

Communication and Social Life: A Case Study of the Japanese and the American Students in the UK¹

Kyoko Tanaka
(Wakayama University)

1. INTRODUCTION

The study-abroad experience is a significant transition and it is accompanied by a large amount of stress which involves both conflict and adjustment to new physical and psychological experiences and changes (Furnham and Bochner, 1982; Kim, 2001 and 2004; Martin and Harrell, 1996; Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001, cited in Cushner and Karim, 2004, p.292). When this cross-cultural experience is considered, cultural distance can be a measurement of cross-cultural adaptation. According to the cultural distance hypothesis, the bigger the cultural distance is, the more difficulties sojourners will encounter (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001, p.9). However, Furnham and Bochner (1982, p.164) pointed out that sojourners experience failures and problems because they lack the vital cultural skills and knowledge. This indicates that language is not the only issue of their cross-cultural adaptation when they have to speak not in their native language but in the language which is used at the destination.

This small-scale research focuses on the international students' social difficulties in a foreign culture. The targets were the international students in the UK from Japan and the US. There are two specific reasons why those two nationalities were chosen; (1) among those three cultures, the UK and the US are culturally close to each other while Japan is not (Hall, 1976, Hofstede, 1991 and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993)² and (2) it is obvious that the American students have far more linguistic advantages compared to the Japanese students despite there being differences between American and British English. Looking at the cultural distances, it is easily assumed that the American students would have less social difficulties than the Japanese students. However, the question is what kinds of difficulties occur to the international students from those two cultures and how difficult they are. In addition, investigating two nationalities in other cultures not only shows the difficulties each nationality has in one country, but it also implies the possible difficulties which might occur if the situation were reversed. Moreover, identifying the problems would improve the treatment of international students from those cultures and could be further applied for the intercultural training module.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

We cannot fully define each culture because it has its diversity, and not all the people in one culture carry the same elements. However, making classifications in certain ways

enables us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of each specific culture. Moreover, it helps us be more open to people's thinking processes and behaviour – because culture is “software” which is internalised in our minds (Hofstede, 1991).

Here, we will look at the cultural profiles done by four interculturists, Hofstede (1991), Hall (1976), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) and we will interpret the Japanese, the American and the British cultures as a whole.

Hofstede (1991) explored cultures and produced four dimensions of culture.

Firstly, power distance (from small to large) explains how the human relationships among different statuses are maintained. In large power distance cultures, there is an emotional distance among different statuses even though it is accepted that subordinates depend on superiors. On the other hand, in small power distance cultures, the interdependence occurs between superiors and subordinates, and the emotional distance between them is relatively smaller. The Japanese culture has a larger power distance than the American and the British cultures. Conversely, the American and the British cultures are closer to each other.

Power distance (PD) index (from small to large)

Smallest PD (11) < The UK (35) < The US (40) < Japan (54) < Largest PD (104)³
(Hofstede, 1991, p. 26)

Secondly, individualism vs. collectivism is about the relationship between individuals and groups. Basically, people in individualist cultures identify themselves as “I” while people in collectivist cultures have their identity based on “we.” Consequently, the interpersonal ties are loose in individualistic culture although people prefer strong interpersonal ties in collectivist cultures. In addition, the issue of face plays a significant role in collectivist cultures since the harmony within a group is highly valued. It is very important to maintain one's own face as well as those of the people you are with. The American and the British cultures are considered highly individualistic cultures while the Japanese culture is more of a collectivistic culture.

Individualism index

The most collectivistic (6) < Japan (46) < the UK (89) < the US (91) < The most individualistic (91)

(Hofstede, 1991, p. 53)

Thirdly, masculinity vs. femininity indicates the social implications of male and female. This aspect not only discusses the social role but also draws on other characteristics. For example, in a masculine culture, failing school is considered quite a problem. This implies that the society is competitive and people wish to avoid making mistakes. The Japanese culture is a highly masculine culture. The American and the British cultures are less masculine than the Japanese culture and they are similar to each other.

Masculinity index

The most feminine (5) < the US (62) < the UK (66) < Japan (95) < the most masculine (95)
(Hofstede, 1991, p. 84)

Lastly, uncertainty avoidance describes how people deal with uncertain situations. Towards strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, people prefer clear situations and want structure so that they can clearly understand and predict events. On the other hand, the opposite situation happens toward the weak uncertainty avoidance cultures. The American and British cultures are much weaker uncertainty avoidance cultures than the Japanese culture.

