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《研究論文》

日本における国際バカロレアカリキュラムに関する教師の見解

—PYPとMYPに焦点を当てて—

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Teachers' Perspectives on the International Baccalaureate Curriculum in Japan: Focusing on the PYP and MYP

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要 旨

本研究は、国際バカロレア (IB) の PYP および MYP において、IB の理想と教育現場との乖離と、これらのプログラムが教師の教育観に与える影響について調査した。IB 認定校で PYP と MYP を担当する日本語教員 2 名に対し、半構造化インタビューを実施した。分析の結果、主な課題として、学生の主体的学習態度の育成、評価の難しさ、プログラム間の移行の難しさ、概念ベースの授業における言語学習の正確性に関する課題が明らかになった。一方で、両教師とも IB での指導経験が自己の変容をもたらしたと述べ、生涯学習者の育成に対する意識の向上、教師自身の自己省察の促進、そして教育に対する長期的な視点の涵養につながったことが示された。本研究の結果は、日本における IB 実施を効果的に進めるためには、保護者と学校の連携強化、言語の正確性のバランス、そして教員への専門能力開発の機会提供が重要であることを示唆している。

Abstract

This study examines Japanese teachers' perspectives on International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, focusing on the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). Through semi-structured interviews with two experienced IB teachers at a school in western Japan, we investigated the gaps between IB ideals and classroom realities, as well as how these programmes influence their teaching approaches. The analysis revealed several key challenges, including the difficulty of fostering proactive learning attitudes in students accustomed to passive styles, the complexities involved in assessment, the hurdles associated with the transition between programs, and the trade-offs regarding linguistic accuracy within concept-based approaches. Conversely, both teachers noted that their experience with IB instruction was transformative; it promoted a stronger awareness of cultivating lifelong learners, encouraged teacher

self-reflection, and fostered a long-term perspective on education. The findings suggest that stronger teacher-parent collaboration, balancing linguistic accuracy in a concept-based curriculum, and professional development opportunities can support effective IB implementation in Japan.

キーワード：国際バカロレア、カリキュラム、PYPプログラム、MYPプログラム、教師の見解

Keywords: International Baccalaureate, Curriculum, Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, Teachers' perspectives

1. Introduction

The International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes started in Europe during the 1960s with the aim of developing inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people to create a better world (IBO, 2017). According to the IBO (2024b), there were 5,800 IB schools in 162 countries and areas as of 2024. In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) actively promotes the expansion of IB programmes. Reforms also target entrance examinations, which now increasingly incorporate IB-inclusive options (MEXT, 2020). MEXT aimed to establish 200 or more IB-accredited schools by 2022, and the number of IB-accredited and candidate schools was 251 as of 2024 (MEXT, 2024). It is expected that IB programmes will continue to establish a stronger presence in Japanese education.

Importantly, IB education also places significant emphasis on developing multilingual students (IBO, 2025d). For example, the IB requires every student in the Diploma Programme (DP) to learn at least one additional language (IBO, 2025b). Language acquisition is not only a requirement in IB programmes but is also considered a crucial medium for promoting intercultural communication and cognitive flexibility (Carder, 2007). As the IBO states, “the role of language is valued as central to developing critical thinking, which is essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness, international-mindedness and global citizenship (IBO, 2011, p.3).” In this sense, language functions not merely as a tool for communication but as a fundamental lens through which individuals perceive and interpret the world.

In this study, the focal language, Japanese, is situated at the intersection of the language used for subject-area instruction in English and the language of the society in which learners live. Consequently, Japanese plays an essential role in supporting students' broader social participation, which is why this research focuses on Japanese language teachers in an IB context. Exploring Japanese teachers' insights into the IB curriculum in Japan—particularly the gap between its ideals and actual classroom realities—is crucial to understanding how educational philosophies are translated into practice. This issue, which lies at the heart of bridging ideals and realities in the bilingual and global education context, represents a critical area of inquiry for both researchers and practitioners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of the IB Curriculum

The IB curriculum is designed to cultivate well-rounded, globally minded individuals through a holistic and inquiry-based approach to education. The IB curriculum adopts a concept-based model, meaning that rather than a topic-based model that aims to know factual knowledge, it aims to understand big concepts and transferable ideas through time, across cultures, and situations (Erickson, 2011). With a focus on interdisciplinary learning, the IB curriculum seeks to nurture students' academic, personal, and social development, equipping them with the skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world (IBO, 2024a).

