

Effects of Cultural Knowledge for Promoting Intercultural Understanding

~Research of Text Chat between Japanese and Chinese~

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Communications between people having different cultures have been frequently had and greatly increased as the world has been globalized. In addition to studies, business activities and travels in foreign countries, people in different countries actively communicate with each other through the Internet. With intercultural communications, misunderstandings and cultural shocks have been caused to disturb people having different cultures due to different value evaluations, views and manner of actions.

Thus, it is necessary to promote a deeper understanding between different cultures so that it will be possible to cross the gap of understanding due to different cultures between people having different cultures and to make intercultural communications smoothly conducted. With communications between Japanese and Chinese, it seems that it is important to promote the intercultural understanding. Although Japan and China are neighboring countries, differences exist between cultures in the two countries. It is considered important to address the cultural difference with problems due to misunderstandings and frictions between people in the two countries.

With Damen's "The Paths of Culture Learning", it shows that as learners increase the knowledge about the other culture, their attitudes toward the other culture also change. With

Asama's "Sympathy process in intercultural understanding", it suggests that it is necessary to understand the other culture from a surface consideration to a deep consideration. Therefore, it is considered that the intercultural understanding will be promoted through considering not only surface cultural differences such as the languages and the actions, but also the formation factor and the influence element about the differences.

Researches of the system for supporting the intercultural communications are active by using the pictograph and the machine translation to cross the language barrier. In order to support to solve the cultural barrier problem, a series of chat systems (AnnoChat, AnnoChat2, AnnoChat3) have been exploited, through investing the function of the annotation (annotation that presents the meaning of words and phrases). However, these supports are capable of treating only the surface cultural differences.

With the present research, the effect is estimated for intercultural understanding by dealing with the cultural knowledge that is not surface. Concretely, the cultural knowledge contains an aspect of the surface cultural difference between Japan and China, and researchers' opinions concerning the cause of formation and influence elements to the surface cultural difference aspect. With the experiment, Japanese and Chinese use the chat system to have conversations in Japanese, while referring to the cultural knowledge provided from the third party. To have an evaluation, the experiment with cultural knowledge was compared to the experiment without providing cultural knowledge. With the experiment using cultural knowledge, topics and cultural knowledge were offered. With the experiment having no cultural knowledge, only a topic was offered. There are seven pairs of Japanese and Chinese students participated in each pattern experiment.

The results of experiment and their analysis were as follows: (1) the change in the fourth stage of Damen's study process, showed that offering the cultural knowledge can be useful for understanding the cultural differences, (2) a lot of contents about deep culture discussed in the experiment using cultural knowledge, showed that the cultural knowledge's effect was expected for deepening intercultural understanding, (3) there appeared conversations concentrated on cultural understanding and a lot of cultural topics.

For my future research, knowledge relating to culture will be collected after influences due to contents of topics are considered. There will be made experiments which are directed not only to the Japanese and Chinese but also to people of other different countries to promote multi-cultural understanding therebetween.