The Role of a Critical Interpreter in a multi-cultural educational site

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Table of contents

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20h1-090

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Chapter.1 Introduction

In 2022, I embarked on a four-month study program in Tbilisi, Georgia, spanning from September to December. My prior research involved an analysis of the lessons I learned from the challenges I encountered during my overseas stay. To investigate these challenges, I collected data from field notes and journals. During my stay, I encountered various issues, including linguistic barriers, utility supply problems, and cultural disparities. To navigate this challenging environment, I employed a solution that involved the use of multimodal communication in an unfamiliar culture. Initially, I had anticipated that English would be a universal common language. However, my experience in Georgia revealed that English is not ubiquitous in the world. My adoption of a diverse set of contextually appropriate communication modes proved to be an effective mode for adapting to diversity and facilitating communication. My usage of the strategies can be regarded as a form of "resilience," (UNESSCO, 2021) which serves as a key factor for survival and building positive relationships within unfamiliar cultural contexts.

The prior research I mentioned piqued my interest in the cross-cultural adjustment and learning experiences of international students in Japan. In 2023, international students from various countries, including Romania, China, Belgium, and others, arrived to participate in the Meisei Summer School project, starting as early as April or May. This surge was due to the relaxation of COVID-19 measures and the delayed arrival of Georgian, Hungarian, British, Russian, Ukrainian, and Thai students in July. Fortunately, I had ample opportunities to engage with these international students. During these interactions, I found myself pondering the challenges they encountered and how their experiences compared to my own experience in Georgia. I was particularly intrigued by how Georgian students, who were visiting Japan for the first time, adapted to their interactions with Meisei University students. The data for this study were collected during my participation in the Meisei Summer School Project 2023 (MSSP 2023), in which I served as a student assistant. MSSP is a program where Meisei University students instruct English to elementary and junior high school students, collaborating closely with international students. Throughout the duration of MSSP, international students shared

the same accommodation facility and responsibilities for daily tasks. The method employed learning environment in MSSP differed from the traditional methods employed in their home institutions. As mentioned earlier, Georgian students, who were my friends during my time in Georgia, were also among the participants. To gain insight into their daily experiences, I resided in the same accommodation facility and collected data through the means of field notes and interviews.

In the previous year, I had also participated in the Meisei Summer School Project 2022 (MSSP2022). Throughout the program, I perceived that there was room for improvement in how Georgian students adapted to the MSSP 2022 culture. This adjustment might be attributed to the distinctive learning approach advocated by MSSP. As a student assistant residing in the accommodation facility, Oak House, I played a crucial role in bridging the gap between international students and Japanese culture. In a sense, my role partially resembled that of a "critical interpreter," a concept elaborated upon in Chapter 2 of my research. Subsequently, I formulated a research question: "How did my actions as a critical interpreter influence the participation of Georgian students?" This inquiry represents an action-research approach aimed at comprehending the critical function of a cultural interpreter in this context.

Chapter.2 Conceptual Framework

In the course of this research, I scrutinized the manner in which my role as a critical interpreter influenced the process of integrating Georgian students into the Japanese learning community. To analyze the data, I employed the conceptual framework of a "translator/interpreter" within the domain of intercultural communication.

2-1 The role of Translator in Intercultural Communication

Indeed, the role of a "translator" holds significant importance within the realm of intercultural communication. As per the Cambridge Dictionary (2023), a translator is defined as an individual who converts written messages into different languages, focusing primarily on linguistic aspects. However, the definition of a translator extends beyond the boundaries of language. According to the insights derived from an interview study by Koksal and Yuruk (2020, p. 328), the role of a translator involves not only transcending language barriers but also actively bridging cultural gaps among individuals.

Koksal and Yuruk posit that translators function as mediators in the construction of positive intercultural relationships, actively addressing both linguistic and cultural barriers.

