#)] *Users:* Ethnic population: 46,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Japan are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

1 (National)

Japanese [jpn] *Users:* 122,000,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Status:* De facto national language. *Lg Dev:* Fully developed. Bible: 1883–2018. *Writing:* Braille script. Han, Hiragana, and Katakana scripts, primary usage. Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 123,445,570 (as L1: 123,285,670; as L2: 159,900).

5 (Developing)

Japanese Sign Language [jsl] *Users:* 126,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimate assuming 0.1% of total population. Other estimates vary widely: 23,900 (2008 WFD); 317,000 (Van Cleve 1986). *Status:* Recognized language (2013, Basic Act of Persons with Disabilities), guarantees the opportunity to choose ‘sign language’, but no further details. *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Over 95% of the deaf understand Japanese Sign Language. 107 deaf schools. The first school opened in Kyoto in 1878. Used by all. Also use Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev:* TV. Dictionary. Bible portions: 1993–2018.

5 (Dispersed)

Korean [kor] *Users:* 825,000 in Japan (2019 Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs), based on nationality. *Lg Use:* Also use Japanese [jpn]. *Writing:* Braille script. Hangul and Han scripts, primary usage. Latin script, used for maps and signs. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000).

6a (Vigorous)

Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs] *Users:* 70, all users. L1 users: 20 (2020 U. Yano). L2 users: 50 (2020 U. Yano). *Lg Use:* Home, market, social events, fishing boats. Used by all. Used by all deaf people in the community.

7 (Shifting)

Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn] *Users:* 9,800 (Leclerc 2020b). *Lg Use:* Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams] *Users:* 1,800 (2004). *Lg Use:* Adults only. Shifting to Japanese

[jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Grammar.

Kikai [kzg] *Users*: Ethnic population: 13,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Those under 20 are mainly monolingual in Japanese (1989 T. Fukuda). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. Texts.

Kunigami [xug] *Users*: 4,900 (Leclerc 2020b). *Lg Use*: Those under 20 are mainly monolingual in Japanese (1989 T. Fukuda). Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Oki-No-Erabu [okn] *Users*: 3,200 (2004). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Okinawan, Central [ryu] *Users*: 1,180,000 (Leclerc 2020b). Ethnic population: 1,200,000 (2000 Y. Uemura). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Bible portions: 1855–1858. *Writing*: Katakana script.

Toku-No-Shima [tkn] *Users*: 5,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Younger generation has passive understanding but cannot speak it (Okamura 2010). Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Yaeyama [rys] *Users*: Ethnic population: 46,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Yonaguni [yoi] *Users*: 800 (2004). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

Yoron [yox] *Users*: 950 (2004). *Lg Use*: Adults only. Shifting to Japanese [jpn].

8a (Moribund)

Amami Koniya Sign Language [jks] *Users*: 4 (2020 Y. Osugi). One family. *Lg Use*: Centered around one family with several deaf members, with their friends, neighbors, and associates (2020 Y. Osugi). Older adults only.

Miyako [mvi] *Users*: Ethnic population: 66,000 (Leclerc 2020b). *Lg Use*: Older adults only. Shifted to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar.

8b (Nearly extinct)

Ainu [ain] *Users*: 2 (2008 A. Vovin). Ethnic population: 13,000 (2019 E. Jozuka). *Lg Use*: Elderly only. Shifted to Japanese [jpn]. *Lg Dev*: Newspapers. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 1897. *Writing*: Katakana script, primary usage. Latin script.

Unestablished

Bengali [ben] *Users*: 69,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Bengali (Bangla) script, primary usage. Braille script. Newa script, no longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880).

Chinese, Mandarin [cmn] *Users*: 549,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Bopomofo script, used since 1913, revised in 1920 and 1932, mainly used in Taiwan. Braille script. Han script, Simplified variant, used since 1956, official in Mainland China (1956) and Singapore (1969),

also used elsewhere. Han script, Traditional variant, used since mid-19th century, official in Taiwan, also used elsewhere. Latin script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,138,222,350 (as L1: 939,237,350; as L2: 198,985,000).

Chinese, Min Nan [nan] *Users*: 75,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Bopomofo script, used since 1998, used in Taiwan. Han script, Simplified variant. Katakana script, used between 1895–1945, once used in Taiwan. Latin script, used since 1850. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 50,312,390 (as L1: 49,909,390; as L2: 403,000).

