Cultural Stereotypes:
How They Are Shaped and Assessed

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interdependent international community where mutual understanding between different cultural groups is essential, policy makers, educators, and teachers have felt the strong need to help youngsters grow to be "world citizens (Reischauer, 1988)". In an attempt to promote globalization in the Japanese educational system, the Ministry of Education of Japan has proposed that understanding and accepting people from other cultures be promoted in the curriculum (The Ministry of Education, 1987). Despite the keen awareness of the necessity of global competence, however, Japan has not been successful in educating students in this area. Mitarai (1994) states that the contact the Japanese have with people from other cultures tends to remain on a superficial level, and that a mutual cultural exchange on a deeper level rarely happens.

One of the factors that hamper mutual understanding and establishing close relationships is seeing others through cultural stereotypes. When we see people from a different culture for the first time, we tend to judge them based on our stereotypic images of the culture they belong to, failing to pay attention to their personal characteristics. Lippmann (1922), a journalist and political philosopher who first introduced the term "stereotype" to the field of social science, remarks that, for the most part, we do not first see, and then define, but we define first and then see.

The danger of heavy reliance on cultural stereotypes has been pointed out by a number of researchers (Brown, 1992; Tsuchiu, 1984; Takeichi, 1994). It is true that cultural stereotypes let us know what to expect from the relationship with a person from a different cultural background. However, negative connotations of stereotyping lead us to prejudice against and misjudgment of that person (Brown, 1992). When we pay more attention to overall traits of the culture to which that person belongs, we may fail to notice his or her personal traits. It can seriously impede communication in a cross-cultural setting (Takeichi, 1994).

Although stereotyping is a universal phenomenon, social scientists report that the Japanese have a stronger tendency to categorize people from other cultures, which gives detrimental effects on our international relationships (Mitarai, 1994). Examples abound in our society. It is not uncommon, unfortunately, that Japanese politicians make negative comments about other nations, particularly about other Asian countries, based on unwarranted simplified stereotypes. Their remarks deteriorate bilateral relations, causing anti-Japanese sentiment in the countries concerned.

One of the greatest challenges Japanese educators and teachers face, therefore, is to nurture impartial attitudes toward different cultures in our children. It is true that we cannot eradicate cultural stereotypes, as Hall (1959, p.120) states that no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation. However, we can at least teach students how to handle cultural stereotypes to minimize their negative effects.

The present paper presents three case studies that examine how each participant freed themselves from false stereotypes of a target culture by interacting with its people. Two Americans and one Japanese who have had intercultural experience were interviewed about the stereotypes they had had before they encountered their host cultures. They were further asked how they confirmed or disconfirmed those stereotypes. By analyzing how they shaped and assessed cultural stereotypes, the present study attempts to explore the attitudes we should cultivate to acquire global competence.

METHOD

Three adults were interviewed by the researcher: two Americans and one Japanese living in New Jersey, the USA. They were selected because they have lived in a culture that is different from their native one and have eventually fit in successfully despite their initial cultural conflicts. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, supplemented by follow-up interviews via e-mail. The major questions were as follows.

(1) Did you have any stereotypes about your target culture and its people before you were immersed in it?

(2) How did you come to believe those stereotypes?

(3) Were there any stereotypes that you found inaccurate after you were exposed to the target culture?

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The data collected from interviews and e-mail communication were qualitatively analyzed.

PARTICIPANTS

Sarah, a 33-year-old middle-class white American, lives in a suburban town in New Jersey. As an active violin teacher in her community, she is particularly interested in introducing music of various styles and from various cultures. After finishing high school in New Hampshire, where she was born and brought up, she was offered a scholarship from a college in Louisiana. She moved there to pursue her studies in performing arts, and lived there for two years. Because of sizable cultural differences between the North and the South in the US she underwent culture shock at the initial stage, although she eventually came to appreciate the Southern culture. After two years she transferred to a music school in Massachusetts, and she has lived in the North since then.

Jiro, a 42-year-old middle-class Japanese, lives in an affluent community in New Jersey. He was sent to a New Jersey-based chemical company as a research manager from its parent company based in Japan three years ago. Before his transfer, he had never lived overseas. In his New Jersey workplace, there are 25 full-time workers: 22 white Americans and three Japanese including Jiro. Over 20 hourly workers are all white except one black and one Hispanic American. Communication is held in English in his office. The only occasion Jiro speaks Japanese is when he talks with his two Japanese colleagues and when he contacts the parent company in Japan. Before his assignment in New Jersey, he had no cross-cultural contact other than several short business trips to the US to attend conferences and industrial fairs.

