

日本とアメリカの紹介文化の比較
Comparison of Introduction Culture between Japan and the US

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My topic is on the comparison of introduction culture between Japan, Korea, and the U.S. I was born and raised in Korea and am studying abroad in America. I learned about the topics I chose from the textbooks, and from the discussions I had during class. I also had conversation sessions with the speaking assistant, Ms. Chen, about Japan's introduction culture.

First, I would summarize the introduction culture of Japan. Japanese people call people by their family names. In Japanese, there is a polite way of speaking called “keigo,” which is used when conversing with elders and strangers. Japanese people bow instead of shaking hands with the people they have met for the first time. Also, Japanese people often exchange business cards with people they meet for the first time. Usually, when you talk to someone, you often use conversation fillers called “aizuchi” instead of making eye contacts.

I asked Ms. Chen, my speaking assistant, about what kind of contact informations that young Japanese people would exchange. I came up with that question because young people in Korea and the U.S. usually exchange Facebook accounts or so. According to Ms. Chen, those who are in business relationship usually exchange business cards. She added that people without business cards could look like they don't have any jobs. She said people with smartphones often exchange accounts for a messenger application called “line.” I thought it was strange how Japanese people avoid making eye contacts during conversations, so I asked Ms. Chen about what would be appropriate for people to look at while talking if it is rude to look at people's eyes. She said looking slightly down would be the most appropriate. During my second speaking session, I asked Ms. Chen some more complex questions. I asked her about the way Japanese people would introduce their friend to other friends. She said, when someone is being introduced to other friend, it would be

a courtesy to the person in the middle, to try to make a conversation about even if I am not interested in the person being introduced. I asked her what Japanese people would do when they are feeling awkward with the person they met for the first time, and if it is rude to check cell phones during conversations. She said that if no one is talking, then one wouldn't speak up until someone brings up a topic. She added that one should never look at their cell-phones during conversations. Lastly, I asked her about some of the questions that are not rude to ask in America, but is considered rude in Japan. Ms. Chen said it was rude to ask people's age. Then I asked, if one doesn't know the age of the person they're talking to, how they would know if they have to use keigo. She said people would use polite language until the other person says it's okay not to use keigo. She also said if the person is superior, you won't comment on anything that's related to their personal style.

In Korea, people who meet for the first time are usually called by their full names. I think Americans usually use their first names. There is also a specific way of speaking politely in Korean, but there isn't in English. However, even though the linguistic rules are not as strict as Japan and Korea, there are certainly some polite ways of speaking in English as well. In Korea, people either bow or shake hands depending on the situation. I think shaking hands is more common in America. In Korea, they often exchange business cards, as well as phone numbers and accounts of a messenger application called "Kakao talk." American people often exchange Facebook accounts. Korean and American people seem to use both aizuchi and eye contacts while they converse. According to what I learned during the conversation sessions, the basic etiquettes seems to be pretty much similar in all three countries. In America, introductions seems to be more casual than in Korea and Japan, but it would still be rude to not concentrate in the conversation that's taking place. I think the custom of using keigo is very similar between Korean and Japan. One should use keigo until both people reach to a consensus that they both wouldn't use it.

There are many differences in the introduction culture of Japan, Korea and the U.S. For example, there is no specific way of speaking politely in the U.S., and the means of communication

being exchanged are slightly different. In my opinion, it is okay to make slight mistakes while trying to accommodate the culture, if the overall attitude is polite. I think I would be able to use some things that I learned while writing this paper when I visit Japan.