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2nd JALT OLE-SIG Conference at Chukyu University, Nagoya

LanguageS Plus

– Language learning and teaching
beyond the first foreign language –

Sunday, Event 9 - 16:00 – 17:50 - SYMPOSIUM

Communication beyond language

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Introduction

Teaching foreign languages is often very much focused on linguistic training. But language is integrated in culture. Culture is what surrounds every one of us, we are in it. We rely on it. We are often not aware of it and therefore do not see it: It is like we breathe air. So we need it. Culture is the base of all actions we do. We realize air, when we catch a cold, when we are exhausted after running fast or we have not enough oxygen. In the same way we realize culture. You meet a person from another country, doing things in a way you do not agree with. You think: “Oh, oh”. You go to another country. It is very interesting “wow”, challenging and takes your breath away “ah!”.

Everything you take for granted, you do not think about is culture. This is the base of your action, the use of your language. Language is communication in a very broad sense, is action and is culture. Teaching foreign languages is therefore communication in a broader sense, is acting, doing things and is culture.

This weekend long meeting of 2^{nds} JALT OLE-SIG Conference on the topic of “LanguageS Plus – Language learning and teaching beyond the

first foreign language” at Chukyu University is a very good forum for discussing the “communication beyond language”.

French, German, Global English, Japanese, Thai, Spanish and more languages with even more cultures involved, because French, Spanish, English are languages which are related to several cultures!

Let me give you a first key word:

Cultures are – as they develop - CONSISTENT.

Language and Culture/Culture and Language are interrelated.

Consistency means, what aspect you are looking for, you will find similarity to the related culture. For example, you can study “family structure”, “teaching styles” or “eating habits” and you will find structures, rules, habits which are related to a core system of values.

1. Communication styles

Johan Galtung now in his 80th, is an international known researcher for global peace. He has a long experience living and doing research in many countries. In an academic paper (presented in 1985) he suggests the following communications styles:

Style	center	peripheral	characteristics
SAXONIC	(A) USA, (B) GB	Canada, Australia	fact-oriented, empirical, person-oriented, humorous, building up, pragmatic
NIPPONIC	Japan	East-Asia	social relations first, “unity”, encyclopedic, vagueness, related to a master (seniority)
TEUTONIC	Germany	East-Europe	rational, data are illustrating, but not proofing; theory building; strict, polarizing, humorless, hierarchical
GALLIC	France	Italy, Romania, Francophone Africa	esthetic, theory-oriented (rational), polarizing but about “elegance” of the language, integrating

For academic level he makes a descriptive analysis and a distinction in four intellectual styles as followed:

Style	Scientific communication	theory - orientation	Production of thesis
saxonic	to build up others, to flatter, humor, (USA) “anything goes”	“data are connecting, theory are separating”, inductive-empirical method, many little steps	USA: How this will be operationalized? UK: How this is proofed through an example? ** horizontal, individual. ** not-polarized
nipponic	to be polite and show respect to authority, organic solidarity	more social than intellectual debates, do not destroy given social relations, the one and the other = circular thinking	“Who is the master?” encyclopedic (data) ** vertical, collectivistic ** not-polarized
teutonic	almost no politeness, cold mood, sarkastic	Data are illustrating, but are not proofing; deductive method, antithetic thinking: this or that	“What reason do you have?” ** vertical, individual. ** polarized
gallic	esthetic	theory-driven like teutonic, but more balance-oriented	“Do you have a proper French expression for it?”; ** polarized ** horizontal, individual.

This is a very simple, stereotype looking categorization. But is some truth in it. Look at different at the presentations we heard today, or look at academic papers. A German paper has to start with a definition. If you give no proper definition, a German scholar will not be pleased. If you are from GB you will start your paper with an example or a case study. But if you are from France, you will try to put your thoughts in very carefully considered words, so that it looks good.

You all want the same: you want to attract the listeners and you want to express your thoughts. This is already very difficult in one culture, in your own culture. But if your listeners are not from the same country as you, if they are from various countries, how would you compose your talk, your speech, your academic paper to attract their attention?

Task 1: How do you attract the attention of your students? Do you use your countries communication/teaching style in classroom instruction? Are you aware of your own teaching style? What do you know about Japanese communication/ teaching styles? Whom do you expect to adapt: the teacher to the students or] the students to the teacher? Is there another way?

2. Groups and Leaders

As an introduction I will give two historic examples of German leaders, which are quite famous: Frederick II., King of Prussia and Ludwig II., King of Bavaria. Both didn't want to become a king, both loved music and arts, but as they became king, they acted differently:

>> Frederick II. He regarded himself as the *first servant of the state*, always keeping Prussia's welfare in mind, and expecting the same devotion to office. Related to the group-concept he was acting in a top down – inter-relation.

>> Ludwig II. He loved his people, but he did not like to be a king. So he did build his dream and the most famous hide-away. He is called the fairy-tale-king. Related to the group-concept he was acting extraordinary in isolation of the group, on his own.

An orchestra is a special group and the conductor is in a very special position. For example the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted a long time by Herbert von Karajan 1954-1989. Now it is conducted by Sir Simon Rattle since 2002. Both have a different leadership. What is the relation? - In 2008 the film called “Trip to Asia – The search for Harmony” was published giving insights to the members of the Berlin Philharmonic. The members of the orchestra describe the situation as follows:

Karajan was a top down – instruction-leader, but Sir Simon Rattle says: „It's about music.” His focus is on the common topic, negotiating a consent with the orchestra (topic – consent – respect concept)

In February 2013 the famous music-performing group AKB48 launched a film “Documentary AKB48. No Flower without Rain” giving insights to the

organisation of the group. There is a leading group and a leader (central position), but the leader of the group is chosen by democratic election. The group has a structure and strict rules, which apply to all of them. So it is a group of groups, with a group of leaders. position – rule – structure

A comparative view of groups in classroom-interaction – How is group-work conducted in different cultural contexts? The task is distributed and the group starts to work. Here some scenes from my experience:

in Germany: the members start immediately asking questions, to negotiate and to argue, what is the task. There is no (visible) leader, one person is volunteer to do the presentation. Looking for a debate–solution with arguments.

in Japan: silence, takes time to establish contact between the members, to clarify the task, what to do, distributing the task to all members, reassuring with the teacher. The students try to establish a position-rule-structure, to be able to interact properly.

in France: they start to negotiate, who will be member in one's group, they start to develop stories, verify with the teacher. They try to personalize and think about the performance.

intercultural groups (G30): depending on the composition of the members, but starts to interact immediately, to ask, to communicate. They establish contact through communicative strategies.

Task 2:

How do people interact in groups in your country? What is the role of a leader compared to this group? What do you know about groups in Japan? Do you use pair-work, group-work in your classroom-instruction? How do you organize it? Do you have made some observation about behavior? How would you evaluate the outcome of this group work?

3. Communication beyond language

We have seen now two totally different examples for communications styles. I would like to discuss what you consider important for intercultural communication concerning international groups emerging in a more global world, hiring human resources throughout the world. My thesis is: "Cultures are – as they develop – consistent". As we have many cultures, we do have several consistencies. How do we deal with them? Some people talk about global standard. Is a global standard consistent? What is this and does this really fit with the situation and the needs of international interaction and cooperation?

Thank you for attention and your cooperation.

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