Mustafa, a 46-year-old middle-class Turkish American, lives in an affluent community in New Jersey. He is a banker working for a major bank in New York City. The first-generation Turkish American was born and brought up in Konya, a historic city in central Turkey. When he was twelve, he was sent to a boarding school where all instructions were given in English by European and American teachers. He went to college in Ankara, which also offered English-medium instructions. Most professors and instructors were Turkish, but the college policy required them to conduct classes in English. The student body was culturally diverse with lots of foreign students primarily from Iran, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Graduating from college, Mustafa moved to the US for the first time to study economics as a graduate student. Upon graduation he started to work as a banker, and since then he has lived in the US except for four years when he stayed in Istanbul, Turkey, on assignment.

CASE STUDY 1

When Sarah left her native culture to join a Southern community at age 18, she had three cultural stereotypes about Southerners:

(1) Southerners are more open, friendly, and gracious than Northerners.
(2) The standard of education in the South is not as high as that in the North.
(3) Southerners are more racially prejudiced than Northerners.

Sarah got the first assumption from people who traveled or lived there. She said, "I hear this (i.e., Southerners' friendliness) from a lot of different people. Some of my relatives are down there. And my aunt lived both in a Southern state and in a Northern state. So I have a personal connection to some people. And I never heard of one person say that Southerners are not friendly."

Through her first-hand experience in Louisiana, she confirmed that Southerners are friendly. She said, "You walk down the street and someone you don't know would say hello to you. That was hard to get used to because it's different here (i.e., in New Jersey)."

The second assumption that the standard of education is lower in the South came to her as a subconscious idea. She thought for a while trying to remember where she got this idea, and she said, "Maybe it was because Ivy League schools are located in the North." Then she added, "Maybe the language. The language they speak may give you an impression that they are not educated. The spoken language is not standard in the South. Or maybe I thought people who are prejudiced are less intelligent. And I thought that Southerners, who are prejudiced against Northerners, are less intelligent. But mostly I heard people talking that the educational standard is lower in the South."

Sarah said that this stereotype turned out to be false. She realized that the Northern and Southern educational standards are equivalent. According to her, the difference is that Northerners are more uptight or nervous about their achievements while Southerners are more relaxed. In other words, the Southerners' attitudes toward their academic endeavor are different from the Northerners' counterparts whereas the final results are the same.

The third assumption was instilled into her mind through school teachings. She said, "I learned that Southerners are racists through a lot of history classes, where you would hear about the Civil War and all the racial tensions that would come back in the 60's and the 70's, especially Ku Klux Klan." But the two years of living in Louisiana made her realize that Southerners are racists just as Northerners are. Sarah found that the Northerners and the Southerners are both racists and that the only difference is the ways they express racism. She said, "The amount of racism is no different. It's more open in the South. It's hidden in the North."

DISCUSSION

The interviews with Sarah raise three major issues about shaping and reassessing cultural stereotypes: (a) the influence of a native culture on shaping cultural stereotypes, (b) sources of information that helps stereotypes to be formed, and (c) multiple perspectives gained from intercultural experience. These issues will be discussed in this order.

a. The influence of native culture on shaping cultural stereotypes

The fact that all the three preconceptions Sarah had about the Southerners are stated in comparatives indicates that she perceives the target culture in the mirror of her own culture. Her views of the Southerners are filtered through her views of the Northerners. Viewing other cultures in analogy to one's own is not uncommon. Brown (1992, p.85) maintains that human beings perceive a cultural environment through the filters and screens of their own world view.

Another point to make is that two out of three stereotypes about Southerners have negative connotations: (1) Southerners are less educated, and (2) Southerners are racists. Stereotypes of out-groups tend to be relatively negative whereas those of in-groups tend to connote positive values (Oka, 1997). This is because the evaluation of a social category to which one belongs is reflected to the evaluation of oneself (Kubota, 1997). It is possible that, inclined to hold a positive image of herself, Sarah had positive images of the cultural group of which she has a membership, which in turn made her perceptions of Southerners relatively negative.

b. Sources of information that shapes stereotypes

Each of the three stereotypes derives from a different source: (1) experiences that people from Sarah's native culture had in the target culture, (2) views and values of people around her, and (3) views and values gained through schooling. It turned out that, out of these three sources, the first one helped her form impartial images of Southerners whereas the other two were not necessarily reliable though not quite inaccurate.

