

異文化コミュニケーションを目指した英語教育

—オリジナルテキスト「宮崎のアメリカ人」と「鹿児島のアメリカ人」を通して—

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The Writing of Original Textbooks, AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI¹⁾ and AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA²⁾ As a Cross-Cultural Approach to English Language Education

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要 約

「国際化」から「グローバル・コミュニケーション」の時代に入り、大学の英語教育も新たな期待感と厳しい試練の最中にあるように見える。特に、大学から教養部が姿を消しつつある現状のもと、一般英語のあり方も問われている。従来のテキストが、一般的にあって欧米人によって書かれたものであることを考えるとき、たとえその題材が日本や日本文化を扱ったものであるとしても、従来の“受信英語”を脱却し、“発進英語”を目指す学習者にとっては多少の距離と違和感が感じられるであろう。「日本人は英語が話せない」という要因の一つとして、日本語でのスピーチやディベートの経験不足と平行して、自分に身近な環境や自文化についての認識不足もあることは否めない。

「足元からの国際化」と草の根の異文化交流を目指して前任校で作成した手作りテキスト、*AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI*は、鹿屋体育大学の学生からも期待以上の歓迎を受けた。と同時に、本学のオリジナル版の作成も強く要望された。学生のコメントにはまた、現在の立場において自分の意見を持ち、さらに言語化することの重要性と

必要性を認識したことも述べられていた。

上記を受けて作成した、*AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA*を教材とした授業を通していえるのは、学生が英語の授業を単に単位修得のための科目としてではなく、自分の学生生活を客観的に見つめ、率直に自己表現する楽しいクラスワークの場として価値づけられるということであろう。身近な環境を描写したテキストにおいてはその登場人物に対しても、日本人の若者は自然に同化し、また外国人との異文化コミュニケーションにもごく当り前のものとして前向きに臨めるであろう。

赴任して一年、現在のスポーツ界がいかに「ボーダレス」で、もはやグローバルな視点無しには語れないかを思い知らされている。英語を専門にしないどころか、概して英語オンチだった学生のほとんどが、将来の日本スポーツ界を担う社会人へのパスポートとして、実用的な英語力の習得を、程度の差はあれ目指している。学生を主人公とするオリジナルテキストで疑似体験する異文化コミュニケーションを通して、彼らが自分への自信と今後の指針を得られるであろうことを希望する。

KEY WORDS : 異文化コミュニケーション, 発進英語, 受信英語, アジア, 日本, アメリカ

1. Introduction

Since I started teaching English at college level in 1983, I have had both fun and difficulty finding or choosing appropriate textbooks for my "general English" classes. There were published a variety of English textbooks, each well-arranged and dealing with a diversity of categories and themes. Many of them drew my attention, making it hard to decide which one to select for each of my classes. Thus, every year I have enjoyed both looking over hundreds of those beautiful masterpieces and using some of them as my teaching materials as well as other audio-visual aids.

However, I gradually came to feel that they were lacking something in terms of cross-cultural communication from a Japanese viewpoint. Among them were a number of textbooks with many descriptions of Japan, her people and culture. I found them not only interesting but also instructive, filled with keen observations through Westerners' eyes. On the other hand, however, those sometimes one-sided observations often annoyed me.

One of my classwork goals is to provide students, through the text used, with as many opportunities as possible to learn how to express themselves and to build up their self-identity as individual Japanese. It should help them to develop such abilities as expressed in the Japanese phrase, "*Hasshin Eigo*", as opposed to its predecessor, "*Jushin Eibo*." These are two virtually untranslatable phrases approximately meaning "English for active expression," and "English for passive understanding" respectively.

My two-year experience of living in the United States had already proved the importance of this aspect of learning English. I remember how much I felt lost whenever I was asked questions relating to Japan, my own country. Each time I felt ashamed, not knowing what to say or how to express myself to answer them. It seemed to me that the problem was not only one of English ability but also of a cross-cultural nature. Gradually I realized that part of my difficulty was due to the lack of both self-awareness as a Japanese national and of verbal training in communication skills.

