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English Scripts of Presentations

Straps

*Kevin Wang
Groves High School*

There are things on everybody's cell phone, but what are they? These are key chains with designs everywhere from cute to scary, and from *Doraemon* to *Pokemon*. My friend's key chain has his girlfriend's DNA in it. From expensive key chains to cheap key chains, they can even be romantic. Now, my friend can go anywhere and his girlfriend can go with him too.

In middle school I went to Japan with my Japanese class. Before coming back I received a bell key chain from my home-stay family. Even though this key chain is cheap, it is very special. All of my memories of that Japanese trip are contained within this bell. Now, when I see this bell I think of my Japanese home-stay family.

Nowadays there are even small games on key chains. Tetris, Pac-Man or Bop-It – they all have their own key chains. If you're on a long, boring plane ride, or are bored at school, you can play these games for fun. Each key chain only costs about ten dollars as well, so they're really cheap. You can buy these at places like Target. This small pocket video game is a lot cheaper than other options.

Key chains are also really nice presents. With a key chain, every time the recipient sees the key chain, they'll think of you. Key chain calculators and key chain animals are good too. A key chain calculator can also be useful if you forget your calculator in math class. With so many options for key chain designs, key chains are indispensable. Do you have a key chain on your phone?

Different Countries, Different Schools

*Em Winfield
Dexter High School*

American students say, "School is difficult." However, Japanese schools are more difficult than American schools. American schools' and Japanese schools' sports and hobbies, school events, and student life are different.

For example, Japanese students' sports and hobbies are different from American students' sports and hobbies. In Japan there are club activities such as kendo, flower arrangement and tea ceremonies. These club activities are cultural. America has things such as debate, drama and American football, but these clubs are less cultural than Japan's club activities. Out of these club activities I would like to try tea ceremony club. I think tea ceremonies are quiet, refined and Japan-like.

Next, Japanese school events are different from American events. For example, in America there are no entrance ceremonies, and in Japanese there are no dances. However, there are school trips and graduation ceremonies in both America and Japan. There are many school events such as cultural festival that seem interesting and fun.

Finally, Japanese student life is different from Americans.' For example, Japanese public school students have to wear uniforms, but in America only private school student wear them. Because clothes are a form of free expression and I want to wear clothes that I want to wear, I prefer not having uniforms. Another difference between Japanese schools and American schools is their school problems. Japanese schools' biggest problem is bullying, but American schools' biggest problem is drugs. Japan's and American's social problems are reflected on their schools.

In conclusion, Japanese schools and American schools are different for many different reasons. I would like to try going to a Japanese school for a year. I would like to try tea ceremony club, entrance ceremonies and cultural festival. I believe that going to a Japanese school would be a good learning experience.

Why?

*Julia Murphy
Dexter High School*

There are many things in which foreigners who go to Japan are surprised about. However, I think the food being different or the way of thinking being different are obvious things. They're going to a foreign country so of course they would be different. What I was surprised about when I went to Japan is something completely different than this.

Firstly, I was surprised about the way words are used. In Japan, depending on who you are talking to, you use different ways of speaking. To people with a high status then it is necessary that you use words such as "*irasshaimasu*" or "*meshiagarimasu*." Because, as for English, no matter who you are talking to, you always use the same words; it was refreshing to me.

However, if one were to use such formal words with your friends at school, people would laugh at you and say, "*bakajana?*" (What are you dumb?). Between high school girls, there is "high school girl" Japanese. "*Teyuuka*" or "*uchi*" or "*maji*" are like such.

That is not all, however. In front of one's parents, "*hanseishiki*" (semiformal), this word was made up by me, however, in other words, semiformal language is used. It is a way of speaking created by mixing both formal and casual language.

There is still more; although, this is something only students studying Japanese can understand. That is, "competitive Japanese." In other words, In order to show that your Japanese is more advanced than the person whom you are with, you randomly use difficult grammar and vocabulary.

However, everyone, what I was shocked at, or, that is, surprised at is not this. Rather, what surprised me was seeing Japanese people who change, not only their way of speaking, but attitude as well. For example, a person might say "*atashi*" or "*ne*" in front of a boy whom they like while trying to act cute, yet in front of their classmates they'll call others "*busu*" or "*dobusu*."

Although the same person not only their language, but voice and face are also completely different. Why?

Actually, my host sister was like such as well. In front of her friends and family she was incredibly hardworking and kind; yet, when no one was looking she would buy and drink alcohol. This is a 15-year-old girl attending one of Japan's most famous high-schools! I really could not believe it. I thought, "Why would such a hardworking girl act like this?" It becomes hard to know which is their real form. Is being a good person that painful? Is she just tired with being so hard-working? Why can people not show their true face to others is something that, even now, I doubt. Why?

It's not that I have become to dislike Japan. On the contrary, I really like it; I

wish to return and to see everyone again. Yet, I don't want to be that kind of person who can't show their true self. It's perfectly fine to change how you talk, but to change even your attitude and character is something that I just cannot create reason out of. Why? Am I really the only one who thinks this is strange?

Thank you very much.