Sarah found that the assumption that Southerners were friendlier than Northerners was an accurate picture. There are some possible reasons for this. First, the providers of this information had direct contact with the target culture. Second, Sarah obtained this information from multiple sources, i.e., "a lot of different people." Thirdly, a characteristic trait such as friendliness is a cultural component that is observable relatively easily. Attitude and demeanor toward others, including exchange of greetings among strangers, are noticeable in everyday life unlike more hidden cultural components such as ideas, beliefs, and values. Taking the above arguments into consideration, we can safely conclude that sharing expatriate experience with people belonging to one's own culture is helpful (Hall, 1959; Athlen, 1988) as long as observed cultural aspects are obvious to anyone who lives in the culture.

The second source of information was people around her who handed down cultural stereotypes informally and implicitly. The process was so implicit that Sarah had difficulty specifying how she got the assumption that Southerners are less educated. We start to learn such culturally inherited stereotypes in infanthood when we have not acquired cognitive abilities or critical thinking abilities (Devian, 1989, cited in Mori, 1997). Therefore, we are not skeptical about them until we come to contact with strong counter evidence.

The third source of information, schooling, did provide her with correct information but only partially, and therefore, failed to help her develop impartial, proper understanding of racial prejudice in the US. The schooling she had received dealt with high-profile historical events that mainly occurred in the South, and the deep-rooted subconscious racism among Northerners was never discussed openly in class. Playing up one aspect of a social phenomenon and playing down another lead to an incomplete picture of the whole. The curriculum of the US offers children ample opportunities to learn about racism: the slavery system, the Civil War, segregation, and the civil rights movements in the 1960's. Their summer book lists include Harriet Beecher Stowe and

Richard Wright. For a few weeks before and after Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, grade school children work on special projects featuring racial discrimination centering around historical events that took place in Southern states. Naturally, they develop a cultural assumption that Southerners are racists, and because discrimination opposes the American conviction that "all men are created equal", this assumption is tinted with a negative connotation, ending up with a negative stereotype of Southerners.

On the contrary, racial prejudice that white Americans have on the fringes of awareness is rarely discussed in social studies class. First, it is difficult to discuss a subconscious concept that is formed under the influence of social, cultural, and personal backgrounds (Mitarai, 1994). Second, it is a politically and socially sensitive issue to discuss in the classroom. Nieto (1992) states that teachers are reluctant to mention a student's race, preferring instead to appear "color-blind." Probably it is because of these educational practice that Sarah missed an opportunity to think about subconscious racism that exists in Northerners' mind.

c. Multiple perspectives

The third issue to be discussed is that, through the process of confirming and disconfirming the three cultural stereotypes, Sarah gained multiple perspectives that are essential for correct understanding of one's own culture (C1) as well as of her host culture (C2). In other words, she learned to see culture from both insider's and outsider's perspectives. Kramsch (1993) suggests that the only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2 is to develop a third perspective, which would enable learners to take both an insider's and outsider's views of C1 and C2. The interviews with Sarah illustrate how she developed this third perspective. Her outsider's view of C2 was that Southerners were more racially prejudiced than Northerners whereas her insider's view of C1 was that Northerners are less racially prejudiced. She lived in C2 and her insider's view on C2 confirmed that her presumption was reality. Next, through her outsider's view of C1, she acknowledged that racism is part of her native culture as well; racism exists in the North in an implicit way whereas it exists in the South in an explicit way. Thus, the process of assessing a system of thought in C2 gave her an opportunity to critically interpret and synthesize a system of thought in C1.

Hall (1959) insists that one of the most effective ways to learn about oneself is by taking seriously the cultures of others (p.31). Sarah had not been aware of Northerners' racism because it was a hidden assumption taken for granted, or "the part we don't think about" (Hall, 1959, p.29) in everyday life. But she came to realize this implicit aspect of her native culture by encountering Southern culture. The interviews with Sarah suggest that a third perspective can increase our accessibility to more accurate assumptions not only about C2 but also about C1.

CASE STUDY 2

Before Jiro moved to the US to live and work there, he thought he had had no specific cultural stereotypes about Americans. After he started to work with American colleagues, however, he encountered some unexpected phenomena that surprised him, when he noticed that he had had the following two stereotypes about Americans on a subconscious level.

(1) The work ethic of the Americans is not as strong as that of the Japanese.
(2) The Americans are inferior to the Japanese in manual dexterity.

When he found that some of his colleagues had strong work ethic or excellent manual dexterity, it struck him as surprise. Recalling the reactions to his own discovery, Jiro thinks, in retrospect, that he had some fixed images about Americans.

