＜論文（英語学）＞

Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom

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Overview

Language is the repository of culture. When we teach a foreign language in the classroom, we are also teaching the culture embedded in that language. This report proposes to examine some of the forms of cultural assumptions that are contained in English and Japanese and focus on how cultural assumptions from our native language can affect our ability to understand the cultural assumptions in a foreign language. As language teachers we must ask to what extent social attitudes can be absorbed in the foreign language classroom. What are some ways we can encourage students to become aware of linguistically-coded cultural aspects, whether hidden or obvious, in the language they are learning?

Keywords

the repository of culture, social register, complimenting, sarcasm, cultural immersion

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1. Cultural short circuits: misperceiving the "other"

As a young newcomer to Japan I had been invited to the home of some Japanese friends for dinner along with a young Australian, who I will call James. The food was superb, the company was lively, the sake flowed and we all had a great time. However, James drank a little more than he could hold, and he got sick before the night was over.

The next day we both stopped by to thank the nice couple for the lovely evening, and the housewife, to my horror, began by noting how James couldn't hold his liquor. Not wanting to see him embarrassed, I immediately pointed out that James had had a lot to drink, most of which he had handled manfully before finally going past his limit. The housewife repeated the charge: that James was a weak drinker. Knowing that James was Australian and being told he was unable to hold his liquor was a real challenge to his manhood and self-image, I stood up for him again. This seemed to irritate the housewife, who then pointed out that I had had a lot to drink, too.

Some time passed before I realized that we both had been doing what we were culturally programmed to do: we each in our own way had been trying to spare the poor fellow any embarrassment about the evening. The problem was that we were each culturally programmed to assume the lad's embarrassment stemmed from a different source. As a result, the culturally dictated phrases that we had each learned to offer on such occasions produced a quite unharmonious duet. Since we were in Japan and speaking Japanese, the blame for this socially uncomfortable exchange lay with my poor Japanese ability. I should have learned the Japanese phrases for that situation rather than just transferring the ones I had learned in English into Japanese. Transferring cultural assumptions does not often succeed; it is more likely to lead to misunderstanding and social disaster.

Understanding culturally-based assumptions can avoid a lot of embarrassment while at the same time making it easier for a foreigner to fit into the social settings of a new culture. Not only are social factors important in making and keeping friends, but the foreign language learner must also be able to interact without making a major faux pas that could affect business relations in the increasingly global business environment. As language teachers, we must consider how the foreign language classroom can be used to help lead our students through this potential cultural minefield.

2. Language, the repository of culture

The culture of every society on earth is contained in its language. Learning a foreign language consists of much more than simply learning to replace the words of one's own language with those of another. The late Dr. Caleb Gattegno, the seminal educator and originator of the Silent Way method of foreign language learning, reminded us that when we learn a foreign language we are acquiring more than a set of language skills, we are acquiring a whole new way of seeing the world and even a whole new personality. Dr. Gattegno pointed out that perhaps the *most important reason* for learning a new language was not what you get (a new language), but who you become.

The reality of Dr. Gattegno's insight first began to dawn on me when

I was still a university student. I was dating a young woman from Colombia, let's call her Cristina, who wanted to make the most of her time in the U.S. by speaking only English the entire time she was there. I was fluent in Spanish from my experiences growing up with friends in South Texas and Mexico, but Cristina refused to speak Spanish with me, and even refused to speak it with other native Spanish speakers or with the university's Spanish teachers. She wanted to spend all her time improving her English. After we had begun dating, Cristina suddenly began speaking only Spanish to me and insisted she would not speak English with me. This struck me as being really strange because she had been so intent on improving her English. When I asked Cristina about this sudden change in her attitude toward speaking English, she told me, "When you are speaking English you are Ralph. When you are speaking Spanish you are Rafael. The personalities are rather different, and I like Rafael better than Ralph, so I intend to speak only Spanish with you."