2-2 The differences between Translator and Interpreter

Koksal and Yuruk (2020) assert that while there are shared characteristics, there are also distinctions between translators and interpreters. Translation primarily involves written language, such as translating books and websites, and demands precision and completeness in the translated work. In contrast, interpretation focuses on spoken communication, such as during meetings and conferences, requiring interpreters to comprehend spoken content and promptly convey it to the audience. This task necessitates not only language proficiency but also a deep understanding of various cultural backgrounds, which is cultivated through their own learning and experiences. In my research, as an action researcher collecting data within the context of MSSP and the accommodation facility, my role aligns more closely with that of an interpreter rather than a translator. This is because the primary source of data was derived from conversations with Georgian students.

2-3 What I mean by a critical interpreter

The background of this research highlights the challenges faced by Georgian students in understanding the learning process within MSSP and their need for improvement in participation. During MSSP 2022, there were instances of cultural misunderstandings between Georgian students and myself, stemming from differences in learning philosophies between MSSP and Georgian classrooms. This underscored the necessity for Georgian students to grasp the cultural nuances rooted in the learning theory of MSSP. Additionally, they initially struggled to acclimate to the Japanese lifestyle, with reservations about sleeping on the floor being one such example. In my role as a cultural and language interpreter, I aimed to not only elucidate cultural distinctions but also fundamental variances in learning philosophies. I define a "critical interpreter" as an individual who interprets language, culture, and, when needed, learning philosophy. Ordinally an interpreter is a role assigned a priori. However, a critical interpreter volunteers judging from the situation. The role of a critical interpreter is, in a way, socially constructed. My purpose was to act as a bridge between Georgian and Japanese students, facilitating a mutual understanding. My goal was to assist Georgian students as well as Meisei University students residing in Oak House in enjoying their short-term study in Japan.

My primary focus was on my own actions as a cultural interpreter, while also observing the outcome of international students, particularly Georgian students, in their journey toward integration into Japanese culture.

Chapter.3 Methodology

To assess the extent of adaptation of Georgian students to Japanese culture and the learning environment influenced by my role as a critical interpreter, I conducted data collection during MSSP2023 as an action-researcher. The Georgian students were divided into two distinct communities, with each student becoming a member of a teaching team. Furthermore, they were integrated into the Oak house residents' team, where they engaged in activities such as cooking, shopping, and living together.

3-1 Data Collection Method

For data collection, I employed a combination of field notes and interviews. Field notes were used to document participants' behaviors and attitudes in their daily living and learning experiences. Additionally, I conducted interviews with Romanian and Hungarian students, international students, Japanese students residing in Oak house, and members who shared the same teaching teams with the Georgian students. These interviews aimed to gain insights into the behavior of Georgian students as they adjusted to both teams and their overall learning experience within the MSSP.

3-2 Data Collection Site

To observe the behavior of Georgian students, I selected the Meisei Summer School Project 2023 (MSSP2023) as the primary context for collecting my data. The participants in MSSP 2023 included 1st to 4th grade students from Meisei University and international students from various countries, including Georgia, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, and China. As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary objective of the program was to have participants teach English to elementary and junior high school students. To achieve this goal, participants were required to create lesson plans, prepare teaching materials, and conduct mock lessons for real classroom performance. Additionally, the participants, including international students and five Meisei University students, resided together in Oak House. This communal living arrangement involved shared responsibilities such as cooking

dinner, room cleaning, and dishwashing. The key to these activities is that students need to undertake them autonomously. To analyze the data, I used the theory of *Communities of Practice* (Lave &Wenger, 1991).

MSSP is intentionally structured as a platform for the creation of Communities of Practice (CoP). These communities are not teacher-centered; rather, the program empowers students to take the initiative in their own self-directed learning. MSSP places significant emphasis on learning through social interactions among participants. Wenger's definition of Communities of Practice (CoP) comprises three key elements (Wenger, 2000). First, CoP members share common objectives. Second, mutual interactions among members foster the growth of the community. Third, a CoP creates a communal repository of shared resources, which includes language, routines, tools, and stories. CoP plays a pivotal role in facilitating the learning process and shaping the identities of learners. This is why MSSP is a platform for participants' autonomous learning.