Jiro said that the first stereotype derived from the fact that the quality of Japanese industrial products is appreciated worldwide, which symbolizes Japanese diligence, persistence, and endurance. He said that it is with patient diligence that Japan achieved industrial and economic advances after World War II. "My parents' generation worked desperately to recover from the postwar devastation. They worked to such an extent that they call themselves 'economic animals' : people who put economic growth first, willingly sacrificing their personal lives. That's why the Japanese industry and economy made rapid and remarkable progress in the 1960's and 1970's," he said. Jiro cited another example from Japanese history. "After 300 years of isolation Japan opened its doors to other countries in the late 19th century, only to find they were far behind the Western nations in legal and political systems, educational systems, technology, and industrialization. Then they devoted themselves to the modernization of the country to catch up with the Westerners. They worked desperately and achieved their goals."

Jiro admits that these notions are not his original ones. He said that he "was made to believe" that the Japanese are diligent because this self image is ubiquitous in books, magazines, newspapers, and TV programs. In other words, it is a concept generally believed in Japan.

It did not take long before Jiro realized that the stereotype he had held about work ethic was a myth. He found that his American colleagues were more hard-working than his Japanese counterparts in Tokyo. One of his American colleagues comes to his office at five in the morning, staying there after other workers leave home in the evening. A few other colleagues often work on weekends although their boss does not order them to do so. Jiro's business associates working in other New Jersey-based companies also work overtime willingly without receiving extra pay. Based on his observation, Jiro concludes that American business people in responsible positions work extremely hard to be professionally successful. According to his interpretation, their strong work ethic is a reflection of the American corporate system, where successful achievements are rewarded with a higher social and financial status.

After this cross-cultural encounter, Jiro started to think that the Japanese strong work ethic may be a thing of the past. He said, "It is true that the Japanese overworked themselves for decades after World War II to recover from the postwar devastation. But once we achieved industrial, technological, and economic prosperity, we have come to place less emphasis on the virtue of diligence. The cultural value we had during the period of rapid economic growth does not apply to today's Japanese society."

Jiro said the American work ethic is reflected not only on the long working hours but also on the intensity and efficiency with which they work. According to his observation, his American colleagues are much more skillful at time management than their Japanese counterparts. Jiro estimates that, if American and Japanese workers were given the same amount of time, Japanese workers would achieve less work because of procrastination and lack of concentration. For instance, conferences are held with intensity and efficiency in the US. In the New Jersey office Jiro works, a conference starts precisely at a scheduled time and concludes precisely at a scheduled time. In the Tokyo office Jiro worked before, a conference rarely starts at a scheduled time because of delayed arrivals. Its finishing time is rarely preset. They conclude a meeting when attendants said what they wanted to say or when there are time conflicts with another meeting scheduled afterward. In the New Jersey office, they have a meeting to make a decision: in the Tokyo office, they have a meeting to exchange opinions. In New Jersey, they have a lively argument: in Tokyo, some attendants doze off. Jiro said, "The poor time management skills of the Japanese may be a reflection of the Japanese corporate system, in which hard working is not properly rewarded. Promotion is based not on achievements but on seniority in Japan."

When he was asked how he got the second assumption that the Americans are inferior to the Japanese in manual dexterity, Jiro did not hesitate to say that no other nation can be compared with Japan in craftsmanship such as ceramics, lacquer ware, and woodwork. Being an ardent student of tea ceremony, Jiro has a deep admiration for Japanese traditional artistic craft, which is a product of an exceptional level of dexterity. He also referred to carefully designed automobiles made in Japan. "When Japanese engineers design automobiles, cellular phones, and other electric appliances, they take fine details seriously. While the Americans aim at practicality, the Japanese go beyond the practical level."

After he started to work in New Jersey, Jiro was surprised to know that there are Americans who are skillful at their hands. It was an eye-opener for Jiro to see manual laborers doing precise and detailed work on the assembly line in the manufacture division of his company. They assemble one-millimeter-square parts with tweezers exactly following the blueprints. In the process of examining finished products, they find flaws less than one-tenth millimeters by looking through microscopes. These hourly workers were mostly in their 50's or 60's.

Jiro witnessed manual skills of the Americans on other occasions as well. Traveling the New England region several times on vacation, Jiro had opportunities to appreciate traditional American handicrafts such as quilting and basketry. He said, "I still believe that the Japanese are superb in manual skills, but I've found that every American is not all thumbs. Some Americans, especially older generations, have admirable craftsmanship. When I come to think of the Japanese, there are few young people who inherit the craftsmanship that has been valued for hundreds of years. Maybe Japan and the US are in a similar situation in that old values are being lost."

