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Japanese Culture Reflected in the Language

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Japanese at
Massey University

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1997

Errata

P.iii,	L.14;	"Though" should read "through".
P.2,	L.10;	"They acquire" should read "they are to acquire".
P.5,	L.28;	"Cord" should read "code".
P.8,	L.20;	"Cord" should read "code".
P.12,	L.15;	"The language" should read "Language".
P.13,	L.1;	"Further more" should read "Furthermore".
P.19,	L.5;	"Brown & Levinson" should read "Brown & Levinson's".
	L.8;	"Save face of speaker" should read "save the face of the speaker".
	L.28;	"Brown & Levioson's" should read "Brown & Levinson's".
P.34,	L.3;	"Edward Hall's" should read "Edward Hall".
P.43,	L.1;	"It" should read "it".
P.75,	L.13;	"From the above examples [3.12d] illustrates" should read "The above examples [3.12d] illustrate".
P.78,	L.18;	"Have" should read "has".
P.81,	L.27;	"Depending upon the sex of the speaker defines the final particles" should read " The final particle normally suggests the sex of the speaker".
P.86,	L.20;	"Itedaita" should read "itadaita".
P.89,	L.1;	"Nigage" should read "nigate".
P.92,	L.20;	"Indicates" should read "indicate".
P.103,	L.20;	"Students" should read "students' ".
P.109,	L.23;	"Rather" should read "rather than".
P.124,	L.9;	"Sawyer and Smith's" should read "Sawyer and Smith".

ABSTRACT

Culture and language have influenced each other as they have evolved! Should this statement be correct, then second language learning becomes second culture learning. However, this fact is not generally known by most second language teachers and students.

The focus of this study has been to examine how the Japanese culture is reflected in the language, and to demonstrate how cultural aspects can be accommodated in the learning environment. The teaching method used is called "Interactive Competence Approach" which integrates sociocultural competence with linguistic and communicative competence, while giving students an awareness, that learning the Japanese language is also learning its culture. The most effective method of cross-cultural training, "cultural assimilator" is employed to increase students' competence.

The relationship between Japanese language and society is best illustrated in the use of politeness, especially honorifics. They are the core of Japanese polite expressions and reflect vertical and *uchi/soto* (in-group and out-group) social dimensions. This vertical and group oriented society is the reflection of the concept of *"ie"*, a basic family unit. Ellipses and indirect expressions are also well-developed to consider other people's feelings and avoid confrontations. Therefore, using this style of language, it is natural then that the Japanese way of communication, which is often described as "implicit" and "indirect" has evolved.

Finally, two major suggestions are formed from integrating these observations and findings:

1. JSL teachers should place more emphasis on politeness in interactions, and honorifics should be simplified.

2. JSL teachers should assist students in improving cross-cultural competence thus enabling them to unravel any social differences while making their own personal adjustments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was fortunate to receive great help and advice from many people at every stage of this research.

First, I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to Professor Kiyoharu Ono, the Head of Department of East Asian Studies of Massey University, for his invaluable comments and most professional supervision as a highly competent researcher of Japanese linguistics. His continual encouragement right through this study from beginning to end has been deeply appreciated.

I gratefully acknowledge the most valuable advice given by his personal lectures and material provided by Professor Yoshinori Nuibe, the Department of Teaching Japanese as a Second Language, Hiroshima University. I have learned the value of cultural competence from his enthusiasm for stimulating students' personal development though his teaching.

I am also indebted Mr Kenzo Kitahara and Mr Takashi Sasaki, the researchers of Inter-cultural Communication Institute, Kanda University of International Studies, and Mr Hiroshi Yamakawa, the Head of Japanese Language Division, Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages. Their advice and the materials provided relating to inter-cultural communication were very helpful.

Sincere thanks to Mrs Etsuko Yatate, a devoted English teacher of global education in Tokyo. Her support for the survey conducted at Tokiwamatsu Gakuen High School greatly contributed to this research. Thanks are also due to Mrs Yatate's colleagues, students, and their parents, who answered the questionnaire. I have greatly benefited from the excellent advice of Mr David Parker and Dr Rick Dezoete. I also acknowledge the belief shown and support given to me by Mr Roger Stokell, a former Head of School of Languages, Auckland Institute of Technology.

Finally, I express deep appreciation to my husband, Ian for his constant encouragement, enormous support, and great understanding. Without the help of all these people, this study could never have been completed.

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*** Data based on survey analysis**

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

*	ungrammatical, unacceptable
'	stress
Φ	null
COP	copula
D	social distance
DO	direct object
FP	sentence final particle
FTA	face-threatening act
H	hearer, addressee
HON	honorific
ID	indirect object
JSL	Japanese as a second language
Lit	literal
LOC	locative
NEG	negative
OBJ	object
P	power
PAST	past
PLA	plain
POL	polite
POSS	possessive
PRES	present
Q	question
R	rating of imposition
S	speaker
SUB	subject
TOP	topic
V	verb