

A Study on Aspects of Cross-Cultural Communication in the Drama *Rinko*

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Rinko is a television drama coproduced in 1997 by Canada, the United States, and Japan. The aim of this paper is to investigate certain conflicts that seem to result from cultural differences between Japan and North America and to probe into these differences. Two types of communication used in the film are discussed: verbal and nonverbal. Specifically, a comparison is made of the North American and Japanese “smile.” Finally, the use of language itself in the English and Japanese versions of the drama is examined.

Introduction

The television drama *Rinko* is based on the novel *The Best Bad Thing* by Japanese-American writer Yoshiko Uchida. It is set in the 1930s and relates the experiences of a 12-year-old Japanese-American girl named Rinko and her spiritual growth during a month-long stay at a California cucumber farm belonging to Mrs. Hata, a friend of her mother’s.

The initial point discussed here is Mrs. Hata’s smile in one scene and the North American director’s difficulty in understanding why she would smile under such serious circumstances. It seems that her smile was the so-called “Japanese

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smile,” and research was made on the meaning of this smile as compared to the meaning behind a North American smile.

The second point concerns the type of language used for the characters in the Japanese and English versions of *Rinko*. The drama was produced in both languages, and it was shown on television in both Japan and North America. When the writer compared these two versions, she noticed a conspicuous difference in how the actors spoke in each of the versions. That is, in the English version Mrs. Hata does not speak standard English, whereas in the Japanese version even the American characters speak standard Japanese. From the American version, the writer analyzed the English used by Mrs. Hata and several other characters in order to discover what type of English was used. The writer also looked at possible reasons why the producers may have used language in the different ways that they did.

I. Nonverbal Communication—The Smile

Communication is generally accomplished through a process of sharing meaning through verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal communicational behaviors include gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and the use being placed on nonverbal communication that may or may not accompany speech. One study done in the United States (Wiener and Mehrabian, 1968) showed that 93% of a message was transmitted by (1) the speaker's tone of voice (38%) and (2) facial expressions (55%). Only 7% of a person's attitude, it was determined, was conveyed by actual words (Hashimoto and Ishii, 1993). According to this study, humans express their emotions and attitudes more nonverbally than verbally. According to Ekman and Friesen (1982), when people have basic feelings such as happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, and disgust, characteristic facial expressions appear on their faces, and these facial expressions are universal, having no connection with their nationalities or their culture.

It goes without saying that smiling is an extremely common phenomenon. People smile when they feel happy, see or hear something ridiculous and humorous, are tickled, sense familiarity with someone, or when they mock someone. *Warai* can be divided into two categories: one which is accompanied by laughter, which, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, is articulated sounds expressive of mirth, joy, or derision, and the other simply a facial expression unaccompanied by laughter.

In the production of the drama *Rinko* there was a conflict between directors in regard to Mrs. Hata's reaction to a situation in the film. (It should be mentioned that the actress who portrayed Mrs. Hata was Kiki Kirin, who is a non-English-speaking native Japanese.) It appears that she smiled in a situation that seemed totally inappropriate to the North American director. Mrs. Hata's smile was unaccompanied by articulate sounds. Unlike the American smile, however, it was not an expression indicative of pleasure, affection, or amusement (*American Heritage Dictionary*). Masafumi Endo, the Japanese director, explained it to Peter Rowe, the Canadian director as a Japanese smile.

The scenario was as follows: When Kosuke-san, a Japanese peddler, arrived with his beat-up old truck filled with various wares, Mrs. Hata was pleased, for she was all out of bean curd cakes, miso, and pickled radish. She needed a sack of rice, too. She ordered these and then pulled out her change purse to pay for them. Her fingers searched the opened purse for money, but there was none to be found. Kosuke glanced over, noticed her empty purse, and told her she could pay next time. It is at this point that Mrs. Hata smiles. Her smile is not a small, deprecating type, but a wide almost laughing one. It was this smile that the North American director thought inappropriate and strange. It was unexpected behavior, and he could not understand why she smiled in these circumstances. Endo explained to Rowe that it was a "Japanese smile." He knew what the smile conveyed and wanted it on that scene. Endo did not want to make a drama with stereotypical characters, as is often

the case with Japanese characters in foreign movies made in foreign countries, and he did not want Japanese viewers to think something was strange or different about the way the Japanese reacted to situations in the drama.

