

**An Integrated Approach to Understanding  
Japanese Students' Classroom Communication:  
a case study**

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the degree of Master in Education in the Faculty of Education

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## Introduction

University classrooms, where either language courses or academic courses take place, are sites of complex communication. What kind of communication patterns are considered favourable or appropriate varies according to many factors, but in UK and US Higher Education (colleges and universities) there seem to be certain behaviours which are considered “norms” by teachers and researchers. When matched against these norms, certain groups of students may be considered to communicate ineffectively. Japanese students are often part of this category together with other nationals from the countries of the “Far East”. Such students are often seen by their teachers to be rather “inactive” in classroom communication.

As a Japanese citizen myself, I have been interested in this issue both as a student at the US and UK Higher Education and as a teacher who teaches English as a foreign language in Japan. It has been my hope to find a way to help my fellow Japanese to overcome the difficulties, if any, which they experience in the English-medium classroom. My journey to find *a way* lasted throughout my Masters in Education (MEd) studies at the University of Manchester, and it turned out to be far more complicated than I initially expected it to be.

In this dissertation, I will discuss how I, a Japanese teacher of English as well as a post-graduate student at UK Higher Education, have deepened my understanding of Japanese students' classroom communication behaviours. I will then suggest how my approach can be practically applied to other teachers as well as learners concerned.

Instead of presenting only the outcome of my cognitive journey, I have chosen to write about the process I went through to develop my knowledge on the issue.

Because "*knowledge is not something objective and independent of the teacher to be learned and transmitted but, rather, is the sum total of the teacher's experiences*"

(Connelly et al, 1997: 666), I believe discussion of my own experiences both as a student and a researcher is necessary in effectively presenting my knowledge to others.

In Chapter 1, I first situate the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication in the specific context: in the classroom of non-language courses at UK and US Higher Education. I suggest that Japanese students' communication behaviours in these classrooms are probably not very different from those of local (American and British) students, but the distorted image of Japanese (or Asian) students as the distant *Other* in contrast to the *Self* (Anglophone Western) seem to affect the way

Japanese students and their teachers understand their behaviours. In this chapter, I also define the issue I address in this dissertation and explain how I approach it.

In Chapter 2, I present my attempts to address the issue as an autobiographical case study. How my behaviours in classrooms have changed over years as well as how my understanding has evolved during my Masters studies is discussed with reference to the texts I have written throughout the process.

The data of the case study is then related to the literature in the following chapter in which major approaches to the issue are discussed. I examine how integration of different approaches has contributed to deepening my understanding.

Lastly, in Chapter 4, I suggest how the integrated approach discussed in the previous chapter can be practically used by Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education as well as their teachers, providing a sample self-diagnostic exercise.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Classroom Communication in US and UK Higher Education**

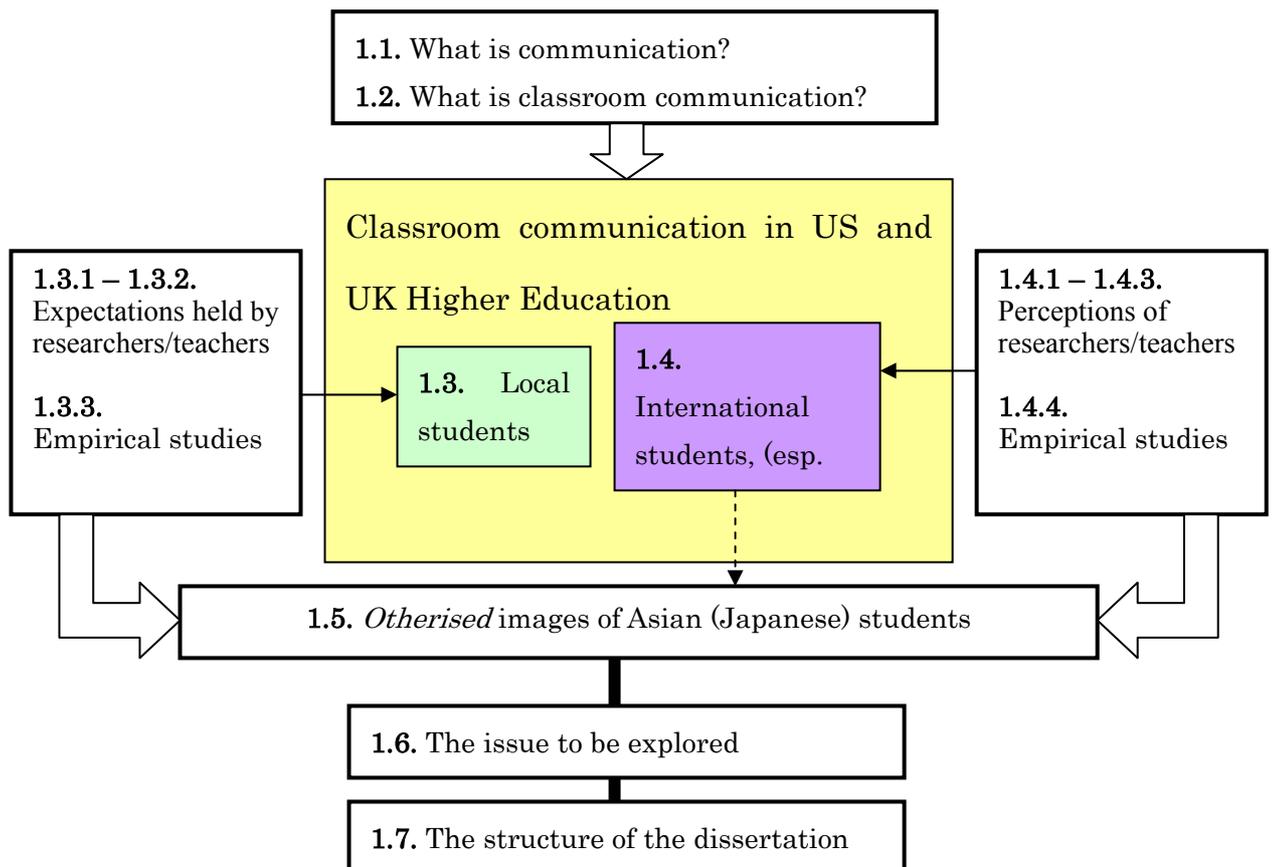
### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I situate the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication within the specific context of non-language courses in US and UK Higher Education, i.e. classrooms in colleges and universities. In this context, "active participation" seems to be considered the norm for communication by teachers and researchers in the field of general Higher Education as well as English language teaching. They also criticise Asian, including Japanese, students for their "inactive" communication style in the classroom. In this chapter, I discuss whether or not their argument actually typifies the communication behaviours of both Asian students and local (American and British) students. After describing a perhaps more accurate picture of communication patterns in these classrooms, I will define the issue I am addressing in this dissertation.

The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part (1.1.-1.2.), I define communication and classroom communication from a transactional point of view. In the second part, I explore classroom communication in US and UK Higher Education with two different focuses: one is on local students (1.3.) and the other on international students (1.4.-1.5.). First, I discuss what are considered as norms for classroom communication in the general Higher Education literature (1.3.1.-1.3.2.), which then will be matched with empirical research findings about the actual behaviour of local students (1.3.3.). International students' classroom behaviour is also reviewed from two perspectives: first, I describe perceptions of their behaviours

held by teachers and researchers in the field of general Higher Education as well as English language teaching (1.4.1. – 1.4.3.), which will then be compared with descriptions of their behaviours in classroom observation studies (1.4.4.). I will explain the mismatch between perceived images and actual behaviours of Asian students using the notions of reification and *otherisation* (1.5.).

In the third part of Chapter 1, I define the issue to be addressed in this dissertation: developing an understanding of Japanese students’ classroom communication behaviours in US and UK Higher Education (1.6.), and explain how I intend to approach it in the succeeding chapters (1.7.). The following figure sets out the organisation of this chapter:



## **1.1 What is Communication?**

‘Communication’ is a term which can be defined in numerous ways. It was once considered as a one-way flow of messages, *“like giving an injection”* (Adler et al, 1998: 10). In recent studies, however, communication is viewed as *“an ongoing, transactional process in which individuals exchange messages whose meanings are influenced by the history of the relationship and the experiences of the participants”* (Adler et al, 1998: 14).

This transactional model of communication suggests that: (1) the sending and receiving of messages occur simultaneously; (2) communication is an on-going process which we cannot separate into discrete acts or behaviours; (3) communication partners mutually influence each other, so that any communication is the result of interaction between them (Adler et al, 1998: 12-14). Here, messages include not only verbal messages but also non-verbal ones such as facial expressions, body movement, and silence. Now, let me apply these three features of communication to interactions in the classroom.

## **1.2 Classroom Communication**

In classrooms, both verbal and non-verbal communication constantly takes place among all participants. When a teacher sends a message to her students by asking “Did you do your homework?”, she is simultaneously receiving messages from them. Some of the messages are verbal (“Yes!”, “What?”, etc.) while others are non-verbal (nodding, raising eyebrows, looking down, etc). Even silence conveys messages as

she tries to attribute certain meanings to the silence (“They haven’t done it”, “They don’t like me!”). This act of meaning attribution (Porter & Samovar, 1997: 9) is also communication, as it will influence the way she interacts with her students next.

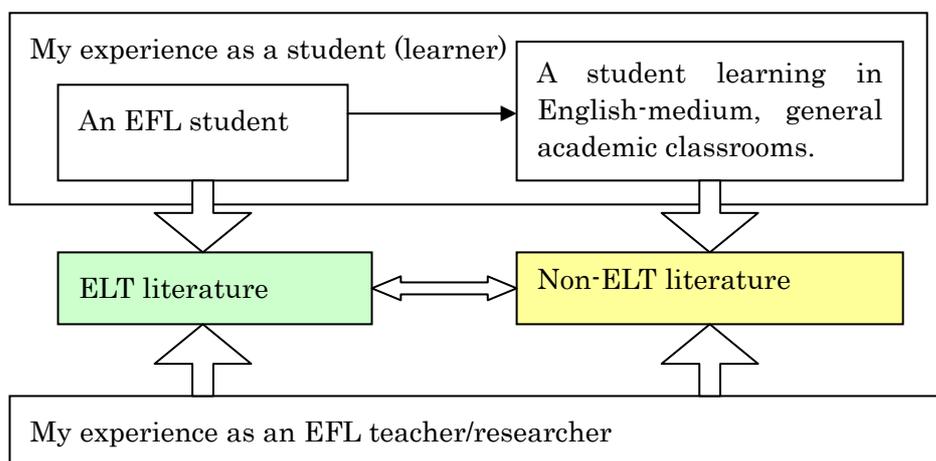
It is not appropriate to take only this part of communication to analyse how the teacher and her students communicate, as their past interactions inevitably have an influence on the way they interact with one another, and the current interaction will affect their future communication as well (Adler et al, 1998: 12).

According to the transactional model of communication, communication partners, like dance partners, mutually influence each other and need careful coordination between them to achieve a satisfactory result (Adler et al, 1998: 13). In the case of classroom communication, however, as a clear power difference exists between teacher and students, the teacher needs to assume greater responsibility for bringing learning into the classroom through effective communication.

The range of teachers’ communication behaviours in classrooms can be summarised with three functions: “They give information, ask for information, and direct student behaviour” (Powell & Caseau 2004: 31). Although this set of behaviours may be universal rather than culture- or state-specific, the actual communication patterns can vary from classroom to classroom.

In this dissertation, I have chosen to focus on classrooms within US and UK Higher Education. The reason for this limited focus is that I have personal experience of studying in both contexts upon which I can draw for rich insider data.

Although focusing on general academic classrooms rather than language classrooms, in this dissertation I will base my arguments not only on the general Higher Education literature but also on the English language teaching (ELT) literature. This choice is made partly because of my experience as a learner and teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The ELT literature has informed me of diverse ways of understanding my own communication behaviour as a student, as well as the behaviour of my students. As I moved beyond the language classroom and joined general academic courses in the US and the UK, the non-ELT literature (including general Higher Education, intercultural communication, and psychology) provided additional insights into the issue of classroom communication. The relationship of both types of literature with my status can be summarised as follows:



In the following sections, I review both ELT and non-ELT literature to explore the classroom communication behaviours of local (American and British) students (1.3.) and those of international students (1.4.).

## **1.3 Classroom Communication in US and UK Higher Education**

### **1.3.1. Typical Images**

Active oral classroom participation is highly encouraged in U.S. universities (Liu, 2001: 40).

Classrooms in the Anglophone West stress ... the norm of loquacity where students are expected not only to have something to say but to be eager to express their opinions on a wide variety of topics (Cogan, 1995: 106).

Statements such as those above often appear in the ELT literature. These statements project a particular image of a classroom in the US and UK: a place where active oral communication naturally takes place among participants, although they are rarely supported through empirical studies. To see if active oral communication is actually the norm for students' communication styles inside such classrooms, I next explore how local (American and British) students are advised to behave in their university classrooms.

### **1.3.2. Expectations for Local Students**

There are a number of study-skills guides which aim to help newly-enrolled local students to achieve academic success in tertiary education (e.g. McIlroy, 2003; Payne & Whittaker, 2000; Johnson, 1994). Generally, they describe what students are expected to do inside and outside the university classroom and list the essential study skills, including classroom communication skills. According to such guides for UK students, there are basically two types of communication style appropriate in their university classrooms: attentive listening and active participation. In lectures, students are expected to listen attentively and to take notes selectively (Dunleavy, 1986: 10; Cottell, 2003: 10), while in tutorials and seminars (with a smaller number of students), active oral participation through contributing to class discussion,

making presentations, and asking questions is encouraged (Dunleavy, 1986: 6; Cottell, 2003: 10; Johnson, 1994: 80). According to the literature on US Higher Education (e.g. Cooper & Robinson, 2000), the situation in the US seems to be similar, i.e. active oral participation is only expected in smaller classes.

It should be noted here that typical images of US and UK classrooms do not correspond to the picture of large, lecture-style classrooms. Only in smaller classes, which are called seminars and tutorials in the UK, does active oral participation seem to be considered as the 'norm' by the study-skills guides and general Higher Education researchers. The next question is whether or not the 'norm' is accepted and shared by students.

Fassinger (1995) researched various factors affecting US college students' classroom interaction. Her research subjects were almost exclusively native speakers of English (96 percent). In the introductory paragraph of her work, she states:

Some students eagerly participate in class daily. Yet, at semester's end most classes contain students who have not uttered a word since first-day introductions. Why the difference? (ibid: 82)

This statement seems to suggest that such perceptions are commonly held by university faculty members. In order to find out the communication patterns of the local students in their classrooms, I next need to review the empirical research findings in the literature on the issues of Higher Education in general.

### **1.3.3. Classroom Communication Patterns of Local Students**

Karp and Yoels (1976) studied patterns of students' classroom participation in a US university. Their classroom observation revealed that only a small percentage of

students did all the talking, instead of everyone being eager to participate. In smaller classes with less than 40 students, only 4.64 students on average made more than 75 percent of total interactions. Another way of describing this result is to note that about half of the students never participated; a quarter of them made comments only once during the class; and the other quarter of them accounted for the rest of the interactions. This picture seems to be quite different from the ‘norm’ which I have just reviewed.

Their study refers to the gender of the students observed, and not to their ethnicity, but it seems to me that the students were probably local US students, considering the much smaller population of international students in the 1970’s. Although the research is almost 30 years old, it suggests that active oral participation was not the kind of behaviour that any student could easily demonstrate in their classrooms. What does the more recent literature add to this picture?

Morgenstern’s (1992) work revealed similar classroom communication patterns among local American university students in a linguistics class. After conducting classroom observations and follow-up interviews, Morgenstern found that five to six students dominated classroom interaction (Morgenstern, 1992, cited in Liu, 2001: 44).

Thus, the research findings on local students’ classroom communication lead us to believe that active oral participation is not a widely-shared behaviour among local students. There seem to be a small number of students who are eager to communicate as expected by their teachers, while the rest fail to show their enthusiasm in class participation.

### **1.3.4. Summary of Classroom Communication in US and UK Higher Education**

The literature suggests that there are two sets of norms in Higher Education classrooms in the US and UK: no oral contribution unless invited by the lecturer in large-class situations; and active class participation where only a small number of students are present.

However, these notional communication contexts and the communication expectations linked to them do not always match the evidence from studies of actual classrooms. Contrary to a stereotypical image that US and UK students eagerly express themselves orally in the classroom, research findings reveal that a limited number of university students tend to dominate classroom interactions while the rest remain silent. It appears that, even before international students are factored in, there already exists a tension between what teachers and researchers expect to happen in the classroom and what actually happens with regard to the communicational behaviour of students.

Now, I shall review how the communication behaviours of the international students, especially Asian (including Japanese) students, are perceived in US and UK Higher Education classrooms.

## **1.4 International Students' Classroom Communication**

### **1.4.1 International Students in General**

Biggs (2003: 120) reports eight common criticisms against international students expressed by their university tutors. Among them, he finds a common complaint on

their class participation mode: “*They are passive; they won’t talk in class*” (ibid: 127). This view is supported by Tompson and Tompson (1996: 53) who regard low class participation as the most serious problem for international students of two US business schools. Similarly, Gareis (2002: 117) reports that the “*business faculty complained that a large percentage of their international [post]graduate students had problems with the communication tasks required for successful completion of classroom and out-of-class assignments*”.

#### **1.4.2 Asian Students**

Of all international students, certain ethnic groups of students are most often problematised by Anglophone researchers and teachers. Biggs (2003: 127) maintains that the statement that international students are passive in classrooms is “*partially true of CHC (Confucian Heritage Cultures) students*”. According to his grouping, Confucian heritage cultures include China, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The list of the countries is similar to those specified by Maxwell et al (2000: 3-4), who report their findings of action research at a university in Glasgow. Their hospitality management students from South East Asia (Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam and China, according to their definition) are found to be “*passive*” and “*unresponsive*”. Also, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986, cited in Liu 2001: 29) argue that especially Asian students in American universities find it difficult and stressful to give presentations, participate in group activities, or ask questions, although they do not specify which countries are regarded as ‘Asian’.