DISCUSSION

The interviews with Jiro raise four issues. First, we see ethnocentrism at work in the process of his forming cultural stereotypes. The two stereotypes he had about Americans derived from the pride he had in his nation. Second, his ethnocentrism was reinforced by theories of Japanese culture that have been disseminated by mass media. Third, Jiro realized that Japanese diligence was a situational attribution although he had considered it a stable, internal attribution before he moved to the US. It presents an example of self-serving attribution bias (Brewer and Miller, 1996). Fourth, Jiro assessed his cultural stereotypes about the Americans and learned to see the members of the target culture as individuals rather than as a whole. Through this process, he also came to pay attention to similarities as well as to differences between his native culture and the target culture. The above four issues will be discussed in this order.

a. National pride

Like Sarah, Jiro formed cultural stereotypes of his target culture in contrast with his native culture. Like Sarah, Jiro perceived his native culture with relatively more positive connotations. What makes Jiro's perception a little different from Sarah's is that his national pride plays special roles in shaping stereotypes of the target culture. Jiro is clearly aware of the superiority of the nation to which he belongs. He had thought the Japanese were "superior" to the Americans in the virtue of hard work and in manual dexterity. The other side of the coin is the perception that Americans are not as good as Japanese in these two aspects.

We readily appreciate positive aspects of our native culture (C1), unintentionally pushing its undesirable aspects to our unconscious level. On the contrary, we tend to notice negative aspects of a host culture (C2) more easily, paying less attention to their positive aspects. In short, C1 stereotypes are more likely to be positive whereas C2 stereotypes are the reverse. We feel complacent about our own culture because of "the blindness that culture imposes on its members (Hall, 1959, p. 48)."

There is a study that proved the Japanese are particularly ethnocentric among other nations. Midoka (1991) conducted a survey in which he asked Japanese adults over 20 years of age living within 30 kilometers from the center of Tokyo if they agreed to the assumption that the Japanese have excellent qualities compared with other peoples. The results showed that 73.9 % of 652 respondents agreed to this statement. Midoka warns that such ethnocentrism is one of the reasons the Japanese cannot function effectively in the international community. Kume (1995) contends that ethnocentrism in its extreme form can undermine the foundation on which intercultural communication is based.

Fortunately, the direct contact with Americans let Jiro reconsider the stereotypes that were based on ethnocentrism. He realized that at least Americans in responsible positions in a workplace are hard workers. He also realized that there are Americans, particularly older generations, who have superb manual skills. The process through which he gained this understanding will be discussed in the fourth part of this discussion section.

b. Mass media: A provider of ethnocentric views

In addition to his national pride, there was yet another source that led Jiro to shaping ethnocentric stereotypes: theories of Japanese culture he had read and heard from books, magazines, newspapers, and TV. Japanese publications and the mass media often depict the Japanese as workaholics. In a book that introduces Japanese modern culture to foreigners, Kubota and De Lapp (1986) describe that work comes first for a Japanese businessman, who at busy times must burn the midnight oil and even go to the office on Sundays and other days off. Tanaka (1990) supports Kubota and De Lapp with statistical data. According to him, Japan was the only industrial country where people worked more than 2.000 hours per year with the typical workweek averaging 2.111 hours in 1988. Non-Japanese writers also state that diligence is generally valued by the Japanese (Forbis, 1975, p.15; Reischauer, 1977, p.154). This portrait of the Japanese is cited and reiterated by the mass media, until the Japanese, including Jiro, have come to take this notion for granted. The media play an important role in shaping cultural stereotypes.

Jiro's finding that this stereotype of the Japanese was not accurate suggests that we should not blindly believe information that media provide. It is not that the media are not trustworthy, but that we should perceive their report with a critical eye (Takeichi, 1994). There are arguments that the Japanese diligence is overly emphasized. According to Kubota (1999), since the 1980's critics have argued that the characteristics of the Japanese people and culture are ideological constructs that serve the interests of the Japanese government and its large corporations. Diligence may be one of such constructs that the Japanese government and the business sector made use of to make workers work even harder to meet their expectations. Vogel (1979), a sociologist who examined how Japan achieved industrial and economic prosperity, insists that Japanese success had less to do with traditional character traits such as diligence and patience than with specific organizational structures, policy programs, and conscious planning. If the media had featured Kubota's and Vogel's arguments just as they feature the commonly accepted notion, Jiro might have held a different assumption about the Japanese work ethic. The information provided by the media can be biased. We need to remember that there may be other arguments hidden behind the media coverage. Healthy skepticism over the mass media will prevent us from shaping false stereotypes.