Although we never saw each other again after she went back to Colombia, Cristina gave me my first clue that we really do pick up a lot of cultural attitudes in how we respond to the world when we learn a language immersed in another culture. This point was strongly emphasized to me when I read a 1970's study by a San Francisco psychiatrist who asked nisei patients of Japanese origin (he himself was a nisei) sentence completion questions such as "When I am angry at my husband, I ..." The questions were asked both in Japanese and in English, but at widely spaced intervals so that the responders didn't realize that they were being asked the same questions in different languages. The results showed a clear pattern of strikingly different answers that were tied to the culture of the language in which the question was asked. That study illustrated how much the language we speak influences our personality and attitudes.

As language teachers we must ask to what extent these social attitudes can be absorbed in the foreign language classroom. What are some ways we can encourage students to become aware of the cultural aspects, whether hidden or obvious, in the language they are learning?

3. The basics: speaking politely

There is no way we can avoid teaching culture in the classroom. Language is not the simple exchange of information similar to interfacing computers. Scientific information that is exchanged in scientific journals may be largely free of cultural attitudes, but when spoken information is exchanged there is always an interpersonal aspect to the act of speech. When a diner talks with a waiter in a restaurant, there are certain assumptions being made as to how they should speak to each other. When a traveler talks to a hotel receptionist, there are sociolinguistic rules concerning what expressions they will use in speaking to each other. The type of language they use will be quite different from the language they use with their co-workers and with their families.

Although today's language textbooks do make some effort to convey these rules of social register, commonly known as degrees of politeness, the rules are presented only vaguely by most textbook writers. Often the textbooks do not even follow the rules consistently - leaving the student quite confused about levels of formality and informality in many of the expressions they learn. I always ask my students to tell me what expressions they believe are more polite or more friendly for the occasion, and I have finally reached the point of no longer being shocked by their answers. Just finding out what the students know in this area can be a major revelation for teachers.

Most textbooks do not *specifically* address levels of politeness with enough clarity in to give students confidence in using these expressions properly. Worse yet, some teachers, and even some textbooks, give students the impression that in America (and other Western countries) everyone is egalitarian and so there is no need to worry about levels of politeness. However, in discussing merely the act of English greetings, Dr. Elaine Chaika notes that the greeting [e.g., Good afternoon, Good evening, Hello, Hey there, Hiya, What's happnin'?, and so on] must match the form of address [e.g., sir, ma'am, Doctor Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Dude, Bro', and so on] in style (politeness) and that the forms of address are as complicated as the society itself. By ignoring the nuances in English language politeness, teachers are often providing students with speech patterns for which native speakers of English must try very hard to overlook the lack of standard norms of politeness.

A good review of the intricacy of levels of politeness in English was covered in Martin Joos' influential 1962 book *Five Clocks*, in which Dr. Joos proposed five distinct context-related "styles" that we employ when using English. Native speakers switch styles unconsciously depending on the context and react differently depending on the style used. One example of how magazine editors take advantage of these distinct styles can be found in the U.S. supermarket tabloids aimed at the housewife. I have picked up a few of these magazines to select interesting readings for my students and have found the stories to be uniformly difficult for even very advanced students to read. The stories are chock full of phrasal verbs and colloquialisms and are written in casual spoken style to get the intended audience - the housewife reader - to react as if she is hearing gossip rather than reading a story. For the non-native speaker who has learned university-level vocabulary, this is a new and different language with different rules, and is generally much more difficult than the heavily Latinate vocabulary that the student has acquired for reading purposes.

In my classes, my students are required to learn to classify socially-based language into two very broad groups: *formal* and *informal* language. Students are encouraged to even further subdivide formal expressions with similar meanings into more and less formal, and informal expressions into more and less familiar. When students learn to use greetings in the classroom, they learn them in context, and we discuss how each greeting fits a contextually appropriate style. This understanding is just as important in making friends as in maintaining the proper standards of politeness in business. Just as one cannot be polite without learning how to use formal expressions, one cannot become really friendly without learning how to use informal expressions.

Lower level students must learn to identify politeness levels implied in commands such as *Please open the door* and requests such as *Can you (Will you) open the door?* and *Could you (Would you) open the door please?* In more advanced classes students discuss other appropriate methods such as *Would you mind opening the door?* The students are made aware that they are always being either formal or informal in speech and that they should know the appropriate level of formality and choose their language accordingly. This is an issue that we deal with in every lesson. Students learn to focus their awareness on whether the expressions they use are appropriate for their relationship with the other person. While they do this unconsciously in their native language, the ability must be learned in a foreign language.