### 1.4.3 Japanese Students

Although there is little research conducted solely on Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education academic courses, there are a number of reports on Japanese students' classroom communication patterns from English language classrooms (Hadley and Evans, 2001; Nakamichi, 2000; Hayagoshi, 1996; Pritchard, 1995) which suggest that Japanese students are quiet in class compared with their counterparts from other countries. Although language classrooms inevitably have different classroom dynamics and communication norms from those of general academic classrooms in Higher Education, these reports from language classrooms suggest that Japanese students are no exception when Asian students are criticised as being inactive in university classes.

However, the above reports from language classrooms seem to place their arguments on the researchers' subjective impression, rather than on comparative studies among different nationals. Hayagoshi (1996: 20), for example, describes her research subjects, Japanese adult students in English language courses in the UK, as "*very quiet in every class in comparison with other nationalities*", without providing any comparative data. Similarly, Pritchard (1995) criticises her Japanese students in a residential English course in England for their reluctance to participate in class, but again does not present any evidence showing that Japanese students are exceptionally reluctant. In order to find out if the communication behaviours of Asian and Japanese students are different from those of others, I next need to review the empirical studies in the literature.

#### 1.4.4 Empirical Studies on Asian Students' Classroom Communication

Liu (2001) studied 20 Asian postgraduate students in a US university through interviews and classroom observations. The subjects were from the six largest national groups in the school: seven Chinese (Mainland China 4, Hong Kong 1, Taiwan 2), six Korean, three Japanese, and four Indonesians. Her findings reveal that the communication mode of these Asian students varied from “*very active*” to “*extremely inactive*”, rather than all falling into the “*extremely inactive*” category. The summary of her findings regarding class participation of the subjects is shown in Table 1.

Participation modes	Number of students	Nationalities of students
Very active	3	2 Korean, 1 Indonesian
Somewhat active	5	2 Chinese, 1 Korean, <b>1 Japanese</b> , 1 Indonesian
Not active	5	2 Korean, <b>1 Japanese</b> , 1 Chinese, 1 Taiwanese
Extremely inactive	7	2 Indonesians, 1 Korean, <b>1 Japanese</b> , 1 Chinese, 1 Taiwanese, 1 from Hong Kong,

Table 1: Liu's findings on Asian students' classroom communication modes  
(Liu, 2001: 66-67)

Unfortunately, her analysis of the students' participation modes are not based upon her close classroom observations (she only observed at least one session for each participant); rather, she used the students' self-assessment and her “*subjective professional judgement as a trained language teacher*” (ibid: 65) based on her interviews with them. Despite such limitations, her study still suggests that it is a myth that Asian students are less active than US and UK students.

Leigh's (2004) work also supports Liu's (2001) findings, although her research focuses on Japanese EFL students rather than students in Higher Education. She conducted classroom observations of intermediate-level English language courses in Manchester, UK, to examine if Japanese students were reticent, i.e. unwilling to

speak, compared with students from other countries. By comparing the frequency of oral contributions during whole-class activities, she found that the Japanese students' communication behaviours varied from “*most active*” in class to “*very inactive*”.

Although they do not specify the nationalities of the research subjects, Furneaux et al (1991: 81) similarly find that “*the amount of participation by NS [native-speaker] and NNS [non native-speaker] students, measured in number of turns and totalled for all seminars, was almost exactly proportional to the size of each population in the study*” during their observation of 13 postgraduate-level seminars at the University of Reading in the UK.

Thus, these empirical studies reveal the actual classroom communication of Asian or Japanese students, which seems no different from the behaviour of local students in US and UK Higher Education discussed earlier in this chapter (Karp & Yoels, 1976; Morgenstern, 1992). There appear to exist both active and inactive participants in both cohorts of students. Yet the behaviour of Asian students somehow often becomes the target of criticism in terms of class participation.

Kubota (2001) suggests that there are two contrasting images of US classrooms in the literature dealing with educational issues in the US and in the field of applied linguistics. She claims (ibid: 26) that:

[w]hen they [US classrooms] are not compared with Asian classrooms, their images are portrayed as problematic. However, when compared with Asian classrooms, they suddenly become closer to the ideal – the norm with positive values.

Her finding corresponds with the images of local students and those of Asian

students which I found in the literature. When not compared with Asian students, local students are perceived to have communication problems in class. Yet, when compared with their Asian counterparts, they are portrayed as ideal students, i.e. enthusiastic participants in class. Why does this happen?

## 1.5 Reification and Otherisation

It seems to me that those researchers and teachers who claim that Asian students are less active participants in class base their argument on reified images of Asians, rather than on the evidence. Reification occurs when patterns of human behaviour are studied and summarised into an abstraction which then becomes “*institutionalised into something that exists over and above human behaviour*” (Holliday, 1999: 241-2). Once reified, abstract images become fixed in people’s minds. People exaggerate and emphasise these images and dismiss any case which does not fit them.

*Otherisation* results from such exaggeration of differences in human behaviour. Otherisation is defined by Holliday (1999: 245) as “*the process whereby the ‘foreign’ is reduced to a simplistic, easily digestible, exotic or degrading stereotype*”. Kubota (2001: 9-10) points out that “*the field [of ESL/EFL] has tended to essentialize the culture of ESL/EFL students, particularly those from East Asia, as categorically different from the perceived culture of students in English-speaking countries such as the United States*”. To be more specific, Susser (1998: 55) defines that “*othering [another term for “otherisation”] posits the Japanese learner as an Other different from Western learners and by implication inferior to them*”, applying Said’s (1978: 2 & 42) argument in the Japanese context.

Hence, a popular criticism that students from Far East are less active participants in

class seems to be a product of *reification* and *otherisation* rather than the result of critical analysis. As these concepts are crucial to understanding the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication, I will further discuss them in the following chapters.

## **1.6 The Issue to be Explored**

From the above literature review, there does not seem to be any apparent difference in students' communication behaviour in terms of class participation between Asian students and local (American and British) students. Yet, Asian students receive more severe criticism from their teachers and researchers. It seems to me that their reified images of Asian students have promoted *otherisation* of these students.

However, teachers and researchers are not the only ones who *otherise* Asian or Japanese students. Students themselves are also influenced by *otherisation*. When studying in the US and UK, I paid constant attention to my own behaviour in order to check if it was appropriate in the given context and to understand why I behaved in a certain way. I now realise that my observation and meaning construction were deeply influenced by reified images of Japanese people, culture and systems; in other words, *Japaneseness*. I *otherised* myself and my fellow Japanese as different from, and inferior to, Anglophones. Furthermore, in my experience, I am not the exception. Many Japanese who study English or other academic disciplines in English seem to be similarly affected by *otherisation*. If *otherisation* does not help the Japanese to observe their behaviour critically and adjust it when necessary, what else can?

In this dissertation, I explore how to develop understanding of Japanese students' classroom communication behaviour in US and UK Higher Education. My focus is

*not* on how Japanese students behave in class, *but* on how their behaviour can be better understood by them and their teachers.

## **1.7 The Structure of this Dissertation**

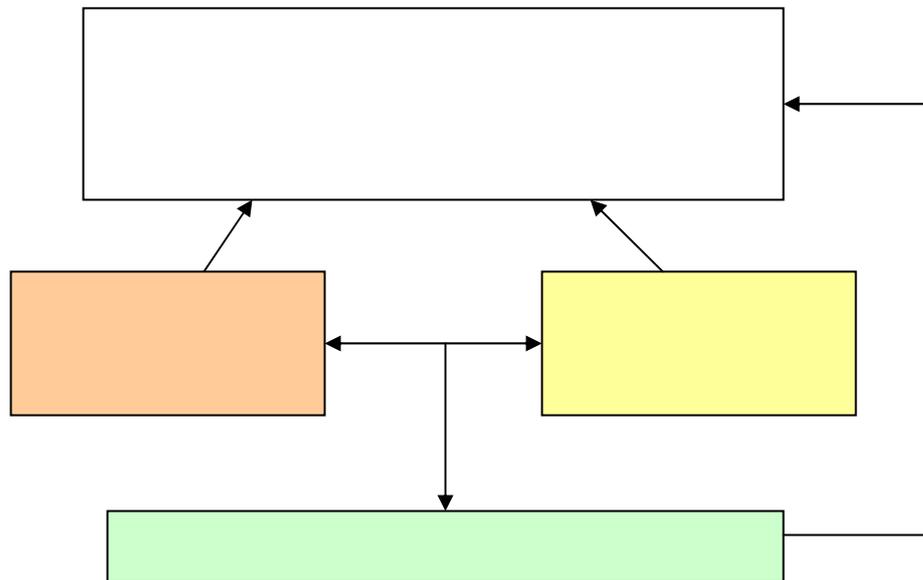
To effectively discuss diverse ways to approach the issue of Japanese students' classroom behaviour, I use two different methods in this dissertation: an autobiographical case study (Chapter 2) and a literature review (Chapter 3). By discussing my own experience both as a student and as a researcher in Chapter 2, I aim to provide rich insider data on how the *otherised* image of classroom communication influenced my behaviour and the meanings I constructed of my life both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, these stories will reveal how I, as a researcher, have struggled to understand Japanese (or Asian) students' classroom behaviour.

One can possibly argue that there is no need to discuss my personal experiences in detail if learning outcomes through these experiences are clearly presented. However, I believe discussion of my cognitive journey is critical in effectively presenting the knowledge I have gained through the process, as "*knowledge is not something objective and independent of the teacher to be learned and transmitted but, rather, is the sum total of the teacher's experiences*" (Connelly et al, 1997: 666). I hope this form of presentation will effectively serve both Japanese students and their teachers in developing their own understanding of the issue.

In Chapter 3, I will review four major approaches to understanding Japanese students' classroom communication which I found in the literature, drawing links with the development of my own understanding as presented in the autobiographical

case study. This literature review intends to discuss diverse approaches to the issue, each with different advantages and limitations, and to present how an integration of these approaches has deepened my understanding.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I will suggest how the integrated approach can be practically used by other Japanese students as well as their teachers, providing a sample self-awareness exercise. The structure of this dissertation is summarised as follows:



## Chapter 2

### My Emerging Sense of Japaneseness: An Autobiographical Case Study

#### Introduction

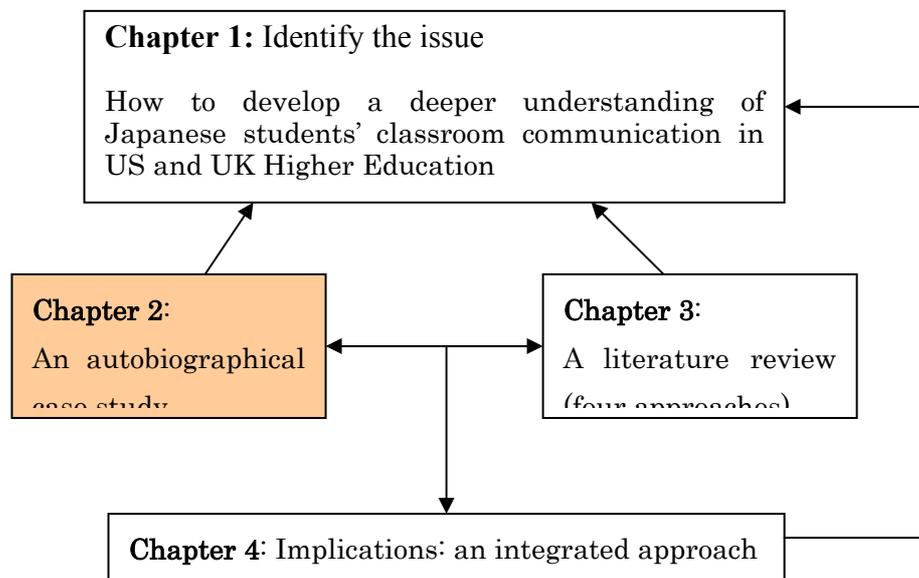
In Chapter 1, I reviewed how the norms for classroom communication in US and UK universities have been constructed in the relevant professional discourses in the field of ELT and general Higher Education. In these discourses, active classroom participation is seen to be a shared norm among local students. Judged in relation to this taken-for-granted “norm”, it appears that students from Far East countries are often criticised as being inactive in class. However, empirical research findings suggest that classroom communication behaviour of Asian students is similar to that of local (American or British) students, which leads me to think such criticism of Asian students is a product of *otherisation*, rather than the result of critical analysis.

When I started to explore the issue of Japanese students’ classroom communication, I was unknowingly but deeply influenced by this *otherised* perception of the reality. Despite repeated conscious attempts, it took me a long time to be able to view the issue without *otherising* Japanese students. My struggle can serve as an example of how powerfully *otherisation* can affect a student’s conceptualisation of the reality in the classroom.

In this chapter, I present my experience in the form of an autobiographical case study. As a Japanese national who has studied in US and UK Higher Education, my experience provides rich insider data on how the distorted image of classroom

communication influenced my behaviour and the meanings I constructed of my life, both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, it reveals how I, as a researcher, have struggled to understand the issue from broader perspectives.

First, I define what I mean by an autobiographical case study, discuss why it is appropriate for the current dissertation, and I explain how I have designed and structured it. Then, through 16 autobiographical episodes, I outline how my classroom behaviour has changed over the years. This also reveals how my understanding of the issue of the Japanese students' classroom communication has evolved during my Masters studies in the UK. I analyse and comment on each episode, with reference to the diverse texts in my corpus of professional personal reflection data.



## 2.1. An Autobiographical Case Study

### 2.1.1. What is An Autobiographical Case Study?

The case study is considered more of a research approach than a specific method or technique (Wallace 1998: 160). Thus, research techniques such as questionnaires and interviews can be used within a case study research approach (ibid: p.168).

Unlike traditional empirical approaches, which aim to establish general principles about certain phenomena, the case study approach does not intend to produce generalisable findings. Instead, as Yin (1984: 14) points out, it allows a researcher “to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events”, something which aids the understanding of “complex social phenomena”. I chose the case study approach as I wanted to understand the complexity of Japanese students’ classroom communication.

Although most case studies deal with someone other than the researcher herself (Wallace 1998: 170), in the current dissertation I have chosen myself as the sole research subject. I present my personal accounts of events as both a student and a researcher, in their chronological order. To distinguish this from other types of case study, I use the term *autobiographical case study* for my approach.

### **2.1.2. Why is an Autobiographical Case Study Appropriate?**

When a researcher studies a subject/subjects other than herself, her research tends to be undertaken over a short period of time (e.g. Hayagoshi, 1996; Pritchard, 1995; Leigh, 2004). In an autobiographical case study, on the other hand, it is possible to explore phenomena which take place over longer periods, even decades. As I aim to present the way in which my behaviour and understanding have changed and developed over a number of years, I find the autobiographical case study more appropriate than other research methods.

### 2.1.3. How to Write and Select Autobiographical Stories

To effectively present longitudinal change in my classroom behaviour, first I roughly divided my life into four stages according to change in my status: (1) as a student in Japan (primary to tertiary); (2) as an undergraduate student in the US; (3) as a returnee in Japan (at a Japanese company); and (4) as a postgraduate student in the UK. Then I wrote randomly what I remembered about each stage, among which I selected only stories which I found relevant to the topic of this dissertation.

As to my experience as a researcher, I first prepared a spreadsheet to see when and how my understanding had changed, based upon various texts which I had created during my Master's studies (which will be described later in this chapter). From this sheet, I chose episodes which show the critical changes in my understanding and then wrote up the entire story for each episode.

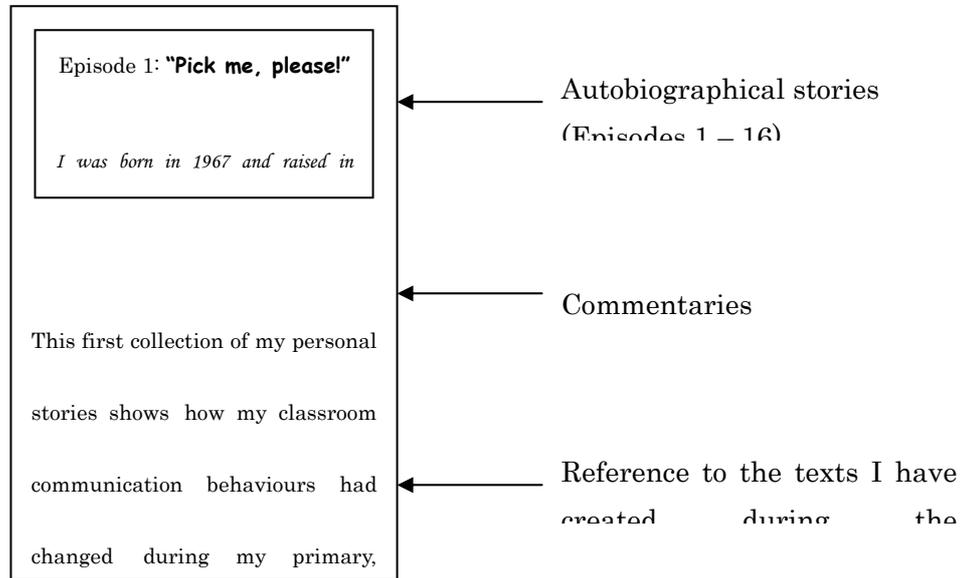
In total, I present 16 episodes from my autobiographical stories, which are categorised and presented in this chapter:

Section in Chapter 2	No. of episodes	My status
2.2. Personal stories of me (1)	4	A Japanese student in Japan
2.3. Personal stories of me (2)	2	A Japanese student in the US
2.4. Personal stories of me (3)	1	A returnee in Japan
2.5. Personal stories of me (4)	2	A Japanese student in the UK
2.6. Personal stories of me (5)	5	A Japanese researcher in the UK
2.7. Personal stories of me (6)	2	A Japanese researcher in the US

### 2.1.4. How to Present an Autobiographical Case Study

Along with these 16 autobiographical stories, I analyse and comment on their critical aspects, referring to the texts which I have created during my exploration. To

distinguish the autobiographical stories from my commentaries, as well as from reference to the texts, the page is formatted in the following style:



### 2.1.5. Which Texts?

To craft and support my autobiographical stories, I studied the following texts which I had created during my Master’s programme. They are also summarised in Appendix 2.

