
Gateway to Communication

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はじめに

英語という手段を用いて、「効果的に」コミュニケーションを行うには、verbal message（言語によるメッセージ）と nonverbal message（言語以外の手段によるメッセージ）の両方を「効果的に」相手と交換することが大切です。もし、「効果的に」行わないと、いわゆるコミュニケーションギャップが生じることとなります。そこで、本書はそのようなコミュニケーションギャップを少しでも減少させることを目標としています。

そのために、本書では、コミュニケーションギャップを様々な場面で想定し、英米人とのコミュニケーションにおいて、いかなる発話、反応、動作、等が英米人に対して適切であるのか、また適切でないのか、ということ进行を考察することによって、コミュニケーションギャップの要因を理解することで、目標に一步でも近付きたいと願っています。

そこで、本書の構成は次のようになっています。

Dialog：具体的なコミュニケーションギャップの例をアメリカ人の大学生 Susan とアメリカに留学中の日本人の大学生 Masahiko との対話を通して提示しています。

Listening Quizzes：リスニング能力の養成と共に、Dialog のコミュニケーションギャップの本質の理解をねらいとしています。

Passage：コミュニケーションギャップの要因を理解するための秘訣を述べています。

Comprehension Questions：その秘訣を十分に会得するために、具体的な状況でどういふ発話、反応、動作、等が適切であるかを答える問題を中心に、TOEFL の Reading Comprehension Test の形式で質問を提示しています。

Grammar Check：Dialog や Passage に出てくる、日本人が間違えやすい、注意すべき文法事項の理解をねらいとしています。

Useful Expressions：Dialog や Passage に出てくる、実際のコミュニケーションに役立つと思われる表現の理解をねらいとしています。

Further Study：Passage で扱われたことと関連する事項に関して、実際に対話をしてみたり、議論したり、あるいは調べたりする問題を提起しています。

このように、本書では、コミュニケーションギャップの克服を主眼にしていますが、全体として、verbal message と nonverbal message の両方の理解にもつながるように構成されています。本書を手掛かりに、将来遭遇するであろうコミュニケーションギャップに対しても、それらを自分で克服し、英米人と「効果的に」コミュニケーションを行うことができることを期待します。

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久保善宏

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UNIT 1

American Conversation



1. あなたは家族あるいは友達と食事中によく会話をする方ですか。
2. あなたは相手が言い終わらないうちに相手の話に割り込むことがありますか。

Dialog



Susan : Masahiko, why were you so quiet tonight?

Masahiko: I had no choice.

Susan : Meaning?

Masahiko: Do you realize how hard it is to speak to a group of Americans?

Susan : I guess maybe I don't.

Masahiko: Everyone talks at once. I never seemed to get a chance to say anything.

Susan : I see what you mean.

Masahiko: You see, it's hard enough to think fast in English...

Susan : I do understand, my friend. Next time, I'll try to help you out.

Masahiko: That would be appreciated, Susan.

Listening Quizzes



Listen to the tape and choose the best answer.

1. _____
A. Susan. B. Masahiko. C. Both Susan and Masahiko.
2. _____
A. He felt it was very difficult.
B. He felt it was very easy.
C. He felt it was a piece of cake.
3. _____
A. Because he can keep a secret.
B. Because he was shy.
C. Because it was difficult for him to think fast in English.

Passage

The rules for conversation in America may seem strange at first, so it's good to know what is expected of you.

Americans are often stereotyped as loud, but this is not always true. As a general rule, raising your voice in normal, polite conversation is thought to be rude. It can also be seen as starting an argument or fight. So, some good advice is to keep your voice down at all times, but don't speak so softly that it is difficult for others to hear you.

Conversation styles are different between Japan and the U.S. You may be surprised during meals. Around the dinner table is a favorite place for conversation. Topics are usually general and light—this is not the time or place for very serious talks on touchy subjects. (This comes from the fact that some subjects may upset people and ruin their meals for them.)