Students must learn to choose not only appropriate expressions in social language such as greetings and forms of address, they must also be able to choose appropriate items of standard vocabulary, such as distinguishing between equivalent pairs such as *have* and *have got* and *would like* and *want*, i.e., they must know when to use *I have two computers,* and when *I've got two computers* is better, and even when to use the very informal *I got two computers* and know why they have chosen the language they are using. When making requests students need to be able to purposefully select among items such as *Can I, May I, Is it OK if I,* and *Do you mind if I.*

These distinctions form a part of what Dr. Gattegno called the "spirit" of a language. This linguistic spirit cannot be added on as an afterthought, it cannot be simply a finish layer spread over language use that has already started to crystallize. Politeness is a basic part of language and reflects cultural assumptions contained within the language, and so exposure to polite versus familiar forms must make up part of the initial exposure to a language.

Other aspects of the spirit of the language that beginning students must focus on include basic intonation patterns and the feelings that are connected with them. Advanced students must also learn to recognize subtleties such as a preponderance of Latin-derived vocabulary versus a heavy reliance on expressions from Old English. Students will also need to understand more advanced intonation patterns and distinguish between formal and informal pronunciation practices.

As Dr. Gattegno was fond of noting, connecting to the spirit of a language confers power to the student to choose speech with confidence, just as a native speaker does.

4. Learning the rules: the meaning of compliments

In his very popular 1972 book titled simply *The Japanese*, author Jack Seward provides many interesting windows into the Japanese psyche. Seward's perspective is interesting. As one of the first foreigners to enter Japan after World War II as a U.S. army linguist, Seward was fluent in Japanese, married a Japanese woman, worked in a Japanese corporation (Yashica), and lived in Japan for many years. While his book provides remarkable insight on the whole, Seward complained in the book that the Japanese habit of indiscriminately paying compliments based on the tiniest of achievements devalued real compliments for really worthwhile achievements. Over the years of living and working in Japan, I have heard very similar complaints from many Westerners.

On the other hand, the Japanese I have met have typically admired the Western custom of paying large amounts of insignificant compliments because it makes everyone feel so good. A typical example of this attitude occurred at a meeting of a cross-cultural exploration group in Tokyo back in the mid-1980's. The Japanese woman who had been invited to speak to the group was lecturing on the topic of compliments, in particular how the unexpected habit of Americans of making daily excessive compliments had boosted her ego and made her feel so good while she was studying at a university in San Francisco.

What is going on here? The Americans are complaining that the Japanese compliment too much over trifles and the Japanese are enjoying their perception of Americans who are always complimenting over trifles. When two cultures come to opposite conclusions on the same issue, we can be sure that there is a rich field for investigating differences in cultural attitudes. Let's look at what was going on in these two examples.

When the woman speaker at the cross-cultural group began to give examples of the compliments she had received, it quickly became very clear to a group of us who discussed it later that the compliments were following very specific rules of which the woman seemed quite unaware. The compliments were based on how she was dressed and how good she looked. The woman had a very formal style of dressing up - she had on an expensive dress, hose, high heels, and lots of make-up, a very common style affected by Japanese women university students of the 1970's. That style was in sharp contrast to the very casual California style of student dress of that era. During that period, California students dressed quite similar to the very casual modern style of dress seen in Japanese students now in the early 21st century.

Elaine Chaika's book *Language The Social Mirror* can help us understand the factors that produced the compliments that this woman reported. In her book, Dr. Chaika discusses American social rules for giving and receiving compliments and points out that special occasions demand compliments. This rule means that when people get something new, such as a new car, or even a new dress, they must be complimented. When they are dressed up for special occasions such as proms or weddings, they must be complimented. The occasion *demands* a compliment. From the compliments that the speaker in the Tokyo cross-cultural group reported, it was easy to see that the American female students complimenting her considered the Japanese woman overdressed for the occasion. Since she was seen as being "dressed up," the other students had to pay compliments. One of the compliments that the speaker reported was, "Oh, Maki, you're *always* so beautiful." In our informal discussion following the meeting, our group of native English speakers unanimously inferred from this statement that the student giving the compliment was uncomfortable about the constant requirement to pay compliments to Maki who was always overdressed. These daily compliments were an indication that Maki's style of dress (heavy make-up, hose, heels) was not standard for the 1970's California university classrooms.