3-3 Participants

In this research, I focused on the Georgian students' behavior. The table below is the information of participants.

Name	Age	Country
Sala	19	Georgia
Sophy	19	Georgia
Nemo	19	Georgia
Laucy	25	Romania
Barbera	26	Romania

Furthermore, in Oak House, there were four Japanese students, two Hungarian students, and two Romanian students. One of the Japanese students was named Ai (she frequently appears in this thesis). These participants were keen on understanding the transformations observed in the Georgian students.

3-4 Research Ethic

In order to protect the privacy of the participants, I used pseudonyms instead of their real names. Additionally, I sought and obtained consent from the participants to analyze the data collected from field notes. Furthermore, I adhered to the Meisei University research ethics checklist to ensure that my research complied with ethical standards.

Chapter.4 Analysis

In this chapter, I conducted an analysis of the participants' capacity to adapt to Japanese culture and the educational community within the context of the MSSP 2023 and Oak House. This analysis encompasses an examination of both the participants' autonomous adjustment and the influence of my role as a critical interpreter in facilitating their adaptation. The data for this analysis were drawn from a combination of field notes and interviews, and my analysis was framed by the framework of a translator. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, my primary focus during observation was centered on the behavior of Georgian students. However, an intriguing development emerged during my observations, prompted by the notably distinct attitude displayed by a Hungarian student. As a result, I expanded the scope of my analysis to encompass both Georgian and Hungarian students. The data analysis revealed three recurring focal points that warrant iterative consideration.

4-1 The effect of prior information

As I discussed in Chapter 1, I expected that Georgian students who participated in MSSP 2022 would exhibit a greater capacity for cultural adaptation. Consequently, to facilitate successful integration into MSSP 2023, supporting the participation of international students became an essential endeavor for me. However, the participants in this year's program appeared to adapt well to Japanese culture and the learning environment. This implies that, in terms of cultural difference, my role as a critical interpreter was to facilitates two-way communication from a collaborative standpoint, rather than providing unilateral translation. The reason for this was that Georgian students were already familiar with the program's dynamics and had insight into the behavior of their Georgian peers in MSSP 2022.

4-1-1 The importance of prior information

International students had already acquired some familiarity with aspects of Japanese language and culture, such as chopstick usage and Japanese-style bedding. However, it is important to note that this does not imply that the international participants possessed comprehensive expertise in Japanese knowledge and culture.

Data 1.

「国際ボランティアが到着して初めての夜、オークハウスで一緒に夕食を食べることになった。Sala と Sophy は自然に茶碗を持って、箸を使ってふりかけご飯を食べていた。間違った箸の持ち方をしていたのを見て、Kou が指摘すると、もっと日本のマナーを教えてと前向きな発言を 2 人はしていた。(Upon the international students' initial evening at Oak house, we convened for a communal dinner. During this gathering, Sala and Sophy adeptly handled their bowls and skillfully wielded chopsticks to consume their rice. Kou, in a gesture of cultural exchange, took the initiative to instruct Sala in the proper use of chopsticks. Sala and Sophy, expressing an enthusiastic desire to embrace Japanese customs, openly expressed their interest in our guidance regarding Japanese manners.)」(11/7/2023, Field note)

Data 2.

「Nemo は独学で日本語を勉強していたようで、寿司屋で自ら率先して日本語を使って店員さんにお礼を言っていた。またわからないことがあると、すぐに日本語で何というか聞いてきた。（Nemo has been engaging in independent Japanese language study. She made an attempt to express her gratitude in Japanese to the sushi restaurant clerk. Additionally, when encountering unfamiliar words or phrases, she sought my assistance in translating them into Japanese.）」(12/7/2023, Field note)

Data 3.