Uncertainty avoidance (UA) index (from weak to strong)

The weakest UA (8) < the UK (35) < the US (46) < Japan (92) < the strongest UA (112)
(Hofstede, 1991, p. 113)

Hall (1976) suggested high- and low-context cultures, which explains how messages and meanings are conveyed. Towards the high-context culture, most of the information depends on the physical context. Therefore, in high-context cultures, people's communication depends on covert and implicit messages and they use much nonverbal communication. Consequently their behaviour tends to be reserved. Because of their overt, implied and internalised communication, they have shared knowledge and assumptions. This leads to the clear distinction between who is in the in-group and who is in the out-group. Moreover, they prefer strong interpersonal relationships and have a strong commitment to the group in which they belong. On the other hand, in low-context cultures, people use more verbal communication. Therefore, their reactions are often conveyed directly with verbal messages. They have less clear in-group and out-group distinctions and less interpersonal relationships with others. Therefore, their commitment to the in-group is less than high-context culture. The Japanese culture is considered to be the very high-context culture while the American and the English culture are considered to be towards the low-context cultures (Lustig and Koester, 2003, p.111).

Hall (1976) added two cultural orientations of time. Basically, people in monochronic cultures perceive time as inflexible. Therefore, their interpersonal relations are subordinate to the present schedule. This indicates they do not have strong interpersonal relationships. On the contrary to this, people in polychronic cultures perceive time as flexible. That is, they are possibly able to handle multiple tasks at once. In addition, the present schedule is subordinate to their interpersonal relations. Consequently, their interpersonal relationships tend to be strong. Hall (1976) pointed out that people in high-context cultures tend to have the polychronic traits. From this point of view, the Japanese culture is considered as a polychronic culture while the British and the American cultures are regarded as monochronic cultures.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) described the concept of universalism

and particularism which is similar to the one of individualism and collectivism. People in universalist culture tend to make decisions based on the rules, while people in particularist culture are likely to emphasize present situations and human relationships regardless of the rules. The American and the British cultures are similar to each other and they are considered universalists, while the Japanese culture is rather particularist.

Particularist vs. universalist

The most particularist (32) < Japan (68) < the UK (91) < the US (93) < the most universalist (97)

(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993, p. 35)

In addition, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1991) pointed out that largely there are two cultures in terms of expressing emotion. They are affective and neutral cultures. People in neutral cultures carefully control and restrain their feelings. However, this does not mean they are hard-hearted. On the other hand, people in highly affective cultures often show their emotion with laughing, smiling and frowning. Their research shows that the Japanese culture is more of a neutral culture while the American and the British cultures are rather affective cultures.

Affective vs. neutral

The most affective (15) < the US (43) < the UK (45) < Japan (74) < the most neutral (81)

(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993, p. 70)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this small-scale research, questionnaires and interviews were implemented. The questionnaire for the Japanese and the American students in the UK was the main research purpose. In addition, the questionnaire for the university faculties was used to support the data and discussion. The purpose of the interviews with the Japanese and the American students and the university faculties was also to support the data and discussion. The details of the respondents are as follows;

Questionnaire

- 25 Japanese (13 males and 12 females, age between 21 and 32) who had received English proficiencies considered to be enough to study at British universities and had experiences of visiting and/or living in other countries.
*They are all numbered such as Japanese male [JM] 1, Japanese female [JF] 2.
- 25 Americans (13 males and 12 females, age between 20 and 28) with experiences of visiting and/or living in other countries.
*They are all numbered such as American male [AM] 1, American female [AF] 2.
- 19 university faculties who deal with international students
*They are all numbered such as university faculty [UF] 1.

Interviews

- 3 Japanese (one male, two females / JM1, JF1 and 3)
- 5 Americans (three males, two females / AM1, 3 and 13, AF 9 and 12)
- 3 university faculties (UF 2, 7 and 16)

*The interviewees were chosen among the all respondents.

The questionnaire administered to the Japanese and the American respondents contained the questions from Social Situations Questionnaire by Furnham and Bochner (1982). This time, the respondents were asked to answer the questions according to their experience during the first six months and the their experience after the six months. A scale of six levels was used to answer the questions. They were; 0 – never experienced; 1 – no difficulty; 2 – slight difficulty; 3 – moderate difficulty; 4 – great difficulty; and 5 – extreme difficulty. All the scores were calculated into the mean scores.

