
ELI STUDENT VOICES

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Commencement Ceremony Speech

Ki Don Kim

R/W 50

Hi, everyone. Do you know my name? You seem so happy now because the semester is finished and you will have a long break time. Some people are going to go to New York or their countries or stay in Gainesville and take care of the UF.

We have walked a long time but too fast. In the fall semester, we had many great issues: 5 hurricanes, the Gators had the first win against FSU since 1986, Christina's wedding, and so on. Maybe the reason of these issues is why I am here. I had to choose the English institute before I made a plan to study abroad. That work was very difficult. However, I am happy to meet the ELI at UF because you know, the ELI has a good organized system.

First, the homepage of ELI is great. We can get the information about the ELI and English studying. Probably, you had contacted the ELI's homepage before you came here.

Second, teachers in the ELI are handsome and beautiful. They have a variety of teaching methods and good personalities. Also, I have always felt their great passion. If we feel our improved ability, it is from their passion, especially, I really thank my teachers now: Tina, Todd, Dr. Chan, James.

Third, I thank the ELI officers and managers. They have always assisted our whole life in Gainesville. If we didn't receive their help, we couldn't get housing, solve immigration problems, understand the US cultures, and meet conversation partners. I thank you again.

Fourth, if I skip these people, they are so angry and sad. They are the LAs. (not Los Angeles but Language Assistants). They are our close friends. They have spent a lot of time with us, even weekends. They attended our party and we drank together. Despite our poor speaking and listening ability, they always listened carefully with patience. I suggest we give our big applause to them.

However, I want to suggest to the ELI as follows:

First, when most students chose the ELI, we were just introduced by family and friends. They attended the ELI or they are UF students. This means that information from people is important to us so the ELI has to focus on current and returning students. If they receive good impressions from the ELI, they spread the information of UF's ELI to their neighbors and family.

Second, the teacher has to develop teaching methods and update teaching materials. The teacher is most important to us because a good teacher gives the chance to improve a student's ability and passion.

Another part, I want to say something to students.

First, you are great for me. The summer and fall semester's students are great people. You always give me a competitive sense and passion for studying. Also, I have felt good fellowship.

Before I came here, I had worked at a petrochemical company for 5 years. When I made this plan to study abroad and finished my job, my friends said, "Are you crazy?" You know this meaning. I had to have some goal. I had to study with clever young students so I made the scholarship my goal. That goal helped my studying and spirit. You are so important people for your parents, family, friends, and country so please love yourselves, your time, and your goal.

Second, you paid the tuition about \$3,000. This cost is expensive for your country. Most students receive this money from their parents. Please, don't be absent and tardy. Also, please attend all activities. This action is important to maintain your passion for English.

Third, don't forget your original purpose. If you want to attend one more semester, you will have the same feeling in the middle of next semester because you will be tired at that time and many students may just waste time. If you want to enter a university in the US, you have to focus on the academic English. Indeed you should study for TOEFL. If you want to improve just speaking ability, please don't ignore writing, reading, and grammar class. Language is life and culture so we have to study all sections of English.

Fourth, you are a diplomat of your country. This means you have to take care of your life, speaking, and personality. If you show you are a lazy, stupid, and rude person, other people get a bad impression about you and your country. Be careful. Again, you are an important private diplomat.

I'm so happy because I can finish two semesters safely and my wife was very happy because she could save money. If the ELI maintains and develops until 20 years later, I can bring my son. I really want to keep in touch with the ELI and my friends forever.

I remember that at the ceremony in the summer semester Steve said, "This time isn't finishing. This time is a new beginning." I like these words.

I want to finish my speaking by bowing for you. In Korea, we normally bow to show respect for a person. I have always respected you because you are my friends and my teachers regardless of age.

Thank you everybody.