「相部屋である Sophy とベットと布団をどっち使うかの話をしていた。Sophy はどちらでも平気で、布団でも寝てみたいと言って、今日は布団で寝ていた。(I engaged

in a conversation with Sophy, who shared the same room, to discuss our sleeping arrangements, specifically the choice between conventional beds or Japanese-style bedding, which involves sleeping on the floor. Sophy expressed her preference for Japanese-style bedding, stating that either option was acceptable. Consequently, she proceeded to adopt the Japanese-style bedding for her sleep arrangement on the current day.)」(12/7/2023, Field note)

Data from sources 1 to 3 collectively indicate that Georgian students possessed pre-existing knowledge of Japanese lifestyle and exhibited a notable motivation to learn the Japanese language. In my role as a critical interpreter for the program's participants, I was struck by the substantial contrast between the attitudes of the current participants and those of the previous year, as observed at the project's outset. In 2022, Georgian students had expressed a strong aversion to sleeping on Japanese-style bedding and residing in Oak House, likening the latter to a "bastille." In an effort to comprehend the origins of this disparity, I conducted an interview with Nemo. According to the interview conducted on August 16, 2023, it was revealed that prior to their arrival in Japan, Georgian students, including the previous participants and their professors, had convened several meetings to prepare the incoming students for their study abroad experience. These meetings served to inform the Georgian students about life in Japan, guiding them on cultural norms, and sharing insights from the experiences of the previous cohort. In particular, the professors strongly advised the newcomers to avoid repeating the same situation and to refrain from becoming overly familiar with Japanese culture, which, in turn, had a profound impact on motivating and shaping their attitudes. Additionally, the incoming Georgian students were enrolled in a Japanese language class, which facilitated their understanding of various facets of Japanese life, including train etiquette, dining customs, cultural norms, and manners. Consequently, this underscores the significance of prior knowledge as a pivotal strategy for successful adjustment to Japanese culture.

4-1-2 The difficulty of train usage in Japan

However, the utilization of the train system posed significant challenges, notwithstanding participants' prior knowledge and theoretical awareness. Despite having a foundational understanding

of the complexities of the Japanese train system, including its intricate network of lines and stations, international participants encountered difficulties when dealing with train-related situations during their initial experiences. Specifically, challenges arose in the form of overcrowded trains and the complexity of navigating the train system. In such instances, the role of a critical interpreter became essential in supporting the international participants' adaptation to the intricacies of the Japanese train system. In terms of using the train system, I assumed the role of instructor from the outset, providing comprehensive guidance on various aspects, such as the process of purchasing train tickets and selecting the appropriate train. Furthermore, in the case of crowded trains, I communicated that such situations were routine in Japan, necessitating an adjustment to this aspect of the local culture. As a result of these efforts, international participants were able to surmount the challenges associated with using the Japanese train system, a testament to both my guidance and their adaptability.

Data 4.

> 「留学生 5 人を大学に連れて行くために、日本に来て初めて電車に乗った。日本のことを知っていると自負していたが、実際に乗るとなると皆混乱した様子であった。切符の買い方、どの電車か何番線に乗ればいいのか、全て教えながら移動した。(On our first train journey to the university, five international students and I embarked. Although they had previously expressed confidence in their knowledge of Japanese, they appeared somewhat disoriented. During this journey, I took on the role of instructing them in various aspects of using the train system, which included explaining how to purchase train tickets and determining the appropriate train line for our destination.)」(12/7/2023, Field note)

Data 5.

> 「今日も一緒に大学に向かう。複雑な日本の電車をどこまで覚えているか確認しながら移動したが、この時点で、Sala と Nemo は軽く覚えた様子で、私の質問に答えていた。(Today, I accompanied five international students on a trip to the university. During our journey, I assessed their recollection of the procedures for using the Japanese train system. On this occasion, both Sala and Nemo were able to provide responses to my inquiries

regarding train-related matters, indicating a partial retention of their previous knowledge.)」(13/7/2023, Field note)

Data 6.