2.1.1 Goals

The IB aims to develop students who are not only knowledgeable but also inquisitive, ethical, and compassionate global citizens. It emphasizes critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and respect for others. IB graduates are expected to become lifelong learners who can navigate the complexities of the modern world and solve problems with creativity and integrity (IBO, 2024a).

2.1.2 IB Learner Profile

The IB advocates ten attributes to assist learners in becoming responsible members of local, national, and global communities and to create a better world beyond academic success. These ten attributes are represented in its “Learner Profile” and are central to all IB programmes. The key attributes outline that IB learners should be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. These traits guide both students and educators in creating a learning environment that encourages intellectual curiosity, self-reflection, and global awareness (IBO, 2019).

2.1.3 Stages of the IB Programmes

According to the IBO (2024c), the IB curriculum is divided into four key programmes, each targeting specific educational outcomes for different age groups:

1. Primary Years Programme (PYP): For students aged 3 to 12, the PYP focuses on inquiry-based learning and transdisciplinary themes, promoting a student-centered approach that encourages students to explore local and global issues.
2. Middle Years Programme (MYP): For students aged 11 to 16, the MYP builds on the PYP by developing critical thinking, research, and communication skills. It equips students with a solid academic foundation, while maintaining a holistic view of education.
3. Diploma Programme (DP): For students aged 16 to 19, the DP fosters learners' desire to learn as a pre-

university course that offers a balanced range of subjects, combining in-depth academic study with research and service-oriented projects.

4. Career-related Programme (CP): Also designed for students aged 16 to 19, the CP is geared toward those seeking a career-specific education. It integrates academic rigor with practical, hands-on learning experiences.

In Japan, the distribution of IB accredited programmes as of 2024 was as follows: PYP 65, MYP 39, DP 69, and CP 0. It is also worth noting that only 13 IB-accredited schools in Japan have continuous programmes running from PYP through DP (MEXT, 2024).

2.2 The Ideals of the IB

According to the International Baccalaureate Global Research Department (2013), teachers' educational perspectives in IB programmes should prioritize students' diverse viewpoints and intellectual curiosity, founded on inquiry-based learning instruction. These educational perspectives include the following elements:

(1) Significance and Purpose of Learning: In IB education, emphasis is placed on learners actively engaging in inquiry and deepening their understanding through their own perspectives and experiences. Through the inquiry-based learning process, students are encouraged to achieve learning beyond mere knowledge acquisition. This approach aims to balance academic knowledge with practical application skills in real-world contexts.

(2) Cultivation of Global Perspectives: IB programmes underscore international perspectives, and teachers are expected to focus on cross-cultural understanding and diverse value systems. Through collaborative learning, students are expected to deepen mutual understanding by gaining opportunities to encounter others' values. This educational approach is considered to foster "global citizenship" perspectives and promote empathy toward different cultures.

(3) Social and Ethical Role of Education: IB programmes stress the cultivation of students' ethical judgment and sense of social responsibility, aiming to enhance awareness of social contribution through education. The teaching approach seeks to establish a foundation for students to form their own values and beliefs while deepening their social engagement. This aspect aligns with the IB's philosophy.

In essence, teachers' educational perspectives, when aligned with the core IB philosophy, should center on students' independent inquiry and respect for diverse viewpoints, aiming for learning that combines academic knowledge with practical application skills. Additionally, this philosophy prioritizes providing comprehensive learning opportunities that focus on developing global perspectives, cross-cultural

understanding, and social responsibility (Wolf & Brown, 2023).

2.3 Issues

Although the goals of IB programmes aim to guide learners on how to live as global citizens, literature suggests that there are misalignments between what the IB expects and the reality. Walker and Lee (2018) identified gaps between IB programmes and practical realities in Asian contexts. These gaps include challenges in programme transitions arising from different pedagogical approaches, limited understanding among colleagues across different IB programmes, misalignment between parental expectations and IB offerings, and difficulties in teachers' adapting to IB programmes (i.e., PYP, MYP, and DP).

In addition, Lee et al. (2011) highlighted two major challenges in IB implementation: issues related to parents and community, and external assessment challenges. Regarding parents and community, they identified a mismatch between IB philosophy and social norms in East Asia. Specifically, they noted that traditional East Asian educational philosophies—characterized by their exam-result orientation, teacher-directed instruction, and a focus on subject content—fundamentally conflict with the IB's curriculum orientation. Transition difficulty is also an issue. For instance, while the MYP curriculum emphasizes learning processes and skills, the DP is more content-driven and heavily influenced by university examination requirements. This structural difference creates substantial challenges for students moving between these programmes (Lee et al., 2011).