#### a) *Study diary entries*

Before I started my Masters studies, I decided to keep a diary of my personal reflections and recollections. Instead of making daily entries, I made it a habit to write only when I wanted to remember some important incidents or thoughts which came to my mind. I made 25 entries in total, between 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 2003 and 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, 2004. All the entries were in Japanese and typed into my own computer. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have translated them into English where necessary. Appendix 3 shows a sample of an entry and its translation.

*b) Email messages written to MEd colleagues*

Among approximately forty colleagues, several of them shared my interest in intercultural communication issues in classrooms. We exchanged email messages, trying to share our current thoughts and findings. Excluding short, keep-in-touch memos, I wrote 17 messages to express my latest views throughout my Masters studies. They were all typed in English.

*c) Texts for assignment writing*

I wrote two assignments of approximately 4,500 words on the issue of Japanese students' academic communication styles: one for a course unit entitled "Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers" and the other for "Classroom Research". While preparing to write, I exchanged emails with course tutors for the purposes of clarifying my understanding and reporting my latest thinking on the assignment writing. In addition, I met my tutors at personal tutorials for thirty minutes to an hour to discuss my assignments. Before the tutorials, I usually prepared some memos to describe my latest thoughts in order to use them as a basis for discussion. After the tutorials, I often sent my tutors memos which summarised the tutorial discussions. These email messages and memos reveal how my understanding developed. The earlier drafts as well as the final version of the assignments are also revealing sources of insight into this development. They were all typed in English.

*d) Texts for dissertation writing*

The process of Master's dissertation writing started in the second term of my course. As with my assignment writing, I used email exchanges with my dissertation supervisor to develop and organise my thoughts. Personal tutorials were mostly recorded for the purpose of personal reflection and recollection. Memos were again

prepared to summarise my latest views and tutorial discussions. They were all typed in English.

Of all the texts listed in Appendix 2, I refer only to the texts which I find helpful to support or analyse my autobiographical stories. When referred to in this chapter, they are given reference numbers which can also be found in Appendix 2.

Having explained how I designed and structured an autobiographical case study for this dissertation, as well as how I crafted and selected my autobiographical stories, I now begin with student stories, to be followed by my researcher stories.

## **2.2. Personal Stories (1) – A Japanese Student in Japan**

### **Episode 1: "Pick me, please!"**

*I was born in 1967 and raised in Kyoto, one of the major cities in Japan. When I was a primary school student, I was eager to speak up in classrooms. I always raised my hand whenever I had a chance to answer my teacher's questions. Even when teachers did not ask for any voluntary contribution, I would eagerly raise my hand whenever I wanted to share something with my teacher and classmates. Actually I was not the only one. There were approximately eight to ten students in every class of 40 to 45 pupils who were keen to participate. As you needed to be picked by a teacher to speak in class, these students often complained when a teacher failed to distribute the chances evenly among those who raised their hands, saying "Don't you think our teacher gave more chances to Yoko than the rest of us? It's unfair".*

Episode 2: **"Leave me alone!"**

*Such classroom communication behaviours totally changed when I proceeded to a local junior high school where students of between the seventh and the ninth grade attend. In early 1980's, students' rebellion and violence in junior high schools was one of the major social issues in Japan. Many students no longer hesitated to show aggressive and rebellious attitude toward teachers. I remember we completely ignored the teacher and talked loudly with each other in class if we particularly hated or disrespected her/him. Even with teachers whom we liked and respected, however, most students hesitated to speak in front of other students. I did not speak up because I was afraid of standing out from the rest of the class. As an early-teen-ager, I was very sensitive about how others would think of me. Although I first did not like this new learning environment, I gradually got used to such communication patterns, and I became another quiet but rebellious student like most of my classmates. This type of classroom communication continued throughout my junior and senior high school days.*

Episode 3: **"I wish my English were better..."**

*After high school, I went to a local university which specialises in foreign studies where I mainly studied linguistics and the English language. Some English language classes, usually consisted of 40 to 50 students, were taught by American or British teachers who encouraged us to speak in English in class. A few most fluent students were the ones who always took the chances. I was overwhelmed by their fluency and native-speaker like accent so that I hesitated to speak despite my eagerness to improve my competence.*

Episode 4: **“Behaving like a Japanese is a problem”**

*In my second year of university, I was selected as one of the exchange students who would spend the third and fourth college years abroad. The Japanese university provided us with some pre-departure courses, one of which was on cross-cultural communication designed to teach us how to become successful communicators in host countries, i.e. mainly the US and the UK. I did not like the lecturer so much because of his cynical and critical attitude toward Japanese students in general. He stressed how important it was for us to behave just like host nationals, not because it would be easier for us to live in their countries, but because, according to him, their ways were better and more rational than Japanese ways. Despite initial resentment toward his attitude, by the time I left for the US, I was fully convinced that I needed to behave like American students especially in class if I would want them to approve of me.*

This first collection of my personal stories shows how my classroom communication behaviour changed during my primary, secondary and tertiary education in Japan. Contrary to the popular belief that Japanese students are trained to be quiet in class out of respect to their teachers (e.g. Pritchard, 1995), the first classroom communication behaviour I acquired was active participation, which was later replaced by a rebellious attitude toward teachers.

In the language classrooms at university, I attributed my hesitation to speak up to language deficits compared with more proficient students, while a pre-departure course on cross-cultural communication totally changed my perception. The following excerpt is from one of the assignments I wrote in the first term of my

Master's course:

Through this preparatory course, I came to believe that the Japanese academic culture is less effective than the American culture. Quietness in classroom was one feature of the Japanese academic culture that I felt ashamed of, and I strongly felt that I would want to adapt myself to American norms (Assignment #1).

Clearly, I had begun to link my own behaviour with *Japaneseness*, i.e. something particular about the Japanese people, culture and system. I felt that language deficits were no longer a legitimate excuse for being quiet in class. I was determined to push myself hard not to behave like a *typical Japanese* (as defined by my cross-cultural communication tutor) once I arrived in the US.

### 2.3. Personal Stories (2) – A Japanese Student in the US

#### Episode 5: "Quiet, alone"

*In 1988, I arrived in Minnesota, US, full of hope, determination, and anxiety. The school was a small, private university prestigious in the state. There was only a small population of non-American students. In almost every class, I was the only international student. Most of the classes were small-sized, seminar-type ones, where students often sat in a big circle and tutors encouraged us to ask questions almost anytime during the class and to participate in the whole class discussion. I often felt miserable because I could not participate in class as much as American students. Despite my determination to behave like my classmates, I completely failed to do so. My listening skills were not good enough yet to follow lively discussion in class, and it was still difficult for me to spontaneously speak on academic topics. Once I decided to join the discussion, my heart started pounding and my ears refused to listen to others. I concentrated on producing English sentences, which often took me*

*more than a minute. By the time I was ready to speak, the discussion moved so far that what I was about to contribute was no longer relevant*

**Episode 6: "Happily quiet?"**

*Toward the end of my two-year studies in the US, I became used to being a quiet member of the class. As I started receiving good marks on my exams and papers, I expected the tutors would be able to tell that I was not stupid or incompetent even though I did not talk much in class, which made me feel less pressured to show my eagerness and abilities to learn. I started to speak only when I had something which I really wanted to say. By the time of graduation I felt quite confident in my academic capabilities except for discussion abilities. Since I had always been eloquent when I wanted to be in my first language, it was still stressful that I could not express myself more freely in English.*

As the fifth episode indicates, I felt that I was the only one who was not behaving as expected in the classroom. In one of the memos I created during the dissertation thinking, I described the distress I felt in class as follows:

I was aware that some American students seldom spoke in class. I used to count how many other students remained silent in a session, trying to avoid being the last one to participate. I realised that almost all the students spoke at least once in a session. I remember feeling miserable when all the students but me contributed to discussion (Memo #44).

This observation, that some American students seldom speak up in class, actually corresponds to the research findings which I reviewed in the previous chapter (Karp & Yoels, 1976; Morgenstern, 1992). However, I still could not get rid of the image of ‘active Americans, quiet Japanese’ so that I paid more attention to the fact that “everyone else spoke at least once!”.

In the sixth episode, I had stopped pushing myself to behave like my active American classmates when I assumed that my identity as a capable student was successfully projected outside the classroom. Although I still felt uncomfortable with my identity as a less eloquent speaker in English-medium classes, I did not bother to explore what had prevented me from being as eloquent as in Japanese.

## 2.4. Personal Stories (3) – A Returnee from the US

### Episode 7: **"You won't find a man!"**

*Upon graduation from the universities both in the US and Japan, I started to work at a leading Japanese manufacturer in my hometown. During a two-week long orientation programme for the new recruits, I was one of the most active participants among more than a hundred of my colleagues. I believed active participation was the only right thing to do in classrooms so that I was proud of my own behaviours. At the end of the programme, one of my male colleagues came to me and said, "Hiromi, I really respect your character and talent, but if you continue to behave like that, you wouldn't be able to find a good man". I was shocked to hear such a remark but immediately disregarded it as I thought he was being very "Japanese", incapable of accepting uniqueness and independence in one's character. However, I gradually realised that his warning was to the point. 'Finding a good man' must have been his joke, but I guess he wanted to warn me to pay attention to how others behave and how they react to your behaviours in a given context. Later on, while working for the company, I had many experiences that I failed to communicate successfully with other staff members because I could not adjust my behaviours to meet their expectations. Eventually, I learnt how I should change my mode of communication*

*according to the context, which benefited me when I later changed my jobs and worked for an audit firm and an English language school.*

In this episode, although I was no longer in academic institutions, I considered active participation as *the norm* for communication at the company orientation seminars. After having experienced constant frustration in classrooms in the US, without any language barrier I thoroughly enjoyed my active role which I regarded as appropriate and even superior to a less active role. It took me a while to learn that, to be a successful communicator, conscious observation of the environment in which you are situated is crucial.

## **2.5. Personal Stories (4) – A Japanese Student in the UK**

Episode 8: **“Don't pick me, please!”**

*In September, 2003, I started my Master of Education (MEd) studies at the University of Manchester. For those who enrolled in the MEd programmes, a week-long induction programme was provided before the start of the term. During this week, we had an introductory lecture which aimed to prepare the students with some basic issues and ideas about English language teaching. Approximately 40 to 50 students were present, sitting in a big circle. The moment came when the lecturer asked us to read a text and to report what it was about. We formed groups of three, each group given a different text to read. All the reporters looked confident and seemed to speak much more fluent and accurate English than I would. I started to feel panicked and determined not to take a reporter's role, afraid of looking stupid in front of unfamiliar faces. When my group's turn came, I did not look up and just waited until either of my partners would take the role. Neither of them started*

*talking. The lecturer waited for a while but finally asked one of my partners to report. I felt so bad while she was reporting so that I forced myself to take the second chance. I was not satisfied with the language I used and the content of my reporting, but at least I felt relieved that I could behave as I considered appropriate.*

My experience at the introductory lecture described in this episode had a tremendous impact on me. In one of my assignments, I referred to this incident as follows:

I felt so embarrassed and ashamed of myself. Not only did I try to cast a burden on someone else but also I found myself unable to behave as I expected myself to do, i.e., to actively participate in the session. From that moment, I started asking myself: why do I feel hesitant to speak in class?; why do I care so much about accuracy of my English?; and why is it so hard for me to keep my confidence in such situations? (Assignment #2)

At this point, I still tried to find answers to these questions only within myself. If I had turned my attention to the context, I might have noticed psychological connotations of *reporting* in this particular scene. It was the first time for the MEd students to speak academically in this course. This reporting can be seen as a test which assesses each student's background knowledge of language teaching as well as his or her academic use of language. We all had to take this test in front of unfamiliar faces. I did not realise how this *assessing* aspect of the reporting had reasonably influenced my affect and behaviour. I only blamed myself for not meeting the expectations which I had set for myself based on my past experience in the US.

I strongly felt that something had to be done to change my classroom communication behaviour. The following is from the diary entry on the day of the lecture:

Although my English is not really good, I try not to feel too anxious and embarrassed to speak up. Whenever I have a chance, I will try to ask questions and give comments in class! This is my resolution. This is my way of taking risks. There are risks of being belittled, risks of annoying people, risks of being ignored, but I shouldn't be afraid of them (Diary #1).

This diary entry suggests that I attributed my hesitation to speak up at the introductory lecture to two things: one was my lack of linguistic competence and the other was my lack of nerve and strong determination to improve my speaking skills. I did not think it had anything to do with my *Japaneseness*, because I thought of myself as not a typical Japanese, deeply influenced by Japanese ways of doing and seeing things. *Culture* could not be the most important factor in my hesitancy, I thought.

Episode 9: **"I admire you, because you are brave!"**

*When the first term started I pushed myself to speak up in class whenever I had things to say, although I still did not feel entirely comfortable to do so.. In the sessions for the Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers course unit, I felt most relaxed playing the role of active participant. Fifteen to twenty students regularly attended the sessions, normally seated in a big u-shape. The topics for discussion were more to do with our own experiences and perceptions rather than academic, abstract concepts, which made me less worried about what to say.*

*After the first few weeks, five to six students including myself started to dominate the discussion in class. One day, a classmate from an Arabic country, who was another active participant in class, said to me, "Hiromi, I have always admired you. You are so brave!". I was not sure what she meant, but assumed that she was talking about my behaviour in class. I did not really appreciate her comment because she seemed to suggest that I needed a lot of courage to speak up with my low English proficiency. I felt so embarrassed that I could not ask what she really meant. Yet, at the same time, I was glad to learn that I was no longer a quiet, invisible bystander in*

*the classroom.*

As this episode indicates, since I made my resolution, my classroom communication behaviour had changed dramatically, which gave me both some emotional distress and satisfaction. I started to consider myself a successful communicator in the classroom, despite the fact that I hardly spoke in two other classes which I was taking in the first term. I considered active participation in one class sufficient to prove my eagerness and competence to contribute to class whenever I wanted. At this point, I stopped worrying about my own classroom communication behaviour, and started to explore the issue from another perspective, that of a researcher.

## **2.6. Personal Stories (5) – A Japanese Researcher in the UK**

Episode 10: **"All you need is courage!"**

*My husband, Toru, began his postgraduate studies in Business Administration in the same year when I started my MEd studies. Without any prior experience in US or UK Higher Education, his speaking abilities were lower than mine, and he constantly reported how quiet he was in group tutorials and lectures. He often said to me, "I wish my English were better" with a deep sigh. I repeatedly told him that his English proficiency should not be the reason for his hesitance to speak up. "You've just got to be brave. Don't be afraid of taking risks. Look at me! I'm now one of the most active students in class". Although he agreed with my argument, still he could not change his communication behaviours. I started to think there must be some particular causes which prevent us, Japanese, from taking risks in classrooms. I decided to explore the issue for my assignment.*

My exploration as a researcher started as I decided to write a 5,000-word assignment for “Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers”. The initial idea of this assignment is summarised in a memo I wrote to the course tutor:

My husband (also Japanese) ... seems to be less confident than he used to be because of his lack of sufficient communication skills in English. And it’s not only about him. I’ve met all Japanese candidates and... [e]ven if their English proficiency test scores are just as good, they are not as good communicators as other nationalities. Some people say that Japanese people are just shy, but I don’t think so. If properly trained, they can be good communicators... I’d like to design a course to train those who are planning to do their MBA studies outside Japan to be prepared for intercultural communication (Memo #1).

With no clear evidence, but mere impressions that I had obtained from informal conversations with these Japanese students, I somehow concluded that “*they are not as good communicators as other nationalities*”. I did not even bother to define what “*good communicators*” are, because I was quite sure that good communicators should be able to actively participate in class. I believed that there must be some particular factors which prevent Japanese students from playing an active role in the classroom. My mission was to identify and eliminate these factors through appropriate intercultural communication training.

Episode 11: **“Whose problem?”**

*As I became active in classrooms, I started to feel a little annoyed at silences of my colleagues, especially those from Far East countries. I would consider it more acceptable and understandable if their English proficiency was not high, but actually most of them could speak better English than I did. They could express themselves freely in small group discussions, but rarely attempted to speak to the whole class. I was wondering why, and also saw the whole situation “a problem”. I remember telling my tutor about my concern and frustration at classroom communication of my*

colleagues at a personal tutorial. When I used the word, "problem", he asked me a very simple question: "whose problem is it?". I could not answer immediately although I always thought the answer was obvious, "THEIR problem, not mine". On the spot, I tried to think of the answer from a different angle. If no one else but I was dissatisfied with the current learning in classrooms, it must be MY problem! Though it was staggering realisation for me, I still thought it was also a problem of reticent students as they would potentially suffer from negative evaluation of their competence by their colleagues and tutors. I continued to believe that THEY needed to change their behaviour in classrooms.

#### Episode 12: **"How simple!"**

The biggest national group of my MEd programme was Chinese so that their behaviours were most noticeable in class. I thought, "Chinese people are different from the rest of us, so that they've got to have their unique reasons why they behave in a certain way". I remember asking one of my Chinese colleagues why most of them appeared reluctant to take a reporter's role after group discussion. She replied, "in China, it is common that the smartest student always takes the role of a reporter. Unless you consider yourself as the smartest, you wouldn't try to be a reporter". Her response seemed to perfectly explain why many of my Chinese colleagues actively participated in small group discussion but looked reluctant when it came to reporting. In order to show your modesty, you should not appear eager to take a reporter's role! I was actually pleased that I could understand their behaviours better with such a simple clue. Instead of taking this account as one of the possible reasons, I concluded this was the main reason shared by all the Chinese students. I did not even bother to ask other Chinese colleagues if it was accurate description of Chinese classroom communication patterns.

