

Topic:

Discuss the reason concretely from the perspective that this catch phrase, "I'm glad that I am Japanese", contains what kind of information and relationships.

Essay:

As a foreigner, if I see the poster in the street when I walk by without paying much attentions to it, it is just a simple sentence that shows the writer's love of being as a Japanese and the willingness of sharing this emotion to the one who is seeing this poster. However, thinking deeper, there are some different definitions can be thought from other side as well. As the sentence said "I'm glad that I am Japanese", does it mean that whether the speaker will not feel glad if he/she was born in another country instead of Japan, whether there is a clear gap of living environment between Japan and other countries?

The reason why there are different definitions of the same sentence is what this report wants to talk about. In order to find the answer, I would like to divide this sentence into four parts as followed: who says it and to whom and what he/she says and finally what is the intension of the speaker. It seems to be not so difficult to find, the main role is the writer of the poster, and the target role which is represented as the role of hearer is not clear because it is possible for everyone to see the poster when walking in the street, and the sentence is that the writer is glad that he/she is Japanese. So it is obvious that those different definitions come from the different view of these two kinds of target roles, Japanese and not Japanese. It is just a simple sentence as my original thought for the one who is Japanese, maybe they have the same feeling. But for someone who is not Japanese, the different definition generates. As stated above, the first reason is the un-definition of the target role.

Secondly, let's figure out why the difference just exists between Japanese and someone who is not Japanese. The word "Japanese", as one of the words from the third person type category, often indicates a positionality of participants implicitly. In other words, the third person type words are used to include the speaker and the hearer, making a confrontation to the target simultaneously. It means that there are three clusters: the speaker, the hearer and the third person. In some case, there is just one cluster, in which all of them are included into the same cluster. However, as sentence in the poster shown, the speaker

has put himself/herself into the same cluster of target one, which means that it will be different if the hearer belongs to the cluster of Japanese or not. Simply speaking, if the hearer is one of the Japanese, the clusters combine as one named Japanese, and if the hearer is not Japanese, then there will be two clusters, Japanese and not Japanese, which exactly confronts with each other. So that is the second reason of why there are different definitions of this sentence.

Thirdly, back to the reality, are there some things that the Japanese one is obviously better than the one from other countries. I think no one will deny that every country have their own advantages and the special identifications. What I want to mention is that because of the no clear expression of the speaker, it is hard to know his/her intension of why he/she say that, which means that it will not be a big deal if the speaker said that he/she is glad to be as Japanese because of the love of sushi.

Finally, I would like to jump out the relationship between speaker and hearer and have a look at the word “glad”. In my opinion, the word “glad” is often used in the condition of being given an award or credit, which contains a sense of honor. It is exactly this sense of honor that brings out the feeling of comparison and class difference.

In order to make it more understandable, I would like to extend it to the condition as followed and have a look if those reasons works. Let's replace the sentence as “I am glad that I am Kyoto people”. So as for someone who is not from Kyoto, can the sentence imply that the speaker does not want to be a one of the people from Tokyo or Osaka or some other place? It is mean that there is a huge obvious gap between Kyoto and other place, especially relative to the class gap? Is there any special points locating in Kyoto that is other cities do not have? What if the speaker says that he is glad that he is Kyoto people because he/she loves those historical architectures? What if the sentence is said about your own country?