Cultural Identity (1st Place)

Hsiao-Hsuan Liang (Linda)

R/W 60

My country, Taiwan, is a small island which lies anchored off the coast of Mainland China. But actually, Taiwan is not a country in the world at all. The reason why Taiwan is not a country is because of politics. It's been almost 60 years since Taiwan was politically separated from Mainland China. Although our government, lifestyle, economic situation, and political policies are totally different from Mainland China, we, traditionally, have inherited the Chinese culture. Therefore, under the military and economic force of Mainland China, Taiwan becomes a part of Mainland China, from their point of view, and it's no more a country that has its own culture. Not only does Mainland China have influences on Taiwan, but also the US affects Taiwan. We are in between Mainland China and the US. We often can't make our own decisions, or once we make a decision, we need to be approved by Mainland China or the US. If Mainland China is unsatisfied by our decision-making, we are going to be under the threatening military rehearsals. This really depresses people in Taiwan and makes people in Taiwan afraid of telling what they really want.

In order to survive this sticky situation, our governors, even our people, are used to pleasing whoever has strong power or strong effects on us. As a result, we lose our cultural identity in some way. We always accept all kinds of cultures, such as American culture and Japanese culture, but we never try to create or develop our own culture. Moreover, we don't know whether exactly "Taiwanese culture" exists or not.

Recently, I have been thinking about "What's my nationality?" and "Am I a Chinese or a Taiwanese?" a lot. Especially when I go abroad, some documents and papers that I need to fill in always make me feel confused. Should I write down "Republic of China" or "Taiwan" in the nationality? Is Taipei our "capital" or "main city"? I feel sad about this situation. I really want to see this condition changed. In my mind, I want to be a Taiwanese who can say out loud my "country" name, who can sing the national anthem in international formal occasions, and who can see the national flag in the other countries. Despite the political influence, I am still proud of being a Taiwanese. We speak Chinese and some dialects, we have traditional Chinese way of thinking, we have long Chinese history, and we are willing to receive new cultures. We have produced a certain mixed culture. Nowadays, we are trying very hard to gather our people who may speak different dialects together to live a better and more respectful life. Only by doing this, can we earn respect from other countries all around the world and really become a part of the world.

When I attempt to explain and describe my cultural identity, I come up with confusion. I even don't know how to start or how to make people understand who I am and what kind of place Taiwan is. I only know about the paradox of being a country that is not a country. Eventually, I understand the reason why I can't just say what makes me a Taiwanese. It's because the history of Taiwan is so young that we are still in the

process of establishing a new culture in which everyone is more open-minded, accepting, and open to change. Besides, we are always questioning and curious about everything. All these features included, a unique culture combining traditional and modern is being founded. That is, Taiwanese culture is a brand new culture developing just like an unfinished book in need of being continued. I hope Taiwan can create an own-style hybrid culture of which every Taiwanese will be proud in the future.

The Curse of the Bambino (2nd Place)

Takahiro Shinchi

R/W 50

"The Bambino forgives Boston," said lots of Boston Red Sox fans on October 27th, 2004 at Bush Stadium in St. Louis, Missouri. "The Idiots," which are Boston's players' nickname, won the World Series, and became the world champions. They have not been the world champions for 86 years.

Babe Ruth, George Herman Ruth, was known most by Americans as a legendry home run batter in Major League Baseball (MLB). There are many legends about his play, which have been passed from person to person for a long time, and never forgotten among lots of baseball fans. The term "Bambino" relates to Babe Ruth. It means baby. Today, I want to introduce you to the curse of the Bambino.

He had played in Boston from 1914 to 1920. While playing in Boston, he led the team 3 times to the World Series. At the time, he was also famous as a pitcher. He had played as both pitcher and batter. His pitching records were unbelievable. He played 3 times as a pitcher in the 1915, 1916, and 1918 World Series and contributed to getting the world champion rings for Boston. His pitching at the World Series was excellent because he went without losing 29 2/3 innings straight.

Baseball fans were surprised by Ruth's trade in the 1920 postseason. Ruth was traded from Boston to the Yankees. He was sold off for \$ 425,000 to the Yankees. It was surprising. It was said that in those days that Boston's owner, Hurry Fraser, needed money for show business in New York City.