Jack Seward's claim that the Japanese compliment too much can be seen in the same light. The compliments are unexpected to Seward, who said that if you can simply ask for a glass of water in Japanese that the Japanese provide lavish praise for your Japanese ability and say what a true scholar you are. Seward, like many foreigners who have since arrived on the shores of the rising sun, notices the compliments because they seem out of place to him, i.e., they don't follow his sociolinguistic rules. The operant rule for this type of compliment in Japan demands that you encourage beginners or that you encourage people who have just made a mistake.

In his book *Japanese Inside Out*, Roger Pulvers - an American-born author, playwright, theater director, and Japanese university professor - talks about getting compliments in Japanese on his language ability. Pulvers said that every time he got a compliment on how well he spoke

Japanese during a conversation with a Japanese person he would immediately review what he had just said in Japanese and find that he had made a mistake in Japanese usage. One of the rules in Japanese compliments seems to be that compliments are used to gloss over mistakes and to encourage people who have just made a mistake. Mistakes in speaking Japanese tend to automatically generate the need to compliment in Japan, just as being over-dressed in the university classroom can automatically generate the need to compliment in the U.S.

Rather than complaining about Japanese compliments of acts that are not worthy of such high praise, it would be better for foreigners to learn the Japanese social rules of compliments. Preferably, this awareness should begin in the classroom as the language is being learned. The point is not to try to remold Westerners as Japanese persons, but to help them understand the social rules that make it possible for them to fit in to Japanese society to the degree that they choose to do so.

On the other hand, Japanese students going to the U.S. should not be allowed to assume that compliments should be willy-nilly splattered all over everyone they meet. Students need to learn when to pay compliments and when not to do so. Dr. Chaika tells of an exercise in which she had her sociology students lavishly compliment people they knew well (mostly relatives) to see what the reaction would be. The most common reaction was extreme discomfort to the point of anger. Of course, one does not expect that compliments from foreigners will cause people to become angry, but unwarranted compliments can make people uncomfortable and make it more difficult for the foreigner to fit in. Such compliments can also make the foreigner seem not to have good sense, or make him appear to be a buffoon. Social norms for giving and receiving compliments need to be addressed early on in the language class, along with politeness and other sociolinguistic norms. Expressions for receiving compliments are just as important as expressions for giving them, and appropriate phrases should be learned in context. These phrases will remain better established in memory if the student becomes aware of the rules governing why and how they are used, giving the students a sense of the values of the society that contribute to the spirit of the language.

5. Going native: catching sarcasm

A well-known Toyota advertisement for new Japanese employees declared that the company was seeking Japanese personnel who could comfortably swear in English. Becoming good at swearing in a foreign language is certainly a milestone that indicates the speaker has reached an admirable level of fluency. However, the ability to understand sarcasm seems to be on a much higher level than even the ability to swear. Understanding sarcasm is similar to understanding jokes in that the listener must understand dual levels of meaning to "get" it. However, with sarcasm the listener must also realize that the use of language is out of place in that situation or that a social rule is being broken. It is really the rare non-native speaker that has such a total domination of a language that he can confidently assume that the use of language by a native speaker is out of place for the occasion, especially when the usage is finely nuanced.

I used to teach English to very advanced students at a translation company. Most of the students had lived abroad, they spoke and read English with confidence, and they could understand very difficult assignments that would be university level in the U.S. However, they hardly ever caught sarcasm in a text without having it pointed out to them. It used to amaze me that such high-caliber students were never able to catch the use of sarcasm. Some of my foreign friends who had lived in Japan for a long time told me that the reason the Japanese did not notice sarcasm was that sarcasm was not common in Japanese. They pointed out that the Japanese had only one word (hiniku) to denote both the concepts of irony and sarcasm, and they reasoned that the word was mostly used to denote irony because sarcasm didn't really exist in Japanese.