Therefore, an ideal text should be a sort of stage on which students can confront their own Japanese persona and share the drama of a variety of cross-cultural scenarios. In other words, they need living examples of Japanese viewpoints resulting from their own struggles to communicate cross-culturally with their Western counterparts. However, I found that English textbooks were generally written by non-Japanese.

In addition, those texts dealing with Japanese scenes were in general based on Japan's well-known cities, such as Tokyo, Osaka, or Kyoto, but not on remote locations. Under these circumstances, my students must be far from feeling familiarity or closeness to the content. For students to be cross-culturally conscious, they need to go through repetitious training to express themselves, including situations relating to their everyday life, living place, family and ideas.

That is how I thought of writing my own text to depict the college where I was teaching, its students, its surroundings and cross-cultural communication between the students and their fictional American counterpart, Rob. That was in 1988, when I was fortunate to be able to attend the Eighth American Studies Forum in Hawaii. My participation in that forum turned out to be significant, providing me with useful suggestions and inspiration in order to meet my challenge.

In addition, during my stay at a Honolulu hotel, I had a Korean roommate, Jin Young Kwak.

Having shared the room for one week, we spent most evenings talking and exchanging our ideas. That was the first time I could get vivid first-hand descriptions of and information about Korea, including its historical relationship with Japan. She seemed to be so knowledgeable and obviously better-educated in terms of her historical perspective. Gradually, I felt there was something lacking in the Japanese education I had experienced. Since then, we have kept in touch with each other, corresponding and exchanging our recent news from time to time.

In the fall of 1988, I started writing my first text, including my special experience at Pearl Harbor and my cross-cultural communication with Jin Young kwak and other people I had encountered in Hawaii.

2. Writing the First Textbook, *AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI*, and the Cassette Tape

It took me six months to accomplish the first book, *AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI*, which appeared in print in April, 1989. It was published at my own expense, for I was not able to persuade a publisher to undertake such locally-based business. The following are its contents:

PREFACE

- Chapter 1. Rob and His Family
- Chapter 2. Rob's Arrival in Hyuga
- Chapter 3. Lunch at the Uni-house
- Chapter 4. In the Japanese Garden at *Nankyudai*³⁾
- Chapter 5. *Oendan*⁴⁾ and Other Clubs
- Chapter 6. Sightseeing in Takanahe
- Chapter 7. The Ogre's Washboard and the Nichinan Coast
- Chapter 8. Earthquake and Tsunami
- Chapter 9. At Heiwadai Park : Japan Meets the U.S.
- Chapter 10. Rob's Letter to Eva
- Chapter 11. Eva's Letter to Rob
- Chapter 12. Phoebe's Letter to Rob
- Chapter 13. College Life in the U.S.A.

The text opens with a brief description about an American, Rob, and his family in Seattle, followed by his trip to Miyazaki, Kyushu ; cross-cultural communication with Japanese college students, as well as local people there ; sharing of war-time tragedies at a local historical site ; and Rob's correspondence with his sister Eva, in the U.S.; and, at the end, a series of conversations on campus featuring a comparison between higher education in Japan and the United States.

The only subtitled chapter, Chapter 9, deals with World War II, including the Pearl Harbor Attack, through cross-cultural communication between an American youth, Rob, and an old Japanese man, Makieda, who had once lived in the United States and later fought in the war for Japan. When teaching that chapter in class, I showed students both the slides and the cassette tape obtained when I visited Pearl Harbor in 1988. Needless to say, my participation in the Eighth Forum for American

Studies maintained my enthusiastic involvement in that subject.

All the manuscripts were sent for proofreading to Mrs. Joanne Smith, my former professor in the United States. Shortly they returned with an additional chapter, number 12, produced by her and many important suggestions generated through our cross-cultural communication. It seemed to me that both of us had learned a great deal through our correspondence, reinforcing our friendship and mutual understanding.