After being traded to the Yankees, he developed the art of batting. He hit 54 home runs in 1920. In 1927, he broke his own personal record and hit 60 home runs. This season home run record was not broken until 1961 by Roger Maris of the Yankees. He won the home run king title 11 times in 13 seasons from 1919 to 1931. After getting Ruth from Boston, the Yankees totally changed. The Yankees had never been the world champions until 1923. Since they first became champions, they have been world champions 26 times. On the other hand, Boston had never again won the championship since Ruth's trade in 1920. They led the World Series 5 times since 1920, but they never won. People began to say that Boston was cursed by Ruth. It has been called the curse of Ruth or the curse of the Bambino.

I present 3 facts to prove the curse of the Bambino. The first was the play-offs in 1978. Boston and the Yankees each had 99 wins and 66 losses, and played for the championship of the American League east division. Bucky

Dent of the Yankees hit a home run in 7th inning. This home run gave victory to the Yankees. Until Bucky hit the home run, Boston had led by 2-0, and the dream of Boston was crushed. That year the Yankees shone as the world champions. The second was game 6 of the 1986 World Series. It was unbelievable. Boston was winning until two outs in the 10th inning against the New York Mets. However, the curse was alive. A Mets batter hit, and the ball rolled in front of the first baseman, Bill Buckner, who let the ball go through his legs. In fact, Boston was defeated good-bye. Therefore, the truth of this curse increased. The third incident was the 2003 American League Championship. For 8 innings in game 7, Boston had led by 5-2 against the Yankees. It became a desperate struggle. Boston's ace pitcher, Pedro Martinez, tied the game. The way to the World Series was shut down for Boston after 11 innings by the game-ending homer of Aaron Boone of the Yankees. These were called the curses of the Bambino.

Boston has positively tried to break the curse in the 2003 postseason. In the 2004 season, Boston's players called themselves "idiots." They tried to change team personality from smart to wild, strong, and idiotic. This means that they got the championship ring, even though their plays were neither elegant nor fair. During the season, they kept playing in a greedy way. Especially against the Yankees, they played violently and wildly. On July 24th, the game was very violent because they quarreled because of a bean ball. Both teams fought violently. As a result, the commissioner suspended some players for a couple of games. Boston really wanted to break the curse. Boston had more wins than losses against the Yankees. Actually Boston won eleven games and lost eight games in the regular season. However, the season ranking was second. Of course, the Yankees were first. People said, "The curse is still alive." However, Boston was not eliminated because they could be in the playoffs as a wild card. They could get the chance again to beat the Yankees and the curse.

Both teams smoothly won the first round of the playoffs, and on October 12, 2004, they fought again in the American League Championship series. This game was their 20th game this season. Boston's players were confident. Every player was triumphant. The regular season result against the Yankees gave them confidence. They also were enthusiastic to beat the Yankees. However, the Yankees stood strong and wanted to beat Boston's dream. Boston's pitching staff collapsed against a strong offense, and they lost 3 games in a row. Most people thought that Boston was beaten once again, but they again became alive like a zombie. After losing three games straight, they won 4 games straight. A victorious goddess helped Boston. Curt Schilling, the game 2 starter pitcher, also came out as a starter in game 6. When he played game 2, he was knocked out completely. In this game, he broke his right ankle, and his injury was very serious. His teammates had already abandoned him in this league champion series because his ankle was cut, and around his ankle was blood. However, he entreated Boston's manager to play. He just believed in his strength and Boston's triumph. The 2004 American League Champion Series "miracle" was accomplished with four wonderful successive victories. The last four games were very tough. The players of both teams fought until they exhausted all

of their energies. It is remembered as a one of the best series of the MLB playoffs.

Boston finally got to the World Series. They fought the St. Louis Cardinals. In the 2004 World Series, the Boston Red Sox showed the fans their overwhelming strength. With the first game, and afterward they overwhelmed St. Louis. Their strength was conspicuous. St. Louis was absolutely helpless. Boston swept St. Louis. And, on October 27th, the curse of the Bambino dissolved. October 27th, 2004 became one historical day in the American baseball.

