書評 :
ジョセフ・ショールズ、阿部珠理『異文化間コミュニケーション
—己を知り、相手を知る—』南雲堂 1997年 99pp.

Book review :
Different Realities : Adventures in intercultural communication by
Joseph Shaules and Juri Abe. Tokyo : Nan'un-do, 1997. 99 pp.

2007年 2月

重盛ひろみ　　Hiromi Shigemori

書評：
ジョセフ・ショールズ、阿部珠理『異文化間コミュニケーション
―己を知る、相手を知る―』 南雲堂 1997年 99pp.

Book review:
Different Realities: Adventures in intercultural communication by Joseph Shaules and Juri Abe. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1997. 99 pp.

重　盛　ひろみ
Hiromi Shigemori

Ⅰ. Introduction

"Different Realities" is a textbook designed to explore a wide range of culture-related top-ics with a focus on intercultural communication. The 12 chapters address such themes as cultural identity, values, beliefs and diversity as well as verbal- and non-verbal communication. Recently, "diversity" has often been discussed in various contexts such as in business settings and educational contexts. It is sometimes dealt with as a topic (i.e. diversity management) in university classes for business majors. In the rapidly-changing global age, it would seem im-portant to learn how to better communicate with a variety of people of different backgrounds and cultures. The book addresses this increasingly important and challenging issue in order to promote student awareness in dealing with diversity, different cultures and people. "Different Realities" is to be applauded as an introductory text for teaching intercultural communication by introducing crucial basic concepts. The subject of the book is noted on the second page as "how to improve our relationships and our communication with people who are different from us".

As Mizuta (2006) emphasizes, it is vital for university teachers to help university students become good communicators to fully function in society. Being a good communicator starts with understanding the differences of others. It includes being articulate in expressing one's own opinions and feelings in a logical manner to fit business formats in their future workplace,

as well as cooperating with diverse people. This is consistent with the main theme of the book which indicates that the "purpose of studying intercultural communication is to help students be ready for the challenges of dealing with a wide range of people (p. 3)". The book deals with various people, not only those from different countries, but also includes a broader spectrum of people with different cultures and backgrounds in age, gender, social status, regions and the like. This might make the book seem more familiar to students with no first-hand experience living abroad or with communicating with foreign people. That seems to be one of the reasons why the book still gains enough popularity to be in its fifteenth printing in 2005, though it was first printed in 1997. I used this book for psychology majors at a university in Tokyo, but the topics covered seem to be relevant to students of any major as there is growing concern about how globalization affects us on a personal level and society on a national level. The book broadly covers key concepts needed for the study of intercultural communication.

Ⅱ. The content of this book

This book is comprised of 12 chapters, each including a reading passage exploring a specific topic followed by three to five activities. Each chapter starts with a lead-in story or dialogue before the main reading passage to draw readers' attention and to smoothly draw them to the target topics. The passages are followed by comprehension exercises entitled "Focus on Content", and then both the "Cultural Quiz" and "Activities" components are set to broaden student point of view and awareness toward the study of intercultural communication. In order to help students better understand respective concepts addressed, each chapter includes some specific anecdotes that act as contextualized examples.

Chapter 1, "Culture and Identity," first defines what a culture is, "as the things that members of a group share in common (p. 2)," and the chapter considers "cultural identity" by putting emphasis on the notion that "culture is learned," explaining the concept and the process of "socialization." The content of the first chapter also serves to give an overview of the whole book.

Chapter 2, "Hidden Culture," addresses covert culture less easily realized than more obvious or overt culture such as traditional arts. It describes what we feel and perceive with hidden culture such as communication style. Then, after the first two chapters, it progresses to more specific topics. Chapter 3 centers on "Stereotypes." It refers to how stereotypes are formed in our minds and provides easy-to-understand examples that help us become aware of stereotypical views we may have of people from different countries, by looking at stereotypical images of Japan and Japanese, Americans and people in Asia and Europe.

Chapter 4, "Word, Words, Words," might appeal to Japanese students because it contains comparisons of simple and familiar English and Japanese words such as "sensei" and "teacher" which are not actually always equivalent in meaning and usage. It also describes how language and culture are interrelated and how language reflects value. An anecdote with a Japanese learner of English studying abroad represents an example of someone you might encounter in educational institutions overseas.

As is apparent by its title, chapter 5, "Communication Without Words" focuses on non-verbal communication (i.e. gestures, body language, personal space, eye contact) and describes what culturally-based non-linguistic cues such as body language, reflect in terms of representing different meanings.