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ryan Gaines

West Bloomfield High School

Please imagine this. Sobbing, you hide your tear drenched red face. And you realize you cannot do anything. Today is the day your lover will die. You wished to comfort them at their side, pat their back, and assure them that it was going to be okay; however, you are not allowed to visit. Even if your lover were to fall into a critical condition, you do not have the right to inform the doctor of your lover's medical treatment ideas. That day, your lover died and you are told to leave the hospital – because, legally you are nothing more than a stranger. Why do you think this is? Because you are a gay couple.

I strongly support the legalization of gay marriage in America and Japan. In the world, discrimination and prejudice against homosexuals is still continuing. Being gay is not a choice or hobby. Also, thoughts such as it being the result of a household without a father, or an abusive childhood are erroneous. The truth is science has proven that there are numerous biological factors that structure the nature of homosexuality. It can be said that gay is natural and not something someone chooses.

U.S. and Japanese governments are denying gay people essential rights; I can say this is national discrimination. However, it is shown in the constitution that all men are entitled to equal rights. Therefore, if gay marriage is not legalized, gay couples are unable to acquire fundamental rights. Now, I have a favor to ask. The next time, you are with the person you love, please try thinking about this. The person dearest to you is in an end of life condition and you cannot do anything to help them. Gays throughout the world face this heart wrenching, sad reality every day.

My Inspiration

*Joseph Canty
Stevenson High School*

“Because I love you, you’ll never have to worry about anything.” This lyric is from the famous Japanese singer Utada Hikaru’s song. Utada is one of Japan’s most famous singers. I think Utada is very talented. She writes and produces all of her own music. Because I want to become a singer, I look up to Utada.

Fortunately, I was able to go to Utada’s concert in Chicago last month. That tour was Utada’s first tour in America. Therefore, going to the concert was a once in a lifetime opportunity. After waiting at the Chicago House of Blues for five hours Utada finally appeared before my eyes. At that moment I felt as if I were the happiest person in the world. That evening was amazing. Utada was BEAUTIFUL! She was wearing a simple, yet high fashion black and white outfit. My older brother and I stared into her large brown eyes. And then our eyes met. I was SO excited! But my brother’s eyes met with hers at least three times that night! He was even more excited than I was! They both looked at one another so much that I thought the two of them had fallen in love!

I could hear the passion in Utada’s voice as she sang. I was comforted by her songs since I could feel her joy, sadness and loneliness in the songs. Also, the lyrics that Utada makes always have a message to them. I hear and indulge in the truth behind her lyrics. Everything about the concert was amazing. I was impressed as well as emotionally touched.

Music is an important thing to everyone. When a person is happy or sad, they turn to music to cheer themselves up. Whether I listen to Utada’s Japanese songs or English songs, my spirit is always lifted. Someday I would like to work for the famous Japanese recording company Avex Trax and sing songs in both English and Japanese. I long to make beautiful, meaningful and up-beat music, just like Utada. I work hard toward this goal every day. Although my dream seems big, just like Utada says in one of her songs, because I love it, I have nothing to worry about. And because your own dreams are precious, be sure to never to give up on them, no matter what happens.

The Culture of Scientists

*Chloe Weisberg
Groves High School*

Please think about a scientist. What is the appearance of this scientist? Are they male? Most people always think of male scientists. Not all scientists are men, but in America and Europe seventy percent of the scientists are men. But, only twelve percent of Japanese scientists are female. Now is much improved over before. Gender discrimination is illegal now, but there are still many stereotypes about scientists.

This summer I interned at a cancer research center at the University of Chicago. I assisted a female Japanese researcher. I talked with this researcher about the culture of Japanese science. This researcher thought that it was easier for women to become scientists in America.

After that, I read in a journal about science an article on one Japanese biology professor. The person who wrote the article was saying that female scientists are often dismissed by other male scientists. In 2001 at Nagoya University this professor criticized about this; as a result she thought she would be fired. Now this professor is the first female president of a national university. This professor has improved the work culture of research science at Ochanomizu University.

In Japan funding for female scientists has been increased. But Japan's fifteen-member Council for Science and Technology Policy has two female members. It is unintentional, but the bias is there.

I want to become a scientist. I think that many Japanese girls also want to become scientists, but in Japan the culture of science is still not gender equal. I, and the president of Ochanomizu University, and the researcher from the University of Chicago and others are thinking that America and Japan should stand firm on bringing forth female scientists..

The One and Only Japan

*Miles Grofsorean
Community High School*

Hello. It is nice to meet you. My name is Miles Grofsorean.

When I first started learning Japanese, I found it to be difficult. In fact, I hated it. But once I went to Japan, my opinion completely changed. The culture shock was magnificent.

To start, I want to say that the first breath of air I took completely woke me up and alerted me to the idea that there was such a place as this. The Japanese environment was pristine. The Japanese people take pride in the cleanliness of their country.