2.4 Position of the Research

Although the IB is gaining more and more attention in Japan, the scope of IB research in this context remains limited. Previous studies have primarily focused on the relationship between the DP and higher education, particularly in connection with university entrance examination reforms (Hanai, 2019; Shibuya, 2016). However, sufficient research focusing on the transition between the PYP and MYP has not been conducted to date. Research on this transition is critical because it may allow for a firmer foundation to be established. Establishing this base of understanding can allow learners to have more consistent learning opportunities while allowing teachers to improve the overall quality of IB education. Furthermore, more deeply understanding teachers' perspectives and their beliefs should be helpful to the effective operation of the programmes and identification of challenges. When teachers are unaware of their beliefs, unintended consequences may arise in the classroom. Xu (2012) argues that belief reassessment is essential when adapting to new educational environments.

Therefore, this study seeks to better understand what gaps exist between the IB's ideals and reality, and how Japanese teachers perceive IB programmes, focusing on the PYP and MYP in particular. Drawing on Japanese language teachers' narratives and beliefs, we examine how learners' multilingual language development is coordinated and shaped within multilingual environments. These insights can support more effective implementation of IB programmes in Japan. Accordingly, we address the following research questions: (1) What are the conflicts teachers face between IB curriculum ideals and the teaching realities in Japan? (2) What are Japanese teachers' perspectives on how the PYP and MYP affect their teaching approaches?

3. Procedure

3.1 The Research Field

The school, located in the West of Japan and serving as the field for this research, offers programmes from PYP to DP and has continued to implement an IB education since the 1990s. It has placed importance on efforts to deepen understanding of the IB philosophy through teacher training and by providing information to parents and learners. Because the acquisition rate of the International Baccalaureate Diploma is very high, it is assumed that the IB philosophy is firmly established consistently across each programme; thus, we considered the conflicts observed between the ideals of the IB and the reality at the field level to be meaningful. Additionally, since the students are mainly foreign nationals coming from various countries, we considered it an important case for revealing the reality of the field regarding how the IB philosophy is actually deployed in a multilingual environment that aligns with the IB's concepts.

3.2 Participants

The first participant, a PYP teacher, possesses 24 years of teaching experience, including nine years abroad and fifteen years of the IB. Before his current role, he taught Japanese at a secondary school in Australia and an international school in Thailand. Upon returning to Japan, he transitioned into IB education; at the time of this study, he was in his eighth year of teaching in the PYP at the research site.

The second participant is an MYP teacher with 18 years of experience, 17 of which have been within the IB framework. Her career began in an elementary school teaching English to returnee students. Subsequently, she served as a librarian at an IB school for seven years before transitioning to Japanese language instruction. She has built her career primarily in Japan and is currently in her sixth year of teaching Japanese within an IB context. We chose these two participants because of their extensive and rich teaching experience and their familiarity with an IB context.

3.3 Process of the Data Collection

In 2024, we conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with participants. Prior to the interviews, each participant completed a questionnaire designed to provide background information on their professional experience and their involvement with the IB programme. The questionnaire examined their teaching experience in the IB setting, their perspectives on the IB curriculum, how they understand its structure and implementation, the challenges they encounter, and the key considerations they take into account when teaching in an IB context. The followings are the examples of the questions:

- ・ IB 教育に興味を持ったきっかけは何ですか。(What sparked your interest in IB education?)
- ・ これまで IB 教育にどのように関わってきましたか。(What has been your involvement in IB education?)
- ・ IB での教育経験で最も印象に残っていることは何ですか。(What has been your most memorable moment in your experience with IB education?)
- ・ IB での教育経験で最も難しかった点、大変だった点は何ですか。(What has been the most

challenging aspect of your teaching in an IB context?)

- ・教師が IB のカリキュラムをよりよく理解し、実践するためには、どのような教育支援やリソースが必要だと思いますか。(What supports or resources do you think teachers need in order to better understand and implement IB curriculum?)
- ・IB 以前と以後の教職キャリアの変化を振り返って、どのような変化に気づきましたか。(Reflecting on your teaching career before and after working in IB, what changes or transformations have you noticed?)

Each participant then took part in an interview lasting approximately one hour, for which we obtained permission to record. The questionnaire served as an interview guide, helping us initiate and extend the conversation. For example, while the questionnaire documented the extent of each participant's involvement in IB education (e.g., how many years they have worked within the IB system), the interviews allowed us to expand the conversation into their specific perspectives on IB curriculum and the ways they integrate its philosophy into the classroom. In this way, we maintained a general direction in our questioning while also creating space to elicit deeper, more personal narratives from the teachers.

