The purpose of this study is to explore the language life of Japanese expatriates and their spouses living in Non-English-Speaking cities and to elucidate factors, which relate to their satisfaction. Despite it is reported that language competence, especially the local language competence, is an important factor for cross-cultural adjustment during the overseas assignment, the scholars have not empirically examined focusing on expatriates and their spouses’ language life. Surveys from various aspects of language life are conducted in five Non-English-speaking cities: Shanghai, Seoul, Düsseldorf, Madrid and Barcelona.

We will report some findings about the relationship between language competence, language use and their satisfaction. To name a few, the result of Shanghai survey, conducted online with 325 valid respondents, indicates that Japanese is their daily language, while the use of Mandarin is highly required for some official communication scenes where the respondents have low communication satisfaction level. The result of correlation analysis also shows that Mandarin competence is positively correlated with the level of communication satisfaction in official scenes (r=.53, p<.01) and has a low correlation with the level of life satisfaction (r=.29, p<.01). The results of other cities will be also reported in our presentation.

Considering positive relationship with the local language competence and the level of communication satisfaction and life satisfaction, it would be important for Japanese companies to encourage learning of local language both for expatriates and their spouses. This finding also shows clear need of foreign languages other than English, showing the importance of multilingual education, which is totally ignored in the Japanese school education system.

This study is a part of a research project Language Behaviours of Japanese Native Speakers in Non-English-Speaking Cities”. Since 2011 multiple-perspective data are collected to analyse the language life of Japanese native speakers living abroad.

Keywords: local language, language life, Japanese expatriates and spouses.