Next, I want to talk about the seemingly natural mixture of modern technology – old, traditional Japan and nature. For example, the Philosopher's Path. The river is lined with beautiful *sakura* and remains quiet and peaceful even though, simultaneously, the busy city of Kyoto continues its daily routine around it. And, along the river itself are several of Japan's high-tech vending machines. However, they do not taint the atmosphere of the Philosopher's Path. Shrines such as *Kamogamo Jinja* and *Miyajima* hold an overpowering, yet soothing peaceful state that is different from any other. When I went to *Miyajima* I took the two hour walk up the stone staircase to the top of the mountain where I encountered the most magnificent view of an ocean I had ever seen.

Now I will talk about the politeness of the Japanese people. While I was in a Tokyo Hotel I had left an old Japanese coin from the Edo period that I brought from America. I had wrapped it in a plastic bag and left it on top of the television. The maid mistook this as a piece of trash and when I asked the clerks where I could look for it, they helped me search through all their trash bags one by one until I found it.

If anyone is taking Japanese, and whether or not they are struggling with it, I implore you to visit Japan. Like many things, it is impossible to truly enjoy and appreciate the language until you visit its place of origin. A trip to Japan is essential to a healthy learning experience.

Thank you very much for your time.

Origami Experience

*Nick Theisen
Groves High School*

Last year my class made one thousand paper cranes. Then we sent them to Hiroshima Peace Park. It was fun but slightly difficult. Therefore, I taught how to make the origami to other people.

I didn't like origami before we made the thousand paper cranes. But now I like them a lot! It was hard but fun. My friend and I made some of them during our science class. The science teacher didn't like us. But it was fun!

I think origami is amazing. From a small piece of paper you make art. There are many important things even though they are small. Small things can become big. An example is recycling.

Many people think that individually recycling is not important. But if everyone were doing it earth becomes better. Last year my Japanese class studied with the wasteful grandmother book. There are a lot of wasteful items. But one by one make changes.

One origami doesn't have a meaning, but a thousand origami does have a meaning. A thousand paper cranes give you a wish. A thousand paper cranes is origami, but art. Together we can change the world.

Japanese Cookies

*Rachel Kwak
Athens High School*

Until recently, I had never seen or eaten Japanese cookies before. I am not talking about Japanese cookies that American children enjoy eating, like “Pocky” or “Hello Panda,” which tend to be sweet and have cute animals drawn on them. I am talking about beautifully, carefully wrapped cookies that adults, not children, usually eat. This type of cookie can only be bought in Japan.

Last year, my mom’s friend’s husband went to Japan on business. There, his co-worker bought him expensive-looking Japanese cookies. After he came back to Michigan, he said he wanted to eat the cookies with us and proceeded to take out a pretty box from under his seat.

I was very surprised after the box was unwrapped and opened. The cookies were individually wrapped in wrapping that should have been used for expensive gifts.

Because there were so many kinds of cookies, and because they were all so pretty, I did not know which one to eat first. Finally, I chose one. It was a cookie wrapped in a flower-design wrapping paper. But it seemed so wasteful to rip the wrapping paper. So I hesitated for a while, and then unwrapped the cookie, being careful to rip only the parts of the paper necessary to get the cookie out. The cookie was so pretty, and yet it looked so delicious as well, so I took a bite.

But what was this? This was not the taste that I was expecting. That “melt-in-your-mouth-sweetness” taste that I was expecting. It was not that taste at all. The cookie that looked so delicious was not delicious at all.

It had a slightly sweet and yet salty taste. I had never tasted anything like that before. Therefore, I was thoroughly disappointed. However, this cookie was from the Japan that I loved, and so I could not give up that easily. I chose a different cookie. I carefully opened the wrapping for this cookie and took a bite, only to be disappointed again. This cookie had the slightly sweet and salty taste as well.

At that point, I made a decision. If the chance came to experience anything from Japan, whether it was books or food or clothing or anything else, I would enjoy that experience to the fullest. Everything that is, except for Japanese cookies.

After that, I had many more chances to try Japanese cookies. Each time I tried the cookies, I became that much more used to their taste. So much so that I have come to enjoy them.

From all of this, I have learned the importance of experience. Just because something is hard or you don't like it, you should not give it up. As you build up experience, that "something" may become easy or enjoyable.

That is why I can eat anything now.

Walls of the Mind

*Melissa Asher
Michigan State University*

I've always been afraid of change. When I was little, I always got nervous before I slept over at friends' houses. When I was in middle school and a friend moved to another state, I was reminded of the fact that we couldn't be together every time I contacted him and it was very painful. And when I entered college, the anxiety of leaving my family and friends in New Mexico and coming to Michigan was the worst of all.

However, the Japanese that I've been learning since high school is trying to change me now. What I mean is that learning a foreign language means changing the way you think completely. When I first started studying Japanese, whenever I came across grammar that was different from English, such as *ame ni furareta* (literally, "I was fallen on by rain"), I thought, "Wow, you can think like *this*, too!" and was ecstatic, but at the same time it was hard to accept that new way of thinking. For example, whenever I couldn't say something in Japanese, I would use the English word. Whenever I didn't understand something in Japanese, I would try translating it into English – thinking in English all of a sudden. Looking back on it, I feel like back then I was just sitting in a castle of English and peeking out at the world of Japanese through a window. Since I could return to my castle of English whenever I ran into something I couldn't do in Japanese, Japanese was no more than a game. But I can feel the days approaching when the game will have to end. If I really want to be skilled at Japanese, I have to stop being afraid of thinking in another language and make Japanese my own, just like English. If I do that, I think that whenever I run into something I can't do in Japanese, I'll be able to deal with it. I can't go building a wall in my mind saying, "This side is the language I use in my everyday life, and this side is the language I'm studying." Even if it means bringing a great change to my mind, that wall needs to come down.