For a time, I bought that explanation. I knew that, compared to languages such as English and Spanish, Japanese has very few swear words and that swearing is not nearly as common in Japanese as in those languages. Although I was aware that the sarcastic use of excessive politeness or excessive respect (*ingin burei*) was not rare, I assumed that perhaps sarcasm, like swearing, might be less common in Japan.

This theory did not stand up to the acid test. When I asked a group of my Japanese native speaking students about sarcasm, they were unanimous in their opinion that sarcasm was fairly common in Japanese. The reason I hadn't been aware of Japanese sarcasm is very likely the same reason that my advanced translation students failed to catch sarcasm in English: it went right over our heads.

My group of students insisted that even though the word *hiniku* was used both for irony and sarcasm they clearly understood the difference. I asked for examples of sarcasm that they had come up against in the past week. One student recounted that he had attended a particular class after having been absent the week before. As he was leaving the class the teacher smiled at him and said, "I suppose you'll be absent next week as well."

For me, this did not qualify as a sarcastic zinger, but all of the students in the group agreed that to them in Japanese it was a stinging remark. The student said he had just smiled in response but admitted that he was still smarting from the insult several days later. All of the students agreed that being on the receiving end of this sarcasm would cause them to become upset. But, I countered, wouldn't it be worse to get a tongue lashing from an angry professor scolding you for being absent? No. All of the students agreed that they would prefer the tongue lashing. This struck me as being really odd. I could not imagine getting such a response from a group of American university students. Why on earth would a student prefer to take the brunt of an angry scolding rather than simply shrugging off a sarcastic remark? I asked the students to define for me as clearly as possible what about the remark made it sting. The students first explained it as making them feel as if they were being thrown away, or discarded. This brought us to the subject of being excluded from the group. Being treated as if one is not a member of the group *(nakama hazure)* is one of the most onerous experiences that the group-conscious Japanese can be made to suffer. The students preferred a tongue lashing because the professor who is scolding them clearly sees them as part of the group and expects them to fulfill their responsibilities as group members.

To recognize sarcasm when it appears, the non-native speaker must not only be aware of the nuances of language and how the language can and cannot be properly used, but he must also be aware of these cultural assumptions involved in the speech acts. A foreign teacher may well make a teasing comment such as "I suppose you'll be absent next week as well" and never realize the kind of reaction it provokes. Looking once more at the Toyota search for employees who could swear in English, one may assume that it would be much easier to find non-native speakers who can swear in English than to find non-native speakers who can understand the nuances of native feelings associated with such acts of swearing.

Language teachers must be aware of the sociolinguistic rules for the language they are teaching and incorporate those rules into their classroom teaching. Native speakers as well as non-native speakers need to read good studies on the language they are teaching. Teachers also need to be familiar with the rules governing the native language of their students when they are teaching students who all share the same linguistic background. I recommend that teachers get at least one book of good sociolinguistic studies from the perspective of a native speaker, because native speakers are less likely to make the kind of mistakes discussed in the two examples on complimenting given above.

For the serious language teacher, one excellent source of American sociolinguistics is Dr. Elaine Chaika's book *Language The Social Mirror*, referred to above. To aid in understanding the Japanese psyche, the best overview of Japanese social attitudes that I have come across is *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, by Yoshio Sugimoto. Dr. Sugimoto is professor of sociology at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. While most of Dr. Sugimoto's books are written in his native Japanese, this excellent book is in English. I heartily recommend both books for teachers who wish to integrate this type of understanding into their classroom teaching. Another excellent source for getting a grasp on Japanese sociolinguistic norms are the language and culture notes of Osamu and Nobuko Mizutani. These notes are associated with their Japanese language teaching materials. Unfortunately, despite their brilliant introduction of Japanese social attitudes, the Mizutanis' lack of understanding of Western culture becomes all too obvious in their attempts at cross-cultural comparisons. However, this does not diminish the wealth of information that they provide on the Japanese worldview.