The publication was followed by the production of a cassette tape to go with the text, thanks to the great help of my Japanese and American friends. We worked on recording the text at a studio of FM Miyazaki Radio Station, where I had weekly talked on American culture on a voluntary basis the previous year. The cassette tape was finally completed with sound effects, such as those of bus and boat, Japanese folk songs, the ocean wave, the windy storm, the radio chime, cheer leaders' songs, and other background music.

AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI was welcomed by students with both surprise and bewilderment. Gradually I came to notice a number of differences in their response or attitudes towards the text. The most distinguished one was their positive involvement in the classwork based on the interpretation of the text. They told me that they had never seen their everyday life or surroundings appear printed in English.

As a teacher, I did not hesitate to make them learn the text; they seemed to realize that they should be fully knowledgeable about its content as a whole. In response to my semester-end evaluation, they frankly gave me all kinds of comments on the text and the cassette tape. Almost all of them expressed their satisfaction, and many of them encouraged me to keep writing original textbooks.

The first edition carrying a number of misprints, I revised it and published the second edition the following spring in 1990. Properly corrected, the second edition turned out to be a masterpiece enriched by a number of drawings and photographs done by students. Such cooperation with my students resulted in the publication of the third edition in April, 1991. That was the time I was notified that my application had been accepted by National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya; I was supposed to move there in the fall.

3. Writing the Second Textbook, *AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA*

All the experiences involved in the first original book have supported my enthusiasm at my present college, inspiring me to start on the second one. When I started teaching there, I decided to use the first book for my new students, considering the geographically close location. At the same time, I began preparing for the second text with its stage based on Kanoya and Kagoshima. The students seemed to enjoy learning English through their text, even though its background is not their own. Most of them said that they had never learned English by means of studying such a locally-based textbook. Eventually they suggested that I write an original textbook for them there.

In October, 1991, I started working on the second textbook, *AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA*, as well as collecting data and materials. The following are its contents :

PREFACE[in Japanese]

- Chapter 1. Trip to Kanoya City
- Chapter 2. Campus Tour
- Chapter 3. Looking around Kanoya City
- Chapter 4. At the Historical Museum (史料館)
- Chapter 5. Rob's Letter to Eva
- Chapter 6. *Kata-yaburi* (型破り) (Breaking away from the Form)
- Chapter 7. Trip to Kagoshima City by Way of Mt. Sakurajima : Volcano
- Chapter 8. Iso Park and Board Sailing
- Chapter 9. Hiramatsu Shrine by Kinko Bay
- Chapter 10. *Jigenryu* (示現流)⁹⁾
- Chapter 11. The Monument to Satsuma Youth (若き薩摩の群像)
- Chapter 12. Eva's Letter to Rob
- Chapter 13. Phoebe's Letter to Cousin Rob –from Penn State Harrisburg–

The text opens similarly with a brief introduction to Rob and his family, followed by his journey from Miyazaki to Kagoshima ; a series of cross-cultural experiences between him and the students and local people there ; and his correspondence with Eva. The college being the only government sports college, the descriptions include some aspects of traditional Japanese martial arts, of the students' future prospects as athletic leaders, and a comparison between Japanese and Western dancing. One of Japan's most historically feudal regions, Kagoshima is rich in a number of historical sites and noted heroes ; they are described in Chapters 8, 9, and 11. Also, one of the nation's most active volcanos, Mt. Sakurajima, is depicted in Chapter 7.

All the manuscripts were sent to Mrs. Joanne Smith for proofreading just like the first one, and returned promptly, accompanied by an additional chapter, number 13, as well as corrections and a variety of significant suggestions. The whole process of our correspondence relating to the text turned out to be a kind of cross-cultural communication. I found that English descriptions could accurately reflect part of Japanese culture or verbal habits even if they are correctly written. I was amused from time to time by her suggestions, which seemed to reflect American culture or verbal habits. Often I was hesitant as to whether to follow her American verbal habits or to maintain my indigenous Japanese speech patterns.