If I think that way, I don't need to be afraid of change any more. My thoughts are still my thoughts even if they're in Japanese. After all, friends are still friends even if they're in another state, and my life is still my life even if I'm living in Michigan...

I think that the people of the world feel limitations because they are building walls in their minds. They build walls and think, "Oil is what moves cars, and we can't use solar power" or "War is the only way to solve our problems" or "This person is an American like me, but this person is different so I can't

understand him” or “This is the way I always think, and this is too hard so I can’t do it.” I feel that they think this way because they are afraid of change like I was. But isn’t it because you’ve decided “I can’t” from the start that you can’t do those things? I would like all the people to try setting aside their fear of change and breaking down the walls in their minds. That’s the way that I want to live from now on.

I Really Love This Dialect

*Keenan Davis
Michigan State University*

The more regions use a language, is it not true that differences will start to appear depending on the place using it? Whether in the English-speaking world or the Japanese-speaking world, a language changes with the location. Japan in particular, though the country's size is relatively small, contains a lot of regional dialects. Amongst those, it can probably be said that the one dialect outside of standard Japanese that is so well-known that it even gains recognition abroad is the dialect of the Kansai region of Japan.

Today, I am going to speak about the Japanese Kansai dialect.

I first became aware of the variety of regional dialects in Japanese from a joke in a comic book, when I learned the phrase representative of the Kansai dialect, "*nandeyanen*." As a language enthusiast I thought this was very interesting, and when I looked the Kansai dialect up on the internet I found that the sentence-ending particle "*wa*," which is restricted to women in standard Japanese, is often used by men; or that negative verbs come in the form of "*wakarahen*," amongst other examples. Compared to English, in which the differences between dialects are mostly accent or vocabulary changes, I found the fact that Kansai dialect and standard Japanese are different even on the grammatical level simply fascinating.

After entering university I met professors and made friends from the Kansai region, and after becoming used to hearing the dialect spoken, I even began to do things like adding the particle "*wa*" to the ends of my sentences myself. People who use the Kansai dialect in Japanese film, comics, and animation are often *yakuza* without common courtesy, or else they are slow-witted airheads, leaving an outside impression of Kansai that is not very good. Furthermore, a friend once told me that the Kansai dialect seems lame because it is often used by stand-up comedians. I have never actually been to Kansai, so though I may say that I have gotten used to the dialect, there is still much about it that I do not understand. However, in spite of its bad impression, I really love the Kansai dialect.

The reason I started to love the Kansai dialect is probably because I saw "Love Com," a movie set in the city of Osaka. This movie is an amazing love story, and I was moved to the point of tears watching it. Because all of the characters are Kansai natives, they of course all speak Kansai dialect. In spite of this, they were all of varying personalities. For the first time I was able to

understand that although it is representative of this specific region of Japan, even Kansai dialect is capable of many different images depending on the person using it—it is not all the same bad stereotype. Even love and sorrow can be portrayed in a Kansai way using this dialect. It might be thought of as Japanese that is a little different by people in other regions of Japan, but I think that it is important to be a little different. I believe we should cherish not only standard Japanese, but also the Kansai dialect; as well as the dialects from all the various regions of Japan.

As I expressed previously, the Kansai dialect is abundant in nuance and appeal to the extent that I cannot fully explain in today's speech. Additionally, since there are many more dialects from all over Japan, each with its own unique characteristics, I would like to become as informed on each dialect as possible. In order to deepen my knowledge of Japanese and become a more thorough language enthusiast, rather than sticking to just the standard dialect, I intend to study region-specific languages and even those that are no longer being used in an active manner. I would like to thank you for listening patiently.

Keigo: Japanese Polite Language

Alexander Nelson
Eastern Michigan University

Hello everyone. Thank you so much for coming today. Today I'd like to talk a little about *keigo*.

Starting in September of 2008, I studied abroad at Tokyo's Aoyama Gakuin University for about one year. The time I spent in Tokyo was the most fun and most influential year of my life so far. Today many audience members are Japanese educators so I'm sure you know well, but if you ask a student of Japanese, "Is Japanese hard?" they will almost certainly respond that, "*keigo* and kanji are the hardest." It is that hard-to-learn *keigo* that, having gone to Japan, I became especially interested in.

While I was in Japan, I had the opportunity to work at Starbucks Japan. Unlike part-time jobs at convenience stores and *Yoshinoya*, at Starbucks, employees interact a great deal with the customers. So, if you can't speak politely, you can't perform your job correctly either. Because of this, I began to study *keigo* as much as I could. If I didn't understand something, I would ask a co-worker or friend. But this advice seemed to only make things harder, because almost every person had a different way of using *keigo*. If you were to ask ten people, "Do you use this phrase?" you would probably get ten different responses.