c. Self-serving attribution bias

A survey study recently released shows that there is statistical evidence that supports Jiro's comment that Japanese strong work ethic belongs to the past. A study conducted by a UN agency in 2000 found that Americans worked 137 hours more per year than Japanese workers whereas the Japanese were long at the top of the heap in terms of the number of hours worked until the mid-1990's (Greenhouse, 2001). With the introduction of the five-day work week and longer vacations, the number of workdays has been reduced in Japan. Economic slowdown also reduced the amount of overtime. In the US, on the other hand, companies have downsized due to recessions, resulting in making workers who remain work longer hours (Greenhouse, 2001). Working in the US in the mid-1990's, Jiro eyewitnessed all these changes.

These changes in working conditions raise a question regarding how we should define diligence. Is it a stable or unstable characteristic? Although a person can be diligent regardless of the situation in which he or she is placed, it is also possible that a given situation forces a person to work extra hard. Jiro's previous perception, which is also a general belief of the Japanese, is that the Japanese diligence was a national characteristic trait, a stable, internal attribution. However, it eventually seems to have been a situational attribution, because what made the Japanese nation diligent was the postwar situation in which the recovery of industry and economy was seriously needed.

The myth that the Japanese are a hardworking people seems to be the result of self-serving attributional bias (Brewer and Miller, 1996, p.13). Brewer and Miller maintain that good outcomes for an in-group are explained by stable, internal attributions and that bad outcomes for an in-group are explained by situational factors, or unstable internal attributes. We can point out the possibility that the Japanese have forged a general assumption that we are a diligent people by nature in order to maintain a good self image when in fact it was social and economic needs that forced us overwork during the postwar period of rapid growth.

d. From a category-based process to an individuating process

After the immersion in American culture, Jiro reconsidered the stereotypes he had about the Americans. The cultural stereotypes he had held were as follows.

(1) The Americans' work ethic is not as strong as that of the Japanese.

(2) The Americans are inferior to the Japanese in manual dexterity.

After reconsideration his perceptions have been changed as follows.

(1') Americans who are in responsible positions work harder and more efficiently than their Japanese counterparts.

(2') Some Americans, particularly older generations, are manually dexterous.

Whereas the original assumptions refer to the Americans as a whole, the revised ones refer to subgroups of Americans. Jiro's focus shifted from a whole nation to subgroups with whom he was directly involved. The encounter with Americans who did not fit the stereotypes he originally held made him realize that there was more variability than he had thought in the American characteristic traits such as diligence and manual dexterity. In other words, the impression formation shifted from "a relatively category-based process to a relatively individuating process (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990)."

The fact that Jiro had daily contact with hard-working American colleagues and skillful hourly workers accelerated the individuating process. He was in close working relationships with C2 members whose characteristics were not consistent with the stereotypes he held. His colleagues on a managerial level, in particular, were very important people in reshaping his concepts about the target culture. As their relationships deepened, both professionally and personally, Jiro came to consider them as individuals rather than as members of the target culture. They were not anonymous any more. Fiske and Neuberg (1990) point out that if the target is interesting or personally relevant the perceiver will attend to noticeable information other than the initial categorization.

Along with the reassessment of the stereotypes about American culture, Jiro's notion about Japanese work ethic was changed as well. As he worked with workaholic American colleagues, he became skeptical of the generalization that the Japanese are hard working. He compared his American colleagues and his former Japanese colleagues based on his own observation, added historical analysis, and reached his own conclusion that the Japanese diligence belonged to the past, which eventually turned out to be a correct understanding according to the recent statistics. His intercultural experience offered him the opportunity to perceive his native culture from another perspective. Like Sarah, Jiro learned to see his native culture from an outsider's perspective, which, according to Kramsch (1993), is essential for full and impartial understanding of one's native culture and other cultures.

A final point to make is that as a result of the individuating process, Jiro found similarity in cultural trends in Japan and those in the US. The discovery of a handful of skillful Americans in older generations reminded him of a situation in Japan that there are also only a handful of skillful Japanese today. Japan has not been successful in passing down traditional skills to younger generations. Indeed, Jiro thinks that Japanese culture is losing craftsmanship that was valued and handed down from generation to generation. Thus he realized that Japanese and American cultures are common in that they face difficulty in preserving old values today.