Once I considered myself to be a successful and proper communicator in class, I started to pass judgement on the appropriateness of my colleagues' classroom communication behaviour. Moreover, I even tried to *otherise* my colleagues based upon their nationalities. Despite the gradual development of my understanding through reading the literature, I continually came back to this approach without much awareness of what it was.

Episode 13: **"The Japanese way is equally valid!"**

*I met my course tutor for personal tutorials while I was preparing for my assignment for "Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers". The tutor helped me question my simplistic view toward the issue of Japanese students' communication behaviours. I tried to resist his challenge because I wanted to keep the issue simple and to find practical solutions to the issue instead of discussing it theoretically. Gradually I began to see my approach would not be useful to fully understand the issue, let alone to devise any effective measures. Finally, I found I had been deeply influenced by negative images of Japanese educational system and culture which I had acquired over years. When you are ashamed of your own culture or background, how can you feel secure in another cultural milieu? I concluded that what Japanese people probably need to do is to realise how valid their own culture is.*

This was the major realisation in the early part of my exploration. I wrote to my course tutor excitedly about it after the tutorial:

I have heard and read a lot of times that the Japanese way of teaching and learning has been severely criticised, and somehow I came to believe that the Japanese way is NOT RIGHT. The western way is THE way and I even felt ashamed of myself when I couldn't adjust to it successfully... Now, I can see

how stressful and difficult [it is] to adjust to another culture when you have to deny or question validity of your own culture. What I have lacked is awareness of validity of my own cultural baggage (Email#22).

Once I became convinced of validity of Japanese academic culture, I became interested in the experience of 'sojourners', those who come to a different cultural milieu for a limited period of time. Culture shock, or acculturation, seemed to be a key to understanding their behaviour in the classroom. I will further discuss this approach in the following chapter with reference to the literature.

Episode 14: **"You just don't know how to kiss!"**

*In an attempt to address the issue from more universal points of view, I compared classroom communication with greeting such as shaking hands and kissing. For example, as Japanese people never kiss for casual greeting, Latin American women's greeting, kissing on both cheeks, always surprised me. I was willing to kiss them back, but I simply did not know exactly how to do it. I could see a clear difference between knowledge and skills: knowledge that kissing on both cheeks is expected among women in Latin America; and skills to kiss them appropriately. I had the proper knowledge but lacked the skills to perform it. I tried to apply this difference into classroom communication. Japanese students may know that they are expected to speak up in class, but they probably don't know when to speak, what to speak, how to interrupt, and so on. I thought communication skills training must be helpful to them if that is the case.*

Gradually abandoning the idea that Japanese students must have their unique reasons to be reticent in class, I continued to look for factors affecting the classroom communication of any academic sojourners. In the above episode, I focused on the

social skills aspect of intercultural communication, which I will discuss further in the third chapter. In order to present my idea more clearly, I replaced ‘kissing’ with ‘bowing’ when I wrote to my supervisor:

If an English man does not bow [to] his teacher in Japan, how is his behaviour considered by the host nationals?

- They might think he is just arrogant, because Western people are typically arrogant.
- They might think he is individualistic, and doesn't care to keep a harmonious relationship with his teacher.
- They might think the power distance between him and his teachers in England is not as wide as in Japan, so that he doesn't respect his teacher enough.

...All those reasons seem so irrelevant, don't they? But that's what the researchers seem to be doing regarding Asian students' classroom behaviour.

The effect of *otherisation* is so clear (Email#25. Italics not in original).

I started to use the term “*otherisation*” as I realised the concept of *Japaneseness* consists of constructed, reified images rather than the facts. I realised that the *otherisation* prevalent in the ELT literature would not be useful to understand the issue better.

However, my supervisor questioned me about the effectiveness of social skills training on classroom communication. If I intended to teach students how to behave in British classrooms, I would need to know what behaviours are commonly expected there. He stressed that there is no single set of classroom communication rules which can conveniently apply to any classroom in Britain. He argued that each classroom has its unique *culture* which only emerges within the communication behaviour among participants.

Actually, this concept of *small culture* (Holliday, 1999) as contrasted with *large*

*culture* (national or regional culture), was not new to me; I had learnt it from the same tutor as early as the first term of my Masters studies, which I will discuss in detail in the following chapter. At this point, however, I did not have sufficient understanding of what it was and how useful the concept is in understanding any issue related to classroom communication.

## 2.7. Personal Stories (6) – A Japanese Researcher in the US

### Episode 15: **"I experienced small culture!"**

*In the summer of 2004, I stopped my dissertation process once and went to the United States to join my husband who attended a local business school for a semester as an exchange student. A group of his colleagues occasionally invited us for their social gatherings, and I had very interesting experience in observing and joining their small culture. In order to function appropriately within the group, I had to carefully observe how they greeted and addressed each other, what conversation topics and jokes were acceptable, how they made requests to each other, and so on. Such constant and attentive observation helped me feel comfortable in this particular small culture. In the past, I probably had done similar observation whenever I joined a new small culture. This time, however, I was well aware of what I was doing and the effect of such conscious observation. I found this approach could be useful for any academic sojourner who wishes to function properly in their classrooms.*

It was another major enlightenment that I experienced during my exploration. I compared this latest experience with my past experience in the classroom in the US, and realised that I did not use critical observation as effectively as I could have. I wrote to my supervisor what I found to be useful suggestions to any academic sojourner, which I summarise as follows:

- (1) When you observe communication in your classroom, don't try to judge what is good or bad about it. Just like when you want to join a group of colleagues, you should just observe it attentively to learn about it, while showing your eagerness to be part of it.
- (2) After you observe for a while and can see emerging patterns of communication behaviours among them, you should try out to see if your understanding is correct. This *trial and error* helps you to deepen your understanding.
- (3) Despite your continuous observation and effort, if you still cannot behave like local students, don't worry about it. It is neither necessary nor important to be able to act just like them as long as you can function appropriately among other participants. Becoming just like a local student should not be your ultimate goal (Email #34).

At this point, I became aware of the potential value of the *small culture* approach. However, further discussion through email with my supervisor made me realise how it could be challenging for a non-native speaker student to follow the above three suggestions. Non-native speakers of English often consider native speakers to have a higher status. Especially for EFL and ESL students, passing as native speakers is the ultimate goal of their English learning (Cook, 1999).

I maintained in my email to my tutor (Email #35) that, when you desperately want to be accepted by a group of people because of their higher status, you will find it difficult to observe their communication behaviour critically. You will be more likely to pay attention only to astonishing differences and ignore apparent similarities. It would be also difficult for you to allow yourself to engage in trial and error, because you would be too worried about undermining your status which you consider already lower than that of the group you are trying to join. Also, you would not be satisfied with your behaviour if it was different from that of the native speakers which you observe.

It seemed to me that, as long as he/she believed that “native speakers are the model”, it would not be easy for any non-native speaker student to comfortably join a *small culture* in Higher Education in the US or the UK.

Episode 16: **“Am I really fat?”**

*Toward the end of my stay in the US, I tried to organise my thoughts on my dissertation which had developed in diverse directions. I considered using a four-question structure to approach the issue of Japanese students’ reticence in classrooms:*

- 1. Is there any evidence that they are really reticent?*
- 2. Is the issue worth being addressed? Is the issue really important?*
- 3. What factors are affecting their reticence?*
- 4. What can be done to resolve the issue?*

*Reflecting on development of my thoughts, I found that I had neglected to ask the first and the second questions. I simply assumed that they are reticent and their behaviour should be changed. I mainly approached the issue from the third and fourth questions, and I found many other EFLT researchers often take the same direction (further discussed in the third chapter). What if there isn’t any significant issue in the first place? Just like a woman who is too self-conscious of her weight. Without questioning if she is really overweight, if she simply “feels” she has a weight problem she would go straight to the fourth question, “what can be done to resolve my problem?” or “how can I lose weight?” Any measure would not benefit but could harm her if she is not overweight! As a researcher, my approach in the past could have damaged Japanese students’ self-esteem rather than raised it. How horrible!*

I wrote this analogy of a weight-watcher in an email message to my supervisor (Email#36). It was another key learning outcome of my exploration. These two plain questions, “Is there any evidence that the issue really exists?” and “Is the issue really important?” are too basic to be neglected when a researcher tries to explore any issue. The reason why many researchers, including myself, fail to ask them seems to be related to *otherisation* and reified images of Japanese students. These images have so powerful an influence on us that it takes a lot of conscious effort to get away from them. In the following chapter, I will review the literature to see how the *otherised* images of Japanese students are constructed and discussed in professional discourses.

## **2.8. Summary of My Autobiographical Stories**

A summary of the 16 episodes presented in this chapter appears in Appendix 1. As a student, my role in the classroom has shifted from an enthusiastic participant in primary school to a reticent member of US undergraduate classes, and finally to an occasionally active participant in the UK postgraduate programme. My communication modes have changed according to the context in which I found myself. A number of factors should be taken into account to explain why I behaved in a certain way: the teacher’s attitude, the students’ demography, the language used in the classroom, the subject matter, the social setting of the school, my own self-image, and so on. It is simply impossible to explain my diverse modes of classroom communication merely in terms of *Japaneseness*.

As a researcher, my understanding of the issue of Japanese students’ classroom communication has also evolved considerably. Deeply influenced by *otherisation*, I first attributed students’ reticence in class to something to do with national culture,

i.e. *Japaneseness* or *Chineseness*. Then, I gradually began to see some universal factors affecting students' classroom behaviour. Finally, I found that I had been manipulated by *otherisation* which prevented me from addressing the issue from a holistic perspective.

## **2.9. Summary of Chapter 2**

In this chapter, I have presented my autobiographical stories related to classroom communication. I had two purposes in telling these stories: one was to provide rich insider data on how the *otherised* image of classroom communication influenced my behaviour and the meanings I constructed of my life both inside and outside the classroom. The other aim was to present how, as a researcher, I have struggled to understand Japanese students' classroom communication.

Actually, my attempts to address the issue have involved much more than the stories presented in this chapter. Reading the literature in the fields of ELT, the psychology of language learning, and intercultural communication has provided me with diverse ways of approaching the issue. In the following chapter, I will review major approaches which I found in the literature and show how I integrate them to reach a more holistic understanding of the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication.

## Chapter 3

### Major Approaches to the Issue of Japanese Students'

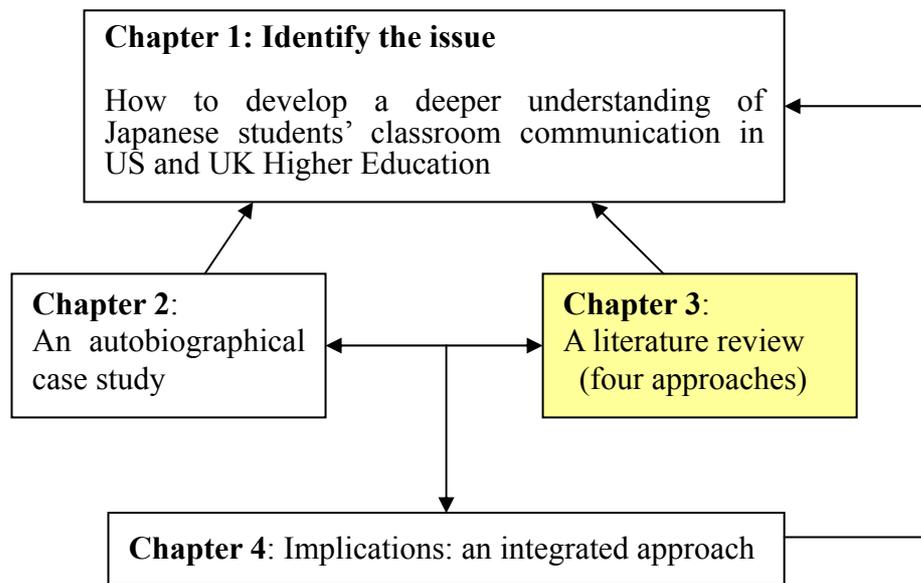
#### Classroom Communication in the Literature

##### Introduction

In Chapter 2, I presented my stories related to classroom communication as an autobiographical case study. My stories as a student in Japan, the US, and the UK provided rich insider data on how I behaved, felt, and made sense of the reality in a variety of classrooms. Also, my attempts to understand the issue of classroom communication from a researcher's perspective served as an example of how powerfully *otherisation* can affect a researcher's analysis and interpretation of students' communication behaviour.

As discussed in the autobiographical case study, my exploration into the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication involved reading other researchers' work. The literature in the field of ELT, psychology of language learning, and intercultural communication has provided me with diverse ways of approaching the issue. In this chapter, I discuss some major approaches, such as 'culturist' ones, drawing links with the development of my understanding as discussed in the previous chapter. I argue that each approach can explain students' classroom communication behaviour to a limited extent, but it is the integration of all these approaches that will help teachers and students deepen their understanding of the issue.

In this chapter, I first explain how I categorise the major approaches into four groups: *the culturist approaches*, *culture shock approaches*, *learning anxiety approaches*, and *small culture approach*. Then, I review the key literature in each category with reference to the autobiographical stories presented in Chapter 2. I discuss the advantages of each approach as well as its limitations, and finally suggest integrating them for a holistic understanding of the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication.



### 3.1. Four Categories

Asian (including Japanese) students' classroom communication is an issue often discussed in both the ELT and non-ELT literature, as I have briefly outlined in Chapter 1. Various approaches are taken to explore why they behave in particular ways and how their behaviour can be changed. Language deficits are often identified as a primary cause of their inactive participation, but also dismissed as insignificant compared with other possible causes (e.g. Ballard, 1996; Zhang, 2002). My personal experience (Episodes 8 and 11 in Chapter 2) during my Master's programme also reveals that proficiency in the language does not fully explain why even advanced-level speakers can be "inactive" in class. Hence, in this dissertation, I focus on those approaches which deal with factors other than the linguistic difficulties of Japanese students.

I find four major ways of approaching the issue, a categorisation based upon how Japanese students are conceptualised by different theorists. I term these the culturist approaches, culture shock approaches, learning anxiety approaches, and small culture approach.

First, in **a culturist approach**, Japanese students are defined as people who belong to a particular national, regional, or ethnic cultural group, i.e. Japanese culture. They are considered deeply influenced by their "culture", which determines and controls the way they behave in the classroom.

Second, **culture shock approaches** see Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education as sojourners who will inevitably experience “culture shock”. Culture shock approaches claim that their particular experience as sojourners has a tremendous impact on their behaviour.

Third, **learning anxiety approaches** argue that Japanese students are no different from other foreign language learners. They naturally feel anxious and threatened in class when they need to use the language which they are still trying to master.

Lastly, the **small culture approach** considers Japanese students as not only participating in but also creating classroom culture. Each classroom has its own unique culture, or *small culture* (Holliday, 1999), and all participants, including Japanese students, jointly craft it through communication. The small culture approach suggests close observation of interaction between all participants, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. The following figure shows a summary of the above differences:

Approaches	How they define Japanese students	
Culturist	Japanese	Non-Japanese (especially, Western or Anglophone)
Culture shock	Sojourners	Locals
Learning anxiety	Foreign language learners	
	Non-foreign language learners	
Small Culture	Those who are in the classroom	

Having explained how I categorise the major approaches, I next review the key literature of each approach, followed by my analysis of its advantages and limitations in terms of developing a holistic understanding of Japanese students' classroom communication behaviour in US and UK Higher Education.

## 3.2. Culturist Approaches

### 3.2.1 What is Culturism?

*Culturism* is defined by Holliday (1999: 245) as the notion “*in which the members of a group to which an ethnic, national or international large cultural label has been attached are perceived as confined and reduced to pre-defined characteristics*” (emphasis in original). “*Large culture*” is the term used by Holliday (1999) to describe ethnic, national, or international cultures, as opposed to “*small culture*”, which will be further discussed later in this chapter.

This definition suggests that any researcher or teacher who takes a culturist approach perceives a Japanese student as someone who automatically has particular characteristics because she/he is Japanese. Thus, culturist approaches focus on identifying critical differences between Japanese and non-Japanese (often Anglophone Western) cultures. They claim that being aware of the differences should help the Japanese and non-Japanese understand each other and adjust their communication behaviour where necessary (e.g. Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Kato, 2001). Now, let me summarise some of the major culturist approaches.

### **3.2.2 Major Culturist Approaches**

#### *A) Philosophies and religions*

Many researchers refer to traditional philosophies and religions such as Zen Buddhism and Confucianism to explain Japanese ways of doing things. Pritchard (1995: 260) tries to find the root of her students' classroom behaviour in Buddhist philosophy, which emphasises “wordless communication (*sasshi* 察し) where silence is considered superior to speech”. Hadley and Evans (2001: 141), on the other hand, stress the influence of Japanese Confucianism. Liu (2001: 25), a Chinese researcher now based in the US, claims that Asian philosophy and religion (e.g., Confucianism,

Buddhism) seem to result in the reluctance to use direct speech, explicit language, free thought and individual expression.

B) *Nihonjinron* (日本人論)

*Nihonjinron*, or the theory of Japanese identity, also attempts to identify unique features of the Japanese. *Amae* (甘え) is a frequently-cited notion which was first introduced by Doi (1973). It refers to “*a feeling of dependency, a desire to be passively loved, and an unwillingness to leave mother-protection to enter into the outside world*” (Liu, 2001: 207). Pritchard (1995: 261) uses this notion to conceptualise the nationals in a rather sarcastic tone: “*The Japanese have a great need and ability to show and to desire dependency on others, without fear of ridicule or a feeling of being ‘stupid’*”.