For example, the first time I heard the phrase "*Go kigenyou*," I didn't know the meaning or how to use it, so I asked my Japanese teacher. "That's a great greeting if you're a classy, intelligent guy. Try it!" she said. So I went to the cafeteria and said energetically "*Go kigenyou!*" to my friends. To my surprise, they all laughed at me. They told me that only princess-type girls from *Gakushuin* use that phrase. When I asked my teacher, it turns out that she graduated from *Gakushuin* and her children currently go there.

"*Go kigenyou*" might be a special case, but I found that even everyday *keigo* changes depending on the person. When I asked my friends how I should talk to my teacher or store manager, some said to be very, very polite while others told me to just speak normally.

I was especially worried about talking with customers at my part-time job. When I wasn't sure how politely I should speak, I would ask my coworkers. But, to my surprise, even within one store, the usage patterns varied greatly. For instance, one of my coworkers always said "*Saizu wa ikaga nasaimasu ka?*" while my other coworkers usually just said "*Saizu wa dou saremasu ka?*"

Becoming more and more interested in the reasons that usage patterns change so radically, I read as much as I could find, but then decided to conduct a survey myself. I soon realized, though, that there were many other variables that I hadn't expected. This made writing the survey very difficult. While writing it, I suddenly understood why *keigo* changes so dramatically: *keigo* isn't something that you can learn just by memorizing vocabulary and grammar, nor is it something that you can memorize and then use right away. It is not uniform. How you view yourself, how you view your place in society, the place of your conversation partner – an innumerable amount of variables like these all influence how one uses *keigo*. *Keigo* is more like an extension of yourself. Not having been raised in Japanese society, how then should Japanese learners learn to use *keigo* effectively? It seems that you just have to go to Japan and live as a participant member of society. But even if I was able to do so, there's a good chance that I'd continue to make mistakes and worry about my usage for the rest of my life. I guess there is no real end to the study of *keigo*, so I have no choice but to try my best.

Searching for My Own Identity

*Joseph DeLeon
Michigan State University*

In today's globalized world, people have become increasingly interconnected. How to harness the opportunities of this interconnected world is often put to question. As for me, instead of looking for globalization's opportunities, I discovered the importance of self confidence gained through foreign language. Today, I'd like to present a tale of how, even though I never explicitly intended to look for meanings to life's grand concepts, I nevertheless came to understand some of the questions that have long troubled me.

Back when I was just 14 years old, I went to my great-grandmother's funeral. Two days before, my great-grandmother, all of 100 years old, passed away in her bedroom, most likely softly singing a song to herself while sketching a picture. As I sat there in front of her coffin, every breath I took made me realize that I was alive. "It really is so simple just to exist," I thought. Furthermore, in front of her coffin, the death of my great-grandmother was conveyed to me through the Spanish language. However, as we all read from the Bible in Spanish, it would be better to say that I, not knowing hardly any Spanish, just sat there and listened.

After her funeral, I decided to look for the heritage to which I truly belonged. After witnessing my great-grandmother's death, Spanish language was inadvertently tinged with a sense of fatality, so I turned to my mother's heritage. From learning French, I was convinced that I felt somehow closer to my Francophone ancestors.

Thus, in the summer of 2009, I studied abroad in France. While doing a home-stay in a city called Tours, even though I reveled in the experience of daily life in France, I slipped into an emotional quagmire. In other words, the experience I had in France was the complete opposite of all that I formerly had imagined. On the plane, I sat to the left of a young French woman, giving me my first real chance to speak casual French on my trip. But, I couldn't say a single thing. Since I felt that I was going to say all the wrong things, I could not help but be embarrassed. After I began my daily life in Tours, due to my fear of speaking French, a range of things, not least of which was making friends, became incredibly difficult.

However, one day, while walking through a guided tour of an immense castle, I realized all of a sudden that I could understand perfectly all that the

guide was saying. It was then that I also realized that I had not gotten embarrassed and, nervously, not known how to understand what was being said. After this innate anxiety vanished, no matter whom I talked with, I began to feel confident in my own French speaking ability.

Additionally, coming home to the United States, even though I hadn't spoken Japanese in three odd months, I used my newfound belief in the importance of my self-confidence in the Japanese language classroom; the more and more I tried my best, the more my I was able to display my inner conviction in my own capabilities.

Yet, given all of that, why did I choose to begin to study Japanese in the first place? I am asked this often by people: I must obviously like anime or even Japanese youth fashion. However, for me, those things would not succinctly explain my decision. Instead, through studying how words are used in works of literature, I started studying Japanese to learn how to develop a new way of thinking. In other words, by focusing on an understanding of culture through my three languages of English, French, and Japanese, and by making these three unite in my college career, I committed myself to comprehend the rich diversity of how humans think.

In all, longing to speak with my great-grandmother in that resting place above the clouds someday, I certainly do have the intention of learning Spanish. For now, with regards to the future family I might one day have, I have decided to continue to study Japanese, to develop my Japanese heart, in order to become the first Japanese speaking ancestor in my lineage. When I first encountered my Spanish language and cultural heritage at my great-grandmother's funeral, when I said "It really is so simple just to exist," I think I would have been better off saying: "It's so simple to create my future identity just through the gift of foreign languages."