「2 限に授業がある初めての日。朝の 10 時台のモノレールに乗った際に、満員電車すぎて皆口を揃えて嫌だと言っていた。Laucy が『日本人は距離を保とうとする文化があるのに、なぜ電車の中だと近すぎるのか。』と苦言していた。私はこれが日本の電車の中の、通勤退勤で必ず起きることで、みんなが乗らなきゃいけないことだと伝えると、苦笑いしていた。(For the international students, it was their first experience taking a train during the second period of the day. As we boarded the monorail around 10 am, a sense of surprise overtook everyone as the train proved to be excessively crowded and chaotic. Laucy inquired hesitantly, "I am aware that Japanese people generally maintain a certain level of personal space. Why is the train so densely packed?" In response, I explained that this was a typical daily occurrence in Japan and one needed to adapt to it. Their reaction was a somewhat resigned and ironic laughter.)」(19/7/2023, Field note)

Data 7.

「Ai, Sala, Sophy, Nonoka はディズニーランドに行っていた。Ai から聞いた話によると、ディズニーの帰り Sala と Sophy の携帯の充電がなくなってしまった。そのために Ai が Oak house までの帰り方を細かく口頭で教えた。そしたらそれを 2 人は覚えて無事帰ってきたようだ。広い東京駅内を迷わず進み、道中でわからなくなると人に聞いていたらしい。(During a visit to Tokyo Disneyland, Ai, Sala, Sophy, and Nonoka faced a situation where the phones of Sala and Sophy had run out of battery on their journey back to Oak house. In response, Ai provided them with detailed verbal instructions on how to reach Oak house from Disneyland. Sala and Sophy quickly memorized the directions and successfully returned home. They navigated Tokyo Station with ease and confidently sought assistance from strangers only when encountering uncertainties along the way.)」(25/7/2023, Field note)

Furthermore, data from 4 to 6 elucidates the challenges faced by international participants in navigating train situations while in Japan. In data 4, it was evident that this was their initial experience with Japanese trains since arriving in the country. As mentioned previously, these international participants possessed a foundational understanding of Japanese culture, but this circumstance necessitated a more comprehensive grasp of the intricacies of the Japanese train system, encompassing aspects such as ticket acquisition, and the route from Oak house to the university. In this context, I assumed the role of a critical interpreter, providing detailed explanations. Datasets 5 and 7 indicated that the Georgian students were already proficient in using Japanese trains independently. In addition to serving as a critical interpreter, I also fulfilled the role of a student assistant for all participants in MSSP 2023. This situation initially raised concerns when Ai candidly communicated with Oak house members through a group chat. Nevertheless, after two weeks in Japan, during which international students had ample opportunities to navigate the train system, they gradually acclimated to the new cultural environment. Moreover, data point 6 underscored the emergence of a new challenge for international participants, particularly highlighted in the case of Laucy, who brought her own preconceived notions of Japanese culture. Through her experiences and the guidance I provided, Laucy came to realize the complexities of the actual situation, leading to a shift in her understanding. It became evident that they possessed distinct sets of information before and after their arrival in Japan. However, rather than being constrained by their prior knowledge, they exhibited a willingness to embrace and adapt to Japanese culture by incorporating new insights.

4-2 Change in participants' English language

A prevalent characteristic among international students was their proficiency in English, which often surpassed that of Japanese students. In fact, there were instances when I, myself, found their English challenging to comprehend. 「Nemo は話し始めるとスピードがどんどん速くなって、私は彼女が何を言っているか理解できなくなってしまった。ゆっくり話すように頼むと、ごめんと言ってゆっくり話してくれた。(Nemo initiated a conversation in English, but I struggled to follow her due to the rapid pace at which she was speaking. I requested that she slow down, and she promptly apologized for her pace.)」(12/7/2023, Field note)「オークハウスに着くまでの帰り道、5 人の留学生と話しながら帰ったが、5 人のスピードは速く、やはり分からないことが