High-context versus low-context communication is another concept which is often used to explain the Japanese “peculiar way” of communicating. High-context communication is characterised thus: “*most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message*” (Hall, 1976: 79, cited in Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994: 28). Japan is considered as a country which has a stronger tendency to employ high-context communication (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994: 30). As a result, Japanese people are considered to “*limit themselves to implicit and even ambiguous use of words*” (Okabe, 1983: 36).

### *C) Cultural dimensions*

Hofstede (1994) researched over 116,000 employees of subsidiaries of the multinational corporation, IBM, in more than 40 countries, and analysed cultural differences in terms of four cultural dimensions: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance, and masculinity-femininity. According to his analysis, Japan is considered as: (1) collectivistic (e.g. harmony-oriented), (2) high in uncertainty avoidance (structure and rule-oriented), (3) having large power distance (accepting inequality in power), and (4) masculine (goal-oriented). Though conducted almost thirty years ago, his work is still frequently referred to when culturist approaches are taken (e.g. Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994).

### *D) Culture of Learning*

Culture of learning is defined by Cortazzi and Jin (1996: 169) as:

taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education.

This notion is often referred to, especially when Asian students' classroom communication is the issue. Turner and Hiraga (1996: 139), for example, define Japanese academic culture as "*predominantly knowledge-centred*", whereas British

academic culture is “*predominantly thinking-centred*”. Cogan (1995: 105-6) points out that the Japanese associate learning with discipline and perseverance, and put a greater emphasis on the accuracy of the answer than on the thinking process followed to reach the answer. Ballard (1996: 154) maintains that “*in Japan the subordinate role of the student overrides any attempt to develop independent or individual views*”. Unfortunately, none of these theorists provides any particular evidence to prove their points.

### **3.2.3 Advantages of Culturist Approaches**

Being aware of cultural differences may to some extent help both Japanese students and their communication partners. When people from culturally diverse backgrounds interact, miscommunication often occurs because “*our being, seeing, behaving, and communicating*” (O’Sullivan, 1994: 97) are often different from those from different backgrounds. Cushner and Brislin (1996: 6) maintain that differences in “*people’s values, attitudes, norms of behavior, and adopted roles*” are considered to be causes of “*most cross-cultural misunderstandings*”.

In the case of Japanese students in UK and US Higher Education, their classroom communication behaviour can be interpreted differently by their local teachers and

classmates from their actual intentions. Kato (2001: 51) asserts that, when communication between students and teachers does not work out, students' personal factors such as "*laziness, lack of motivation or incompetence*" are often blamed, which is supported by Leigh's (2004: 43) finding in a UK language institution. It seems that knowledge of cultural difference may resolve some misunderstandings between Japanese students and non-Japanese teachers and peer students.

Also, Japanese students themselves can conveniently refer to cultural differences when asked to explain why they behave in a certain way. In my case, for example, I used to refer to "*the Japanese culture of learning*", especially its emphasis on accuracy, group harmony, and its de-emphasising of creativity and individual opinions, although my own learning experience in primary school contradicts all these features (see Episode 1 of my autobiographical story in Chapter 2). By attributing my behaviour to these supposedly shared Japanese characteristics, I tried to protect my self-image or status as a hard-working, enthusiastic student, blaming something which I could not easily change or influence. It worked only to a limited degree, as it also had a negative effect on my identity (discussed below).

### 3.2.4 Limitations of Culturist Approaches

There are, however, critical limitations of these culturist approaches. First of all, many of these “*characteristics of Japanese cultures*” are no better than myths or stereotypes. Kumaravadivelu (2003: 710) challenges common cultural stereotypes of Asian students, such as obedience to authority, passivity in class, and lack of critical thinking, criticising the ELT profession as remarkably ready “*to forge a causal connection between the classroom behavior of Asian students and their cultural beliefs even though research findings are ambiguous and even contradictory*”.

Cheng (2000: 441) argues against the alleged influence of Confucius doctrines and collectivism on Asian students’ classroom communication, stating that “*attributing some Asian language learners’ reticence and passivity to their cultural attributes is groundless and detrimental to cross-cultural studies*”. Rose (1996) challenges a widespread belief that the Japanese way of communicating is indirect and ambiguous, whereas Americans are more direct and clear. Pointing out that American people also communicate indirectly and ambiguously in certain situations, he claims “*members of both groups exhibit similar behaviour, but to varying degrees. This is an indication that the issue is not all or nothing, but is better perceived as one of degree*” (ibid: 70).

Thus, one of the problems with culturist approaches is that they tend to polarise or dichotomise people's differences between nations or regions, while there may only exist some tendencies. I will review further criticism of culturist approaches from the *small* culture perspective in the later section.

Another limitation is that most of these images are often given negative connotations so that they would damage the self-image of Japanese students. *Amae* (甘え), collectivism, masculinity (goal-orientedness), and knowledge-centred learning styles are often discussed in a negative rather than positive tone by researchers (e.g. Ballard 1996, Pritchard 1995). Many Japanese students who study in English-speaking classrooms have to face teachers and/or fellow students who have unfavourable views of their communication and learning styles. Despite the claim made by Cortazzi and Jin (1996: 174) that "*there is no reason to suppose that one culture of learning is superior to another*", it can be an extremely difficult task for such students to keep positive images of themselves as Japanese, which is illustrated by my autobiographical story (Episode 4).

Another serious limitation of culturist approaches is that knowledge of such cultural differences actually does not help Japanese students adjust or change their behaviour,

even when they want to. If a Japanese student is well convinced that her *Japaneseness* is the major cause of, say, her reluctance to speak up in class, there seems not much she can do to change her behaviour because she is “programmed” to behave in a certain way by her “culture”. Hence, culturist approaches would not encourage students to find ways to adjust their behaviour.

Thus, although culturist approaches can be beneficial in terms of raising awareness of ethnocentric views, it seems to me that they have rather adverse effects on developing an understanding of Japanese students’ classroom communication behaviour.

### **3.3. Culture Shock Approaches**

In contrast to culturist approaches, culture shock approaches regard Japanese students as academic sojourners, who stay in a different cultural milieu for a limited period of time with the intention of going back to their home country. Under these approaches, all sojourners are considered to go through a similar experience in their host countries, which is widely called “*culture shock*”.

#### **3.3.1. What is Culture Shock?**

*Culture shock* is a term first coined by Oberg (1960, cited in Kim, 1988: 23) and was once discussed mainly from a mental health perspective, i.e. how to help and treat those who suffer from severe mental distress during their sojourning experience (Ward et al, 2001; Kim, 1988). However, in recent studies, *culture shock* has been conceptualised as a learning experience rather than a set of problems to be avoided. It is regarded as a fundamental, transitional experience for a sojourner who is in the process of learning to function effectively in a host environment (Kim, 1988). There are a number of theories to explain sojourners' experiences (e.g. Kim, 1988; Gudykunst, 1998/2002), but for the purpose of this dissertation, I focus on the concepts which have helped me develop my understanding of Japanese students' classroom communication in US and UK Higher Education.

### **3.3.2. Major Culture Shock Approaches**

#### *A) Affective aspects of culture shock*

When interacting with someone from another cultural group, people naturally feel stressed, nervous, and exhausted as “*things taken for granted at home require virtually constant monitoring in the new culture to assure some degree of understanding*” (Lustig & Koester, 1999: 342). Such affective aspects of sojourners' transitional experience can explain to some extent why Japanese students feel more

anxious in class than their local classmates in US and UK Higher Education. This approach suggests that stress-coping strategies should be adopted to help sojourners overcome emotional distress during their transition (Ward et al, 2001: 71).

#### *B) Behavioural aspects*

As rules and conventions which regulate interpersonal interactions vary from community to community, sojourners are often unaware of the rules of the host community. Due to lack of these social skills, sojourners “*will have difficulty in initiating and sustaining harmonious relations with their hosts*” (Ward et al, 2001: 43). In the case of Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education, from this perspective, they simply lack the necessary knowledge of the communication conventions of the classroom. I once tried to take this approach, as Episode 14 of my autobiographical story shows.

#### *C) Cognitive aspects (identity)*

According to Ward et al (2001: 274), cognitive aspects of culture shock affect both behavioural and affective aspects of sojourners’ adaptation. In other words, how a sojourner identifies herself and conceptualises her hosts affects her level of stress and social skills proficiency.

When I started my undergraduate studies at a college in the US, my self-image was severely damaged as my autobiographical story (Episode 5) reveals. Although I tried hard to change my behaviour, I failed because I was too nervous to pay close attention to how other participants actually communicated with each other. My *otherised* images of self (incompetent, inappropriate) and of host nationals (competent, appropriate) seem to have unfavourably affected both my affect and behaviour. In order to explore why my self-image was at stake, I next discuss Ting-Toomey's (1993) concept of identity security/vulnerability.

*D) Identity security/vulnerability*

Ting-Toomey (1993: 81) argues that we need a good balance of security and vulnerability in our sense of self-conception, as "*too much security can bring boredom and inertia, but too much insecurity or unpredictability can exhaust the self-system in question*". She maintains that, although one may hold a stable sense of identity, "*each communication episode produces an inevitable change*" (ibid: 74) and that this "*inevitable move of identity change*" promotes identity vulnerability (ibid: 81).

In the case of Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education, many have probably regarded themselves as competent learners while in Japan. Their once-stable identity as capable students is often challenged once they start to compete with their native-born colleagues in the US or UK , as I experienced (Episodes 5 and 6). In this regard, it seems beneficial for Japanese students to learn how to keep a positive self-image in order to succeed in intercultural communication in the classroom.

### **3.3.3. Advantages of Culture Shock Approaches**

Culture shock approaches can be beneficial to Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education, as they suggest that their experience is no different from that of sojourners from other countries. Being aware that it is natural for them to feel stressed, uncomfortable, and tired during intercultural transitions can make them feel less “miserable” and help them prepare for their transitional experience.

Also, these approaches suggest what should be done to overcome any difficulties they experience in their classrooms. Stress reducing strategies, social skills training, as well as positive self-conceptualisation, can possibly help those who wish to change their classroom communication behaviour.

### 3.3.4. Limitations of Culture Shock Approaches

Alongside their advantages, I found significant limitations in these approaches. First, they do not take it into account that the classroom learning experience may be very different from other social events/interactions in the host country. I once tried to compare classroom communication with some greeting behaviours such as bowing and kissing, ignoring the fact that classroom communication involves much more complicated human interactions (Episode 14). My tutor advised that I should be aware that a single set of communication skills which students can conveniently learn and acquire simply does not exist. Each classroom has its unique *small culture*, so that general social skills training would not be very effective. The notion of *small culture* in class will be elaborated later in this chapter.

Another limitation is that these approaches often ground their arguments on differences of *large cultures*. Social skills training, for example, would be designed according to cultural differences between sojourners' national, regional, or ethnic cultures and those of their hosts. These differences are often reified or *otherised* images rather than reality, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter. Culture shock approaches can be useful only if they free themselves from the *large culture* paradigm.

### **3.4. Learning Anxiety Approaches**

#### **3.4.1. What is Language Learning Anxiety?**

This type of approach does not separate Japanese students from any other group, such as local students or Western people. They are considered the same as any other human beings, who naturally tend to feel anxious in certain situations. Anxiety is defined as “*the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system*” (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Horwitz et al, 1986: 125). Unlike general anxiety, language learning anxiety arises only in a specific situation, i.e. when people learn a foreign language in class. Although these approaches are often taken when discussing ESL/EFL students, I find them useful in discussing the psychology of Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education.

#### **3.4.2. Major Learning Anxiety Approaches**

##### *a) Identity vulnerability*

Horwitz et al (1986: 128) describe foreign language anxiety as “*a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*”. Tsui (1996:

155-6) points out two unique features of foreign language learning: requiring learners to perform in a language over which they do not have total control yet; and learners' greater chances of making mistakes (in terms of content, form, or pronunciation, for example) in public. As Cohen and Norst (1989: 61) argue, language learning is fundamentally different from other learning experiences as "*language and self are so closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on the other*". Thus, a learner's self-concept naturally becomes vulnerable in the language classroom.

Cohen and Norst (1989) researched a group of adult English monolinguals who were required to study a foreign language for their Master's degree at an Australian university. Their diary studies revealed that many of the learners felt frightened and embarrassed in class and lost self-esteem during their thirty-week-long learning experience.

Tsui (1996) studied the reticence of Hong Kong secondary school students and found that all the factors which their teachers identified as possible causes for students' reticence are related to anxiety. She recommends that teachers should be acutely aware of language learning anxiety if they wish to devise effective strategies to make students speak more in class (ibid: 150-160).

Although the above studies were conducted in language classrooms, I think that not only are the findings applicable to US and UK Higher Education classrooms, but the students' anxiety can be more severe there. Though non native-speaker (NNS) students are expected to have a sufficient command of English to fulfil academic requirements, it is rather unrealistic to assume that their linguistic competence is equal to that of native-speaker (NS) students. They are more likely to be language users who are still in the process of improving their foreign language proficiency. However, their teachers and peer students who are monolingual can be unaware of or insensitive to their anxiety and vulnerable identity. NNS students are often encouraged by their NS teachers and peers to be "*more relaxed*", "*less worried about accuracy*", and "*more willing to take risks*" (e.g. Doyon, 2000), as I advised myself and my husband (Episode 8 and 10, respectively). Such advice, albeit well-intentioned, seems to suggest that those NNS students are "*too shy or disturbed*", "*obsessed with accuracy*" and "*risk avoiders*", which all have negative connotations. Encouragement of this kind can even be an additional source of NNS students' identity vulnerability.

b) *The Native-speaker ideal*

Of all foreign language learners, those who learn English as a second or foreign language may be even more anxious, because of the widespread notion of *native-speaker ideal*. Cook (1999: 185) criticises the current English language teaching, as it ultimately aims to help learners (L2 learners) become like native speakers of English and treats them as “*failed*” or “*deficient*” native speakers. Citing Halliday’s claim (1968: 165, in Cook, 1999: 195) that “*a speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being*”, Cook (1999: 190) argues that L2 learners should be treated as “*multicompetent language users*” who use English differently, not wrongly, because of their knowledge of both English and their first language.

One of the frequently-made suggestions to improve the English fluency of Japanese students is that, instead of thinking in Japanese and translating it into English, they should think in English, because that is what native speakers of English do. This clearly suggests lack of knowledge of the differences between monolingual native speakers and multicompetent language users.

Furthermore, the very notion of native speakers and non-native speakers has been challenged by many researchers (e.g. Kramsch, 1998; Rampton, 1996), considering

that English has become a *lingua franca*. As the chances of communication between L2 users of English are becoming higher now, it is even a practical choice for L2 users to abandon the native speaker ideal. I remember that I could not make myself understood by my Chinese colleagues at the Master's course when I used some colloquial expressions which I had acquired in the US (such as "what's up?"). I was not an effective communicator in this situation, even though I was probably more approximate to native speakers of English than my colleagues were.

#### **3.4.3. An Advantage of Learning Anxiety Approaches**

The learning anxiety approaches can be effective, especially when a student's self-image is at stake. The mere knowledge that any foreign language learner, including an English native speaker, would feel anxious in the classroom may help Japanese students repair their damaged self-concept. Also, when their NS teachers and peers are not very supportive or understanding, they can try to protect their self-esteem by referring to their unique position as multicompetent language users.

#### **3.4.4. A Limitation of Learning Anxiety Approaches**

There are a number of strategies suggested to minimise the anxiety levels of L2 learners. Many of them are, however, directed at language teachers (e.g. Tsui 1996).

Thus, the major limitation of anxiety approaches is that strategies which can be employed by learners themselves are scarce.

Next, as the fourth and final category, I discuss the *small culture* approach.

### **3.5. The Small Culture Approach**

#### **3.5.1. What is Small Culture?**

##### *a) Large culture versus small culture*

The terms *large culture* and *small culture* are used by Holliday (1999) to distinguish two different usages of the word “culture”. The former refers to national, regional, ethnic, or international cultures, whereas the latter relates to “*any cohesive social grouping with no necessary subordination to large cultures*” (ibid: 240). To be more specific, for example, Japanese culture, British culture and Asian culture are all *large* cultures, while corporate culture and academic culture are examples of *small* cultures. Holliday (ibid) argues that *large* cultures are products of reifying *small* cultures; they consist of overgeneralisation of those who belong to different national, regional or ethnic groups. I briefly summarise Holliday’s (ibid) argument to elucidate how reification works in the large culture paradigm.

b) *Reification*

The aim of studying “culture” is usually to better understand the human behaviour of a certain group. The patterns of behaviour are identified, analysed and explained, often in abstract terms. These patterns are called “culture”, or *small culture*. In this sense, cultures are no more than descriptions of human behaviour. However, these patterns explained in abstract terms are often “*institutionalised into something that exists over and above human behaviour*” (ibid: 242), which is called *reification*. After reification, *culture* indicates “*concrete, separate, behaviour-defining ethnic, national and international groups with material permanence and clear boundaries*” (ibid: 242).

Let me exemplify the process of reification by using the notion of “*Amae (甘え)*”. Suppose you (a teacher) find a tendency for your Japanese students to be more dependent on you than other students. You use an abstract term, *Amae*, to explain their tendency. You then regard *Amae* as one of the distinctive characteristics of Japanese people in general, as something you rarely find in other groups of people. You consider that this culture of *Amae* influences or determines your Japanese students’ behaviour in class. Thus, although the notion of *Amae* was once just an abstraction drawn from “a tendency” of human behaviour, you eventually refer to it

as if it were “*a causal agent*” or “*a conscious being*” (Keesing 1981: 72, cited in Holliday 1999: 242).

There are plenty of other examples of reification in the ELT literature that I reviewed in the section on the culturist approaches (e.g. Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Pritchard, 1995). Holliday (1999: 242) claims that reification is a natural process of conceptualisation and that raising awareness of its nature and dangers is more important than denying *large* cultures altogether.

c) *Otherisation (Othering)*

As a result of reification, *otherised* images of a group of people are created.