CASE STUDY 3

Unlike the other two interviewees, Mustafa said he had not had any cultural stereotypes about the Americans before he moved to the US. Not that he was uninformed of American culture. Indeed, he had had a much larger amount of exposure to the target culture than Sarah and Jiro before his encounter with C2. When he was in primary school in Konya, he learned "quite a bit about the US geography, history, and culture." In those years his principle learning was from the schooling. Although he did not make much use of the mass media to learn about American culture, he used to go to the movies with his friends every Saturday, from the age of eight and on, to watch primarily American Westerns and pirate movies. Going to the movies was part of his pastime in his teens and during his college years as well.

The promotion to a boarding school at age twelve provided him with direct contact with people from other cultures including Americans. Although the students were all Turkish in his school, the faculty members were European, Australian, and American. The first year was totally devoted to mastering the English language, followed by five years of instruction of all academic subjects given in English. The teachers who taught him during these five years were principally Fulbright scholars and Peace Corps volunteers.

During these years Mustafa developed very close relationships with some of his English-speaking teachers in and outside school. For the first few years he perceived them as authorities, but in his junior and senior years their psychological distance was shortened. He received great influence from them both academically and personally. The most influential teacher for him was Mr. Brown, a 22-year-old black Peace Corp volunteer who taught him English during his senior year. Mustafa described him as "one of the smartest individuals I have ever met." They became quite friendly and used to go to the movies and soccer matches on weekends. Mr. Brown even hired Mustafa as his Turkish teacher. He probed him about religion, politics, and economics, always playing the devil's advocate. "He basically taught me to question things, and not to accept things at face value," Mustafa said.

After graduating from high school Mustafa attended a technical college in Ankara, which also brought him cultural diversity. Mustafa had some good foreign friends from Iran, Jordan, Syria Algeria, and Morocco. The language of instruction was also English. Although most professors and instructors were Turkish, they had to conduct the classes in English.

The summer jobs he had during his college years gave him additional intercultural experience. As a fluent English speaker, he used to work as a tour guide in middle Anatolia and thus "met lots of American tourists from every walk of life." Also, three summers he worked for American archeologists in Konya. He was with them day and night for at least two months each time at excavation sites.

Although Mustafa had been exposed to other cultures when young and had had no cultural stereotypes about Americans, the move to the US was not an easy one. "First several months I was very homesick and I did not like New York at all simply because things were different here from what I was used to," he said. The value systems were extremely different. He said, "For example, I thought people in the U.S. did not have much respect for the older people from the way they spoke to them. In Turkey you are always respectful and you respond only if they speak to you. Silence is a golden rule."

Mustafa used to highlight negative aspects of American culture at the initial stage of his transition. Gradually, however, he gained an impartial perspective to view his native culture and host culture. He said, "Anything that was different, I immediately interpreted as bad or not as good. Later on, of course, I changed my thinking. That is, yes things are different in the US, but they are not bad and in certain instances they were better than the way of things done back home."

DISCUSSION

Mustafa obviously owes his impartial cultural perspectives to the direct, close, and personal contact with a variety of people from other cultures he had from his early adolescent years. As a result of forming personal and intimate relationships with some of them, he learned to pay more attention to their personal traits rather than the general characteristics of the cultures to which they belonged. He perceived his middle school teachers from Europe, Australia, and the US as educational professionals he admired rather than as members of other cultures. For Mustafa, their personal value came first, and their cultural backgrounds came next. He learned to forego "category-based, stereotypic impression formation for more attribute-oriented, individuating impression formation (Fiske and Neuburg, 1990)."

There is another possible interpretation about how Mustafa came to understand people on a personal level rather than on a group level. Although his native culture (C1) is Turkish and his host culture (C2) is American, the distinction between the two cultures does not seem sharp and clear to him. First, C2 existed in daily life before he started to live in C2. C1 and C2 existed side by side. Second, as an elite student in a developing country Mustafa knew that his future career would require him to interact with C2, or to live in C2. Probably Mustafa perceived C2 as his future in-group rather than as a total out-group. Karasawa (1996) maintains that members of an in-group are judged on a personal level whereas members of an out-group are judged on a group level. The perception of his C2 as his future in-group may have enabled him to judge C2 people on a personal level even before he started to live in the US.

Interaction with different social and professional groups with different personal backgrounds who belong to one culture seems to contribute to avoiding forming simplistic stereotypes. As a college student Mustafa had a part-time job as a tour guide, which gave him opportunities to meet various American tourists "from every walk of life." Thus, he directly observed individual differences of people in the target culture.

Thanks to the rich intercultural experience he had before his move to the US, Mustafa was able to avoid seeing people through stereotypes. However, whether we have cultural stereotypes or not, intercultural contact is stressful. Mustafa confessed that he was extremely homesick and did not like New York City when he started to study there. He evaluated everything that was different negatively.