Thank you for your undivided attention.

Globalization Is the Best!

*James Canty
Michigan State University*

It's likely that everyone has heard the word "globalization" more than once. Recently, this word has been often used especially on the news and on TV. Because we have currently fallen into a global recession, there might be many disputes relating to globalization. However, globalization is not always utilized only as a serious and grave topic. Actually, I feel that it is something that can be enjoyed. Because of this, I would like to talk about ways in which globalization is a bright and interesting thing in my speech today.

Children are taught the importance of sharing by their parents. Isn't that the beginning of globalization? In other words, globalization can be viewed as the spreading of ideas and desirable manufactured products and goods all around the world. If trading companies did not exist, the best goods and products in the world could not be shared with the people who want them. Therefore, through goods and products the people of the world are connected, and this in itself is an example of globalization.

For me, the influence of globalization on my life is huge. In 2001 I began listening to Japanese-language music on the Internet. The interest I directed towards this music gradually became deeper, and it is the reason why I began learning Japanese. At that time I had no clue that I would be able to meet so many other opportunities from my interest in Japanese music. For example, probably the best influence of globalization is the spread of delicious foods. At the favorite restaurant of Michigan State University students, called Ajishin, not just Japanese culture is displayed, and I think it is a bit just like the United Nations! Besides just Japanese people, you see Indians, Taiwanese, Mexicans, Koreans and other people of various nationalities who go there to eat. One day at Ajishin, a family from Greece asked my brother and I the following question: "Do you know what this is called in Japanese?" Our answer was "*Hashi!*" (chopsticks). Another example is from last year when one day while my dad and I were eating at a restaurant in Detroit, a man who we did not know came up to us and showed us his *kanji* (Japanese calligraphic character) tattoo. *Kanji* tattoos are very popular in the United States. This man then said, "This tattoo is my girlfriend's name." But since I have studied Japanese and I am able to read *kanji*, I understood that the *kanji* was actually the *kanji* for "woman." I didn't say anything to the man but it was all very funny!

Now, through the spread of the Internet, anybody can become friends with people who live on the other side of the earth, even without meeting them in real life. Because of this, I feel that the world has become a more connected entity in the minds of people. There may be people who hold the fear that globalization might cause our own original cultures to disappear, but I believe that there is no need to worry. People who know about foreign traditions and customs are able to understand their own culture more, and thus their daily life becomes much richer. Thanks to the Internet and modern means of transportation, if we go forward on the path that we are on, I believe that the power to prevent wars and a chance at world peace are at hand.

Because globalization is something necessary for the future, by all means, how about we all try to start a new experience? Try looking at various messages from other countries on YouTube or other places online, begin learning a foreign language, or try going on an overseas trip. Instead of the world becoming larger, it is quickly becoming a small thing that we can grasp in our hands, so let's all clasp hands together! If we do this, it seems that many things should be able to be shared between the people of the world.

Does Losing One's Memory Mean Losing One's Self?

*Andrea Panger
Eastern Michigan University*

Our memories are an important part of who we are. Everyone's personality is made up of knowledge, experiences, hopes, and dreams. As we lose these memories, what becomes of us?

This is the story of my grandmother who I love very much. For as long as I can remember, she had been a very strong and independent person. Before I was born, my grandfather passed away at 49 years old. Although I think it was hard for my grandmother, it seems she tried to do everything she could by herself so she would not trouble the rest of the family. She also enjoyed helping others. However, when her legs grew weak and it became difficult for her to walk she came to depend on my family more and more. I think she regretted having to depend on us, but I really loved her, so I loved helping her, too.

A few years ago, when I moved to California for work, I was only able to see my grandmother once in a year's time. During that time, her condition drastically changed. At first, I didn't quite understand that she was not the way she used to be, but when I saw her again, I felt as if she had become a different person. She was barely able to walk and largely uninterested in her surroundings. She kept repeating the same strange questions. I truly felt bad for her. She was still with us, but I was sad as it seemed like the grandmother I loved so was no longer there. My parents seemed to feel the same way. Eventually, my parents became unable to take care of her, and she moved in with a caregiver.

Because of all that, I started to feel that I should spend as much time with my grandmother as possible. I always visit her when I have time off. Yet visiting is not necessarily easy. Because of her diabetes, her diet is strict, though she forgets this and always tells people who visit her that she is hungry. If someone tells her she can't eat, she is disappointed and soon asks about food again. Yet aside from that, it's difficult for her to express herself. She says that there are many ideas floating around in her head, but she is unable to express them. Sometimes she does not say much at all when we go to see her. This is sad for her and for us, too.

It seems like my grandmother is aware that she has forgotten many things, but at least she remembers her family. Although she usually seems unhappy, she is very glad to see us when we visit. Still, she sometimes

forgets family members whom she rarely sees, so she might have to try hard to remember us.

