Tacit Nuance Teaching in L2 Education : a Perspective of Language and Culture as Knowledge

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論 文

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1. Language and Culture are non-detachable

Most researchers agree that language and culture are closely connected. Agar（1994）coined the term *languaculture* and stressed the notion that language and culture are inseparable. Charbonnier（1961）explained that the emergence of language coincides exactly with the emergence of culture. Some have described language and culture as *two sides of the same coin*（Kramch, 1998; Seelye, 1993）. Some researchers believed that language is at the core of culture. For example, Maruyama（1984）argued that language is the means by which we articulate the world; the structure of cognition based on language is culture. Another who thinks that language is contained within culture is Schiffman（1996）, who considered there are *nested relationships* in language. He claimed that language-as-text（including oral discourse）is nested in linguistic culture, while language-as-code is in turn nested in language-as-text. Thus, language is an integral part of culture.

As is well known, culture nurtures language, but in foreign language education, it is very important to realize that language also has very strong effects on culture. According to Kramsch（1998）, language expresses cultural reality as common experience, embodies cultural reality as linguistic action, and also symbolizes cultural reality as value or social identity. Agar（1994）also noted that every language forms ways of action, thinking and feeling. Lo Bianco（2003）claimed that social environment changes will result in changes in language, which will necessarily produce new culture. In the same spirit, Kawakami（2007）noted that both language and culture are dynamic; therefore the relationship between them also changes dynamically. He suggests, therefore, that in language education students must consider language and culture from a dynamic perspective and also master and assimilate new cultural behaviors.

This paper is organized into five sections. The first section examines the relationship of language and culture. In the second section, we present a review of existing literature on the concepts of language and culture from the perspective of knowledge, and analyze both language and culture as containing explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. The third section discusses the methods for teaching tacit nuance of Japanese language and culture by using Japanese onomatopoeia as an example. Finally, we discuss the contribution of this article, as well as some of its implications.

2. Language and Culture as Knowledge

Although the image that knowledge consists of what is written in books is strong, the knowledge expressed in language and numbers actually represents only the tip of the iceberg. Nonaka and Takeuchi（1995）viewed *knowledge* as consisting mainly of subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches – in other words, as primarily tacit rather than explicit. Knowledge con-

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tains know-how, information with judgement, and the capacity for effective action. Nonaka (1990) described *tacit knowledge* as personal and difficult to formalize, transmit, and share, and he coined the term *explicit knowledge* to characterize that part that is formal and systematic, which can be easily transmitted and shared.[2] These two kinds of knowledge, tacit and explicit, "interact with and interchange into each other in the activities of human beings" (Nonaka& Takeuchi, 1995, p.61).

Bialystok (1978) noted a language has three parts: *explicit* linguistic knowledge, *implicit* (tacit) linguistic knowledge, and *other* knowledge. Explicit linguistic knowledge contains all the conscious facts such as grammar rules and pronunciation rules. When we use an explicit linguistic language frequently for a long time, then we come to use it automatically. At that point, explicit linguistic language changes to implicit linguistic knowledge. *Other* knowledge refers to the rest of the information the learner brings to the learning process – knowledge about the target culture and the world in general. Another example is the use of implicit linguistic knowledge to determine the use of a certain language in the right context; once the usage is explained by means of language, the knowledge become explicit. The knowledge which is not related to language in context is other knowledge.

Table 1 The Criteria of Implicit Knowledge and Explicit Knowledge (Excerpted from Ellis, 2009)

Implicit Knowledge	Explicit Knowledge
Tacit and intuitive	Conscious
Procedural	Declarative
Available through automatic processing	Accessible only through controlled processing
Only evident in learners' verbal behavior	Verbalizable

Ellis (2009) argues that foreign language learning entails the acquisition of both implicit and explicit

knowledge. He identified the criteria that can be used to distinguish the two, shown in Table 1.

One of the earliest definitions of culture is this: "Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1871, p.1). Although more than 100 definitions have been proposed from various fields of research since that first definition, all of them regard culture as comprising the material civilization, moral culture, and lifestyles produced by human activities. More recently, there has been a tendency to remove the element of material culture from the definition of culture. For example, Street (1993) argued culture is a verb, and believed the most important function of culture is to define language, ideas, and things for a group. Biggs and Moore (1993) defined culture as the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of humans which is transmitted from one generation to another. And Broady (2004) concluded culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group of people from another.
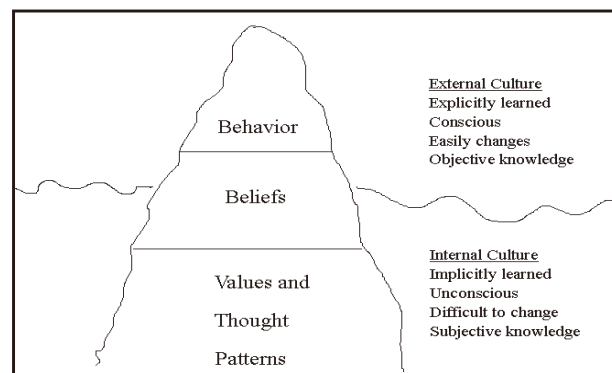