Why did Mrs. Hata smile? In order to understand this, we need to look more closely at this Japanese smile. What, exactly, is this smile? Of course, Japanese smile in situations similar to those in which North Americans smile as well. However, there are situations in which Japanese smile that might seem strange to North Americans. This is seemingly what is meant here by the Japanese smile.

T. Umehara (1972) claims that there are two kinds of Japanese smile. One is a smile of reconciliation with and/or resignation to meeting one's fate, and the other is a smile of self-defense used to hide one's vulnerable point. In the case of the former, the smile has meaning to the person doing the smiling him/herself, while the latter smile has meaning to those who are observing the smiling person. When a person experiences some hardship, such as a death in the family, she naturally suffers, but hopefully she accepts the tragedy with fatalistic resignation in the end. At this moment, the self (or ego) in grief and agony is transformed into one which can accept hardships with joy. The smile resulting from a proud resignation to the decrees of fate and fortune or of destiny and predestination diminishes the pain of those hardships (Umehara, 1972, pp. 76–77, writer's translation).

It is claimed that both the smile of fatal resignation that diminishes peoples' suffering and the smile of self-defense that hides one's vulnerable points are interwoven in the Japanese mind. It appears that Mrs. Hata's smile can be explained in this way.

T. Umehara makes use of a theory proposed by Stern to compare humorous smiling/laughing with smiling used to express joy, sympathy, modesty, or remorse. Stern explains smiling from a sense of value, interpreting funny or humorous smiling as “degrading” the value of anxiety, suffering, or pain and other types of smiling as “devaluing” those feelings. By

degradation he means that value gets closer and closer to minus infinity, whereas devaluation implies that both plus and minus values moves closer to zero, so that values respectively reduce their absolute value.

What circumstances, we might ask, motivate some Japanese to wear this enigmatic smile? The following examples show the Japanese smile in situations similar to that of Mrs. Hata's, since many Japanese tend to hide their true feelings.

There are numerous examples of how Japanese hide their true feelings by wearing a smile. One, often quoted when the Japanese smile is discussed, is taken from *A Handkerchief*, a short novel by Ryunosuke Akutagawa (1969). The problematic scene is as follows: The mother of Professor Hasegawa's former student calls at his home and tells him of her son's death in a calm and fluent tone of voice with no tears in her eyes and even with a smile on her face, even though she should have been overwhelmed with the grief of having lost her son. Hasegawa feels her behavior is somewhat strange and different from that of a person relating something sad. He feels that she looks more as if she is chattering about daily routines or something. Professor Hasegawa, although Japanese, has been abroad and has been influenced by experiences of people expressing their grief openly. However, when he tries to pick up a fan that he has dropped, he notices that the mother's hands are trembling on her lap. While feigning calmness, she is actually repressing her grief to the extent that she has shredded the handkerchief that she is holding in her hands. After the woman leaves, Professor Hasegawa praises her behavior as that of Japanese women's *bushido*—the way a samurai should behave.

Lafcadio Hearn, an American writer who became a naturalized Japanese citizen, writes about several Japanese enigmatic smiles—the smile put on when a Japanese has had a hard time, is in shame, or in deep discouragement—in an essay entitled “Japanese Smiles.” In addition to illustrating several Japanese smiles that occur in unexpected situations, Hearn writes that Japanese can smile even at the moment of death as well as in

daily life (e.g. greeting with a smile). Smiling that gives a good impression and has people feel good in the home and in society is a rule expected to be kept in their daily life. These smiles do not show any resistance or apparent hypocrisy. The Japanese smile is a mannerism that has been cultivated and developed with great care throughout generations. Tada (1994) notes that smiles as greetings have resulted from self-control and have become widespread in Japanese society.

Why is it thought that Japanese do not express their feelings frankly and openly? In our earlier example, Mrs. Hata might have explained that she had no money while apologizing and making excuses. But if she had done this, she would have given the peddler the opportunity to say something disagreeable. Generally speaking, the customers' position is looked upon as being somewhat stronger and higher than that of peddlers, so it would have been a disgrace for her to tell him she had no money. Her smile not only hid her embarrassment, but it also lessened her disgrace. By smiling, she was hinting for Kosuke-san to understand her situation. At the same time it also showed him that she understood the situation as well.

Japan is often called a homogeneous society, sharing a common race consciousness, with people living in similar situations, and therefore it is easier to understand each other without explaining everything in words. There are words in Japanese such as *haragei*—an ability for making one's views felt—and *sasshi no bunka*—the culture of guessing.