For data analysis, we employed reflective thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase framework: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. This approach allowed us to identify patterns and themes that reflect the interplay between teachers' beliefs and the IB curriculum. Following the analysis, we conducted member checking to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data and interpretations.

4. Findings

4.1 Ideals and Reality

Regarding the first research question, both the PYP and MYP teachers shared similar perspectives. The themes we found to reveal the main gaps between IB ideals and reality in both the PYP and MYP settings were in terms of students' learning attitudes, assessment difficulties, and transition issues. Additionally, the PYP interview data shows a lack of accuracy and foundational knowledge in language. To better understand the gaps between the ideals and the reality in IB programmes in these settings, we compared the curriculum documents against the perspectives of two teachers from these settings.

4.1.1 Students' Learning Attitudes

According to the PYP curriculum (IBO, 2025c), the IB adopts a student-centered approach that fosters active participation in learning. However, the PYP teacher we surveyed and interviewed reported that the students he teaches tend to favor passive learning. Similarly, although the IBO (2024d) mentions that MYP develops students' confidence in managing their own learning and making connections between their learning in the classroom and the real world, the MYP teacher we interviewed indicated that students often

lack confidence.

PYP teacher Questionnaire data 1

生徒主体的な学習態度の養成が一番大変だと思います。IB Learner Profile の一つとして掲げられているように、IB では、社会の様々なことについて興味、疑問を持ち、生徒自らでその答えを追求する探究心を持つことが期待されています。しかしながら、この生徒が主体的な学習態度を習得することはかなりハイレベルな能力です。特に、日本及びアジアの国々の生徒は、教師が生徒に知識を授ける受け身の学習を好むタイプが多いので主体的学習態度を生徒に定着させるのに常に試行錯誤しています。[I think fostering a proactive learning attitude among students is the most challenging aspect. As outlined in the IB Learner Profile, the IB expects students to develop a sense of curiosity and inquiry about various societal issues, as well as the ability to pursue answers on their own. However, acquiring this proactive learning attitude is a very high-level skill. In particular, students in Japan and other Asian countries often prefer a passive learning style, where the teacher imparts knowledge to the students. Because of this, I am constantly experimenting to help students internalize a proactive learning attitude.]

Question Number 6

MYP teacher Verbal data 1

教員としては自信がない生徒に対してもどかしいかな。だから逆に言うと点数が悪くても僕はもう強く生きていきますっていう人を<略>レジリエンスを持って社会に立ち向かっていくとか生きていけるようにするにはどうしたらいいのかな、本当に IB でいいのかなっていうときはありますよね。[As a teacher, I feel frustrated with students who lack confidence. So conversely, I wonder... for people who say “I will live strongly even if my scores are bad” ... how can we help them develop resilience to face society and live their lives? There are times when I really question whether the IB is truly the right approach.]

Discourse Number 56

4.1.2 Assessment Difficulties

The IB curriculum describes assessment in the PYP as ongoing assessment that provides constructive feedback (IBO, 2025a). However, the PYP teacher reported that their assessments are generally abstract and that there is a lack of understanding about assessments among parents. In the MYP, the curriculum emphasizes that “the IB takes great care in ensuring assessment of students is meaningful and fair” (IBO, 2025a, IB assessment principles and practices, para. 1). Nevertheless, the MYP teacher we interviewed noted that despite her feeling that her students are amazing, this excellence does not translate to their scores. Moreover, the final assessment outcome tends to be reduced to just a number.

PYP teacher Verbal data 1

どっちかというところ、例えばミドルスクール、ハイスクールの方がやりやすいところがある

ありますよね。数値化してるから。PYPの方は、ちょっとよくわからないというか、これを数値化した方が、保護者の人はわかりやすいし、そうしてほしいっていう、まあ、生徒もそうです。そっちの方がモチベーションが上がる生徒もいますし、そっちの方を好むタイプもいるんですけども、それをやると、特にPYPはIBではないっていう、そこら辺の葛藤はありますよね。[Relatively speaking, for example, middle school and high school are easier to handle. That's because they use numerical assessments. As for the PYP, it's a bit hard to understand; if it were more quantified, it would be easier for parents to understand, and they would prefer it that way—students too. Some students are more motivated by that approach, and some prefer it. However, if you take that route, particularly in the PYP, it might no longer align with what the IB represents. So, there's that conflict.]