Cohabitation

Sung-Eun Cho

R/W 60

Studies have found that somewhere in-between 30 and 40% of American college students are cohabitating at any given time. Cohabitation was not a big deal until the late 60s. It actually came along with liberation. It was the result of the sexual revolution movement among young people, and they started to neglect the traditional tenet that is "You do not live together until you get married." However, it is not always considered good thing to do because for many years we do not think it is the right thing to do. I am opposed to cohabitation, especially young couples'. My opinion about cohabitation is not based on morals but is based on experience which I got when I saw young couples' ones and studies.

If we ask young cohabitating couples why they live together, they might say that they live together to practice marriage. To determine compatibility is very important to cohabitating couples as well as married couples; however, to find successful marriages from cohabitating couples are rare. Only one couple out of five who cohabitate ends up getting married. What happens to the couples who cohabitate before they get married? They have an 85% higher divorce rate. It means only 3% of cohabitation ends up in successful marriage. They have twice the rate of violence, physical abuse and infidelity than a married couple. Interestingly, according to studies, when we ask cohabitating couple whether they are going to get married, the overwhelming response of girls is "Yes!" but guys' is "No!" The young men's number one reason for cohabitation is readily available sex. Men tend to take a relationship much more casually and accept sex as just part of the friendship while women take the relationship very seriously and accept sex as being 'the wife.'

Another reason for cohabitating couple is money because it is cheaper. They say they are going to split expenses 50/50, but studies have found that women support men. They spend more than 70% of the money in their cohabitating relationships. Her money tends to go for rent, food and things to support their relationship, and his money tends to go for his personal things and things that what he wants to do. His money is 'his,' and her money is 'ours.'

The last reason why young people live together is sex roles and division of labor. Even though most young people want an egalitarian marriage, studies have found that in reality most cohabitating relationships move into traditional role

patterns. Male dominant, female submissive. Women find themselves doing the laundry, cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, etc., something that contradicts an egalitarian marriage. She is doing whatever he wants her to do, and there is going to be a conflict.

Cohabitation is good for him but not for her. It is a really economical and convenient relationship for guys, and they do tend to take their relationship less seriously than women. The other problem of cohabitation is lie. They are always on edge whether their parents find out their relationship, so sometimes the whole of their relationship turns out a lie. When this relationship ends, the person feels lost, abused and used. They often are left in an extreme state of rejection, devaluation and loss of self esteem. When married couples get divorced, there is a legal structure to protect them; on the other hand, there is not any legal protection or legal right for cohabitating couples. They just chose to live together, and now they choose not to.

I don't think there are too many differences between cohabitation and marriage except for legal paper, but the legal paper itself makes people much more serious about their relationship. I want to recommend to young couples not to cohabit. Cohabitation is not a winning position, especially for young women. They don't have to contribute more money, labor, and faith to support their not even married relationships. The man whom you live with doesn't even think about the marriage with you.

Thai's Cultural Identity

Thunwarat Pimukmanaskit (Bee)

R/W 60

Are you an American? Are you a Westerner? Are you an Oriental? Are you an Asian? How can you explain to other people who you are? Sometimes it's not so easy to find an exact answer and reason. Although there are some general icons that are used for identifying your culture such as religion, language, geography, race, tradition or history, only some icons influence Thai's cultural identity.

For me, the most powerful icon that shows Thai's cultural identity is the Thai language. Hundreds of years ago *King Ramkhamhaeng the Great* created the Thai alphabet from the Old Khmer script, a southern Brahmic script. At that time we had 44 consonants, 28 vowels and 4 tone marks. Because of the combination of tonality, orthography, relational markers, grammar and phonology, it is so difficult for foreigners, even Thais, to learn Thai language.

Actually, there are many cultures in Thailand. In the North, there are ancient tribes who have been living there for a long time before there was Thailand. In the South, there are Thai Muslims--like Malaysia, our neighbor. Then the Thai government divided administration into 4 regions: Central, Northern, Northeastern and Southern. Also, most of the Thais are mutts; mixing Thai with Chinese identity, because of immigration since a very long time ago. As a result, there are many linguistic and cultural diversities; differences in foods, music and costumes.