As has often been pointed out, Japanese society developed from a farming society, not a hunting one as in the Western world. According to some theories in hunting societies people need to depend on themselves, since it is not necessary for them to hunt in a group. In the farming society, however, co-operation is a must. Farmers cannot undertake the whole farming process alone—planting seedlings, harvesting, and drying, thrashing and polishing rice. For most, if not all, of these operations the farmer needs the cooperation of his neighbors. In such groups, harmony is critically important. To maintain harmony, people learned not to disclose themselves

too openly and not to voice too strong opinions.

When we communicate with other persons, how much we reveal ourselves to others is one important variable. The degree of this self-disclosure is different from person to person even in the same culture. However, there tend to be cultural standards for self-disclosure as well—with some cultures tending to disclose more than others. In regard to Japanese and Americans, Barnlund (1973) showed evidence that there is a difference in self-disclosure between these cultures. The degree to which Japanese express their feelings and opinions to those around them is lower than that of Americans. Japanese tend to keep self-disclosure limited to small personal groups.

Furuta (1987) cites research by Ishii Bin showing how Japanese adults engage in conversation on an average of three hours and thirty-one minutes a day, while their American counterparts average six hours and forty-three minutes. This might be explained partly by the idea of high/low context cultures proposed by E. T. Hall (1976). In high context cultures, people depend less on verbal communication than those in low context cultures. Communication, according to Hall, is influenced by contexts, which include all surroundings—the physical, social, and psychological environment, as well as time—and these factors have a large effect on the context and form of communication. Since it is often claimed that Japan is a homogeneous society, we might liken it to a high context culture with the consequent role played by nonverbal communication being large.

In the drama *Rinko*, Mrs. Hata said nothing to the peddler. Instead, she just smiled. Since they were both from the same cultural background, the meaning of the smile was understood. The smile, in this case, was both one of fatal resignation, which helped ease her sufferings, and a smile of self-defense, which hid her true feelings and vulnerabilities. Thus, from a Japanese cultural perspective, Mrs. Hata's smile appeared appropriate to Endo.

II. Syntactic characteristics of *Rinko's* Non-native English

The English used by two different Japanese-Americans is represented by Mrs. Hata and Mr. Yamanaka, another immigrant from Japan. Several characteristics are listed below:

- a) Her English is syntactically simpler than the English spoken by native speakers of English. There is frequent deletion/omission of the subject.
- b) Negation involves the use of the negative markers “no” or “not” just before the verb and sometimes directly before other parts of speech, such as adjectives or nouns.
- c) In interrogative sentences, there is no conversion of the subject and the auxiliary verb or verbs. Question words (who, what, where, when, why, and how) are simply put at the beginning of the sentence.
- d) Verbs.
 - 1) Deletion of “be” as a predicate verb often appears.
 - 2) There is no inflection of “person,” “number,” and “tense.” Only the base form of the verb is used.
- e) Another characteristic is the omission of prepositions.
- f) Plural forms of nouns usually have no “s.”
- g) Passive voice does not appear except in one incomplete example with Mrs. Hata—“Me finished.”

A. The English is syntactically simpler than the English spoken by native speakers. There is frequent deletion/omission of the subject. Examples found in lines by Mrs. Hata:

- 1. Means good fortune all life long. (You'll have good fortune during your lifetime).
- 2. Like cucumber? (Do you like cucumbers?)
- 3. Like eggs? (Do you like eggs?)
- 4. Long trip. (It will be a long trip).
- 5. Eat plenty egg, grow big strong. (Eat plenty of eggs and you'll grow big and strong).

6. *Rinko*, ride in back with boys. More fun for you. (It will be more fun for you.)
7. Don't worry. No boil. (We won't boil you).
8. Not fancy. (It isn't fancy).
9. No train. Very danger. (No trains. They are very dangerous).
10. You like daughter to me. Daughter number two. (You are my second daughter).
11. She live in Tamba village Japan. Live with my mother. (She lives with my mother).
12. Don't have to be lonely. (I don't have to be lonely).
13. Works better on shoes than hair. Best smelling shoes in California! (It works better on shoes than on hair. These are the best smelling shoes ...)
14. No, but makes me wonder. Maybe they no let Kiyō come to United States. (No, but it makes me wonder).
15. Need help! (I need help!)
16. No truck. (There was no truck! I found no truck!)
17. Doctor say, must wait for day or two. (Doctor said I must wait for a day or two).
18. *Shikatanagai*. Cannot be help. (It cannot be helped).
19. Only want Abu get well. (I only want Abu to get well).
20. How sell cucumber? (How can we sell the cucumbers?)
21. How take care Abu and Zenny? (How can I take care of Abu and Jenny?)
22. And need money now. Or bank take farm. (And I need money now. Or the bank will take our farm).