Chinese, Wu [wu] *Users*: 7,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Han script, Simplified variant, used since 1981. Han script, Traditional variant. Latin script, used since mid/late 19th century. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 83,421,190 (as L1: 83,353,940; as L2: 67,250).

Chinese, Yue [yue] *Users*: 36,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Braille script, used in Hong Kong. Han script, Simplified variant. Han script, Traditional variant, official usage in Hong Kong and Macau, also used elsewhere. Latin script, used since mid-19th century. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 86,633,370 (as L1: 86,116,370; as L2: 517,000).

English [eng] *Users*: 10,973,000 in Japan, all users. L1 users: 73,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). L2 users: 10,900,000 (2020). *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

French [fra] *Users*: 6,300 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030).

Malay [zlm] *Users*: 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Latin script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 19,179,170 (as L1: 16,171,280; as L2: 3,007,890).

Nepali [npi] *Users*: 61,000 in Japan (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Writing*: Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

Persian, Iranian [pes] *Users*: 50,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, used in Iran. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000).

Portuguese [por] *Users*: 266,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

Punjabi, Eastern [pan] *Users*: 70,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Gurmukhi script, primary usage. Khojki script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 52,077,070 (as L1: 48,299,070; as L2: 3,778,000).

- Spanish** [spa] *Users:* 168,000 in Japan, all users. L1 users: 108,000 in Japan (Instituto Cervantes 2017). L2 users: 60,000 (2013). *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).
- Tagalog** [tgl] *Users:* 499,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Tagalog script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000).
- Thai** [tha] *Users:* 9,900 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing:* Braille script. Thai script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 60,830,110 (as L1: 20,823,610; as L2: 40,006,500).
- Turkish** [tur] *Users:* 3,650 in Japan (2010 census). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Braille script. Cyrillic script, used in Bulgaria. Greek script, no longer in use. Latin script, used since 1928 or 1929, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 90,028,000 (as L1: 84,010,500; as L2: 6,017,500).
- Vietnamese** [vie] *Users:* 14,000 in Japan (Leclerc 2020b). *Writing:* Braille script. Han (Hanzi, Kanji, Hanja) script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 85,807,700 (as L1: 85,023,700; as L2: 784,000).

Languages by Prefecture

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the top-level administrative subdivisions within Japan. Under the name of each prefecture is a list of the language communities that are located within its area.

Ehime

Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs], 15

Hokkaido

Ainu [ain], 11

Kagoshima

Amami Koniya Sign Language [jks], 11

Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11

Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams], 11

Kikai [kzg], 14

Oki-No-Erabu [okn], 16

Toku-No-Shima [tkn], 17

Yoron [yox], 19

Kyoto

Korean [kor], 14

Okinawa

Kunigami [xug], 14

Miyako [mvi], 15

Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15

Yaeyama [rys], 18

Yonaguni [yoi], 18

Osaka

Korean [kor], 14

Tokyo

Korean [kor], 14

Yamaguchi

Korean [kor], 14

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Japan. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

Japonic

Japanese [jpn], [13](#)

Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Northern Amami-Okinawan

Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], [11](#)

Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams], [11](#)

Kikai [kzg], [14](#)

Toku-No-Shima [tkn], [17](#)

Japonic, Ryukyuan, Amami-Okinawan, Southern Amami-Okinawan

Kunigami [xug], [14](#)

Okinawan, Central [ryu], [15](#)

Oki-No-Erabu [okn], [16](#)

Yoron [yox], [19](#)

Japonic, Ryukyuan, Sakishima

Miyako [mvi], [15](#)

Yaeyama [rys], [18](#)

Yonaguni [yoi], [18](#)

Koreanic

Korean [kor], [14](#)

Language isolate

Ainu [ain], [11](#)

Sign language, Deaf community sign language

Japanese Sign Language [jsl], [13](#)

Sign language, Shared sign language

Amami Koniya Sign Language [jks], [11](#)

Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs], [15](#)

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 34 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

ain	Ainu (Japan), 11	pes	Persian, Iranian, 16
ams	Amami-Oshima, Southern, 11	por	Portuguese, 16
ben	Bengali, 11	ryn	Amami-Oshima, Northern, 11
cmn	Chinese, Mandarin, 12	rys	Yaeyama, 18
ehs	Miyakubo Sign Language, 15	ryu	Okinawan, Central, 15
eng	English, 13	spa	Spanish, 17
fra	French, 13	tgl	Tagalog, 17
jks	Amami Koniya Sign Language, 11	tha	Thai, 17
jpn	Japanese, 13	tkn	Toku-No-Shima, 17
jsl	Japanese Sign Language, 13	tur	Turkish, 18
kor	Korean, 14	vie	Vietnamese, 18
kzg	Kikai, 14	wuu	Chinese, Wu, 12
mvi	Miyako, 15	xug	Kunigami, 14
nan	Chinese, Min Nan, 12	yoi	Yonaguni, 18
npi	Nepali, 15	yox	Yoron, 19
okn	Oki-No-Erabu, 16	yue	Chinese, Yue, 12
pan	Punjabi, Eastern, 16	zlm	Malay, 15

Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

- Ainu** [ain], 11
- Ainu Itak**, *alt.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Amami Koniya Sign Language** [jks], 11, 20
- Amami-Oshima Shuwa**, *alt.* Amami Koniya Sign Language [jks], 11
- Amami-Oshima, Northern** [ryn], 11, 20
see Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Amami-Oshima, Southern** [ams], 11, 20
see Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams], 11
- Mandarin Chinese**, *see* Chinese, Mandarin [cmn], 12
- Min Nan Chinese**, *see* Chinese, Min Nan [nan], 12
- Wu Chinese**, *see* Chinese, Wu [wuu], 12
- Yue Chinese**, *see* Chinese, Yue [yue], 12
- East Oki-No-Erabu**, *dial.* Oki-No-Erabu [okn], 16
- Eastern Japanese**, *dial.* Japanese [jpn], 13
- Ehime Oshima Shuwa**, *alt.* Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs], 15
- Ehime-Oshima Sign Language**, *alt.* Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs], 15
- Ezo**, *alt. dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Hateruma**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Hatoma**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Hirara**, *alt. dial.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Hokkaido**, *dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Irabu-Jima**, *dial.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Ishigaki**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Japanese** [jpn], 13, 20
- Japanese Sign Language** [jsl], 13, 0
- JSL**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- Kabira**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Kametsu**, *dial.* Toku-No-Shima [tkn], 17
- Kikai** [kzg], 14, 20
- Kohama**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Korean** [kor], 14
- Kudaka**, *dial.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Kunigami** [xug], 14, 20
- Kuril**, *dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Kuroshima**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Luchu**, *alt.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Miyako** [mvi], 15, 20
- Miyakoan**, *alt.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Miyako-Ikema**, *alt.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Miyako-Jima**, *dial.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Miyakubo Shuwa**, *alt.* Miyakubo Sign Language [ehs], 15
- Miyakubo Sign Language** [ehs], 15, 20
- Nago**, *dial.* Kunigami [xug], 14
- Naha**, *dial.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Naze**, *dial.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Nihon Shuwa**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language

- [jsl], 13
- Nihon Shuwa Gengo**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- Northern Amami-Osima**, *alt.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- NS**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- NSG**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- Ogami**, *alt. dial.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Okinawan**, *alt.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Okinawan, Central** [ryu], 15, 20
see Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Oki-No-Erabu** [okn], 16, 20
- Onotsu**, *dial.* Kikai [kzg], 14
- Oosima**, *alt.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Oshima**, *alt.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Osima**, *alt.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Iranian Persian**, *see* Persian, Iranian [pes], 16
- Eastern Punjabi**, *see* Punjabi, Eastern [pan], 16
- Saghilin**, *alt. dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Sakhalin**, *dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Sani**, *dial.* Amami-Oshima, Northern [ryn], 11
- Shikotan**, *alt. dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Shiraho**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Shuri**, *dial.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Shuwa**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- Sonai**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Southern Amami-Osima**, *alt.* Amami-Oshima, Southern [ams], 11
- Taketomi**, *dial.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Taraika**, *dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Tarama-Minna**, *dial.* Miyako [mvi], 15
- Temane**, *alt.* Japanese Sign Language [jsl], 13
- Toku-No-Shima** [tkn], 17, 20
- Torishima**, *dial.* Okinawan, Central [ryu], 15
- Tsishima**, *alt. dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- West Oki-No-Erabu**, *dial.* Oki-No-Erabu [okn], 16
- Western Japanese**, *dial.* Japanese [jpn], 13
- Yaeyama** [rys], 18, 20
- Yayeyama**, *alt.* Yaeyama [rys], 18
- Yezo**, *alt. dial.* Ainu [ain], 11
- Yonaguni** [yoi], 18, 20
- Yoron** [yox], 19, 20
- Zainichi Korean**, *alt.* Korean [kor], 14
- Zu-zu-ben**, *dial.* Japanese [jpn], 13

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