多かった。(While returning to Oak house, I engaged in a conversation with five international students. However, their rapid-paced English made it difficult for me to fully understand their discussion.)」(13/7/2023, Field note)「Sophy と Sala と Rain と一緒に私から持ちかけた話題である歴史に関して話していた。しかし、鬼のように速いテンポ感とスピードの会話で私が入る隙はなく、ほぼ理解できなかった。(Sophy, Sala, Rain from Romania, and I discussed history which I proposed to. However, I found it nearly impossible to contribute to the conversation or comprehend it fully due to the exceptionally rapid tempo and pace at which they were conversing.)」(18/7/2023, Field note). Based on the gathered data, it was evident that the English proficiency of international participants presented a significant challenge, both in terms of comprehension and active participation, for both myself and Japanese students who were not particularly proficient in English. Nonetheless, international participants like Nemo conveyed that there had been ongoing efforts to gradually adapt to the English proficiency level. Simultaneously, within the teaching group, certain Japanese students expressed their concerns about language barriers. They lamented the difficulties faced by Japanese students, particularly freshmen, in speaking and understanding the English spoken by international participants. 「Nemo のチームの話し合いは、Nemo の話を理解しているのは 3 年生の女の子だけで、一年生の子はポカンとしていた。(The discussion within Nemo's team took on a notably serious tone. It was primarily the third-grade girl who engaged in conversation with Nemo, while the two freshmen observed the interaction with a somewhat bewildered expression.)」(26/7/2023. Field note)「Nemo と同じメンバーの一年生が英語を分かってあげられなくて悔しいし、Nemo に申し訳ないと泣いていた。(One of the freshmen, who was on the same teaching team as Nemo, became emotional and shed tears due to her difficulty in comprehending Nemo's communication.)」(26/7/2023, Field note)「Sophy のチームの模擬授業は、静かであった。Sophy がメインティーチャーであったが、他の日本人はぼーっと立っているようで、Sophy が行き詰まった時にすぐにサポートしてくれなかった。(I observed a mock lesson conducted by Sophy's teaching team, which was notably quiet. While Sophy held the role of the main teacher, the other team members remained stationary and seemingly passive. When Sophy encountered a momentary pause or difficulty, there was a lack of immediate support or intervention from her fellow team members.)」(27/7/2023, Field note). The data presented here shed light on the team-related challenges related to English proficiency. Prior to the intensive course, which involved the preparation of lesson plans and materials for the upcoming lessons, students engaged in numerous discussions

and mock lessons. These data emphasize that each individual's level of English proficiency had a reciprocal influence on the team dynamics, resulting in a negative impact. 「Sophy の模擬授業は、小学 3 年生に対して理解できないような説明量と難しい英単語を使っていた。(Sophy's mock lesson posed challenges for the third-grade elementary school students as it incorporated complex vocabulary and overly detailed explanations.)」(27/7/2023, Field note). This data illustrates the influence of Sophy's English proficiency on her team's progress in developing lesson plans. To address these challenges, I assumed the role of a critical interpreter, working to bridge the gap in English proficiency and facilitate the success of lessons that met the students' objectives.

4-2-1 Working as a critical interpreter

As previously mentioned, I undertook various actions in the role of a critical interpreter to assist international participants in overcoming the challenges they encountered. In particular, during the process of preparing lesson plans, students engaged in extensive discussions and conducted numerous mock lessons to prepare for their actual teaching performance. It became evident that international participants possessed a higher proficiency in English compared to Japanese students, leading to communication difficulties among the two groups. Data 8 and 9 highlight communication issues experienced by Nemo and Sophy. Although they were highly motivated to adapt to Japanese culture and teach English to children, they encountered challenges in aligning with the lowest level of English proficiency among the students. This included speaking too quickly and using overly complex English vocabulary. In my role as a critical interpreter, I not only provided iterative feedback to Nemo and Sophy regarding their lesson plans and mock lessons but also actively engaged in conducting mock lessons with the student assistants. This approach aimed to facilitate the students' learning and discovery process, enhancing their abilities to deliver effective lessons.

Data 8.