Interviewees were asked for any specific experiences and/or comments about the situations from the Social Situations Questionnaire.

4. RESULTS

In this paper, only the results in the questionnaire are presented in the table 1. Also, only the information which was used in the discussion is presented in the appendix 1, 2 and 3.

(Table 1) The questionnaire data from the Japanese and the American respondents

Score (difficulty 1 – 5)

The percentage shows how many people have experienced the situation. No ratio of the respondents = 100%

Questions		Japanese		Americans	
		first 6 months	after 6 months	first 6 months	after 6 months
1	Making friends of your own age	1.58 (96%)	1.54 (96%)	1.81	1.49
2	Shopping in a large supermarket	1.46 (96%)	1.21 (96%)	1.76	1.12
3	Going on public transport (trains, buses, tubes)	2.04	1.33 (96%)	2.13	1.28
4	Going to discotheques or dances	2.45 (80%)	1.75 (80%)	1.71 (84%)	1.38 (88%)
5	Making British friends of your own age	3.10 (96%)	2.51 (92%)	2.34 (96%)	1.90 (96%)
6	Making close friends from other countries of your own age	2.30 (96%)	1.78 (92%)	1.84	1.68
7	Going to a small private party with British people	2.92 (85%)	2.17 (85%)	2.19 (92%)	1.85 (92%)
8	Going out with somebody whom you are sexually attracted to	2.26 (65%)	1.94 (61%)	1.99 (88%)	1.72 (88%)
9	Being with a group of people of your age, but of the opposite sex	2.04 (93%)	1.68 (89%)	1.52	1.44
10	Going into restaurants or cafes	1.59 (96%)	1.09 (93%)	1.4	1.12
11	Going into a room full of people	2.45 (93%)	2.22 (93%)	1.6	1.28
12	Being with older British people	2.2	1.83 (96%)	1.61 (96%)	1.32 (96%)
13	Meeting strangers and being introduced to new people	2.42 (96%)	1.88 (93%)	1.59	1.36
14	Being with people that you don't know very well	2.52	2.28	1.8	1.59
15	Approaching others – starting up a friendship	2.56	2.22 (96%)	2.08	1.76
16	Making ordinary decisions affecting others	2.51	2.15 (96%)	1.88	1.56

17	Getting to know people in depth	2.50 (96%)	2.17 (96%)	2.24	1.88
18	Taking the initiative in keeping the conversation going	2.83 (96%)	2.61 (93%)	1.6	1.47
19	People standing or sitting very close to you	2.41 (89%)	2.18 (89%)	1.52	1.45
20	Talking about yourself and your feelings in conversation	2.21 (96%)	2.04 (93%)	1.56	1.40
21	Dealing with people staring at you	2.52 (92%)	2.40 (91%)	1.94 (72%)	1.83 (72%)
22	Attending a formal dinner	2.57 (76%)	1.99 (76%)	1.52 (96%)	1.20 (96%)
23	Complaining in public	2.77 (96%)	2.17 (92%)	2.39 (72%)	1.94 (72%)
24	Seeing the doctor	2.52 (64%)	2.04 (56%)	2.00 (80%)	1.73 (85%)
25	Appearing in front of an audience	3.21	2.45	2.25 (92%)	1.60 (92%)
26	Being interviewed for something	3.00 (85%)	2.24 (89%)	1.85 (65%)	1.78 (65%)
27	Being the leader of a small group	3.16 (76%)	2.84 (76%)	1.60 (80%)	1.47 (84%)
28	Dealing with people with higher status than you	2.49 (93%)	2.17 (93%)	1.64	1.63
29	Reprimanding a subordinate	2.97 (68%)	2.32 (72%)	2.34 (24%)	2.33 (24%)
30	Going to a social occasion where there are many people of another national or cultural group to yourself	2.16	1.71 (96%)	1.6	1.32
31	Apologising to a superior if you have done wrong	1.82 (84%)	1.63 (84%)	1.67 (79%)	1.62 (79%)
32	Understanding jokes, humour, sarcasm	3.35 (93%)	2.69 (93%)	2.1	1.61
33	Dealing with somebody who is cross and aggressive	3.24 (88%)	3.04 (88%)	2.68 (76%)	2.01 (80%)
34	Buying special goods (medicines, books, electrical goods, etc)	2.08 (93%)	1.60 (93%)	2.05 (92%)	1.72 (92%)
35	Using public and private toilet facilities	1.74 (93%)	1.56 (93%)	1.37 (96%)	1.21 (96%)
36	Waiting in a queue	1.84	1.59	1.38 (96%)	1.30 (92%)
37	Getting very intimate with a person of the opposite sex	2.97 (80%)	1.95 (76%)	2.34 (72%)	1.64 (72%)
38	Going into pubs	2.13	1.75	1.71 (96%)	1.34 (96%)
39	Going to worship (church, temple, mosque)	1.98 (87%)	1.67 (68%)	1.44 (49%)	1.06 (49%)
40	Talking about serious matters (politics, religion) to people of your own age	2.45 (89%)	2.03 (81%)	2.06	2.05