Discourse Number 17

MYP teacher Verbal data 2

ただ、数字として結びつけられるかっていうと、すべてにおいてそれは正直言って非常に難しい。＜略＞やっぱりその数字の帳尻を合わせるというか、最終的に自分としてはここまで考えられる、ここまでできるだろうと思っている生徒が評価されなかった場合っていうのは非常に苦しいですよ。[However, to be honest, it's extremely difficult to connect everything to numerical measurements ...Indeed, when it comes to balancing the numbers, or when a student who I believe has reached a certain level of capability and potential is not evaluated accordingly, it becomes extremely painful.]

Discourse Number 58

4.1.3 Lack of Accuracy and Foundational Knowledge in Language

According to the IB curriculum, the PYP aims to “develop knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and the attributes of the IB Learner profile” (IBO, 2025c, The PYP curriculum framework, para. 2). However, the PYP teacher we interviewed reported a lack of foundational knowledge and accuracy, particularly in concept-based learning settings.

PYP teacher Verbal data 2

例えば言語を教えるというのは、(IBが)概念ベースですから、その知識とか、正確性とか、という基礎がおざなりになる時が、やっぱりすごくあるんですよ。[For example, teaching a language (in the IB) is concept-based, so there are definitely many times when the foundations like knowledge and accuracy, tend to be neglected.]

Discourse Number 21

4.1.4 Transition Issues

The IB intends to provide a “connected curriculum” across the PYP, MYP, DP, and CP programmes (IBO, 2019, p.5). However, the PYP teacher reported that many students experience confusion during the transition from PYP to MYP. In addition to the different assessment system between PYP and MYP (PYP teacher Verbal data 1), the MYP teacher raised the issue of the amount of homework between PYP and MYP, which

could also lead to a transition issue.

The MYP teacher shared the same perspectives and mentioned that schools need to work as a unified team to support students transitioning between programmes.

PYP teacher Verbal data 3

毎年ミドルスクールに上がって、戸惑う生徒がかなり出ることになるわけ。だから、そこら辺の移行を、もっとスムーズにやる必要はあるかなとは思うんですけども… PYP から MYP の移行期に、どうした方がいいのかというのは、話し合いでよく出ています。だから宿題の量に関しても、PYP の宿題の量と MYP の宿題の量は今、違うと。[Every year, quite a few students who move up to middle school end up being confused. So I think there's a need to make that transition smoother...During the transition period from PYP to MYP, what we should do about it often comes up in discussions. So, regarding the amount of homework as well, the amount of homework in PYP and the amount of homework in MYP are currently different.]

Discourse Number 18

MYP teacher Verbal data 3

やっぱり教員の力とか、教員の経験だとか、あと保護者の理解っていうのも非常に大事だと思うので、そこをうまく学校がまとめる、そういうことができたら一番いいと思うんですね。特にそのトランジションのとき、PYP から MYP、MYP から DP のトランジションの構成というか、を学校一丸としてやっぱり。[I think the teachers' capabilities, their experience, and also parents' understanding are very important, so it would be best if the school could bring all of these together effectively. Especially during transitions—the structure of transitions from PYP to MYP, and from MYP to DP—the school really needs to work as a unified team.]

Discourse Number 42

4.2 Teachers' Perspectives on the IB curriculum

Along the same lines of our findings for the first research question, both the PYP and MYP teachers shared similar perspectives on how these programmes influence their approach to teaching—particularly in terms of awareness, learner initiative, and a long-term view of education.

4.2.1 Awareness

The data shows that both the PYP and MYP teachers developed greater awareness of their own professional identities while teaching in an IB context. They each noted having established their teaching philosophies through their IB teaching experience. The PYP teacher stated that the IB taught him the importance of learning through trial and error rather than focusing solely on accuracy of grammar and knowledge. Through teaching in an IB context, he felt that his teaching focus shifted from the goal of delivering specific content to one of cultivating lifelong learners.

It is noteworthy that both teachers referenced the predominant educational beliefs in Japan as a point of

comparison. The PYP teacher stated that Japanese language textbooks tend to emphasize accuracy, which contrasts with what he has learned in an IB context. The MYP teacher mentioned that the IB setting provides her with more opportunities to develop her teaching perspectives and educational philosophy compared to teaching in a more traditional Japanese school.

