

Re: Culture clash

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- *From:* Phil Yff <phil.yff@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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On Sat, 08 Sep 2007 10:55:35 +1000, Ben Finney wrote:

However, I draw different conclusions from your anecdotal information. You refer to "NSoE that I speak with who have learned Japanese *outside* Japan to the point of conversational fluency". You imply, though, that your anecdotal Japanese learners of English are striving for more than mere "conversational fluency."

No, such was never my intended implication. The NSoJ-learners-of-English are having trouble attaining the (subjectively-judged) same level of conversational fluency as the NSoE-learners-of-Japanese attain. The former group have chronic trouble with the new language, the latter praise its ease of assimilation.

You have to take what they say with a grain of salt. In my experience, Japanese tend to practice a certain amount of self deprecation whereas North Americans tend to brag about their accomplishments. A Japanese might say she still has a lot to learn while an American might brag about how well he speaks. Nevertheless, the two speakers might have equal conversational fluency.

Furthermore, in the US, where a large portion of the population speaks only one language, acquiring even a rudimentary ability in another language is laudable. In Japan, high school graduates expect to have a basic degree of conversational fluency in English and are quick to self-critique when they encounter difficulty communicating.

Phil Yff

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