Fig. 1. The 'Iceberg Analogy' of Culture (Weaver, 1986)

In Weaver's (1986) *the iceberg model of culture,* actions and some beliefs form the external culture, which is the part of the iceberg that shows above the surface of the water; this is objective knowledge which can be intentionally grasped as explicit knowledge, and

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which can be changed（see Figure 1）. Other beliefs, values, and thought patterns are internal culture, forming the larger part of the iceberg under the water's surface. This is the subjective knowledge which can only be mastered subconsciously, and which is difficult to change. We consider this part to be implicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. The iceberg model of culture is a significant attempt to connect knowledge to culture. The implicit portion and tacit portion of culture may be sharable when we express it in language. For example, Okada（2009）rhetorically interpreted the act of conducting an orchestra during a concert rehearsal: "The intense sensation of motion in our body which is originally inherent in music is clearly evoked by expressing it in language"（p.63）. He noted nonverbal cultural business is nurtured by being expressed in language. Rhetoric and metaphor are good methods for changing implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

3. Teaching Tacit Nuance of Japanese Onomatopoeia as Knowledge

Language is understood to be a system of conversational symbols shared by a community of users. Onomatopoeia plays an integral part in the language; it is used frequently in everyday conversation, to help bring events to life through vivid depiction and enactment（Perniss, Thompson and Vigliocco, 2010）. However, due to the fact that onomatopoeic constructions are heavily influenced by the nuances of the culture and the language, studies have shown that they are difficult for Japanese language learners（Ivanona, 2006）. There are several reasons for this difficulty, including: the large number of onomatopoeias; the difficulty in inferring their meanings; the existence of similar expressions with different nuances; the lack of similar expressions in the learner's native language（Chen, Shirozu, Matsushita, 2013）; onomatopoeias are words of feelings; a single onomatopoeia may have multiple meanings; there are no corresponding words in foreign languages（Watanabe, 1997）.

The meaning of words is rather like an iceberg. Meanings written in the dictionary and explicit nuances are above the water, while the tacit nuances which we use subconsciously are under the water（Fig. 2, based on Weaver, 1986）. The part above water is relatively

easy to grasp, but the part hidden under water is very difficult for learners to understand.
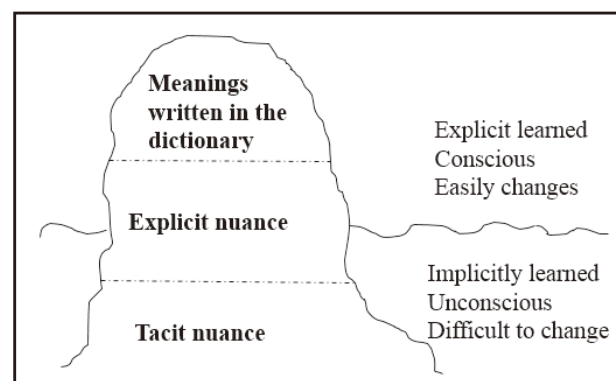

Fig. 2 The 'Iceberg Analogy' of language meaning

Tacit knowledge has two parts. One part can be changed to explicit knowledge using metaphor or analogy and the other part cannot be completely converted to explicit knowledge. We can learn the latter only from our experience（Eraut, 1985）. Even native speakers may feel different nuances for the same onomatopoeia, and have a variety of judgments for their usage in a specific context. What is more, according to different occasions and situations, nuance can be staggered in the same context. Thus, it is difficult to verbalize why such diversity or fluctuation exists. It is thought that people learn tacit nuance by practicing their language since infancy, not only by passively accumulating language experience, but also by beginning to express themselves, which is the same as learning a second language.

In our previous study（Yang, Hashimoto, Li, and Li, 2014; Li, Hashimoto, Li, and Yang, 2015）, we set two creation tasks for onomatopoeia, the *ABAB type* and the *AB っ type*（っ pronounced as *sokuon* meaning a double consonant）. There are more than 5000 onomatopoeia, but more than 30% are *ABAB type*, and most of them have another form with *AB っ type*. That is why we chose these two major examples. Because the onomatopoeias made by the learners may not exist, we call this process "creation" rather than generation. To learn the nuance, it is more important to understand the complexity of using onomatopoeias in real life rather than to simply know the right answers. Therefore, we ask the learners to create their own onomatopoeias instead of choosing from existing ones. Onomatopoeia is also creative for native Japanese

speakers. Despite the fact that there is a plethora of well-established onomatopoeias, native Japanese speakers often just create their own new one. Moreover, it is considered that such onomatopoeias are better accepted emotionally among friends (Sharlin, 2009). Since Japanese learners do not possess the same level of nuance that native speakers do, creating their own onomatopoeias through the word-formation rules is an effective way for them to master the relationship between wording/phoneme and explicit nuance.