5. DISCUSSION

As a whole, the American respondents had less social difficult situations with less difficulty than the Japanese respondents both for the first months and following six months. For the first six months, while the Japanese respondents had 33 out of 40 situations where the difficulty ranged between 2.04 and 3.35 points, the American respondents had only 13 out of 39 situations⁴, and the difficulty ranged between 2.00 and 2.68 points. After the six months, the American respondents had only two out of 39 situations and the difficulty were 2.01 and 2.05 points. On the other hand, still 21 out of 40 situations remained where the difficulty varied between 2.03 and 3.04 points for the Japanese respondents. Therefore, this result confirmed the cultural distance hypothesis which explains that sojourners will encounter more difficulties as the cultural distance gets bigger (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001, p.9). However, the results show that the American respondents also experienced some social situations with difficulties to a certain extent during their stay although in different contexts from the Japanese respondents.

The situations where human relations and/or interpersonal communication occur (situation 5-9, 11-18, 20, 23 and 32) could be influenced a lot by the cultural traits. It is considered that the primary issues for the Japanese respondents were the face issue from their collectivism, the fear of making mistakes from their masculine cultural traits and perfectionism which comes from their uncertainty avoidance. In addition, it seems that they drew on the language concern as well. JF3 said, "When I am among people who are fluent in English even though they are not native English speakers, and I have something I don't understand or cannot say, still now, I am so depressed (Appendix (A) 3: Line (L) 6-7)." It is likely that Japanese students in general do not have confidence in their speaking ability compared to other international students (A3: L5-8). However, this is because of the feeling that they do not want to lose face by making mistakes in English (UF19/A2: L8-9, JM1/A3: L6-7). Indeed, one of the Japanese respondents pointed out the face issue which Japanese people have (JM/A3: L6-7). Consequently, these aspects prevent them from communicating with others to some degree. The fear of making mistakes possibly delays their further relationship with others as well. This would cause difficulty in building friendships further. JF3 mentioned "if I can only communicate with them slowly, I think they would not want to be interested in me as a friend (JF3/A3: L10-11)."

Although they have clear in- and out-groups from their collectivistic, high-context and particularist culture, they prefer to be included (UF16/A3: L1-5) because their interpersonal ties are strong. That is, they wish to build the relationships with others further. However, their collectivistic and high-context culture possibly drew out their reserved characteristics. In addition, as mentioned above, the language concern would still affect their performance. Therefore, if they do not speak out and use high-context communication, i.e., non-verbal communication, it would be difficult for those who are from less high-context cultures to understand Japanese students further. In addition, it is considered that they do not show their emotions often because of their neutral characteristic. JF3 remarked that there were more assertive people in the UK (A3: L1-4).