6. Getting technical: some classroom approaches

Looking at the difficulties facing non-native speakers in trying to understand the complexities of social norms in politeness, complimenting, and sarcasm, one may be overwhelmed at the task and assume that it is too difficult to teach, or that it would take so much extra time that it would not be practical to attempt to teach such concepts in the classroom. However, I believe that teaching these concepts is not only possible, doing so provides a better use of time than not teaching them because these concepts define the use of language in meaningful and memorable fashion for the students. This kind of understanding helps the student to both remember and be able to properly use the language.

During his lifetime, Dr. Caleb Gattegno with his Silent Way of teaching languages and mathematics was often referred to as the world's greatest teacher. Dr. Gattegno liked to say that he wasn't actually teaching languages and mathematics, he was merely educating students' awareness. Dr. Gattegno believed that our awareness is the only thing that can be educated. When students focus their own awareness on the concepts that they need to learn, the students can then take their own responsibility for learning them. Our problem as teachers is how best to help students focus their awareness on the proper areas and create situations in which students can work out the rules for themselves. As we educate student awareness, we are helping students gain confidence in their own mastery over the new language and we are providing the type of associations that can they can best use to build permanent memories.

Using the model of what works to focus students' awareness on an issue can help us as teachers come up with ways to best present new material to the students. One approach that I have used in writing a textbook *(kore nara hanaseru eikaiwa)* is to adopt parallel scenarios which follow a Japanese person who speaks English (Ken Hara) as he interacts with English-speaking friends and in business situations that closely parallel the friendly situations. This keeps the formal and informal language strictly separate and in proper context. At the end of each pair of parallel chapters, the students must compare the language used and be able to explain how and why it differs.

Another approach that I would like to employ in a language textbook is putting all language in visually consistent typeface according to its level of politeness. Neutral words would be in normal black typeface, polite words (e.g., *would like, have*) could be in a special typeface and color, and familiar words (e.g., **want, have got**) could be in yet another typeface and color. After students become used to these, then other similar conventions could be added, e.g., **rude** words or **slang** could be added in still other colors and typefaces. The results could look something like this:

Would you like some coffee?

No *thank you.*

Do you want some tea?

Yeah tea **sounds good. Thanks.**

The teacher can obtain whiteboard markers (or chalk) in the colors selected and consistently use the same color when writing words that should be distinguished by style. The emoticons that are so popular with computer email could also be added to the text with specific language styles. After a while, students come to associate these properties with words themselves and begin to use the expressions with their proper feelings. This approach has the added benefit of permitting levels of language to be occasionally mixed in the textbook without fear of confusing the students. Since mixing formal and informal language is a common feature of natural language, this permits students to become comfortable with the more natural use of language, once more adding to their grasp of the spirit of the language.

The use of culture notes in language teaching is a valuable tool, and used to good effect by Osamu and Nobuko Mizutani in their teaching materials for the Japanese language. Although I also used the technique of culture notes to help students connect with the cultural assumptions behind what transpires in each chapter in the *kore nara hanaseru eikaiwa* course, there are other techniques that may focus the students' attention even more strongly on the subject. In the business English text *Business Venture*, the textbook includes a "Culture File" in each chapter. Each file is one page in length and is based on a special theme, such as time, gifts, tipping, interrupting, job mobility, and so on. The students can decide what kind of answer they would expect for each situation and discuss how the assumptions are different for different cultures. Instead of telling students what the answers are, students are asked what they feel would be appropriate. Especially in a class with students from different cultures, this approach can quickly lead to interesting discussions. One can assume raised eyebrows at the very least in a discussion of Mexican versus Japanese attitudes concerning time, or Arab versus Chinese attitudes concerning touching, or Thai versus German attitudes on a man being kind to the female friends of his girlfriend, or even Australian versus American attitudes on tipping. To get to the heart of such an issue, I think it is far more important for students to understand *why* Americans feel as they do about tipping rather than merely focusing on the mechanics of *how much* to tip.

In the monocultural classroom, students are more likely to agree on the answers to these questions, but students may be surprised that their answers differ from those that would be expected in the culture of the language they are learning. This theme can be expanded in the monocultural classroom by giving several answers for students to choose from and discuss why. Then students could be given information indicating that all of the answers are correct for different cultures and be asked to predict which cultures would choose which answers. This approach can be used to substitute for the variety of answers that would come up in a multicultural classroom.