PYP teacher Verbal data 4

日本の教科書とか見てるとね、やっぱり正確性重視なんですよ。特に言語なんかを教えるときに正確性重視しても、話せないし書けないです。で、それを正確性重視して、きちんと間違えたらいけないっていうようなアプローチよりも、試行錯誤の中から、この学びの直しを見出す、みたいなことに関して言えば、やっぱりそうですね、IB がすべてそういう意味で教えてくれたので、人生が豊かになったと思いますね。[When you look at Japanese textbooks, they really emphasize accuracy. Especially when teaching languages, if you focus too much on accuracy, students can't speak or write effectively. ... Rather than emphasizing accuracy and taking an approach where making mistakes is forbidden, when it comes to finding learning corrections through trial and error, yes, IB has taught me everything in that sense, so I think my life has been enriched.]

Discourse Number 33

MYP teacher Verbal data 4

私にとって日本の学校で教えてた時と今と比べると、よりその規制がかからない状態で自分の教育観とか教育理念っていうのを発展させてもらえるチャンスをもたらえた。それを実際の生徒のもう本当に大事な成長過程を使って、一緒に成長させてもらえたっていうのは非常に大きなことだと思います。＜略＞それを自分が学ばせてもらったことによって、今の学習者に対してどうやって貢献できるかっていうのを考えられるようになったので、コンテンツをいかに教えるかっていうことよりも、IB の理念であるやっぱりより良い生涯学習者っていうのをどうやってその一人一人の生徒に植え付けていけるかっていうのが一番のフォーカス教育のフォーカスになったので、非常にそこは良い変化、学びだったかなと思います。[Compared to when I was teaching in Japanese schools, I've been given the chance to develop my educational views and philosophy in a less restricted environment. Being able to grow together with students during their truly important developmental stages is something I consider extremely significant. ...Through what I've learned, I've become able to think about how I can contribute to today's learners. Rather than focusing on how to teach content, my main educational focus has become how to instill in each individual student the IB philosophy of becoming better lifelong learners. I think this has been a very positive change and learning experience for me.]

Discourse Number 69

4.2.2 Learner Initiative

The data reveals that both the PYP and MYP teachers place importance on learners' initiative. Rather than giving answers to students directly, they first provide opportunities for students to think independently. For

example, the PYP teacher's teaching ideal is "not to teach." He prepares challenging tasks that spark students' curiosity and prompt them to ask themselves "why." The MYP teacher's response also demonstrates support for student initiative. When students make repeated mistakes, she does not judge them. Instead, she asks what the student thinks. She designs learning experiences that encourage students to initiate their own courses of action in their lives, which fosters student responsibility.

PYP teacher Verbal data 5

探究型のタスクを考えるっていうことで、基本的に、さっきの IB で、僕が今一番思ってることは、もう教えないってこと。理想は教えないってことなんです。僕の今の理想の教え方っていうのは、ある程度ここで壁にぶつかるでしょう、というのを予想して、タスクを計画しますよね。まあ大体、こことここでぶつかる。そしたら、(学生が) なんてだろうって思ってくれと。(学生が) 聞いたときに、(僕が) 答えを用意していくっていうのが、理想的な。[In terms of thinking about inquiry-based tasks, basically, what I'm thinking most about in the IB right now is not teaching. The ideal is not to teach. My current ideal teaching method is to anticipate where students will hit walls and plan tasks accordingly. Generally, they'll encounter obstacles at certain points. Then they'll think "why is this happening?" When they ask questions, I have the answers prepared –that's the ideal.]

Discourse Number 24

MYP teacher Verbal data 5

あなたは助詞の使い方分からなくてずっと間違えてるけど、日本に何年も住んでいて、日本語でまだこういう間違いをするのはどうですか? っていうふうに、よく悪い、いいとか悪いとか言わないで、「あなたはどう考えるの? それに対してどうなの? あなたはそれを考えないんだったら、その学習そのものはどうなの?」 っていうところに、自分の人生に責任をとるじゃないけども、自分の人生に、どうしたいのかっていうデザインを自分でさせるっていうのを、特に MYP の 1 年目からはどんどん入れていって。[You don't understand how to use particles correctly and keep making mistakes. How do you feel about still making these kinds of errors in Japanese despite living in Japan for many years? Instead of simply labeling things as good or bad, I ask, "What do you think about this? How do you feel about it? If you're not thinking about this, what about your learning process itself?" It's about having students take responsibility for their own lives, and having them design how they want their lives to be. I increasingly incorporate this approach starting especially from the first year of the MYP.]