On the other hand, the American respondents did not have much difficulty in those situations. They had difficulty in the situations 5, 7, 15 and 17. It is obvious that their linguistic advantage would help their interpersonal communication when we consider the language issue which the Japanese students possibly have. Besides, they would not hesitate to communicate due to their cultural traits. However, it is also because of their geographical mobility that forces them to initiate conversation with strangers often and to learn to get to know people easily (Levine and Adelman, 1993, p.136 and 140, Hall and Hall, 1990, p.144). Here the results from the situations 5 and 7 are interesting. Both refer to British people. The assumption is that, although they are assertive, straightforward, and outspoken to show their honesty due to their low-context, individualist and affective culture, their behaviour could be seen in a different way. UF3 mentioned their behaviour as being quite alien to the British people (A3: L3-4). At the same time, AM6 found it difficult to meet British people (A1: L5-6). Although the Americans and the British are culturally close to each other, the slight differences could cause communicative discord. In terms of the situations 15 and 17, since their culture is a highly individualist, low-context and particular culture where interpersonal

bonds are fragile and people are more independent, they are probably not used to having many deep and close friendships (Levine and Adelman, 1993, p.136). UF3 found that American students in general tend to have superficial friendships (A3: L1).

Both the Japanese and the American students found it difficult to complain in public (situation 23). The difficulty that both of them found would seem a common aspect, however, the circumstances are different. UF5 pointed out that they do not complain because they are possibly less confident at expressing themselves in English (A2: L2-3). This is quite acceptable (reference the language issue discussed above). However, this could be because of their collectivistic and neutral culture. That is, they did not want to show their anger and/or did not want to damage the harmony of the situation. When UF6's students had problems with their accommodation, they solved them just by moving out and were able to maintain their friendship (A2: L5-6).

On the other hand, the general Americans' strong assertiveness possibly caused difficulties in this kind of situation for the American respondents. The point is the different perception of assertiveness. Although they would be assertive enough to complain, the respondents were not possibly assertive enough to deal with it. That is, their assertiveness was seen as being too strong or even rude. Moreover, this confirms that the American culture is a more individualistic, low-context and incorporates more aspects of an affective culture than the British culture.

The Japanese respondents found that the situations which involve one's own attention (situations 25, 26 and 27) were difficult. This issue can be considered as the result of their collectivist cultural traits. That is, they probably had to state their opinion not as "we" but as "I." In addition, to get attention, they had to be assertive against their high-context cultural traits. They could not be shy. Their language concern possibly affects these situations as well. JM1 admitted his concern about speaking English in front of an audience (A3: L1-4).

Among those three situations (situations 25, 26 and 27), the American respondents had difficulty only in the situation where they appeared in front of an audience (the situation 25). The difficulty was not derived from the same language issue which affects the Japanese respondents. However, the issue here is the difference in dialects and the content of their remarks. Since some words and phrases they use in the US may contain different meanings in the UK (AM3/A3: L6-17; AM4/A1: L2-3, AM12/A1: 8-9, AM13/A3: L1-3, AF2/A1: L11-12, AF12/A1: L15-16 and A3: L1-2), there are possibilities that their statements might be misunderstood. AM 3 mentioned that he had to worry about what he said because he had to make sure that his statements were not offensive to the culture there (A3: L1-4). Although they did not show much difficulty in the given situations, this aspect possibly affects some interpersonal communication as well.

Some situations require specific cultural knowledge. For the Japanese respondents, understanding jokes, humour and sarcasm (the situation 32) involves not only their language issue but also the cultural knowledge. JF1 stated she did not understand if the jokes were funny or not even though she understood the sentences (A3: L1-2). That is, since the permissible range of humour is different from culture to culture, the hearer has to perceive the sensibility of meanings in words (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993,

p.73). Therefore, it is understandable that the American respondents had some difficulty in this situation for the first six months as well. Some of the American respondents and the university faculties mentioned this point. This difficulty would happen in the opposite situation as well, i.e., when both the Japanese and the Americans make jokes, or try to use humour and sarcasm.

Sensitivity in asking questions involves a certain specific cultural knowledge. This sensitivity is very important in terms of any interpersonal communication. However, Japanese students in general do not know the boundaries (UF7/ A3: L1-3), i.e., if they can ask private questions or not. Therefore, it is possible that people from other cultures might become perplexed when the Japanese students ask some inappropriate questions.