Body language is another facet of language. Understanding feeling extends beyond appropriate intonation to such physical reactions as smiling, when it is appropriate and not appropriate to smile, and also such matters as when we should shake hands and how firmly, eye contact and physical closeness when speaking, and many other matters. In my classes with only Japanese students, I often get the Japanese head tilt that means "I don't know". Right there I stop the class and explain that they *must* answer in English. They are free to use the very formal "I'm sorry, I don't know", the standard "I don't know", the informal "I dunno", or some version of the very informal shrug, which consists of raised eyebrows, hands out to the sides with palms up and the shoulders pulled upward, but if they are going to use body language, they still have to reply in English and not in Japanese. The shrug may only be used with other informal language. With formal language, one does not permit the informal styles of body language, just as one does not in Japanese. This type of demand does not add to the teaching burden or the time spent, but it does give the students a real feel for using the language naturally and helps them get into the spirit of the language.

As students continue learning these social attitudes and associating them with the language, they acquire part of the worldview required to fit in with another culture. However, there are limits to how much can be absorbed in the monocultural classroom.

7. Bringing it all together: study abroad

The famous sociologist Edward T. Hall tells of a man who had learned to speak Japanese in Japan but then returned to live and work in the U.S. Hall tells how this man would change in his speaking rhythms and body language when Japanese visitors came, and how this change only gradually wore off in the days after the visitors had left. According to Hall, this type of behavior is an indication of just how much we all as social beings fit into the rhythms of the societies in which we live. Since this behavior is largely unconscious, it cannot be taught, it must be caught. This goes well beyond the province of the four walls of the foreign language classroom.

In the early 1990's our university began a short-term homestay program for students to travel abroad and live in the homes of families in English-speaking countries while studying English. Students attend a preparatory class for one semester, and then go to America or Australia for three weeks where they attend English classes in the mornings at a university in that country and have a lot of special activities in the afternoons and evenings and on weekends. Since the homestay families and other students and teachers at the university do not speak Japanese, students are immersed in English and in the cultural niceties as well. I have found that in the first week, almost all of the students will speak to me in Japanese outside the classroom. That begins to change in the second week, and in the third week most of the students are speaking to me as much as possible in English outside the classroom. There is an amazing change in the students' expressions and in their attitudes toward speaking English.

Language study with cultural immersion gives the students the opportunity to begin to employ the social strategies that they have studied in the classroom and to realize that these social attitudes form the reality of life for people in places such as Australia and America. This travel also provides a tremendous impetus for student motivation in language learning. Students who have traveled abroad always seem more focused in their learning in the language classroom, and generally exhibit a superior ability to grasp what the native speaker is trying to say. It really amazes me that such a short experience produces such powerful results.

I know of no way to reproduce these results in the classroom. Obviously, if students were able to spend more time abroad, two or three months even, the results would be that much better, but the cost is prohibitive for many students. The main objective is to at least provide students with some opportunity to live immersed within a culture that speaks the language that they are studying. This seems hugely important to me. In this day and age of common international jet travel, study abroad seems to be something that can be exploited much more than it has been. The world has changed, travel to a foreign country is no longer a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and our language programs should be ready to change with the times. For serious students with at least a minor in language, at least one foreign homestay should be required. I cannot overemphasize the value of the results I have seen in students who have studied abroad, even in students who had been rather poor students before participating in the program.

Naturally, classroom activities must prepare students for the experience, both in English levels and in cultural assumptions, but there is no substitute for exposure to the raw language and culture, immersed among people who cannot speak the students' native language. The classroom preparation should not be seen as merely an extra demand on student and teacher time. If the cultural aspect of language is integrated into the teaching of the language itself, this aspect can provide a greater memory network to help students better retain and better understand the language as they learn it. I believe that integrating the cultural aspect into language teaching can actually improve the efficiency of classroom time.

Until students have the opportunity to meet with native speakers of the language they are learning, or at the very least to meet with other non-native speakers who don't speak the students' native language, students are unlikely to realize what it really means to learn another language and to experience, as Dr. Gattegno said, how it changes them as persons.

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