*Otherisation* is defined by Holliday (ibid: 245) as “*the process whereby the ‘foreign’ is reduced to a simplistic, easily digestible, exotic or degrading stereotype*”.

Otherisation, or *othering*, has recently received severe criticism from many ELT researchers. Susser (1998) applies Said’s (1978) concept of *Orientalism* to analyse the literature dealing with Japanese learners in the field of EFL/ESL. *Orientalism* is described as “*ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient,*

*the East, 'them')*” (Said, 1978: 43). Through investigation based on the four characteristics of Orientalism, which include *othering*, *stereotyping*, *representing*, and *essentialising* (for definitions and examples of these terms, see Appendix 4), Susser (1998) points out the presence of Orientalism in the literature which is supposed to help non-Japanese teachers deal with their Japanese students.

Similarly, Kubota (2001: 23-5) finds a root of *othering* in colonialism and claims that othering, essentialising, and dichotomising the culture of the *Self* (Anglophone West) and the *Other* (esp. East Asians) is prevalent in applied linguistics. Referring to her own studies on opposing images of US classrooms in the literature, Kubota (ibid: 10-11) argues that *othering* “*presupposes the existence of the unproblematic Self as a monolithic, normative category*”. As I discussed in Chapter 1, in terms of classroom communication behaviour in US or UK Higher Education, Asian students, including Japanese, are clearly posited as “*the problematic Other*”, while local students are considered “*the unproblematic Self*”.

Having explained the process and dangers of the *large* culture approach, I next discuss how the *small* culture approach works.

d) *Small culture = communication*

In the *small culture* paradigm, culture refers to “*the composite of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping*” (Holliday 1999: 247). In other words, patterned behaviour, or communication, is culture (Hall, 1959). Patterns are nonetheless permanent or persistent; they change in accordance with the change of environment. Thus, small culture is “*a dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningfully within those circumstances*” (Holliday 1999: 248). Each group member is a co-creator of small culture, rather than passively controlled or programmed by it. Furthermore, small culture is formed within a wider social frame. Each member of a newly forming small culture brings *small culture residues* from past experiences (ibid: 248-9). This is especially evident in multinational classrooms.

e) *Classroom = small culture*

In the classroom, students and teacher gradually form patterns or conventions of behaviour, influenced by many factors, including *small cultures* they have experienced in their families, nations, regions, professions, institutions, or in relationships with peers (Holliday 1999: 249). This does not mean that their national identity or profession, for example, determines how they behave in the classroom.

Rather, it suggests that their activities show some evidence of the small cultures they have formed in the past. The story that one of my Chinese colleagues told me about her experience of reporting in class (Episode 12) seems to be an example of her *small culture* residue, although she reified it and explained it to me as if it were a convention shared by every Chinese student.

*f) Small culture = not a causal agent, but a means of understanding*

When an issue arises in a social group, the small culture approach suggests that a researcher should look at *what group members do* rather than *who they are* (Holliday 1999: 250). Close observation of their activities should help a researcher understand the issue better. This is actually what I did when I met a group of business school students in the US and tried to join their small culture (Episode 15). It was a multinational group (1 American, 1 French, 1 Chinese, 2 Japanese), but I never paid attention to their nationalities to explain their behaviour. If I had, I might have found some patterned behaviour among, say, Asians or Westerners, but it would not have helped develop my understanding of their small culture at all.

Thus, the small culture approach suggests that ethnographic action research would be an effective method to address issues which arise within a classroom (Holliday, 1994).

### **3.5.2. Advantages of the Small Culture Approach**

As opposed to culturist approaches (or the large culture approach), the small culture approach starts not with cultural differences but with an issue emerging within a social group. For example, if a teacher fails to facilitate whole class discussions, in the large culture paradigm, her attention is confined to differences in behaviour among different national or regional groups and how to deal with problems of the *Other* (i.e. Asian students). On the other hand, if she takes the small culture approach, she tries to observe emerging patterns of behaviour or activities of all the participants, including herself and local students (the *Self*).

As Kubota (2001: 31) points out, emphasis on cultural differences would not only reinforce cultural essentialisation, but also conceal the problems of the *Self*. My observation of Chinese colleagues in class (Episode 11, 12) is a clear indication of how my large culture approach had failed to analyse the issue from a more holistic point of view. If I had taken the small culture approach then, I might have noticed

patterned behaviour among all the students and the tutor, which would have explained better certain students' (not limited to Chinese students) hesitance to speak in the whole class situation. In short, I think that the small culture approach would provide Japanese students and their teachers with a practical way to address the issues arising in their classes.

Another advantage is that it would have a favourable effect on Japanese students' self-concept. As discussed earlier, culturist approaches, whatever their convenience, would damage Japanese students' self-image, as most concepts of cultural difference are based on the presupposition that Japanese (or Asians) are distant, exotic, inferior *Others*. Once Japanese students realise that images of Japanese culture are reified images rather than facts, and that their ways of doing things are equally valid compared with any others, their identity will become much less vulnerable. This is what I experienced during my Masters studies (Episode 13). Once identity becomes more stable, students become less anxious and better able to cope with stress and to learn social skills necessary to function appropriately in the context (Ward et al, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1993).

### **3.5.3. Limitations of the Small Culture Approach**

One of the limitations of the small culture approach is considerable difficulty in

escaping from the *large* culture paradigm. As my autobiographical stories show, my observation and conceptualisation of my own communication behaviour and that of other students in class had been strongly influenced by the reified images of Japanese and Anglophone Westerners. They were fixed in my mind so firmly that it took me a very long time to finally abandon them (Episode 16). It would not be easy to convince Japanese students or their teachers to see the cultural differences as constructed images rather than reality.

Also, critical observation of small culture would not be very easy unless an ethnographer held unbiased views toward different groups of people. If she attached a higher status to a particular group for whatever reasons, their behaviour would be seen as “the norm” and the behaviour of other groups of people would always be compared unfavourably with it. Moreover, if the ethnographer were a student, she would feel a desperate need to be accepted by and assimilated into the group with a higher status (see Episode 5 and 15 for examples), which would prevent her from critically observing her own behaviour and that of her communication partners.

Thus, despite its potential practicality, the small culture approach alone would not be sufficient to develop understanding Japanese students’ classroom communication in

US and UK Higher Education. It was an integration of all the approaches I have reviewed here which helped me to see the issue from a more holistic perspective. I shall next explain how I have incorporated these different approaches into one picture.

### 3.6. An Integrated Approach

#### 3.6.1. Summary of the Major Approaches

The advantages and limitations of each approach are summarised in Appendix 5. As illustrated in Figure 1, each approach conceptualises Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education in different ways, which helped me explore the issue from diverse perspectives.

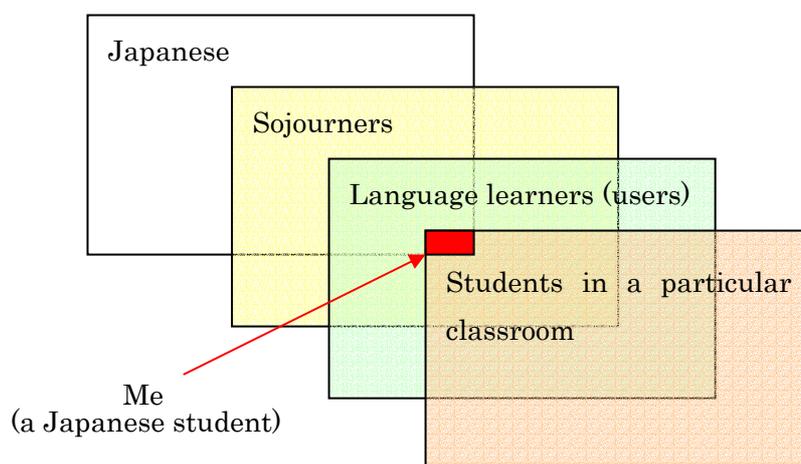


Figure 1: Conceptualisation of a Japanese student within the four approaches

Culturist approaches suggest raising awareness of cultural differences to reduce the

chance of miscommunication. In culture shock approaches, it is considered natural for sojourners to feel distressed and tired because of social skills deficit and vulnerable identity. Learning anxiety approaches stress how foreign language learning/using in the classroom can be a threatening experience for any student including both Japanese (or Asian) and Anglophone Westerners. Lastly, the small culture approach suggests that a student is a creator of small culture in her classroom, rather than a passive subject of its influence.

Despite the multidimensional nature of these analyses, each approach has its limitations. Unless they are applied in a certain structure, they would not be as effective as they could possibly be. In my case, compilation of knowledge on these four approaches did not help me until I found a particular structure within which to apply them, which I describe in the next section.

### **3.6.2. A Four-Question Structure**

As Episode 16 of my autobiographical stories indicates, I find there are four critical questions to ask when addressing any issue: (1) is there any evidence that the issue really exists? (2) is the issue really important? (3) what factors are involved? and (4) what can be done to resolve the issue? When I started my exploration of the issue of

Japanese students' classroom communication, questions (1) and (2) never came to my mind. As to question (3), I presumed I already knew the answers: “*distinctive features of Japanese culture*” such as *Amae*, knowledge-focused education, and collectivism. All I needed to do was identify the most influential factor; then I could ask question (4) to deal with it. As my exploration continued, however, I found more and more factors possibly affecting Japanese students' behaviour, such as identity vulnerability and language learning anxiety. I found it extremely difficult to limit the factors to a few which apply exclusively to Japanese students.

At the very end of my exploration, as presented in Episode 16, I finally asked myself question (1): are Japanese students really inactive participants in US and UK Higher Education classrooms? Any evidence? I found my knowledge of Japanese students' relatively inactive role in the classroom was more “knowledge as belief”, “knowledge as experience” and “knowledge as authority” than “empirical knowledge” (Seliger & Shohamy 1989: 13-16; Cohen et al, 2000:3-5). I simply believed it was a true description of Japanese students in these classrooms from my own experience as well as from what “the authority” (i.e. ELT teachers and researchers) told me. I had never bothered to verify the very existence of the issue.

At the same time, I asked myself question (2): is Japanese students' inactive role, if it actually exists, really an important issue? To whom is it important? As I discussed in Episode 8 and 11, I had presumed that, when a student is inactive in class, she (myself in Episode 8 and Chinese colleagues in Episode 11) has a problem. I simply believed that she had to change her "problematic behaviour" for her own sake. However, if a student can learn better while quietly participating in class and reflecting on her own, does she really have a problem? It may be a problem for a teacher who considers that active student participation is the only sign of good teaching (Holliday, 1997); or it could also be a problem for peer students who have ethnocentric views toward learning (e.g. myself in Episode 11).

Thus, by asking these two questions, the issue becomes clearer and specific enough to effectively address. The issue does not exist in abstract; rather, it exists in a real classroom and each student/classroom has a different issue. The small culture approach thus becomes very important. Through ethnography, questions (1) and (2) should be answered first, followed by question (3). Question (4) comes only at the very end, as it could even be detrimental if sufficient understanding of the small culture has not yet been achieved (see Episode 10 for an example).

Having explained the four-question structure, let me apply it to the current issue in this dissertation, and explain how I now understand Japanese students' classroom communication.

### **3.6.3. My Understanding of the Issue of Japanese Students' Classroom Communication**

*(a) Question 1: are Japanese students really inactive participants in US and UK Higher Education classrooms?*

From the available empirical research findings (Liu, 2001; Leigh, 2004; Furneaux et al, 1991), I think there are both active and inactive Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education, just like any other nationals including the local US and UK students. Japanese students' incapability to participate actively in class is not a real issue, but a distorted image constructed by *otherisation* in the professional discourse.

*(b) Question 2: is Japanese students' inactive role, if it actually exists, really an important issue? To whom is it important?*

Some Japanese students may be inactive participants in the classroom. Their behaviour may cause them a problem if their tutors and peer students evaluate it negatively (e.g. low grade). Also, it could be damaging to their self-concept,

confidence, and learning process if they consider their own behaviour inappropriate or even inferior to that of more active colleagues. Thus, in certain situations, some Japanese students' inactive class participation could be an important issue for the students themselves and/or for their communication partners (tutors and colleagues). Careful observation of interactions among members would be crucial to determine whether or not there exists an issue in each classroom.

*(c) Question 3: what factors affect their behaviour?*

There are many factors which could be at work. Some seem to be shared by any classroom: subject matter, teaching styles, discussion topics, seating arrangements, personalities of participants. Other factors which would be more significant in multinational classrooms include participants' value systems, prior learning experiences, their sojourning experiences, foreign language anxiety, and *otherised* images of their own national group and their host. Not only is it impossible to identify which factors commonly affect Japanese students, but such an attempt could promote overgeneralisation and *otherisation* of Japanese students. A researcher should pay exclusive attention to the Japanese students whom she faces in her real classroom, instead of trying to apply her findings to other settings or applying other researchers' findings to her classroom.

(d) *Question 4: what can be done to resolve the issue?*

Once some of the possible factors affecting a certain student's behaviour are identified by a researcher and/or the student herself, they can collaboratively devise, or she can help the student devise, a strategy to deal with them. This should be done as action research, aimed at bringing about changes in the actual classroom of the researcher, rather than generating implications for classrooms in general.

### **3.7. Summary of Chapter 3**

In this chapter, I have reviewed some key literature in the field of ELT, intercultural communication, and psychology to explore the issue of Japanese students' classroom communication in US and UK Higher Education. I discussed the four major approaches and identified their advantages and limitations. In order to understand the issue holistically, I proposed a four-question structure to integrate all four approaches. Finally, I applied the integrated approach to discuss my own understanding of the issue.

Having described how I understand the issue of Japanese students' classroom behaviour, I will propose in the final chapter how the integrated approach could be practically used by both Japanese students who wish to understand or change their

classroom communication behaviour and teachers concerned about their students'

communication patterns.

## **Chapter 4**

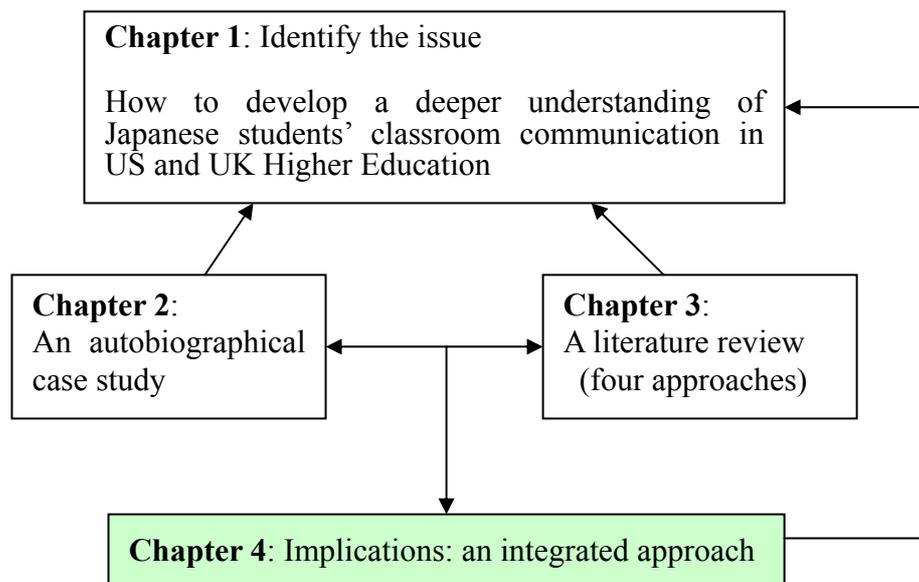
### **Implications of the Integrated Approach**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter 3, I discussed the four major approaches to the issue of the classroom communication of Japanese students, drawing links with the development of my understanding as discussed in Chapter 2. I argued that each type of approach could explain students' classroom behaviour to a limited extent, and therefore argued that it is through the integration of these approaches that the deeper understandings of the issue are likely to be achieved by both teachers and students. To this end, I introduced a four-question structure to integrate the four approaches, and then delineated how I understood the issue of Japanese students' classroom behaviour in US and UK Higher Education by applying the integrated approach.

In this chapter, I propose to show how this integrated approach could be practically used by both Japanese students and their teachers. First, I discuss the practicality of the approach to deal with diverse small cultures. Next, I describe the "Small-Culture Awareness Inventory" which I developed from the idea of the self-awareness inventory in the intercultural communication training (ICT) literature (e.g. Casse,

1999). Then, I suggest a Small-Culture Awareness Inventory directed to Japanese students in US and UK Higher Education. After suggesting another Small-Culture Awareness Inventory for university tutors, I point out some potential pitfalls of the inventory and suggest how to avoid making inappropriate use of them.



#### 4.1 Practicality of the Integrated Approach

As I discussed in the previous chapters, there are a great number of factors possibly affecting students' classroom behaviour. Each student has different reasons to behave in a certain way, and each classroom has a distinctive small culture which its participants collaboratively create and negotiate. Hence, it could be argued that it would neither be practical nor effective to use a single approach to understand the behaviour of different students in different classrooms.

The above argument is legitimate if an approach provides an exhaustive list of possible factors and suggests strategies to deal with them. Such a list could not only promote the stereotyping of Japanese students, but also interfere with attentive observation of emerging small culture as it confines observers' attention to its limited aspects.

The integrated approach which I propose does not enumerate possible factors. Instead, it asks questions which aim to help students or teachers increase their awareness of their own classroom communication behaviour as well as their awareness of their beliefs and perceptions about their own class participation and/or that of other participants. In other words, it is intended to help them explore the emerging small culture(s) in which they are participating. I think this approach can be practically applied to any classroom situation where Japanese students (or any other nationals) are perceived by themselves or their teachers to have a communication problem.

#### **4.2 Small-Culture Awareness Inventory**

I have developed a self-exploratory exercise which I term the "*Small-Culture Awareness Inventory*" (SCAI). This is based in part on the ideas for Self-Awareness Inventories (SAI) in the Intercultural communication literature (e.g. Casse, 1999).