The power distance issue occurs in situations where they deal with people of higher status than them (the situation 28). Due to the large power distance of the Japanese, it would be assumed that the Japanese respondents had some idea of the situation and they were used to dealing with people of a different status. However, they found it difficult dealing with people of a higher status. Mainly people who have a higher status than them are possibly their teachers at their institutions. It is almost impossible to call people with higher status by their first name in Japan. However, it is not inappropriate to call them by their first name in British culture. That is, the Japanese respondents were not used to having as close of an emotional distance as the American respondents, whose culture is a small power distance. At the same time, naturally, there are occasions where the formal expressions should be used. In this case, some titles are used according to a person of status. However, Japanese students generally have a problem with using the titles (UF7/A3: L5-6). That is, although they are allowed to call their superior by their first name in most of the situations, they still have to consider when they should call them formally.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Classifications by interculturists, such as Hall (1976), Hofstede (1991) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) are helpful. This is because, although we cannot define each culture exactly, they give us some general ideas which help us to understand the culture and identify possible problems.

In this piece of research, we have focused on three cultures; the Japanese, the American and the British cultures and analysed the social difficulties according to researches and taxonomies by Hall (1976), Hofstede (1991) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993). According to their study, the American and the British cultures are close to each other while the Japanese culture is not so similar to them. Therefore, it was assumed that the American respondents faced fewer difficult situations and with less difficulty than the Japanese respondents. Actually, the results of this small-scale research indicate this hypothesis is reasonable. However, the American respondents still had social challenges because the American and the British cultures are not identical.

The Japanese respondents had difficulties in most of the situations. There could be countless reasons for each case on a personal level. However, we could correlate their problems to cultural traits. Especially the face issue was their primal influence on their

behaviour. Naturally, it is important for them to speak and write in perfect English. However, if they stick to it, it will prevent them from communicating with others. Moreover, this will delay their cross-cultural adaptation. Therefore, easing the fears related to their face issue could motivate their interpersonal communication and raise their cross-cultural competence.

Although the American students did not have many difficult situations in this piece of research, they should keep in mind that there is still the possibility that they will have to face such problems. This is because, although the American and the British cultures are close to each other, they are not identical. Their strong assertiveness could be the cause of interpersonal communication failures. Also, they should realise that there are still differences between American and British English and they should keep that in mind when they speak.

In order to gain the maximum benefit from the experience of studying abroad, better preparations would be the best solution. Researching the institution is important for the international students. However, they should remember that the invisible parts of a culture, such as the communication style, attitudes and behaviour would have strong impact in actual everyday life.

Institutions which provide study abroad opportunities to the international students could provide information not only about their institutions but also about the host countries, especially the invisible parts which are mentioned above so that the international students can prepare for their cross-cultural adaptation. That is to say, this would also be one of their missions for international students.

Notes

- 1 This paper is a version which was taken and modified from a paper presented as Social Difficulty in the United Kingdom: International Students from Japan and the United States at University of Luton in October 2005 for a degree of MA in Intercultural Communication.
- 2 It is difficult to generalise what the British and the American cultures are because of their multicultural societies. Consequently, in this paper, the British and the American cultures mean their mainstream cultures that the interculturists have already explained.
- 3 The numbers in the brackets are scores obtained from Hofstede's survey (1991). (The followings are the same in the Individual index, masculinity index and uncertainty avoidance index.)
- 4 Question 29 is eliminated from the American respondents' data both for the first and following six months because the situation was experienced only by 24% of them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The questionnaire data from the international students from Japan and the US

The question: Please describe your story – whatever you have experienced during your stay in the UK, or please give any comments

1	AM 4
2	I was fortunate to be a native speaker, although the Scots have an interesting set of phrases that
3	did take some getting used to.
4	AM 6
5	Although I find it slightly difficult to meet British people my age I often find them to be polite
6	but not extremely friendly. I also find that many British students hold pretty strong stereotypes
7	of American students.
8	AM 12
9	I am always a bit nervous before I have spoken, because I don't know how the person's reaction
10	will be to my foreign accent.
11	AF 2
12	Only recently have I become more confident about "belonging" here, although there are still
13	some people who mock my American accent because it is so different from their British.
14	AF 12
15	However, I have found that there are great differences in the culture, food, social activities, and
16	yes, even the language between America and England!

Appendix 2

The questionnaire data from university faculties at universities in the UK

The question: Please tell me any social problems you have to deal with for your international students from the US and Japan. And please describe how you have dealt with it/them.

1	UF 5
2	Japanese - the opposite. Not willing to complain or assert themselves. This may be because they
3	feel less confident expressing themselves in English.
4	UF 6
5	The Japanese student solved their own problem by changing accommodation and maintained
6	friendships in this way.
7	UF 19
8	The Japanese are usually quite shy, and find it difficult to speak, because they are trying to speak
9	with perfect grammar/vocabulary.