Eventually I came to realize that such a cross-cultural experience needs to be introduced to Japanese learners of the English language. In order to grow out of our Japanese cultural habits and confront those of other nations, we need to break out of our cultural shell voluntarily, not have it broken from the outside. For the sake of that purpose, individual Japanese students of English should experience the precise procedure of gradual acculturation, starting with, and always maintaining, their own identities as a Japanese.

I was fortunate this time to locate a publisher in Fukuoka City who would undertake the publication. Regarding their task as the publication of educational literature mainly meant for high school students, they were willing to pioneer in publication for college education. The whole process took longer than I had expected, and *AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA* was published on May 14,

1992.

In the middle of June, when we were studying Chapter 4, I conducted a survey among 100 of my students, using a questionnaire consisting of 11 items, in order to learn how they were evaluating the textbook. I asked how they were appreciating the contents, the English used for the text, the Notes, the Vocabulary, the Comprehension Questions, the maps of Japan and United States, and a variety of illustrations, as well as how the text could be improved.

According to the survey, 73 students felt a psychological closeness to the text, and its content was regarded as instructive by 49 students ; interesting by 20 ; unique by 15 ; different from others by 14 ; fun by 13. Also, the English used was regarded as being on an average level by 46 students ; difficult by 32 ; practical by 16 ; easy to read by 11. The Notes were judged as useful by 50 students ; average by 26, informative by 20 ; interesting by 5.

In addition, 73 students replied that its local setting has stimulated their interest and curiosity to a great degree. It seems that those students who come from other regions throughout Japan have enjoyed studying about their university and its neighborhood by means of reading an English text.

At the same time, 55 students suggested the text be illustrated with more photographs and sketches, and this seems to imply how much they depend on audio-visual aids. Needless to say, almost all English textbooks are accompanied by their own recorded cassette tapes. Taking this into consideration, it seems to be necessary to record a cassette tape to enhance the text, thus inspiring students to study the text by themselves and eventually improving their listening abilities.

Fortunately, I have conducted my classes in our computerized Language Laboratory which is equipped with all kinds of audio-visual devices, such as individual audio-visual booths and a video screen. A cassette tape would play a significant role in my classwork, reinforcing the educational climate. Despite my recent arrival at my current school, I would like to take advantage of any possibility to produce such a cassette tape.

There are five more chapters remaining to be studied in the text, so it is quite difficult to draw a conclusion at this point. I must wait until the end of the academic year and then conduct another survey in order to grasp the total picture of the educational benefit derived from both the writing and the studying of *AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA*.

4. Future Vision

I reflect my first encounter with Asian people during my stay in the United States from 1981 to 1983. As I became friends with a number of students and residents from Asia, I stopped to wonder why I had never had such an Asian experience back in Japan. It seemed strange for me to get an access to Asian culture across the Pacific Ocean in the United States.

In April, 1991, I was given a great insight into Asian culture when I attended *the Third International Conference on Cross-Cultural Communication : East and West*, which was held at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan. My presentation there, and my association with both other participants and local people, inspired me to continue producing texts.

Now I am thinking of writing a third text, which will include more characters from Asian countries. Its purpose would be to demonstrate cross-cultural communication between Japan, as the

epitome of Asia, and the United States, as the epitome of the Western world. It seems to me that including characters from other Asian countries would help the Japanese characters to reflect upon their historical involvement with Asia and to carefully consider how they should behave and what role they should play in international society as an Asian nation.

NOTES

- 1) Kazuko Miyashita, *AN AMERICAN in MIYAZAKI* (Miyazaki : Komyakusha, 1989).
- 2) Kazuko Miyashita, *AN AMERICAN in KAGOSHIMA* (Fukuoka : Keiryusha, 1992).
- 3) Japanese-style acronym of Minami Kushu Daigaku (University), consisted of three Chinese characters, representing the first letter of each word respectively.
- 4) Japanese expression which means a cheer leader's group.
- 5) One of Japanese martial arts founded in Kagoshima around 1600.