Yet this does not mean that my grandmother, who was always so cheerful and thoughtful, is gone. On rare occasions, she surprises us with a lively conversation like we used to have years ago. At those times, she remembers all kinds of things and actively asks us questions and listens to us carefully. Seeing that, one quickly understands that her personality has not changed. Thus, I am always waiting for those moments when I can talk to her the way I used to.

While my grandmother has lost some of her memory, and sometimes I think talking to people is hard for her, it does seem like her memories are still there somewhere—she simply can't access them. It's always difficult when this happens to a loved one, but I think it's precisely because that person is so important to us that we should continue to give them our support. Perhaps they won't be able to do everything they could before—or remember everything they used to—but they still have thoughts and feelings and deserve our respect. Even if they can't remember anything, they will know we're thinking of them and feel grateful for that. For this reason, I will always love my grandmother and keep cheering her on.

When someone loses their memory, though it may seem that they have become a different person, I think the truth is that they are still the same as before. Even if they lose all of their memories, as long as their knowledge, experiences, hopes, and dreams are alive in the memories of the people close to them, I think that person has not changed. Thus, I will never forget my grandmother's kindness because I will always be grateful to her.

Lessons from Mrs. Schubert

*Nathan Bynum
Michigan State University*

Starting with bad economic times, poverty, genocide, and war, there are many problems facing our world today. Even today's world leaders don't know how to solve such problems. What do you think? How are we supposed to solve the problems of tomorrow? I know the answer. Actually, I learned the answer from a high school English teacher.

On the first day of the 11th grade, I entered room number 34 and an older lady with a cardigan on was just smiling at everyone. This person looked like your typical teacher, but actually, she was completely different. This was Mrs. Schubert.

Mrs. Schubert was every student's favorite teacher at my high school. Even people who weren't in her class had some sort of a relationship with Mrs. Schubert. Students would nickname her Schubie or Schubs. If it was early in the morning and students couldn't focus, Mrs. Schubert would give us "The Attention Dance." Watching a teacher in her 50's dance so that students could focus is an unbelievable thing.

One day, Mrs. Schubert was having trouble with attaching an attachment to an email. Whenever I didn't understand something, Mrs. Schubert would, without a doubt, always help me. So, I decided to help her out. The next day, I wrote up a sheet that explained how to attach something to an email for her future use. When I gave her the sheet, the look of thankfulness on her face was indescribable.

In May of last year, I got an invitation on Facebook for a group called "Prayers for Mrs. Schubert." The second I read this, my heart sank. According to this, Mrs. Schubert had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Mrs. Schubert would always talk about how teachers aren't supposed to "give students the fish. Teachers are supposed to show students how to fish for themselves." I'm currently studying education and in the future, I would like to be a teacher like Mrs. Schubert. So, one day I went to go see Mrs. Schubert. I asked her questions like "Why do all of your students love you?" or "What kind of things did you do in your classroom?" And she replied, "The students, you just gotta love 'em." As I heard Mrs. Schubert's words, I instantly understood. Both the "good students" and the "bad students" had respect for Mrs. Schubert. That's because Mrs. Schubert always tried to understand each individual student's background. Even though Mrs.

Schubert was sick, she was still teaching her students. However, on October 10th 2009 Mrs. Schubert sadly lost her battle with cancer.

When I look back on Mrs. Schubert, I think, "Oh! So that was the answer all along." In order for the world to be happy, everybody has to try to love each other. Today, there are many people around the world who are enveloped in themselves and their money. They don't try to love one another. However, if we can learn to love one another, we will succeed.

In my training for becoming a teacher, I often work with refugee students from Africa. In doing so, I try not to ask them "Why can't you understand?" and get irritated. Rather, I try to understand their background and work with them patiently. Whenever that happens, things go smoothly. When I become a teacher, I would like to treat my students with that same love. If I do that, my students will also be able to experience what I have learned from Mrs. Schubert.

In spite of the fact that Mrs. Schubert has passed away, her lessons will still remain on my heart forever. Thanks, Schubie.

Comparative Healthcares

*Jason Gauruder
Michigan State University*

Do you have health insurance? For how long have you been receiving healthcare services? Do you know anyone without health insurance?

This past summer, I performed an observational study at the Shiga University of Medical Science; I toured several places within the hospital and was introduced to many patients and hospital personnel. In the pharmacy I helped blend different medicines, assisted in looking after patients, and observed several surgeries. From the perspective of an American citizen who was able to directly experience the Japanese healthcare system, I was very moved by the level of care. Therefore, today I would like to share with you all the findings of my research.

The American healthcare system is quite complex as a whole. Americans either go through their employer for coverage, or go through a private insurer in order to purchase coverage. Nevertheless, according to the World Health Organization the cost of American healthcare is the highest in the world. Furthermore, 15% of American citizens, or 4,500,000 people, do not have any kind of health insurance. In order to find a solution to this problem, President Obama has proposed a socialized healthcare system. However, there are still those who oppose this proposal.