Appendix 3

The interview data from the Japanese and American students and the university faculties

JM1

1	My previous occupation in Japan was consulting job. So, I had to make presentations with Power
2	Point all the time. So, making presentations are not a problem for me. But, here, there is a language
3	issue.
4	(I see.)
5	So, I feel pressure in terms of the English language.
6	...
7	As for Japanese, there are face issues, and, don't want to be considered as a stupid. ... Always
8	thinking whether my utterance contributes for the whole discussion or not, and wonder if I can say
9	it now or not, I think.

JF1

1	But, sometimes I don't really understand jokes on the magazines if they are funny or not, even if I
2	look up the words in the dictionary and I understand the whole sentences.

JF3

1	Ah, I am not good at those people. I am not good at assertive people. But, better than when I was
2	in Japan. Because there are many aggressive people.
3	(Where do you see those people?)
4	I think it is good on the contrary. There are more assertive people here.
5	...
6	When I am among people who are fluent in English even though they are not native English
7	speakers, and I have something I don't understand or cannot say, still now, I am so depressed.
8	...
9	Conversation is very important to make friends, isn't it? Well, any kind people as well as native
10	English speakers would want to continue conversation smoothly. But, if I can only communicate
11	with them slowly, I think they would not be interested in me as a friend.

AM3

1	I found quite interesting because the humour isn't necessarily the same. Maybe where you go, you
2	always have to be careful of. If you say something, that you think it's funny, it's not really funny
3	in another country. So, yes, I had to worry about that a little bit. I had to make sure what I was
4	saying that wasn't offensive to culture over here.
5	...
6	Yeah, a lot of things and I can't. My flatmate used to always go. He used to always say, while I
7	was walking to the door and "alright?" I really didn't know what "alright?" meant in England.
8	When I first heard it, I thought like something is wrong with me. Like, I look tired or just, can't
9	get "you are alright." But that's not what you meant. "Alright" which is just like a way of saying,
10	"hi, how are you?" Or, "you didn't okay" or something. Not they were something wrong. But it
11	was just "alright?" Now I ask to say "alright?" "Oh, yeah, yeah, how are you doing?" "Good." It
12	was really weirdo at first having to hear that. That sounds so confusing. "Just a second. What?
13	What exactly about?" But, communication over here in general is, is, weirdo because they, as
14	much as it, it is real English, it's not.
15	If you want to go to rent a car, like how I would say it in the States, you to go to rent a car. When
16	you just say, "rent a car, rent a car, please" They will look at me and "what? You want to rent a
17	car?" There, doesn't make any sense. But, if you go and say "wanna hire a car." But, "hire a car," it's,
18	that what they say. It's just like, different ways of saying stuff.

AM13

1	As Americans, we have slangs and words; sometimes don't translate into, you know, what people
2	aren't saying in the UK vice versa. So, they say something and trying to be, you know, funny at
3	some purpose. When the time you talk, sometimes doesn't translate. And some are embarrassing.

AF12

1	We call different names like, um, especially vegetable. They are lots of things are the same things,
2	but we call different things there, so...

UF3

1	They (American students) find easier to be very friendly on the superficial basis, very quickly.
2	...
3	Sometimes that behaviour can be quite alien to British people because they (American students) are
4	too straightforward.

UF7

1	Sometimes I thought that Japanese students went always, they are quite inquisitive about British
2	people. And sometimes they didn't know the boundaries. Maybe they would ask "how old are
3	you?" or...
4	...
5	And I think for Japanese as well, they have a problem with some of the title. Whether they call
6	Doctor or Professor or Sir. And they get quite anxious about that sometimes. And I guess in terms
7	of speaking, I think some of the Japanese students sometimes lack confident.
8	(Confidence?)
9	Lack of confidence in their speaking ability compared to some other international students.

UF16

1	So, and Japanese students are pretty much like to feeling included, and yet, they, they often feel so,
2	they are, there's barrier somehow. That prevents some from really feeling accepted. Yeah. And part
3	of that, shows up with, with Japanese students or American students, too, seem, well, I, you know,
4	I sort of feel so, maybe I'm becoming a friend but I'm never ever asked, to participate with the
5	other English students. So, there seems to be, sometimes that barrier.