Most of the Thais, even our royalty, are Buddhist. Its teachings have a lot of influence on Buddhists. A lot of Thais have at least a small image of the Buddha or a famous priest. We are taught to be open-minded, to be logical, to avoid sin, to accept changes, etc. When we were high school students, we had to learn about Buddha's teachings in our curriculum. We have many Buddhist public holidays. For example, on Buddhist Lent day, *Makabucha* day and *Visakabucha* day, a lot of Buddhists will go to Thai temples to give alms and listen to preaching. However, there are some Thais who are Christians and Muslims, especially in the south of the country.

The last point that presents Thai's cultural identity is royalty. We have used the institution of monarchy for more than 700 years, and we have never been controlled by other colonies. We have a constitution which even our king has to follow. Now our king has a lot of influence on Thais. Everyone respects, loves and reveres this king. You can see this in theaters. Before a movie starts, everyone has to stand up to pay respect to the King of Thailand. In addition, every morning and evening we will hear the Thai anthem from media such as a TV and radio. Our king and queen's birthdays are public holidays, and we will have big celebrations on those days. Also, Thailand has many holidays for commemorating our royal dynasty, the *Chakri* dynasty, such as *Chakri* day and coronation day.

Besides language, religion and royalty, there are other factors that can identify Thai's culture. Some cultures have already disappeared into time. Some cultures were also affected by other cultures. However, we should understand those cultures and screen which cultures are suitable to our country. Don't accept everything!!

Success and Luck

Ki Don Kim

R/W 50

There is no correlation between success and luck. Success refers to one's ability to achieve the superior part of his or her goals in a lifetime, which in turn leads to a correlation between success and income since the accomplishment of such a natural goal as to provide a good future for one's loved ones demands the means. What is the simplest and most lawful way to earn enough to be considered a successful person? People have to receive a good education and find a good job. Both receiving an education and making a career presuppose one's readiness to work hard, and success without hard work is simply not possible for the vast majority of the world's population.

First of all, considering an education and a career as key factors of success, one will choose to pursue a degree from a college or a university. One wishing to be admitted to the university will have to take several tests. If people want to be so lucky, people have to know something. People could pass the test with a high score. A low score means failure, and that test taker will not likely be admitted. Therefore, in order to be successful, one should prepare for the tests and work hard, because a good education will provide people with a good job and an opportunity to accomplish some of people's goals and

dreams. In my lifetime, I have never met a person who could graduate from college without studying hard.

Secondly, it is impossible to make a career if one is lazy and lacking knowledge, at least in developed countries. Luck plays no role in achieving this success. Even if people are unbelievably lucky enough to become a manager though not being qualified enough, people will be asked to resign in the near future because of inability due to lack of knowledge and experience to make correct decisions. For instance, my friend used to work for a very small company owned by his uncle. This company was later closed because of the bankruptcy. The cause of bankruptcy was wrong strategies and decisions made by the owner. After the failure, my friend went to a university and worked for another company so that he could obtain experience and become a successful businessman. Nowadays, my friend considers himself a successful person because he had turned his two biggest dreams of producing consumer goods of high quality and making charitable donations to needy people into reality.

Thirdly, sometimes, people want to make a big fortune at one stroke, so they buy lottery, horse racing ticket, and gamble in Las Vegas. However, we can't see many people who get a lot of money by lottery, horse racing ticket, and gambling. Needless to say, they can get money first, but they have greed and then squander their money or run into debt. Finally, they lose their money, family, health, job, dream, and so on. We can see this story from neighbors and mass media. We have to control our thinking about success. We just have to keep a rightful mind and do our best. Most people like free material, time, and so on because people don't like to work and study hard. In the Bible, we can see the following sentence: who doesn't work, doesn't eat. We were made to work hard for life. We can get a lot of money by all methods, but people must know the rightful methods for success and earning.