On the other hand, the Japanese have two systems of health insurance within their country: the Social Healthcare system and the National Health Insurance system. Those who work for a company can receive health insurance through the Social Healthcare system; and as for those who are retired, part-time workers, or work in the agricultural industry are able to receive coverage through the National Health Insurance system. In Japan, because of the availability of health insurance there is no concern of expensive bills when receiving medical treatment. Furthermore, serious illness and medical treatments that can be expensive and take a considerable amount of time to cure are made affordable by the government.

During my observation of Japanese healthcare, I was particularly impressed by the emphasis on preventative healthcare. All over the country there are community health centers that provide such services as preventative shots and pre/post maternal and childcare. Japanese health insurance also covers holistic/Chinese medicine and treatments. Furthermore, with the recent

inclination of aged citizens in Japan an insurance system has been introduced that tends to the additional nursing support needed for seniors.

However, I think that Japan is also facing various problems. The cost of healthcare is steadily increasing, as well as the large, aged population in rural areas leading to less adequate service compared to urban areas.

In the future I have an interest in becoming a nurse but see the many hardships of nursing as a career. Especially in Japan, the salary of nurses is low, there are almost no benefits to being a specialized nurse (holding a higher degree than RN), and male nurses are not as popular as here in the US. In the near future I think these issues should be improved for the betterment of everyone.

I think that the US and Japan have a lot of information they can exchange. The Japanese have adopted modern medicine from the West, on the other hand, I believe the US can also learn many things from Japan. Many Japanese study medicine in the US, but I also think more Americans should be going to Japan to study. If the Americans and Japanese were to cooperate more, I believe there could be far more achievements in the medical field.

Why I'm Hooked on Haruki Murakami

*Lawrence Gross
University of Michigan*

1Q84, the newest book of Japan's esteemed novelist Haruki Murakami, recently has become the most talked about topic in the Japanese literary world. Last year *1Q84* became a best seller, with over 2,000,000 copies sold in Japan, and now its translations are eagerly awaited throughout the world. I, too, am one who is looking forward to next September, when it will be released in the United States. In the meantime, I've tried to make use of my time by thinking once again about the reasons why I like Haruki Murakami's novels.

In Haruki Murakami's novels, there are three main aspects contributing to why I want to read them; or, rather, to why I'm hooked on them. First, when reading his work, I find myself thinking, "Though this is surely fiction, the developments in the story seem like they're real." Beyond being just interesting, I think that a good novel is one that makes you feel like you're reading about things you yourself are feeling; and this is a feature of Murakami's novels. For example, as a reader trying to make sense of the story, I can relate to the feelings of the main characters as they attempt to try to make sense of the uncanny events that are going on around them. For example, the main character of "The Wind-up Bird Chronicle", unemployed and inexplicably deserted by first his cat and then his wife, undergoes a quest to understand these events. Although it's fiction, I felt the unexplained nature of this story represents uncertainty in life. In this way, the reader is tied into Murakami's world.

Next, the characters in Murakami's work always have unique and interesting characteristics. For example, whenever I talk about the humor in Murakami's work, I give as an example the ear-model from "A Wild Sheep Chase." Her ears have a beauty that affects her surroundings to the extent that when her ears become exposed at a restaurant the waiter stops still in his tracks and trembles, while the plaster peels from the walls. Although this scene is clearly fiction, it's brimming with humor and I can't help but laugh.

Other characters with special characteristics include a man who can excellently make pasta, a girl who is always hungry, and an old man who can talk to cats. When I read about the unique individuals in Murakami's works, it makes me want to examine and develop my own personal qualities.

The third reason is the values emphasized in Murakami's work. Reading Murakami, I get the idea that it would be good if I, like the characters in the books, disregard societal norms and pursue the things that are of true value to me. That's because many of Murakami's characters are apathetic to societal standards, like making money and working in a company. In fact, not one of Murakami's main characters is a "salary man." Instead, for example, in "Kafka on the Shore," the main character runs away on his 15th birthday and goes to Shikoku in search of his mother and sister. Furthermore, in "Pinball, 1973" the main character, a pinball enthusiast, devotes himself to finding the pinball machine he last played on many years before. I think that to act on the things that have intrinsic value to you is ideal. Also, since, when I'm reading a novel, I don't want to be reminded of the things that I don't want to do but that I must, or of societal responsibilities, I'm strongly attracted to Murakami's characters who follow their heart.

Where, then, do these characteristics of Murakami's work come from? I feel that they have a correlation with the fact that Murakami is a marathon-runner. In his book, "What I Talk about When I Talk about Running," Murakami tells how he's learned many things from running. For example, since running causes physical pain, Murakami says he learned that, "while pain is inevitable, suffering is optional." That way of thinking is probably useful for writing too. Furthermore, just like running long distances, writing a book is a reflective, individual undertaking that requires much hard work.

While Murakami states how much he's learned from running, I, instead, have learned so much from Murakami's stories. I find that I connect to his work on many levels, and that reading his writing forces me to reflect my own lifestyle and worldview. Perhaps what running is for Murakami is a little like what his novels are for me.

I haven't yet read *1Q84*, but in the near future I hope to try to read it in Japanese. By reading Murakami's work in Japanese rather than his work translated in English, I look forward to making new discoveries and finding myself attracted to his work for new reasons altogether.