Let me summarise what SAIs are, and to then position my SCAI alongside them.

#### **4.2.1. Self-Awareness Inventory (SAI)**

##### *a) What is a Self-Awareness Inventory?*

A Self-Awareness Inventory (SAI) is defined by Casse (1999: 32) as:

a subjective training tool which uses a questionnaire to give people an opportunity to reflect on aspects of their own personality in relation to a selected theme or topic.

The Small-Culture Awareness Inventory (SCAI) which I present in this dissertation is similar to the SAI except that personality is not the main theme to be explored. Instead, it aims to help people pay closer attention to communication or interactions within a particular small culture in which they are participating. That is why I have termed it the “*Small-Culture Awareness Inventory*”. I next describe the form of the SCAI.

##### *b) Types of Self-Awareness Inventory*

There seem to be three main types of SAI: one-question exercises, multiple-choice exercises, and in-depth exercises (Casse, 1999: 32). In the one-question type, participants are asked only one open-ended question, while the multiple-choice exercise asks more than one question with several possible answers from which a participant must choose. The in-depth self-assessment exercise requires an often

lengthy questionnaire which is prepared and processed by well-trained professional researchers (ibid: 32-33).

The SCAI that I propose does not belong to any of the above types, but it has characteristics of both the one-question type and the multiple-choice exercise. In order to explore more than one aspect of classroom interactions, it asks a series of open-ended questions which participants are required to answer in their own words.

Now, let me describe the process I went through to design the SCAI which I present in this dissertation.

#### **4.2.2. Developing a Small-Culture Awareness Inventory**

Casse (1999: 36-38) suggests the following seven steps to develop an effective SAI, based upon which I have designed my original SCAI:

##### *a) Step 1: Clarify the objectives*

The SCAI which I present in Appendix 6 is designed for Japanese students participating in academic courses in US or UK Higher Education. The aim of the current SCAI is to help the Japanese students raise their awareness in order to bring

about changes in their classroom communication behaviour if found necessary by the students themselves.

*b) Step 2: Develop the model or the framework*

As I discussed in Chapter 3, I find the *four-question* structure useful to meaningfully integrate the major approaches to the issue of classroom communication. For clarification, the *four questions* are: (1) *Is there any evidence that the issue really exists?* (2) *Is the issue really important?* (3) *What factors are involved?* and (4) *What can be done to resolve the issue?* Using this *four-question* structure as the framework for the current SCAI, I have divided the whole exercise into four parts, each of which addresses one of the *four questions*.

*c) Step 3: Formulate the questions to demonstrate each element of the model*

For the purpose of presentation in this dissertation, I designed three to four questions to address each of the *four questions* discussed above. Additionally, the current SCAI has a classroom observation task which I drew from the teacher education literature (e.g. Wajnryb, 1992). I designed all of them in Japanese and then translated them into English for the purpose of presentation as well as for the convenience of non-Japanese tutors/teachers. I will discuss the purpose of each question later in this

chapter.

*d) Step 4: Shuffle the questions and rate them (e.g. most likely – least likely)*

I neither shuffle the questions nor provide ratings to each item, as it is actually important to ask the *four questions* in numerical order, so as to promote deeper understanding of classroom communication. Also, as I explained earlier, ratings would not be necessary because the questions should be open-ended in order to be more self-exploratory.

*e) Step 5: Develop the instructions for proper use of the SCAI*

The SCAI is not designed to be used in class, but solely for the use of individual work. Still, it is important for students to follow certain procedures in order to fully benefit from the exercise. In Appendix 6, I enumerate key points for them to keep in mind while working on the SCAI.

More importantly, as a tutor coordinates the whole process of SCAI, they need to be keenly aware of its purpose and potential outcomes. A sample of the instructions for the coordinating tutor is shown in Appendix 7.

*f) Step 6: Pilot tests; and Step 7: Polishing*

The SCAI proposed here is only a sample, rather than a complete version. Because of the limited scope of the current dissertation, I present it as exemplification of the integrated approach, rather than proposing it as a ready-to-use SCAI. I recommend that Steps 6 and 7 should be taken by each tutor who wishes to put it to actual use.

Having explained the nature and purpose of the SCAI as well as how I designed it, let me present the SCAI for Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education (Appendix 6).

### **4.3 Small-Culture Awareness Inventory for Japanese Students in US or UK Higher Education**

As discussed earlier, the sample SCAI in Appendix 6 is divided into four parts in order to effectively address the *four questions*. I now explain how the questions in each part would help Japanese students increase their awareness of classroom communication.

#### **4.3.1. Small-Culture Awareness Inventory Part 1**

The first part of the SCAI aims to ask whether or not there actually exists an issue to be dealt with in the specific context in which a Japanese student studies. The student who works on the SCAI is regarded by her tutor as a student who problematises her

own behaviour in class through preliminary research (see Appendix 7 [1]). This section tries to reveal exactly what she considers as a problem, and to help her explore whether “the problem” actually exists.

I have designed three questions and one observation task as samples. The first two questions aim to find out about the student’s perception of her own classroom communication behaviour as well as her feelings about and her judgements of it. These are followed by the third question which is intended to turn the student’s attention to other participants in class and to raise awareness of her perception of their behaviour. I suggest that additional questions should be asked to further reveal the student’s perception of the problem and classroom communication in her class.

The classroom observation task in Question 3 is designed to surface patterns of communication behaviour among participants, i.e. aspects of the emerging *small* culture in which they are participating. Other observation tasks with different focuses of observation (e.g. types of contribution, length of each contribution, interaction during recess time) would help the student learn about the emerging small culture from different angles. At the end of the Part 1, the student is supposedly able to see her own communication behaviour from broader perspectives which may lead her to

critically see “the problem” she had perceived to exist before. If the student no longer finds any particular problem in her behaviour in class, she does not need to proceed to Part 2.

#### **4.3.2. Small-Culture Awareness Inventory Part 2**

If the student still problematises her own communication behaviour in class, she should be given Part 2 of the SCAI by her tutor. In this part, she will be asked about the significance she attaches to the problem which she identified in Part 1. Questions 11 and 12 are designed to help the student identify what behaviour she considers favourable and acceptable and the purpose of such behaviour.

If the student has taken it for granted that she should behave in certain ways (e.g. active class participation), she may find it difficult to question the significance of it. In such a case, the following question, “*Can you think of any other way to achieve the same purpose?*”, could be even a harder question to answer. Additional questions such as “*Can you think of any other class where you could achieve the same purpose but behaved differently?*” and “*What benefit can you receive by behaving as you wish (i.e. as you answered to Question 11)?*” would help the student explore how important it is for her to deal with the perceived “problem”. At the end of Part2, the student is supposed to see “the problem” from different perspectives and to decide

how significant it is for her own academic and social well-being. If the student does not consider it very significant, she can finish the SCAI at this point.

#### **4.3.3. Small-Culture Awareness Inventory Part 3**

Those students who regard their perceived “problem” as something too important to be dismissed should proceed to Part 3 of the SCAI. In this part, factors possibly affecting the student’s behaviour are examined. By placing the factors into different types of categories (Questions 22 and 23), the student will have a chance to see them from diverse perspectives. The factors probably include the student’s personal traits (e.g. shyness), her language difficulties, and the small culture of the class which she has discovered through the SCAI. Also, the student may list the factors related to her nationality (the culturist approaches), her sojourning experience (the culture shock approaches) and her anxiety to use English in the classroom (the learning anxiety approaches).

However, if the student is strongly influenced by *otherised* images of Japanese as well as of other nationals, it will be difficult for her to find factors other than the *large* culture differences. By asking additional questions and recommending some literature to read (e.g. Kubota, 2001; Karp & Yoels, 1976; Matsumoto, 2002), the

tutor can help the student take other approaches she has not effectively used yet. At the end of this part, the student should be able to identify some factors, drawn not from the *large* culture differences, but from observation of her own behaviour as well as the emerging *small* culture of her class. Those students who have taken other approaches in this part will probably start questioning “the problem” they have identified in Parts 1 and 2. Instead of proceeding to Part 4, they can be advised either to go back to Part 1 and start over again, or to exit from the SCAI at this point.

#### **4.3.4. Small-Culture Awareness Inventory Part 4**

Part 4 of the SCAI aims to help the student identify specific ways to deal with the factors which she found in Part 3. This part is critical for the SCAI, as its objective is to help the student change her behaviour if found necessary by herself after exploring her emerging *small* culture.

Questions 31 to 34 show four steps which the student should take in order to bring about changes in her behaviour: *Plan* (#31-33), *Do* (#33), *See* (#34) and *Plan again* (#34). This cycle can continue until the student finds satisfactory changes in her behaviour or she wants it to end for any other reason: the choice is entirely the student's. Any measures to bring about changes often involve great effort which the

student may find too troublesome especially when she is already busy with other academic and social duties. Hence, the tutor should not encourage the student to continue or persevere with her plan. At the end of this part, I expect the student either to see some positive changes in her behaviour, or to discount the idea of changing her behaviour if she finds it less important than other things in her life. In either case, I anticipate that the student would feel more satisfied with her own behaviour in class.

As explained earlier, the SCAI in Appendix 6 is by no means the finalised product. I present it to illustrate how the integrated approach I suggested in Chapter 3 can be practically applied to other Japanese students. For the actual use, more questions as well as classroom observation tasks should be added as I recommended earlier in this section.

Having described the SCAI which I developed for Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education, I next suggest another SCAI for their teachers.

#### **4.4 Small-Culture Awareness Inventory for Teachers**

Japanese students are not the only ones who can be influenced by *otherised* images of Japanese students as well as Western academic cultures. University tutors and EFL teachers, both Japanese and non-Japanese, can be as strongly affected as their students. I suggest that they should raise awareness of how they approach the issue of Japanese students' communication in class.

Tutors and teachers should be reminded that communication is never one-way traffic, as discussed in Chapter 1. When communication does not work in class, teachers will assume greater responsibility as they have more power to exercise in the classroom. When students fail to behave as their teachers expect them to do, it is important for the teachers to reflect on their own practice and communication in class. A specially-designed SCAI for teachers could serve as a tool for their professional reflection and improvement.

Lastly, I point out some potential pitfalls of the SCAI which I presented in Appendix 6 and suggest how to avoid making inappropriate use of it.

## **4.5 Words of Caution**

### **4.5.1. Who Should Take the Inventory**

As discussed earlier, the Japanese student who takes the SCAI should be the one who problematises her own classroom behaviour. It should not be the tutor who determines which student has a problem, but the student herself. Students with ‘inactive’ participation do not necessarily consider their behaviour as problematic, while active participants may be feeling uncomfortable with their communication styles (e.g. Episode 6 and 9 of my autobiographical stories). If a student is directed by her tutor to take the SCAI when she does not consider her own behaviour problematic, the student would perceive that the tutor is not satisfied with her classroom communication. That would possibly make her identity vulnerable and might interfere with her learning.

### **4.5.2. Acknowledging the Limited Knowledge**

As discussed in Chapter 1, human communication is far from being a simple exchange of messages. Communication is an on-going, transactional process which involves many factors, including the participants’ relationship and past experiences (Adler et al, 1998: 14). It is too complex to be fully explained by either the participants or outside observers. My advice is that neither the Japanese students nor

their tutors should attempt to understand exactly why the students behave in a certain way. Instead, they should acknowledge that our knowledge about communication behaviour will always remain partial. We can keep learning only when we are aware of our limited knowledge. The SCAI is a tool, not to find “the answer”, but to support our continuous learning. I suggest that it should be used regularly rather than once and for all.

#### **4.6 Summary of Chapter 4**

In this chapter, I have proposed the “Small-Culture Awareness Inventory (SCAI)”, an exercise encouraging and promoting exploration of classroom culture by its participants. Through the SCAI, the student or her teacher will be helped to see her own communication behaviour as well as other interactions in her classroom from diverse perspectives including the four major approaches which I discussed in Chapter 3. These approaches are integrated into the SCAI by the four-question structure which was also introduced in the previous chapter. By presenting a sample SCAI designed for Japanese students in UK or US Higher Education, I have exemplified how the integrated approach could be practically applied to other classrooms. Although the current SCAI is underdeveloped and has some potential drawbacks, it could still be a tool for the personal and professional development of

Japanese students as well as for their teachers.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have explored Japanese students' classroom communication behaviour in US and UK Higher Education. My focus was on how their behaviour can be better understood by them and their teachers, rather than on their actual classroom behaviour. Through an autobiographical case study and a literature review, I have discussed different approaches to the issue, revealing that *otherised* images of Japanese students would greatly interfere with developing a deeper understanding of their classroom behaviour. I have suggested an approach which intends to help Japanese students and their teachers observe the students' classroom behaviour from broader perspectives, which I expect will lead them to abandoning the otherised images of Japanese students.

Now at the end of my journey, I fully acknowledge a great difficulty in escaping from the effect of *otherisation*. It has taken me more than a year to finally get away from it. It was not an easy journey at all, as the otherised images of Japanese students were more than "images" to me; rather, they were "reality". One could try to see the reality from different angles, but it would be extremely difficult to deny or challenge it once it is fixed in one's mind.

I anticipate that many Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education and their teachers may experience a similar degree of difficulty when approaching the issue of classroom communication. The suggested self-awareness exercise does not act as a quick aid when a Japanese student wants to understand her own behaviour in class. It only encourages and supports gradual but drastic change in her views of herself and her communication partners in the English-medium classroom. Students need to spend a great deal of time and effort to carry out such change. If otherised images of Japanese students were neither as strong as, nor as negative as they actually are in many cases, it would not be necessary for them to bear such extra burden. In order to minimise their burden, what I should do as an EFL teacher/researcher include:

- (1) to support Japanese students' and their teachers' awareness raising by developing and polishing Small-Culture Awareness Inventories (SCAIs); and
- (2) to conduct empirical research which challenges the otherised images of Japanese students.

I think that we, EFL/ESL teachers/researchers, should continue our effort to free ourselves and our students from the effect of otherisation until any group of students is no longer seen as a cohort of the distant *Others*.

## Appendix 1: Autobiographical Stories

My status	No.	Title	Key points
A Japanese student in Japan	1	<b>“Pick me, please!”</b>	Different modes of participation in Japanese classrooms.  Implant of <i>Otherised</i> images of Japanese
	2	<b>“Leave me alone!”</b>	
	3	<b>“I wish my English were better...”</b>	
	4	<b>“Behaving like a Japanese is a problem”</b>	
A Japanese student in the US	5	<b>“Quiet, alone”</b>	An inactive participant.
	6	<b>“Happily quiet?”</b>	
A returnee in Japan	7	<b>“You won’t find a man!”</b>	An active participant.
A Japanese student in the UK	8	<b>“Don’t pick me, please!”</b>	An inactive participant.
	9	<b>“I admire you, because you are brave!”</b>	An (occasionally) active participant.
A Japanese researcher in the UK	10	<b>“All you need is courage!”</b>	<i>Otherising</i> Japanese MBA students.
	11	<b>“Whose problem?”</b>	<i>Otherising</i> Chinese colleagues.
	12	<b>“How simple!”</b>	
	13	<b>“The Japanese way is equally valid!”</b>	Realisation of <i>otherised</i> images of Japaneseness.
	14	<b>“You just don’t know how to kiss!”</b>	Social skills deficits.
A Japanese researcher in the US	15	<b>“I experienced Small culture!”</b>	Observing <i>small culture</i> .
	16	<b>“Am I really fat?”</b>	Realisation of the impact of <i>otherisation</i> .

## Appendix 2: List of Texts

This is the list of the texts which I have created during my Masters studies between September 2003 and March 2005.

Type	Number	Original language	Period
Study diary entries	24	Japanese	September 2003 - June 2004
Email messages to colleagues*	17	English	February 2004 – March 2004
Email messages to tutors*	19	English	November 2003– November 2004
Memos for assignments	29	English	October 2003– May 2004
Memos for dissertation	22	English	June 2004– March 2004
Recording of personal tutorials	7	English	Jun 2004 – Mar 2005
Earlier drafts of assignments	1	English	May 2004
Final drafts of assignments	2	English	January – June 2004

\*Email messages to colleagues and tutors exclude short communication with regard to scheduling or greeting.

The details of the above texts are summarised in the following tables:

### 1. Study diary entries

Month	Number	Reference No.
Sep 2003	1	Diary #1
Oct 2003	5	Diary #2 - 6
Nov 2003	1	Diary #7
Dec 2003	1	Diary #8
Jan 2004	5	Diary #9 - 13
Feb 2004	3	Diary #14 -16
Mar 2004	3	Diary #17 - 19
Apr 2004	2	Diary #20 - 21
May 2004	2	Diary #22 - 23
Jun 2004	1	Diary #24

Study diary was kept in Japanese so that the above entries were first analysed in Japanese and translated into English solely for the purpose of presentation. A sample of an diary entry with its translation is shown in Appendix 3.