In American conversation, it is common for several persons to try to speak at once. They often compete for the right to speak. There are no guidelines about who gets the chance to talk. It depends on the conversation and those who are involved. What is important, is not to get upset if another speaks over you. Just wait for another opportunity and jump in when you have the chance. This is normal and will not offend others.

This goes for cutting someone off as well. In conversation, especially when the speakers are excited, Americans tend to speak before another has finished. (This is true in both casual and business situations.) Cutting someone off is OK as long as you don't do it all the time. If you do it constantly, others will probably get offended.

As a Japanese, don't be afraid of having meaningful conversations with those you meet—in the American style. You will be expected to.

Notes

[On Dialog]

at once (=all at once): at the same time

[On Passage]

are involved: are involved (in the conversation) [(会話に) 参加している]

Comprehension Questions

Based on the passage, choose the best answer.

- If you raise your voice when talking to an American, he or she may think that you are ready to
 - sing.
 - whistle.
 - fight.
 - say goodbye.
- If you strike up a conversation with Americans at dinner, what kind of topics may upset them?
 - Delicate topics.
 - Simple topics.
 - Everyday topics.
 - General topics.
- If you are having a conversation with Americans and one of them speaks over you, you should
 - get mad at him or her.
 - tell him or her off.
 - get upset.
 - not get worked up.
- If you have a conversation with an American and cut him or her off all the time, he or she might
 - feel good.
 - take offense.
 - thank you.
 - feel refreshed.

Grammar Check

Choose the appropriate answer(s).

- seem ~ vs. seem to ~**
 - He seems _____.
 - He seems to _____.
 - intelligent
 - be intelligent
 - be single
- cut someone off vs. cut off someone**
 - “If a speaker talks too long, what will the chairman do to the speaker?”
“He will cut _____.”
 - “Who did the chairman cut off?”
“He cut _____.”
 - him off
 - off him
 - off that speaker

Useful Expressions

Put the following Japanese into English, making use of the useful expressions.

1. **help someone out:** help someone by doing some work for them

Q. 彼がもし困ったことになっても双子の弟が手助けしてくれるだろう。

_____.

2. **jump in:** interrupt when someone else is speaking

Q. 日本では人の話に割り込むことは礼儀知らずだとみなされる。

_____.

3. **go for:** be true for

Q. 君が疲れているのはわかるけど、疲れているのは僕も一緒だ。

_____.

4. **as long as:** provided that

Q. 健康でいる限り仕事を辞めたくない。

_____.

Further Study

Answer the following questions.

1. What kind of topic do you think is touchy for Americans?

2. What do you think of cutting someone off in Japanese conversation?

UNIT 2

Discussing “Touchy” Subjects



1. あなたは初対面の人とどのような話題について話をしますか。
2. あなたは友達と話をする場合、意識的に避けようとする話題がありますか。

Dialog



Susan : Did you have a good time tonight, Masahiko?

Masahiko: Yeah, but I am mentally tired.

Susan : Why's that?

Masahiko: I talked with people about religion, money, politics....

Susan : So?

Masahiko: So I was surprised. I thought Americans avoided those subjects.

Susan : Hardly, as you obviously just found out.

Masahiko: Did I ever!

Susan : But, all in all, weren't they interesting topics?

Masahiko: They sure were. I learned a lot!

Listening Quizzes



Listen to the tape and choose the best answer.

1. _____

- A. He thought Americans enjoyed talking about any topic.
- B. He thought Americans avoided talking about some topics.
- C. He didn't think Americans avoided talking about any topic.

2. _____

- A. Everyday topics. B. Common topics. C. Religion, money, politics, etc.

3. _____

- A. He thought them interesting.
- B. He thought them uninteresting.
- C. He thought them exhausting.

Passage


You may have read about certain topics that should not be discussed with Americans because they are too personal. Such warnings have their place as a basic guideline, but don't be misled.