Discourse Number 63

4.2.3 A Long-Term View of Education

Both the PYP and MYP teachers shared their views on taking a long-term perspective in education. The PYP teacher compared the IB to more traditional approaches to education in Japan. While more traditional schools in Japan tend to set absolute goals for students to achieve by the end of the year, he stressed the

benefits of carrying learning forward to the next grade level in an IB context. He believes it is important to maintain a long-term view of education. The MYP teacher also mentioned that there are times when students cannot achieve good short-term results in an IB context. However, even when this happens, she hopes for students to continue to grow as lifelong learners who can create something on their own and learn with curiosity even after the IB.

PYP teacher Verbal data 6

例えば、日本の場合、語弊があるかもしれないけど、もう、絶対ここに、到達目標はここだから、ここに行かないと、みたいな感じなんですけど、でも、やっぱり、この時点では、ここまで行かなかったから、それは、次の学年に持ち越して行って、将来的には身に付けてくれるだろうっていうことを、期待するというか、やっぱり、そういう見方が必要だと思いますね。[For example, in Japan's case—this might be a misstatement, but it's like “You absolutely must reach this target goal, you have to get there.” But I think at this point, if they didn't reach that level, we carry it forward to the next grade level and expect that they will eventually acquire it in the future. I think we need that kind of perspective.]

Discourse Number 28

MYP teacher Verbal data 6

こんなに12年も特別な教育を受けさせて結果が出ないのは何でだってなるかもしれないんですけども、いろんなやっぱりここで見てみると、結局いい大学に入ってもその後、何ていうかな、沈んじゃったっていう例も結構あるんですよね。まあ社会に出ても学び続けられる、何か生み出せる人、自分で探求心を持って学習していける人っていうのを、少しでもちょっと教育、教育というか目覚めさせることができるようになればいいと思うので。[People might wonder why there are no results despite providing 12 years of such special education, but looking at various cases here, there are actually quite a few examples of people who got into good universities but then, how should I put it, ended up sinking afterward. I think it would be good if we could somehow awaken—through education, or rather—people who can continue learning even after entering society, people who can create something, people who can study with their own sense of curiosity and inquiry.]

Discourse Number 45

5. Discussion

In this section, we supplement the data and make suggestions for teaching in IB contexts.

5.1 Dilemma of Numbers and Importance of Extracurricular Opportunities

Regarding assessment, the assessment system is rather unique in the IB curriculum. In the PYP, all assessments are conducted internally by teachers within the school (IBO, 2009). In other words, the assessment is not grade-based. Therefore, the ways in which assessment is handled depend on the teachers

and their schools. In the interview, the PYP teacher noted that he provides descriptions to parents to inform them about how the student is learning. However, he also mentioned that most teachers and students tend to prefer numbers. Additionally, he stated that non-numeric feedback makes it difficult to compare students to one another, only allowing comparison to their past selves. The difficulty of assessment was also found to apply to the MYP context. Assessment in the MYP does provide numerical grades, which creates another potential conflict among students and parents seeking only “good numbers.” While numbers do not always reflect students’ actual abilities or their promise for a bright future, students have to get good grades to get into university.

We suggest that while teachers should obviously encourage students to perform to the best of their abilities in school, they should also create opportunities that help expand students’ views and paths for learning outside of the classroom. During the interview, the MYP teacher mentioned that she tries to suggest extracurricular opportunities that she thinks may fit with individual students. For example, she encouraged a student to enter a writing contest because she thought that student had great writing ability. Of course, many students are busy with schoolwork, and oftentimes achieving good scores becomes their primary goal. However, it would be beneficial to help students more fully realize the breadth of their strengths beyond school grades by sharing opportunities outside of school.

5.2 Balancing Linguistic Accuracy with Concept-Based Learning

“Accuracy” in the interview data (PYP teacher Verbal data 2, MYP teacher Verbal data 5) refers to linguistic precision, specifically regarding grammatical form and mechanical correctness. In a traditional Japanese language classroom, such accuracy is often the primary goal. However, in the IB’s concept-based curriculum, language is viewed primarily as a tool for inquiry, critical thinking, and communication (IBO, 2011).

The findings suggest that the teachers do not view the lack of accuracy merely as a deficit, but as a pedagogical trade-off or a shift in focus. The PYP teacher believes that strictly enforcing accuracy (“must not make mistakes”) can hinder students’ willingness to speak, write, and engage in trial and error, which are crucial for inquiry. He accepts some loss of immediate accuracy to foster a “richer life” and a proactive learning attitude. The MYP teacher addresses grammatical errors (e.g., particles) not by immediate correction, but by prompting self-reflection (e.g., “How do you feel about making these mistakes despite living in Japan for many years?”).