Examples of deletion/omission of subject found in Yamana ka's lines (he is an illegal alien from Japan):

1. Not bad sprain. Soon feel better. (This is not a bad sprain. You will soon feel better.)
2. Ankle better? (Is your ankle better?)
3. Kites go up in sky. You go up too. Fingers feel kites. Feel pull. Feel need. Become part of sky. (Your fingers feel the pull. They feel the need. You'll become part of the sky.)
4. Enough talk. (We've had enough talk.)

5. Too hot to leave so long. (It's too hot to leave them so long.)
6. Got cook job on freighter. (I got a job as a cook on a freighter.)
7. ... so jump ship in San Francisco. (... so I jumped ship in San Francisco.)
8. Get men from metalworks help. (He has gotten men from his metalworks to help you.)
9. No can live whole life afraid somebody find out. Have work to do. (I can't live my whole life afraid of somebody finding me out. I have work to do.)

B. Negation involves the use of a negative marker, “no” or “not,” before the verb. In the examples of Mrs. Hata's speech the negative marker appears before other parts of speech as well:

1. (pointing to a chair) Not fancy. But roof no leak. (It is not fancy. But the roof does not leak).
2. No boil. (I won't boil you.)
3. No burglar. No ax murderer. Mr. Yamanaka. (He is not a burglar. He is not an ax murderer.)
4. No. Mr. Hata not boarder. (No. Mr. Hata is not a boarder.)
5. No. No leave. Mr. Hata and I choose this land. (No. I won't leave.)
6. No train. Very danger. (You must not hop the train.)
7. ... maybe they no let Kiyo come to United States. (... maybe they won't let Kiyo come to the United States.)
8. Rinko, you no worry. (Rinko, don't you worry.)
9. No truck. Me finished. (I have no truck. I am finished.)
10. But Mr. Hata not understand. (But Mr. Hata does not understand.)
11. No see. But it not mean spirits not there. (I haven't seen them. But it does not mean spirits are not there.)

Examples found in Yamanaka's lines:

1. Not bad sprain. (This is not a bad sprain.)

2. Hide? I not hide. (Hide? I didn't hide.)
3. Only things I no can control. (Only things I cannot control.)
4. So, you see now why I no can have people snoop around here ... (So, you see now why I cannot have people snooping around here ...)
5. No can live whole life afraid somebody find out. (I cannot live my whole life afraid somebody will find me out.)

C. Interrogative sentences. In these cases, there is no conversion of the subject and auxiliary verb or verb. Question words like when, who, where, what, and how are simply put at the beginning of the sentence. Examples found in Mrs. Hata's lines:

1. You like bath, *Rinko*?
2. Like cucumber? Like egg?
3. Where Mr. Wilson?
4. Where boys go away?
5. What wrong?
6. What happen?
7. My boy, okay? He okay? Abu okay? My boy okay? Okay?
8. What he doing here?
9. Who are you? You from bank?
10. How this happen?
11. So how sell cucumber? How make money? How take care Abu and Zenny?
12. How we get money now?

Examples from Mr. Yamanaka's lines:

1. You boys all right?
2. Everybody twist ankles?
3. Ankle better?
4. Why you ask so many questions?
5. Abu alright?
6. You just standing there?

D. Verbs.

- 1) Deletion of "be" as predicate verb often appears.
- 2) There is no inflection of "person," "number," and "tense."

Only the base form of the verb is used.

Examples from the lines of Mrs. Hata:

1. Mr. Hata not boarder. Mr. Hata dead. (Mr. Hata is not a boarder. Mr. Hata is dead.)—"be" verb
2. We fatten you up. (We will fatten you up.) —tense
3. Who need clock? (Who needs a clock?) —third person singular present
4. I get lonely. (I will get lonely.)—tense
5. When Mr. Hata alive, he drive, I watch. Now Mr. Hata dead, I drive, he watch. (When Mr. Hata was alive, he drove and I watched. Now Mr. Hata is dead, I drive and he watches.)—"be" verb, tense, third person singular present
6. We all have bath tonight. (We will all have a bath tonight.)—tense
7. Mr. Yamanaka boarder. Live in barn. (Mr. Yamanaka is a boarder. He lives in the barn.)—"be" verb
8. You best massage. (You are the best masseur I've ever had.)—"be" verb
9. Where Mr. Wilson? (Where is Mr. Wilson?)—"be" verb
10. He say harvest cukes first, pay later. (He said to harvest the cukes first and to pay later.)—tense
11. *Rinko* help. Zenny help. Abu help. (*Rinko* helps. Jenny helps. Abu helps.)—third person singular present
12. Mr. Hata and I choose this land to raise family. (Mr. Hata and I chose this land to raise our family.)—tense
13. Hot water help back. Help ankle too. (Hot water helps my back. It'll help your ankle too.)—third person singular present
14. Ah *Rinko*, I know you good girl. (Ah *Rinko*, I know you are a good girl.)—"be" verb
15. You like daughter to me. Daughter number two. (You are like my daughter to me. You are my second daughter.)—"be" verb
16. I show you. (I will show you her picture.)—tense
17. This daughter, Kiyō. She live in Tamba village Japan, live with my mother. (This is my daughter, Kiyō. She

- lives in Tamba village, Japan. She lives with my mother.)
 —“be” verb, third person singular present
18. Work better on shoes than hair. Best smelling shoes in California. (It works better on shoes than hair. These are the best smelling shoes in California.)—third person singular present, (subject), “be” verb
19. My boy, okay? He okay? Abu okay? My boy okay? (My boy is okay? He is okay? Abu is okay? My boy is okay?)
 — “be” verb
20. Abu know. I’m here. So I stay. Tell Yamanaka-san what happen. (Abu knows. I’m here. So I will stay. Tell Yamanaka-san what happened.)—tense, third person singular present
21. Abu say he want to see you. (Abu says he wants to see you.)—third person singular present
22. Doctor say, must wait for a day or two. Then you visit Abu. (Doctor says we must wait for a day or two. Then you will be able to visit Abu.)—tense, third person singular present
23. I go make food. (I will go and make food.)—tense
24. It good having daughter, even just for summer. (It is good having a daughter, even just for summer.)—“be” verb
25. Maybe Mr. Hata make you speak. (Maybe Mr. Hata made you speak.)—tense
26. And need money now. Or bank take farm. (And we need money now. Or the bank will take our farm.)—tense
27. This my children home. (This is my children’s home.)
 —“be” verb

Examples found in the lines of Mr. Yamanaka:

1. Maybe someday he learn proper name, Yamanaka Mankichi. I go change. (Maybe someday he will learn my proper name, Yamanaka Mankichi. I will go and change my clothes.)—tense
2. Cucumber rotten. Too hot to leave so long. (Cucumbers are rotten. It is too hot to leave them so long.)—tense, (subject), “be” verb

E. Omission of prepositions.

1. Mrs. Hata: We have plenty cucumber. (We have plenty of cucumbers.)
2. Mrs. Hata: Just like Japan. (Just like in Japan.)
3. Mrs. Hata: Mr. Wilson, he say harvest cukes first, pay later. (Mr. Wilson, he said to harvest the cukes first and to pay later.)
4. Mrs. Hata: How take care Abu and Zenny? (How can I take care of Abu and Jenny?)
5. Only want Abu get well. (I only want Abu to get well.)
6. Yamanaka: I have dream making my fortune in Golden Land and go back Japan rich man, so jump ship in San Francisco. (I have a dream of making my fortune in the Golden Land and going back to Japan as a rich man, so I jumped ship in San Francisco.)

F. Plural “s” of noun is variable (i.e. appears sometimes and not at other times).

1. Like cucumber?
2. We have plenty of cucumber.
3. Like egg?
4. Eat plenty egg.
5. Water in tub must be clean for others.
6. My boys, keep off trains.

III. Discussion

The English used by Mrs. Hata and other Japanese-Americans might be characterized as a pidgin—defined as a communication system that develops among people who do not share a common language (Todd, 1984). Based on the example above, the English has many similar characteristics to that of other pidgin Englishes.

- 1) Pidgin Englishes are syntactically simpler than a mother-tongue variety of English. Sentences are usually short.

- Wikɔp!*—Get up! (predicate)
Wikɔp di pikin—Get the child up. (predicate + object)
I bin wikɔp di pikin—She got the child up. (subject + predicate + object)
I bin wikɔp fɔ dai—He arose from the dead. (subject + predicate + object + complement)
- 2) Negation usually involves the use of one negative marker, “no,” which precedes the verb.