However, Mustafa was able to overcome his culture shock because categorization or generalization of C2 had not occurred to him in the long run. It is true that his initial emotional reactions were negative, but the individual differences of the Americans he observed as a student, as an excavation assistant, and as a tour guide helped him eschew generalizing negative images as well as forming negative stereotypes of the Americans.

IMPLICATIONS

The three case studies presented above indicate that openness to and tolerance toward different cultures contribute to cultivating objective and multiple perspectives. It enables one to avoid holding inaccurate cultural stereotypes and to get a correct and impartial picture of a different culture. As a by-product, one obtains unbiased perspectives of his or her own native culture. Sarah and Jiro learned to perceive their C1s and C2s from insiders' and outsiders' points of view because they were open enough not to ignore incidents that might serve as counter-evidence of their cultural assumptions. They reassessed and reconsidered those cultural stereotypes, and learned to attend to variety and complexity that exist in C2s. Mustafa, as a result of having seen his C2 through a variety of C2 people in a variety of settings before his immersion in C2, is free from the use of negative and oversimplified cultural stereotypes of C2 people. These case studies suggest that teachers and educators should help students cultivate openness to different views and develop multiple perspectives through intercultural education in the school system.

The greatest challenge for teachers in the Japanese school system, however, is that we do not have rich opportunities to directly contact different cultures as Sarah, Jiro, and Mustafa did. Although ethnic communities have lately become visible in Japan, our society is still relatively homogeneous racially and culturally. First-hand information about members of other cultures is not easily available on a regular basis in most school settings. Japanese society is clearly disadvantaged compared with multicultural nations where cross-cultural encounters are everyday occurrences.

However, these unfavorable situations for international education would not diminish the chance to help students grow to be internationally minded adults. A person can attain cultural tolerance without ever living overseas or communicating with foreigners. Reischauer (1989) maintains that there are two types of global citizens: an acting global citizen and an existing global citizen. The former is a person with communicative skills who has the abilities and opportunities to work in the international community. The latter is a person who has reached the true understanding of the world with tolerant attitudes. Reischauer states that an existing global citizen does not have to have the experience of living abroad or speaking with foreigners. The practical goal in the school setting in Japan would be to produce existing global citizens.

The first step would be to bring multiple sources of information about other cultures to the classroom. Unless we make conscious efforts to collect information, we tend to keep inaccurate cultural stereotypes that are subconsciously handed down from generation to generation. These stereotypes of an out-group are likely to be negative, often reflecting ethnocentrism of an in-group. We should remember that Sarah and Jiro, before they lived in the target cultures, used to hold negative C2 stereotypes that stemmed from ethnocentrism.

The importance of keeping students well-informed is supported by a UNESCO study that examined Japanese children's attitudes toward Koreans. When the children were asked if they liked Korea and its people before they learned about the country, the majority of them showed unfriendly reactions. After a series of lectures, though, friendly attitudes surpassed unfriendly attitudes (UNESCO, 1971). The children's negative reactions to Koreans may have been reflection of Japanese contemptuous feelings toward the country that was once dominated by Japan. Such historical connotations are deeply rooted and subconsciously handed down from older generations. Stereotypes that derive from these subconscious assumptions are difficult to eradicate unless one encounters exemplars that are not consistent with the stereotypes. In a culturally homogeneous society where such exemplars are not usually accessible first-hand, students should be given accurate information of other cultures through a number of sources.

Second, we need to teach them to critically examine the information about other cultures. The mass media is a great source of information, but it may provide us with simplistic cultural stereotypes either intentionally or unintentionally. So may schooling, which is supposed to instill impartial perspectives in students (Corson, 1993). Does a particular cultural fact or behavior represent the whole group? How much generalization is at work? What exemplars support it? Students will have to ask these questions to refrain from forming unjustified stereotyping. Healthy skepticism is what is called for.

A variety of programs and activities have been introduced to the classroom as intercultural understanding is emphasized in a new version of Course of Study issued by the Ministry of Education. However, we should go beyond just introducing cultural facts and behaviors. Learning hundreds of facts about a number of other cultures would be meaningless if one does not know how to evaluate them with an unbiased eye. Our final goal is not transmitting the cultural knowledge but to help students develop impartial perspectives and attitudes to see other cultures. Reischauer (1989) states that what is more difficult than the mere accumulation of knowledge about conditions and attitudes in other parts of the world is to make a conscious effort to see problems from the various points of view of other peoples of the world. The three case studies discussed above suggest the importance of developing objective perspectives as part of global competence.

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