In sum, as long as people understand success as an ability to turn some of his or her dreams and goals into reality, people will have to work hard because people will need money. People's chances to earn that money will increase remarkably if people graduate from a college and make a career. All of these things are simply not possible without hard work. Luck has no place in such a scheme of events.

My Friends' Betrayal

Kwangsuk Joo

R/W 40

When I was a little kid, four years old, there was a dangerous incident which made me feel that I was betrayed.

At that time, I lived in a small, poor town with a small river, not so deep but deeper than my height. On the riverside, there was an irrigation water pipe, pumping water from the river to the fields. My several friends lived there. I was the only kid who had a bicycle in the town. My friends envied me, so I often helped them to ride on my bicycle, one by one. One day, I went out in order to play with the bicycle. Many friends had gathered and I was riding around the town. When I was passing by the river, a water pipe was about to fall into the river. I thought that

I would block its fall and told my friends to help me. We went there and tried to pull the machine with our best effort, but it didn't move at all. So I went to the back of it and pushed the machine. Suddenly, I was shocked by the strong electric power. I felt that I was hovering in the air for about ten seconds. Then I fell down into the river. I could not swim at all. Although nobody helped me, I came out of the water by myself with much effort. I have no idea how I came out the river and how much time I spent in escaping from the stream. At that moment, I could not see my friends. I went home and put new clothes on; then, I came out and looked for my friends and my bicycle. When I found them, I saw that my friends were just playing with the bicycle. I thought that they had not cared about me. I felt that they betrayed me.

After the incident, I didn't think about it again for long time. But whenever I recall the incident, I wonder why they did not help me. I think that they should have helped or cared for me. It is a bad memory from my childhood days.

Complication Between Different Genders

Kamolwan Paramee (Joy)

R/W 60

We often see men and women fight for various reasons. Women think their boyfriends don't understand what they want while men think their girlfriends talk too much. Women usually say men don't listen to them while men say women think too much. At the waiting area in a mall people who use a couch or a bench are usually men. The opposite is true at a store with sales: most of people are women who are trying to find clothes at cheap prices while men stand beside them or sit on a small chair waiting for them. Women can talk all day while men don't know what they should talk about. All of these activities happen because of the effect of nature and nurture in men and women which lead to different ideas of communication, interests, etc.

"You just don't understand" is commonly spoken between men and women. Most of the time, it is because of a communication problem between them. The problems arise from the different styles between men and women when they are speaking and listening. According to Tannen's study "Intimacy and Independence," women tend to be more concerned with intimacy and men focus more on independence. Men always think communication is a tool to preserve their independence, hence men speak less. Women use communication to build closeness and intimacy, hence women speak more. Men think a best friend is one who he can do things with while women think a best friend is one who they can sit and talk with anytime. As I already mentioned, women use talking as a tool for closeness and intimacy with friends or their loved ones but it doesn't apply to men. This makes men misunderstand why their women constantly talk and talk. All these facts remind me of a picture of a man sitting and reading a newspaper while his wife continuously talks at the breakfast table.

Another style that women use when they talk is "problem talk." Women always talk about problems, problems

about their friends, family, job etc. Communication is represented as a connection for women. She expects her man to tell his problems while she tells her problems. That makes her feel close to him. But for men, “problem talk” is seen as an advice so he gives only the solution for that problem. This kind of answer makes a woman feel like a man tries to cut her off from a conversation or a man just wants to get away from her problem. Compared to a woman, a man thinks when he gives a solution for the problem he is supportive and he doesn’t know that she is trying to encourage him to join and share himself with her. This kind of communication also causes dissent between them. For example, after a man listens to the problem he will give a solution or advice to his partner. However, women still talk, sticking to the same problem and avoid or dismiss the advice. Men become confused and angry at the end. As a result, you can hear a man say “women complain all the time.” This man thinks women are experts at talking about nothing while a woman thinks men don’t care about her since men don’t talk the way that makes her feels close to them.