Before create onomatopoeias, first is to teach the word-formation rules representing the explicit nuances of onomatopoeic words. Tamori (2010) offered a proposal about some nuance rules expressed by onomatopoeia with a certain kind of inflection and phonology. For instance, there is a rule that when you use the inflection of 2 words repeated twice (such as ABAB, baribari, sarasara, *etc.*), it expresses the nuance that the action lasts consecutively up to the present. Such rules express an explicit nuance in Japanese onomatopoeia. In particular, we have *ABAB type* and *ABっtype* as wording rules, "the effect of voiced sound" and "the smoothness of 'sa' and 'su'" as phonemic rules; these rules are provided to the learners as Table I.

In addition, when native Japanese speakers give feedback to the learners on the contextual correctness of their created onomatopoeias, the learners are able to recognize the gap of nuance between them and the native speakers and attempt to narrow the gap. By creating different onomatopoeias for the same given condition, the learners continuously correct their understanding of onomatopoeias and thus eliminate the gap to native speakers.

Table 2 EXAMPLES FOR WORD-FORMATION RULES

Sound repetition	Repetition means the movement persists up to the present.
	Example:落とした消しゴムが「ころころ」と彼女の足下に転がっていった。
Voiced consonants	Voiced consonants indicate a louder voice or noise.
	Example:「ごろごろ／ころころ」坂を転がる。

4. Discussion

Swain (1985) pointed out that besides comprehensible input, output is also significant, because by outputting their information, language learners notice the gap between their ways of expression compared to the correct way. There is a process through which someone builds a hypothesis based on his or her own knowledge, examines its validity according to the output, and revises the hypothesis according to feedback (Gass, Mackey, and Pica, 1998; Muranoi, 2007). This output and feedback are considered as a method for acquiring knowledge that cannot be explicitly explained. By this means language learners can get the feedback, repeat their hypothesis rectification and construct their own implicit nuances. This process is close to native speakers' language acquisition.

In particular, for learning the explicit nuances of onomatopoeia, we extract word-formation rules from existing onomatopoeias and have the learners memorize these rules. Then, for learning tacit nuances, the learners are asked to use these rules to create onomatopoeias according to given contexts. In this way, the learners are able to express their own nuance.
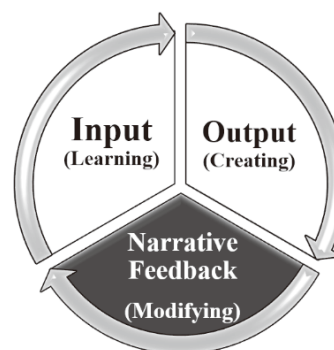

Fig. 3 The points of E-learning system

We therefore improved this E-learning system as below. 1) Improve the feedback database through an evaluation approach utilizing narrative interpretation. Learners can learn tacit nuances which are then changed to explicit ones. 2) As shown in figure 3, students learn about explicit nuance by learning word-formation rules, creating onomatopoeias, getting narrative feedback to modify their linguistic hypotheses, and then learning the new nuance they did not notice before. In the process to repeat learning, learners gain an awareness about tacit

nuances which cannot be changed to language, as they internalize the new awareness and output again to practice through their learning experience.

5. Conclusion

In this article we discussed how to teach tacit nuance from perspective of language and culture as knowledge. We proposed an E-learning system to help students to learn both the explicit and tacit nuances of onomatopoeia through an evaluation approach utilizing narrative interpretation. The three elements of this teaching method are repetitive learning of word-formation rules, creating onomatopoeic words by utilizing those word-formation rules, and getting feedback of native speakers' narrative interpretation. The three elements are incomplete without each other. Word-formation rules and narrative feedback are the part of tacit nuance which can be changed to explicit knowledge using metaphor or analogy. Tacit nuance cannot be completely converted to explicit knowledge therefore learners learn only from their experience, in other words, by creating onomatopoeias. Repetitive learning of word-formation rules, creating new onomatopoeias and gaining new awareness from narrative interpretation is the total process to acquire the explicit and tacit nuances of onomatopoeia. The interaction between native speakers and learners is not face to face. But together they do create new knowledge through the spiral process of articulation, socialization, consolidation and internalization.

Next, we will conduct a verification experiment, consider adding new types of onomatopoeia into the E-learning system, and enrich the narrative interpretation database. We expect to put this E-learning system to practical use.

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Abstract

This paper firstly examines the concepts of language and culture from the perspective of knowledge. Knowledge is understood as the total of explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge, and tacit knowledge. Both language and culture are included in knowledge; their non-detachability is expressed in phrases like language is a part of culture, two sides of the same coin, language is the core of culture, and languaculture. We point out that tacit knowledge has two parts in L2 education. One part can be changed to explicit knowledge using metaphor or analogy, and the other part cannot be completely converted to explicit knowledge. We can learn the latter only by experience. We created an E-learning system to help students to learn tacit nuance of Japanese onomatopoeia. Students can learn explicit nuance by studying word-formation rules, creating onomatopoeias, getting narrative feedback to modify their linguistic hypotheses, and then acquiring the new nuance they did not notice before. In the process of repeated learning, learners will also be aware of tacit nuances which cannot be changed to language, as they internalize the new concept and output it again in the practice of their learning experience.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Knowledge, Tacit Nuance, Onomatopoeia