Go!—Go!

No go!—Don’t go!

Dem fit go—They can go.

Dem no fit go—They cannot go.

- 3) Passive constructions do not occur.
 4) Yes/no questions are indicated by intonation. The question forms equivalent for when, where, and why are put at the beginning of the questions.

Yu bin go—You went

Fɔ wich taim yu bin go?—When did you go?

Usai yu bin go?—Where did you go?

Fɔ seka weti yu bin go?—Why did you go?

- 5) Nouns are not usually marked for plurality.
Yu gɛt daso tri banana?—Have you only three bananas?
- 6) There is no inflection of “person,” “number,” or “tense.”

A singf chɔs an ma—I sing in church and my

brɔda sing fɔ chɔs. brother sings in church.

Wi tu sing fɔ dei. We both sing there.

I bin go yɛstadei. I—He went yesterday. He

go agen tudei. Sɔmtaim goes again today. Perhaps

i no go tumɔɔ. he will not go tomorrow.

All of these characteristics are found in the English spoken by Mrs. Hata. But there are unmistakable differences between her English and pidgin. For example, pidgins do have certain rules. For instance, there is a specific word order, even if the sentences are very simple, and there are specific words to show tense, even though there are no inflections. These rules are not evident in the English of *Rinko*. Why is it, one wonders, that

Japanese-Americans in the English version—especially Mrs. Hata and to some extent Mr. Yamanaka—speak pidgin-like English?

To answer this question, we must look closer at who Mrs. Hata actually is. She is an immigrant. She grew up in Japan and came to the United States with her husband. How is this depicted in the drama? We are told that she was a childhood friend of *Rinko*'s mother when she was growing up in Japan. This is illustrated by some of the customs she keeps, such as the Buddhist memorial service for her husband, and the food she eats. But the most obvious means of demonstrating this point is through her English. As mentioned above, her English can be seen as a kind of pidgin, but more than that, it is the English of someone from Japan learning the language as an adult. If this is so, we should be able to see evidence of this learning in the drama. We should see, for example, first language interference, and we should notice her own feelings toward the language as well.

Mrs. Hata's English rarely has subjects and often omits the plural form of nouns as well as prepositions. Both of these characteristics of her speech may possibly be attributed to the interference of Japanese. Subjects are often deleted in Japanese, and there is no plural form of nouns. Nor are there prepositions. Mr. Yamanaka is living in Mrs. Hata's barn as an illegal alien. We do not know how long he has been in the United States, but his English appears to be better than Mrs. Hata's. This may be because Mrs. Hata is a housewife and has less occasion to associate outside her home with native speakers.

What is Mrs. Hata's view of her English? In the novel *Rinko* notes that "she understands English pretty well but doesn't feel comfortable speaking it." She continues further to say that speaking English makes her feel odd, just as if she had put her undershirt on backwards. In the drama she spoke Japanese especially when she felt at a loss, was overwhelmed, or in sorrow. She could not fully express her feelings in English. She did not have the words, and so reverted to Japanese. Seeing this, it would seem very strange if she were to speak standard

English in the drama. If her English was flawless, then her statements of being uncomfortable in the language would not ring true.

The North American director appeared to want the drama to portray Mrs. Hata's situation in the 1930s as realistically as possible. For Americans, language is essentially part of the story. America is a culture of immigrants, and first-generation immigrants are often expected to retain some of their home country's culture and language. American audiences frequently expect to see these cultural differences, and for many it would seem strange if this was not portrayed. Also, the home country's influence is expected to wane in succeeding generations. This has been the pattern up until recent years.

In the Japanese version the American characters speak fluent Japanese. One wonders why the producers simply did not use subtitles. They don't show characters having any trouble at all speaking English. Is this because to Japanese producers language is just a means to tell the story? Is it that the story itself is the biggest concern, not the language? The Japanese director apparently had no problems allowing the story line itself to create the world which they wanted to depict. The point is that if the film were more realistic linguistically in the Japanese version, then it would have been harder to understand, and the language used would have become a focus and not just one of the details as in the English-language version.

IV. Conclusion

In spite of a number of cultural differences, it appears that *Rinko* was realistically portrayed to both Japanese and North American audiences. Mrs. Hata's Japanese smile conveyed her embarrassment and hid her vulnerability and seemed natural to the Japanese audience while not detracting from the North American audience's experience. In a similar way, the use of nonstandard English made the film more realistic to the American audience but was not important enough to the story

to be included in the Japanese version.

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