Acknowledging this trade-off, some may feel that more rigorous tests with numerical outcomes can help students improve accuracy; however, if PYP assessments were to become purely numerical, it would not align with the philosophy that the IB envisions for the PYP (PYP teacher Verbal data 1). According to the IBO (2009), PYP assessments are conducted through five methods: observation, performance assessments, process-focused assessments, selected responses, and open-ended tasks. Although teachers might be able to use performance assessments and selected responses (e.g. tests and quizzes) to evaluate accuracy and knowledge of language, the IBO places strong emphasis on a holistic approach. Therefore, it may still be difficult to prioritize accuracy and knowledge alone within the PYP framework.

In contrast, the MYP provides more detailed assessment criteria than the PYP. According to the IBO (2014), MYP assessments in *Language and Literature* are based on four criteria: analyzing, organizing, producing text, and using language. Similarly, in *Language Acquisition*, the four criteria are comprehending spoken and visual text, comprehending written and visual text, communicating, and using language. Internal assessments at the MYP level include both summative (final evaluations) and formative (ongoing) assessments. These assessments offer some flexibility to teachers, making it possible to place greater emphasis on language use, which may help students pay more attention to accuracy. Additionally, ongoing feedback provided during each stage of a project may also support student improvement.

5.3 Challenges in Transition and School-Specific Initiatives

In the transition period within the IB curriculum, there is a structural gap between the PYP and the MYP. Millikan (2001) notes that the PYP is an inquiry-based approach, whereas the DP is characterized by subject-focused and specialized teaching. The MYP serves as the bridge between these two programmes; however, the philosophical shift from the PYP to the MYP is not always clearly understood. The findings reinforce this issue, which includes the differences in assessment systems, and the different amounts of homework between these two programmes. IBO offers continuum-based professional development to help educators smooth out the transition between the IB programmes (IBO, 2015).

At the school level, the participants in this study recognized regular in-school dialogue and voluntary study groups as the practical forums for addressing transition issues. At the school, transition-related issues are discussed during a monthly all-staff meeting, where matters such as homework load and concrete adjustments are addressed. In addition, challenges are shared through voluntary study groups. These kinds of context-specific responses are key to bridging the systemic gaps. Moreover, the teacher-parent relationship is crucial to support students. Both of the IB teachers interviewed for this study use online platforms through which students submit assignments and receive grades with teacher comments. Through these platforms, interactions between teachers and parents are expected to occur smoothly even though parents may find it difficult to find time to establish an ongoing dialogue with the teachers.

It is noteworthy that during the interview, the PYP teacher described the IB context as “community-based,” where students, parents, teachers, and neighbors create the learning environment together. This kind of collaboration also leads to providing students with more opportunities outside of the classroom, as we mentioned in section 5.1. Combining dialogues among the teachers and close teacher-parent relationships, teachers can find the individual needs of the students and provide context-specific supports.

5.4 Creating Professional Development Opportunities

The IB curriculum is concept-based and centers around the IB Learner Profile as a core component. As a result, teachers may sometimes be unsure of how to effectively integrate these concepts into their classrooms. Professional development opportunities, such as study groups among IB teachers, are helpful for allowing teachers to learn from one another. In these study groups, teachers exchange ideas about their teaching approaches and discuss the challenges they face. In fact, during the interview, both the PYP and

MYP teachers mentioned that they participate in study groups once or twice a year. These study groups bring together both new and experienced teachers, giving them the opportunity to consult with one another about teaching in the IB programmes. For example, the study group that the MYP teacher attends provides a space for teachers to share what happened in their classes, what they tried, and whether or not it worked. Through these interactions, teachers gain practical insights from these sessions.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on the IB curriculum and to understand the realities of teaching in the PYP and MYP in Japan. We would like to emphasize that although the IB curriculum is not perfect, the teachers expressed a positive attitude toward the educational philosophies of the IB. They believe in its potential and feel that they grow alongside their students through the teaching process.

One of the limitations of this study is that our research focused on only two teachers from a single IB school. To gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the IB, it is essential to include more participants from a wider range of schools, especially in Japan, where there are not many schools with continuous programmes from PYP to DP. Therefore, it would be fruitful to involve a broader spectrum of IB teachers, ranging from those with a single programme to those with multiple programmes. Additionally, a longitudinal case study focusing on a single new teacher and how their teaching philosophy evolves over time would be valuable. Such research could provide deeper insights into how teachers adapt their practices to the IB setting and how their educational philosophies develop through their experiences with the IB.

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