2. Email messages to colleagues

Receiver	Period	number	Reference No.
MEd colleague (Australian)	Feb– April 2004	14	Email #1-14
MEd colleague (Canadian)	Nov–Dec 2004	2	Email #15-16
MEd colleague (Korean)	March	1	Email #17

3. Email messages to the tutor \*\*

Topics	Period	number	Reference No.
Assignment for the course unit titled “ Intercultural Communication for language teachers”	Nov 2003– Jan 2004	5	Email #18-22
Assignment for the course unit titled “Classroom Research”	March 2004	1	Email #23
Dissertation	July 2004– Nov 2004	13	Email #24-36

\*\* All the above communication was made to the same tutor (Dr. Richard Fay)

4. Memos for assignments

Course unit	Period	number	Reference No.
Intercultural Communication for language teachers	Oct 2003– Jan 2004	20	Memo#1-20
Classroom Research	Mar 2004– May 2004	9	Memo#21-29

5. Memos for dissertation

month	number	Reference No.
Jun 2004	1	Memo#30
July 2004	9	Memo#31-39
Dec 2004	2	Memo#40-41
Jan 2005	8	Memo#42-49
Mar 2005	2	Memo#50-51

6. Recording of personal tutorials for dissertation

Period	number	Reference No.
Jun 2004 – Mar 2005	7	Recording#1-7

7. Earlier drafts of assignments

Course unit	Period	number	Reference No.
Intercultural Communication for language teachers	—	—	—
Classroom Research	May 2004	1	Draft#1

8. Final drafts of assignments

Course unit	Title	Period	Reference No.
Intercultural Communication for language teachers	How self-identification affects cross-cultural adaptation: the third possible cause of Japanese students' reticence in the classroom	Jan 2004	Assignment #1
Classroom Research	Exploring the relationship between oral communication and identity: a case of Japanese students in a British MBA programme	June 2004	Assignment #2

### Appendix 3: A Data Sample: a study diary entry

To illustrate how I processed my raw text data for presentation, I present a study diary entry made on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 2003 (Diary #1).

Japanese (original)	English translation	Reference
<p>私の問題点は、やはりスピーキング。なかなかスムーズに英語が出てこない。文法的にきれいな文がなかなか作れないし、複雑なことを言おうと思うとこんがらがらる。これは練習あるのみだろう。<u>下手な英語ではあるが、なるべく怖がらずに・恥ずかしがらずに話しかけたり発言したりしよう</u>と決めた。授業中も機会があったら質問したり、発言しよう！これが「リスク・テイク」。馬鹿にされるリスク・うっとしがられるリスク・相手にされないリスクを恐れず、使っていこう。少し慣れたら、イギリス人と交流できる場にもかかわりたいと思う。でないとマンチェスターの英語にちっともなれないし、こちらの「文化」体験もできないから。ホームステイも絶対いくぞ！</p> <p>また、別の問題はリスニング。授業やニュースはだいたいわかるが、問題は店員との会話やTVドラマ。普通の会話がやっぱり苦手。ルームメイトがいない分、意識してイギリス人とつきあわないとなあ。その点、日本に行っていたというリズに声をかけて、LANGUAGE EXCHANGE をしようかな。</p> <p>さて、リーディングとライティングももちろん問題あり。ただこれについては授業が進んでから書いてみたいと思う。</p>	<p>My biggest problem is speaking. English does not come easily. It is still difficult for me to make grammatically correct sentences, and I get confused when I try to say something complicated. I think all I need is practice. <u>Although my English is not really good, I try not to feel too anxious and embarrassed to speak up.</u> Whenever I have a chance, I will try to ask questions and give comments in class! This is my resolution. This is my way of taking risks. There are risks of being belittled, risks of annoying people, risks of being ignored, but I shouldn't be afraid of them. Once I get used to it, I want to find some occasions to mingle with British people. Otherwise, I won't get used to Manchester accent, or experience their "culture". I will try the "HOST" scheme as well!</p> <p>Another problem is listening. I can understand the lecture and TV news, but interactions with shop clerks and TV dramas are hard. Since I don't have a (English-speaking) roommate, I should pay conscious effort to interact with British people. I'd better ask Liz, one of the colleagues who have lived in Japan, if she is interested in language exchange with me.</p> <p>Of course, reading and writing are also problem areas, but I would like to write about these skills once the course starts.</p>	<p>Reference to Episode 8</p>

## Appendix 4: Outcomes of Reification

Susser (1998) provides the following definitions and examples of characteristics of *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), which exemplifies reified images of Japanese people and society:

Characteristics of Orientalism	Definitions	Examples in the Japanese context
Othering	“Positing the Japanese learner as an Other different from Western learners and by implication inferior to them” (Susser, 1998: 55).	Because of Confucianism, Japanese emphasise social hierarchy, the role of effort, memorization, the importance of examination, and so on (Susser, 1998: 59).
Stereotyping	“ascribing characteristics to people on the basis of their group memberships” (Oakes et al 1994: 1, cited in Susser 1998: 56)	Japanese society is group-oriented, hierarchal, and harmonious (Susser, 1998: 60).
Representing	“abstracting from the reality, rather than depicting the actual circumstances” (Susser, 1998: 57).	Japanese society is homogeneous and harmonious (Susser, 1998: 64).
Essentialising	“explaining or describing complex things simplistically” (Susser, 1998: 57).  Presenting them “monolithically, with no sense of variety or individual differences” (Susser, 1998: 65).	Japanese students are often quiet in language classrooms (Susser, 1998: 65).

## Appendix 5: Summary of the Major Approaches

Approaches	Advantages	Limitations
Culturist approaches	(1) Rectify ethnocentric views. (2) Some positive effect on self-image.	(1) Cultural differences are often myths or stereotypes. (2) Cast negative effect on self-image.
Culture shock approaches	(1) Ease stress and anxiety to some extent. (2) Provide practical strategies to cope with transitional experience.	(1) Classroom communication is more complicated than general social interactions. (2) Based on reified images of cultures.
Learning anxiety approaches	Restore self-esteem.	Few strategies suggested for students to feel less anxious.
Small culture approach	(1) Provide a practical way to address the issue. (2) Positive effect on self-image	(1) Difficult to abandon Culturist concepts. (2) Power difference would interfere with critical observation.

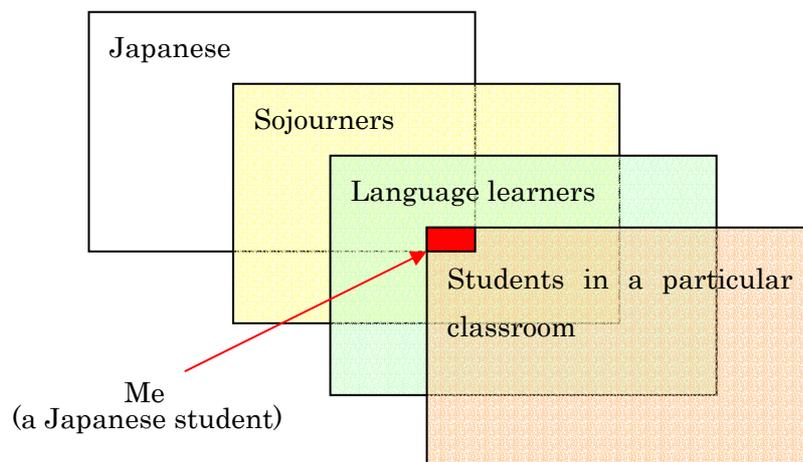


Figure 1: Conceptualisation of a Japanese student from the four approaches

**Appendix 6:**  
**A Small-Culture Awareness Inventory**  
**for Japanese Students in US or UK Higher Education**

<取り組み方：Instructions >

1. それぞれの質問になるべく順番に答えてください。回答は短くても長くても構いません。

You should start from Question 1 and try to answer each question before you move to the next one. Answers can be long or short.

2. 一度に全ての質問に答える必要はありません。時間をゆっくりかけて取り組んでください。

You do not need to complete the whole questionnaire at a time. Take as much time as you want.

3. 問題文の意味がわからない場合や何か疑問点がある場合は、担当教官にご相談ください。

If you have any inquiries about the questions or the questionnaire, please consult with your tutor who is coordinating this exercise.

4. 成績等とは全く関係がありませんので、率直なお気持ちをお書きください。なお、ここに書かれた内容は、担当教官以外には一切明かされません(ご本人の事前許可がある場合を除く)。

This exercise does by no means affect your course grades. Please let us hear your frank opinions. Also, no one but the coordinating tutor would know your answers without your prior permission.

5. この中には、授業中に観察(observation)をする必要があるタスクが含まれています。観察をする場合は事前に担当教官に報告し、許可をもらってください。

This exercise includes some classroom observation tasks. When you want to conduct an observation task, please talk to your tutor and get permission in advance.

6. 回答を記入し終えたら、担当教官に提出してください。後日、教官から口頭または書面にてフィードバックがあります。また、必要に応じて別のエクササイズをご紹介します。

When completed, please submit this to your coordinating tutor. Your tutor will give you some feedback either orally or in writing. If found necessary by your tutor, you will be given another set of the similar exercise.

< Questionnaire Part 1 >

Course unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tutor (coordinator): \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 このクラスの授業中、あなたは主にどのような行動をとっていますか？

During the session for this course unit, what do you mainly do? Please describe your behaviour in the following situations:

教師の質問・説明等に対して(when the tutor asks questions or explains something):

クラスメートに対して(toward your classmates):

- 2-1 上記のあなたの行動に対して、あなた自身は満足していますか、それとも不満はありますか？ その理由もお書きください。Are you satisfied with your own behaviours (your answers to Question 1)? Why are/aren't you satisfied?

教師の質問・説明等に対しての行動(with my behaviour when the tutor asks questions or explains something):

クラスメートに対しての行動(with your behaviour toward the classmates):

- 2-2 Question 2-1 で「不満がある」と答えた方だけお答えください。This question should be answered only by those who responded “I am NOT satisfied with my own behaviour” to Question 2-1:

このクラスの教師やクラスメートは、あなたの行動についてどう思っていると思いますか？そう思う根拠があれば、それも一緒にご記入ください。How do you think your tutor and classmates consider your behaviour in class? Why do you have such impressions?

教師(the tutor)

クラスメート(可能であれば、具体的に名前を挙げてください)  
(the classmates[if possible, please put their specific names]):

### 3 クラス観察 1 <Classroom Observation Task 1>

では、実際のクラスでの行動を観察してみましょう。あなただけでなく、教師やクラスメートの行動を注意深く観察しメモすることで、別の視点からクラス全体の様子が見えてきます。授業全体を観察する必要はありません。自分で特に気になる時間帯(15～20分程度)を選んで、下記の表を埋めてみてください。Now, let's try classroom observation. By carefully observing not only your behaviour but also that of your tutor and classmates, you will be able to see the interaction within the class from different perspectives. You do not have to observe the whole session. Choose whichever part of the session you want to observe (no more than 15 to 20 minutes) and work on the following observation schedule.

< 取り組み方 : Direction >

- (1) クラスメートの名前を縦列に記入しなさい。Put all the names of your classmates.
- (2) 授業中、教師が質問をしたら、誰が答えたり発言するかを観察しなさい。何番目に発言したかを示すために、発言した生徒の欄に番号を記入しなさい(例：1番目に発言した生徒の欄には「1」という文字を記入する)。Whenever the tutor asks a question, pay attention to who replies or speaks after the question. Put the number according to the turn they take (e.g. If Student A spoke first, put “1” in her cell).

\*必要に応じて表は拡大してください(add rows/columns if necessary):

Tutor's questions	Q 1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Students								
(eg) Hiromi	1	3		1, 3		2		6

- (3) 表が完成したら、授業が終わったあとなるべくすぐに分析してみましよう。まず、生徒の発言行動にある種のパターンがないか検討してみましよう。例えば「一番初めに発言する傾向があるのは誰か」「教師の全ての質問に答えた生徒はいるのか」「他の生徒からより多くのコメントを引き出すような意見を述べる生徒は誰か？」等。After the class, study the schedule as soon as possible. First, try to see if any patterns of the behaviours are emerging. Examples: who tends to speak first? Does anyone respond to all the questions? Whose comments or opinions elicit more comments from other classmates?
- (4) 教師の質問によって生徒の発言数に変化があることにあなたは気づくかもしれません。そのような場合は、その原因を考えてみましよう。You may notice that certain questions elicit more reactions from students while others fail to do so. Can you think of any reason?
- (5) 最後に、この観察によって、今まで気づかなかったクラスメートや教師の発言行動があれば、ご記入ください: If you notice any behaviour of your classmates or tutor which I were not aware of before, describe them.

< Questionnaire Part 2 >

Course unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tutor (coordinator): \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

このエクササイズは、このクラスでの授業中のご自分の行動に対して、不満を感じている方だけ取り組んでください。Only those who are unsatisfied with their own classroom communication behaviour should work on this exercise:

- 11 どのような行動を取れば、ご自分の授業中の行動に満足できると思いますか？なるべく具体的にご記入ください。What kind of classroom communication behaviour would make you satisfied? Please be specific.
  
- 12 上記に記入された行動をとることによって、どんな目的を果たすことができると思いますか？What purpose do you think can be achieved by behaving as you specified in the above?
  
- 13 同じ目的を達成するために、他の方法はないでしょうか？Can you think of any other way to achieve the same purpose?

< Questionnaire Part 3 >

Course unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tutor (coordinator): \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

このエクササイズは、ご自分の授業中の行動を変えることがご自身にとって重要であると思っていられる方だけ取り組んでください。Only those who consider it important to change their classroom communication behaviour for their own sake should work on this exercise:

- 21 あなたが理想とする行動(Q11)を取れない理由を考えてみましょう。まず、あなたが考えつく全ての理由を列挙してみてください。Let's explore why you cannot behave as you want to. First, list up all the possible reasons you can think of:

- 22 次に、上記に述べた理由を分類してみましょう。まずは、理由として挙げた根拠別に分類してみてください。Now, let's categorise the listed reasons into some groups. First, group them according to the source of your knowledge.

書籍・TV 等のメディア： literature and/or mass-media.	
今までの経験：my experience	
根拠はないが、そう感じた： my impression	
自分でリサーチしてみた： my own research findings	
その他：others	

- 23 次に、列挙された理由の中で、ご自分でコントロールしたり変化させたりできるものと、できないものに分けてみましょう。Next, divide them into two groups according to how much you can control or change them.

You can control or change:	
You cannot control or change:	

< Questionnaire Part 4 >

Course unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tutor (coordinator): \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

このエクササイズは、ご自分の行動に影響を与えていると思われる要因をいくつかに絞り込めた方だけ取り組んでください。Only those who have identified several factors affecting their classroom communication behaviour should work on this exercise:

- 31 まず、ご自分でコントロールできたり変化させたりすることが可能だと思われた理由(Q23)の中から1つ、取り組みやすいと思うものを選んでください。Among the reasons which you consider that you can control or change (Q23), please pick one which I find easier to deal with:
- 32 その理由を克服するための方法として、思いつくものを全て列挙してみましよう。Now, think of as many measures or ways to deal with it, and list them all.
- 33 Q32 のリストの中で、最も重要だと思うものを3つ選び、具体的に対策を考えましよう。Choose the three most important measures from the above list and think of how they can be implemented in your everyday life.

	克服方法 Measures	具体的な手順 Procedures	具体的なスケジュール Schedule
1			
2			
3			

- 34 1ヶ月後、上記の対策が計画通りに実行できたか、そしてその成果を検討してみましょう。計画通りに実行できなかった場合は、Q33に戻って計画を作り直しましょう。成果が期待したほど上がらなかった場合は、Q32から別の方法を選ぶか、Q33で具体的手順を変えてみましょう。After a month, please check: (1) whether or not you could implement your plan; and (2) whether or not you could achieve as much result as you expected.

If the answer to (1) is NO, go back to Q33 and revise the procedures and schedule.

If the answer to (2) is NO, go back to Q32 and choose other measures, or go back to Q33 and revise the procedures and schedule.

## **Appendix 7: Instructions for the Small-Culture Awareness Inventory**

This is a sample of the instructions for the SCAI for Japanese students in US or UK Higher Education (Appendix 6). The following instructions are given to a coordinator of the exercise, i.e. usually a course tutor in US or UK Higher Education:

### (1) Who should use it

It should be limited to those Japanese students perceive their classroom behaviour as a problem. In order to learn who problematises own behaviour, you (a tutor) may need to conduct a small preliminary research to every member of the class (not limited to those who you consider “reticent”) as a form of feedback. You can ask some open-ended questions such as “Do you feel comfortable in class?” and “Can you describe yourself in a typical session?” in interviews or questionnaires.

### (2) When to use it

SCAI would not be effectively used until some patterns of behaviour (small culture) start to emerge. Also, it naturally takes time for anyone to get accustomed to any new social setting. I would suggest you wait at least for a month (or more than 6 sessions) before you conduct it.

### (3) Where to use it

SCAI requires students to write their answers in their own words, which takes time and involves highly personal tasks. I would suggest that you should allow your students to take the form with them and work on them individually.

### (4) In what language it should be conducted

As you can see in Appendix 6, the questions are asked both in Japanese and English. If you can read the Japanese language, it is better to allow your Japanese students to write their answers in Japanese. It would make the work load much lighter for them, and more importantly, it is usually much revealing when writing in the mother language.

### (5) How to process/analyse/interpret the outcome

First, it is important that you do not compare the result with those of other Japanese students or any other nationalities to find commonalities or differences. It is not the objective of this questionnaire to make any national or *large* culture comparisons. Instead, just pay attention to an individual student's answers.

There is no need to process the answers in any specific ways. Do not translate the answers written in Japanese to English on any stage of this exercise, unless you need to share the outcome with your colleagues. Even in such a case, translate it at the stage of presentation.

The SCAI in Appendix 6 consists of four different questionnaires, each of which asks questions with regard to one of the *four questions* (see Chapter 3 for details). Do not give all of them at one time. Start from Questionnaire No.1 and analyse and interpret each of them, and give feedback to the student before the next questionnaire is given to him/her.

#### (6) What feedback should be given

The whole point of this SCAI is to promote self-exploration so that you need not give any advice on what they should do and how they should behave. Instead, as feedback, you can give some supplementary questions to promote their further exploration. For example, if a student paid excessive attention to his own behaviour while little to other aspects of classroom culture, you can ask specific questions such as “what types of questions are answered most by students?”, “did the change in seating arrangement in class influenced your mood or feeling?”. Also, suggest some tasks which would help students to see the issue from different perspectives. Such tasks include classroom observation, reading some research articles regarding classroom communication (e.g. Cohen and Norst, 1989), and interview with their colleagues or other tutors. These should not be imposed on them as many of them are likely to already have a lot of coursework to do. Respect their will and pace to work on their own “problem”.

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