Keep in mind that so-called "touchy" subjects are of great interest to millions of people. In fact, many of them are sources of extremely entertaining discussions. What may cause problems, though, is being too direct or too personal with your conversation partner.

For our first example, let's consider religion. In America, most every religion in the world is represented. Many are proud of their faith and are delighted to teach others about it. So, when the topic of religion arises, don't automatically shy away. If it's interesting to you, talk about it and ask general questions. Let the other lead the conversation. If they want to tell you very personal information, it's up to them.

The same is true for politics. Politics is definitely one of the most popular subjects throughout America. Everyone has some opinion and they are usually more than willing to share it. And, when they do, they are going to want to hear yours. The secret is not to get into a "who's-right" comparison. Keep things light and others will, too.

A third touchy subject that is often mentioned is money. When this is the topic, you should definitely be careful. Questioning someone as to how much they earn gets too personal very quickly. Discussing general wages and how to make money are safe. In fact, ideas on these areas are often very welcome.

Don't be afraid of talking about the serious subjects you've heard about with Americans. Just remember to be general at first and get personal only if you are invited to. Then sit back and enjoy where the conversation goes.

Notes

[On Dialog]

Did I ever!: (Yes,) I certainly did find out. (強い同意を表す)

[On Passage]

be of interest to (someone): be interesting to (someone)

be up to (someone): be the responsibility of (someone)

the secret 「秘訣」

a 'who's-right' comparison 「誰が正しく誰が正しくないかの比較」

sit back: relax

Comprehension Questions

Based on the passage, choose the best answer.

1. You should bear in mind that so-called "touchy" subjects are
 - A. interesting to one million Americans.
 - B. interesting to a large number of Americans.
 - C. boring to thousands of Americans.
 - D. boring to a bunch of Americans.

2. If religion becomes a topic of conversation with Americans, you can
 - A. not talk about it.
 - B. not ask any questions about it.
 - C. ask personal questions about it.
 - D. ask general questions about it.

3. When you are talking with Americans about politics,
 - A. you can give them your opinion about politics.
 - B. you can make a comparison between the politicians you and others support.
 - C. they don't want to hear your opinion about politics.
 - D. all of them will show no interest in politics.

4. When you are talking with Americans about money, you should shy away from asking,
 - A. "How much do you think top fashion models can make a year?"
 - B. "How much is the annual income per person in America?"
 - C. "How much money do you earn a month?"
 - D. "Do Americans spend a fortune on a wedding?"

Grammar Check

Choose the appropriate answer(s).

1. **sure vs. certain**

- A. "Is it OK if I smoke?" "_____."
 - B. She's _____ to win.
 - C. I _____ am hungry.
- a. Sure b. Certain c. sure d. certain

2. **more than vs. more ~ than**

- A. We will be _____ to help you.
 - B. He is _____ sad.
- a. more angry than b. angrier than c. more than happy

Useful Expressions

Put the following Japanese into English, making use of the useful expressions.

1. **have a good time:** enjoy oneself very much

Q. この間の日曜日はドライブをして楽しんだ。

_____.

2. **all in all** (= all things considered): in general

Q. 全体的に見て今度の会議は大成功だったと思うよ。

_____.

3. **keep in mind that** ~ : remember that ~

Q. アメリカでは4年制大学を卒業するのはやさしくないということを覚えておきなさい。

_____.

4. **shy away (from ~)** : avoid ~

Q. 彼女と話す時にはその話題は避けた方が無難でしょう。

_____.

Further Study

Answer the following questions.

1. When talking to an American you do not know well, which of the following questions might cause problems?
- A. How old are you? (to an adult)
 - B. Where are you from?
 - C. How much do you weigh?
 - D. Where do you go to school?
 - E. How much was your sweater?
 - F. Where do you work?
 - G. How much do you make a month?
 - H. What are you planning to do during the coming summer vacation?
 - I. Are you single? (to an adult woman)
 - J. Did you have a nice weekend?