"Diversity" is discussed in chapter 6 by introducing a story about a Korean girl born in Japan. Diversity is defined here as "difference within a group that shares an identity (p. 41)." This chapter touches on the issues of bullying, returnees and how to support the disabled, and also expands into the issues of exclusion caused by Japanese conformity which puts emphasis on similarity within groups.

Chapter 7 is called, "Perception." It points out the importance of distinguishing between description and interpretation of the information we perceive or get through our senses, when we are with people from different cultures and with different experiences. It also points out that the meaning and the interpretation of the behaviors and the information gained differs depending on the culture. This topic is touched on briefly in chapter 2 as well and is dealt with again with more concrete examples.

Both chapters 8 and 9 focus on communication style. Chapter 8 starts with a conversation that shows the differences in communication style between males and females. Moreover, it describes differences between the Kanto and Kansai areas, in age and between ways of communication in English and Japanese. As it illustrates how communication styles reflect cultural values by introducing topics familiar even to Japanese students, it will help Japanese EFL learners have the opportunity to become more conscious of intercultural communication in a broader sense.

Chapter 9 illustrates the communication style related to "context" defined as "the shared information that two communicators rely on as background for their messages (p. 65)." This chapter also offers a comparison of a relatively high context society like Japan where "a few words can communicate a lot (p.65)" because most of the message is communicated within the shared knowledge, with a relatively low context society like the U. S. where people rely more

on concrete and detailed verbal expression to avoid misinterpretation. The authors point out that in a high context society like Japan, "Japanese culture emphasizes an appreciation of context and the ability to understand without relying on words (p. 66)" as well. As they conclude in this chapter, recognizing your own communication style and patterns come from your culture can help you better understand the way others communicate and to have less stereotypical views.

Chapter 10 "Values" discusses cultural values, defined as something important to keep in mind when you decide things and is reflected in customs, traditional social institutions and proverbs, as a binary juxtaposition of personal value and personality. It also describes how understanding the cultural values of its local employees affects business, leading to the development of the management's negative stereotypical views and to the failure in business.

Chapter 11 describes " Deep culture" defined as "the most fundamental beliefs and values of a group of people" related to things such as time, social status, beliefs about human nature and many other abstract concepts (pp. 80 – 81). It also deals with individualism versus collectivism, and the differences in social status as power distance. It asserts that deep culture is not easily noticed, but by knowing and understanding others' deep culture, we can learn more about ourselves and our own beliefs and values.

Finally, chapter 12 considers "Culture Shock," defined as "the unavoidable stress related to adapting to a new cultural environment (p.89)," starting with the story about an American boy staying in Niigata, Japan who is struggling to adjust to his new surroundings, causing him to get frustrated. The four steps of the adaptation process in a new environment are explained; culture surprise, culture stress, culture shock and culture adaptation. It is said that you can get through difficulties and get over unpleasant experiences, though it takes time, which leads you to regain your sense of normal self and normal emotional balance (p. 90). These days, an increasing number of Japanese students study abroad. The description that "Reminding oneself that negative feelings may be related to culture shock and not expecting oneself to be perfectly comfortable immediately can help the transition (p. 90)" is relevant to most people staying abroad to help promote adaptation to a different environment.

Ⅲ．Teaching practices using this book

I used this text in a university reading class. I would therefore like to note some things I found while teaching.

Searching for key concepts shown repeatedly throughout the book aided me in envisioning

a more whole picture of what is important in the study of intercultural communication. For example, the text often brings up the importance of knowing "differences and similarities" about people or cultures different than your own. In some chapters, the authors emphasize discovering both differences and similarities to build the basis for relating well to a diversity of peoples. They also consider negative results in the case of not knowing about commonalities and differences such as bullying and discrimination caused by exclusion due to differences. Furthermore, one of the strong messages and the key concepts repeatedly described is that knowing different people or cultures leads to knowing ourselves better, and vice versa.

These key concepts can be good cues to better comprehend the meaning of the texts.

In addition, to fully grasp what is implied in the English text, students needed to see how some key concepts and words were paraphrased in other paragraphs. Some students had difficulty in getting the meaning of some of the lengthier sentences. To help, I had them employ bottom-up processing to understand the structure, vocabulary items and the details in the text.