> 「模擬授業が終わった後、心配そうな表情をしていた Nemo と話した。彼女は自分でも子供に英語を教えることが初めてだから緊張して話すスピードが速くなってしまっていることを分かっていた。何が問題なのか、また一年生の状況を伝え、どう動けばいいかをアドバイスした。(I engaged in a conversation with Nemo following

the conclusion of the mock lesson, during which she displayed signs of apprehension. She recognized that, as it was her first experience teaching English to young children, she had begun speaking more rapidly and with increased nervousness. Subsequently, I provided her with suggestions on how to effectively address the issues and concerns typically encountered by freshmen.)」(26/7/2023, Field note)

Data 9.

「模擬授業のあと、説明時間を短くするためにもっと簡単な英単語を使うこと、チームの子の英語の理解度を Sophy に伝えた。それを聞いた Sophy はすぐにチームの人とプランの見直すために話し合いをしていた。(Following the mock lesson, I advised Sophy to incorporate simpler vocabulary in her instructions to enhance efficiency in communication and comprehension among team members. Subsequently, Sophy initiated a discussion with team members about the revision of lesson plans.)」(27/7/2023, Field note)

Data 10.

「今まで、teaching team の模擬授業や進み具合を見て、初めて参加した一年生や国際ボランティアの子達に何かインパクトを与えたい、みんなに実際の授業の雰囲気や流れを感じて欲しいと思った。そこで SA で模擬授業をやりたいと提案し、模擬授業をみんなの前で披露した。Barbera が率先して生徒役をやってくれた。授業にメリハリをつけるための拍手と掛け声を実際に披露して、一体感を持たせる方法を披露した。一気にみんな目をキラキラさせていた。(As I continued my collaboration with the teaching team and observed the progress being made, I became inclined to create an environment in which freshman and international students could experience the ambiance and dynamics characteristic of real lessons. Consequently, I proposed the idea of student assistant members conducting mock lessons. During these mock lessons, student assistants actively engaged with students who were participating in MSSP, with Barbera taking on the role of a proactive child participant. The student assistants demonstrated a cohesive approach, involving elements like synchronized clapping and offering encouraging remarks to maintain a balanced lesson. Following the simulation, there was a noticeable spark of enthusiasm and engagement in everyone's eyes.)」(31/7/2023, Field note)

In Data 8 and 9, my role as a critical interpreter is elaborated, where the focus goes beyond simply identifying what went wrong. Instead, it encompasses addressing the difficulties faced by first-year students and Japanese students in terms of comprehension. Furthermore, Data 10 highlights that bridging cultural gaps involves more than providing advice or words; it necessitates embodying support for everyone. Employing strategies that encompass both oral and visual awareness was part of the approach. Subsequent data provides evidence of the impact of international students' behavior during this process.

4-2-2 Consequence after my work as a critical interpreter

I conducted observations of the transformation in the English proficiency of international participants following my interventions. Of particular interest was the notable shift observed in Nemo's team, which revealed compelling changes. Nemo, initially prone to nervousness and speaking at a rapid pace due to her lack of prior experience in teaching English to children, adapted her communication style. She began employing simpler English to better connect with her teammates and actively engaged in extra preparations. This change not only encompassed language proficiency but also reflected an improved attitude toward her fellow team members. Furthermore, Barbera underwent a transformation, becoming attuned to the proficiency levels of Japanese English through interactions with Japanese individuals and my guidance. She made a concerted effort to consider the experience from the perspective of Japanese children, aiming to ensure their enjoyment during the lessons. The following data provide further insight into the consequences of these shifts.

Data 11.