In general, to comprehend the meaning of a text written in the target language, second language or foreign language readers have numerous things to tune in to, such as grammar, vocabulary and the content knowledge on the topic discussed. Most Japanese EFL learners have experienced the yakudoku approach (Hino, 1988) in high school reading classes. The main emphasis in the yakudoku approach is placed on translating English sentences into Japanese (Hino, 1988; Gorsuch, 1998). The yakudoku method employed at high school in Japan seems to be primarily a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach in that the reader decodes fragments of written text and creates a mental translation, decoding it into Japanese syntax (Hino, 1988; Law, 1995). Therefore, even university students tend to use more bottom-up processing to translate the English into Japanese while reading ahead.

This book, however, provides such an abundance of examples and specific topics, as well as conveys the importance of developing cultural awareness, that focusing only on bottom-up reading would not be appropriate or sufficient or not worth doing. Rather, to fully understand and appreciate the content of each chapter, teachers need to encourage students to employ both top-down and bottom-up processing to construct the meaning (even in their L1, Japanese, or hopefully in English in their heads,) by having them activate both their formal- and content-schemata. In the university reading class I taught, I found that, in a sense, Japanese translation helped students feel secure when they were trying to understand the English text while arguing unfamiliar concepts related to intercultural communication from the book.

Each chapter addresses the main theme discussed in a part of a passage, and is written in

a logical format. In order to promote top-down processing while reading the text, even at an early stage in the lesson, I did some activities to encourage my students to take note of the structure of the text, to grasp the main ideas and learn how each paragraph is related and how the paragraphs develop from the inside and to search for and locate topic sentences, explanations, and specific examples.

Using textual knowledge and its knowledge of discourse markers, for example, worked to help my class develop reading strategies (i.e. predicting content and intension in the text; connecting text to existing background knowledge; making inferences) and notice textual structures (i.e. locating topic sentence, specific examples; connecting one part of the text to others). These practices might work to develop strategies for reading expository texts like this book.

Then, based on what is discussed in each chapter, students can develop their understanding through some activities in the text following the reading passage and also through some supplementary activities. One of the teaching ideas is to look at the content of "Different Realities" from a different perspective and to give students additional readings according to student interest. For example, in my reading class, I introduced short excerpts from "International Management" (Mead, 2005) which includes anecdotes on managing cultures and diversity in a business context and has some shared key concepts with "Different Realities" such as "Culture is learned" (Mead, ibid.). Looking at a culture from a different perspective with the excerpts from a business-focused book, for example, seemed to provide my students with some more ways to approach the culture-related topics. If students are economics majors, based on what they understand through reading "Different Realities" and other business-related reading passages discussing the same topics, there might be a chance to develop content knowledge necessary to carry out their other business-focused subject studies.

One of the strongest points of this book is that the content of each passage is well-contextualized as to fit a Japanese context. Since "Different Realities" provides an abundance of contextualized examples, even students without firsthand experience communicating with people from different countries can feel familiarity toward the study of intercultural communication. Moreover, the topics argued in this book can provide an opportunity to brainstorm and discuss by drawing on life experience and episodes or anecdotes students have found and encountered in everyday life. These experiences in class can help make the content of the book more familiar and relevant for them. Teachers, however, might need to introduce some new examples to update the information because this book was written in 1997.

As the authors state in chapter 1, "to help students be ready for the challenges of dealing

with a wide range of people (p.3)" is the main objective of studying intercultural communication. Learning it through this book, utilizing the wide range of issues and topics carefully introduced with cultural variety, seems to be of great help in preparing pre-experienced university students to function in the workplace and in global and diversified societies in the future. In that sense, rather than just facilitate English study, this book has the potential to contribute to making university learning relevant to students' future needs as well. As a result, it is to be regarded highly as a teaching resource in reading classes related to communication study or business management.

参考文献

References:

Gorsuch, G..: Yakudoku EFL instruction in two Japanese high school classrooms: An exploratory study in JALT Journal, 20(1), 1998, pp.6-32

Hino, N.: Yakudoku: Japan's dominant tradition in foreign language learning in JALT Journal, 10(1&2), 1988, pp.45-55

Law, G. : Ideologies of English language education in Japan in JALT Journal, 17(2), 1995, pp. 213-224

Mead, R. : International management: Cross-cultural dimensions.3rd ed, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 10

Mizuta, N.: Daigaku no kyoikuryoku koso mondai. [Critical issues on the ability of universities to educate] in The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2006, February 27, p. 29