> 「Nemo たちのチームの模擬授業を見た。マユがメインティーチャーで、Nemo がサブ。マユの英語は、順序や使い方がぐちゃぐちゃで一見何を言っているか分からない時があるが、とても一生懸命伝えようと頑張る一年生である。Nemo はマユが指示したことを分かりやすく彼女の言葉でリピートしたりしていて、とてもチームに貢献している。マユが間違った英語の表現をしていた時があった。しかし、Nemo は完璧に言い直すわけではなく、マユに寄り添った簡単な word でみんなに伝えていた。(I observed Nemo's team during a mock lesson in which Mayu assumed the role of

the main teacher and Nemo served as the assistant teacher. Mayu, a diligent freshman, made concerted efforts to convey instructions in English, although her proficiency was somewhat limited, making the delivery less coherent. Nemo played a pivotal role by reiterating Mayu's statements with ease, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the communication within the team. Whenever Mayu made an error or used incorrect English, Nemo intervened by providing simplified explanations, offering unwavering support to Mayu without completely restating the content.)」(2/8/2023, Field note)

Data 12.

"After dinner, Barbera abruptly inquired about her lesson plan, expressing apprehension regarding a dialogue she believed to be somewhat lengthy, which could potentially pose challenges for the children. Drawing upon my previous experience of teaching English to 1st and 2nd grade kids last year, I shared insights with her, providing information about the circumstances from the previous year and offering guidance on how to address the issue. Barbera demonstrated a keen understanding of the global differences in English proficiency between Hungary and Japan and approached the situation by taking care to use simpler language and provide clear explanations." (3/8/2023, Field note)

Data 13.

「１６時までの集中講義中。チームの子に 16 時だから帰っていいよと言われたが、Nemo はマテリアル作りにも積極的に１６時以降も残って活動していた。(The intensive course was scheduled to conclude at 4 pm. Nonetheless, Nemo continued to work on preparing materials for lesson activities, even after her team members advised her to return home.)」(4/8/2023, Field note)

These data depict the behavioral changes exhibited by international participants following my interventions. Data 11 highlights a significant improvement in one participant's English proficiency, as evidenced by Nemo's ability to understand her even when I found her choice of words challenging

to comprehend. Nemo's enhanced communication skills had a positive impact on her team, as observed in Data 13. Moreover, Data 12 illustrates changes in Barera's behavior. Notably, Barbera, who initially showed less interest in Japan compared to other international participants, proactively initiated a conversation with me. She engaged in self-reflection and shared her thoughts, indicating that she was able to engage in self-disclosure through her experiences. The influence of my efforts is reflected in the behavioral transformations of international participants. Consequently, the team dynamics and interpersonal relationships were enhanced as a result of these changes. This is exemplified by Saki's comments in her interview, attesting to the positive shift in Nemo's mindset and engagement within the team.

Chapter.5 Conclusion

In this paper, I observed international participants' cross-cultural adjustment to host country situation such as Japanese culture and educational environment facilitated by my role as a critical interpreter. Drawing from my experiences during both my previous study abroad and MSSP 2023, I have come to recognize the significance of the interpreter's role in bridging relationships and cultures. While traditionally, interpreters have been associated with the demand for a high level of linguistic proficiency, the contemporary interpreter is not only tasked with bridging language gaps but also cultural differences. I must admit that I occasionally lack confidence in my English-speaking abilities. When I initially selected this thesis topic, I harbored concerns about my capacity to use English effectively as a critical interpreter in the context of my research and in providing support for international participants. However, as time has passed, I have come to understand the critical role of an interpreter in establishing social relationships. In my analysis of the data, I found that international participants swiftly integrated themselves into Japanese culture and their new environment. This study underscores the notion that, regardless of one's level of language proficiency and the specific situations encountered, anyone can assume the role of a critical interpreter to facilitate connections between individuals and cultures. It is my hope that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of effective communication by embracing one's unique position and circumstances, ultimately fostering better intercultural relationships as a critical interpreter.

I have recently received a job offer from an advertising company and will commence my work there in April. As I transition into this new professional environment, I aspire to become a proficient

critical interpreter capable of fostering meaningful relationships and connections among individuals with diverse expertise and backgrounds. I also look forward to the opportunity to bridge connections between people and cultures, and I would be delighted if I can play a role in bringing individuals and cultures together to foster a deeper understanding of both the human experience and diverse cultures.

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