In addition, men and women have different interests. One obvious different interest is the way they think towards shopping. For men, shopping is a thing that they don’t want to do at all. Some men are saved from shopping by their wives or girlfriends but some men aren’t. They still need to go shopping for themselves. For men, shopping is “task oriented,” go to a store, buy the item and then leave. They never ask themselves questions like “Do they really need this item?” or “Should I buy it now or wait until it’s on sale?” Women tend to treat shopping as a sport that they enjoy to play. Men will buy a special present at the last minute. They will go to a store and look for the present that was already wrapped or ready to go. Men spend less time in shopping but spend more money while women use more time but spend less money. There is a saying for this kind of activity, “She signs the cards and he signs the checks.” According to Entrepreneur magazine by Scott S. Smith, “60% of men who take jeans into a fitting room end up buying them, compared with just 25% of women,” and “86% of women look at price tags when they shop, compared with 72% of men.” However please keep it in mind that there are also some men who like to shop and some women who don’t.

We know that shopping is the thing that men loathe to do. But there are some exceptions. They like “boy stuff” such as electronics or computers, etc. Referring to the research conducted by Stacy “men like shopping provided they’re going out to buy a Lear jet or a Porsche or a Computer or something—a toy for a boy,” showing that men also take interest in shopping for certain types of products. However this doesn’t mean women don’t like to shop for these kinds of products. Women also like to shop for electronics, computers or “boy stuff”. Therefore there is a small difference between men and women in buying things like TVs. Men want to get a bigger, wider TV screen because they mainly just want to replace the old one. Compared to men, women care more about the price, ease of use and compatibility so women prefer warranty products while men don’t care maybe because men like to fix things.

Finally, numerous research articles and books have been written relating to the different genders with all of them

drawing a conclusion that men and women speak different languages. In order to overcome these problems they just need to understand, respect the differences and similarities between men and women. Since they live in the same world they have the same fears, desires and needs. They need to understand their opposite partners and at the same time they also need to be understood by the opposite genders. Everything that is related to the emotions or feelings is certainly not easy to understand because of all the complications. Therefore “We just need to understand,” should be the key words to make a good and lifelong relationship between men and women.

The US Presidential Election

Chaiwat Sinthusiri

R/W 40

Last month before the Presidential Election Day in the United States, I learned a lot about US politics in class. I was really excited and was also lucky because the presidential election is held once every four years. I wanted President George W. Bush to win this election. Because, in fact, he did many things--Iraq wars, big economic problems- so some people said “He made a mistake”. If he is still president, he can prove himself, which he did well. In other words, I thought that Senator John Kerry was not strong enough; he had no power to dominate the country; therefore, I did not support him.

An election campaign on television was shown with both candidates; they were interested in talking about their policies and strategies to persuade people to vote for them. I sometimes saw supporters at street intersections where they held election signs and asked drivers to press their horns and to vote for them. The election campaigns in the US are different from Thailand—there are a lot of view boards beside roads, trees or buildings and you could see huge pictures in Thailand.

I watched the presidential debate two times with my cousin who had so much knowledge about US politics; it was a new experience for me since my country didn’t have debates that were very formal like in US. In my opinion, the debate was a good way to illustrate and discuss about their policies as well as attitudes. People could understand the view of persons who were running for the president and then they could make a decision when voting. In the presidential debate, I thought that President Bush did not feel comfortable and also he jumped to answer questions many times. Maybe he was really angry because all the time Senator Kerry said to him that he did everything wrong and he was not suitable to be a president. And President Bush could not respond well in everything he did. Senator Kerry was more comfortable and more confident to answer questions; he spoke clearly and slowly as well as he showed that he had sufficient abilities to be president as well. On other hand, the vice presidential debate between Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards was very significant, too. Cheney, who had served the government many terms, had so much experience; therefore, he could speak to convince people to vote for Republicans easier than Edwards could to vote for Democrats. However, Edwards looked younger and more handsome as well as having a very wonderful speech; he

did not have such strong arguments that convinced people to vote Democratic. I believed that both of the debates did not change adult people's minds when voting because they had already made decisions to support either the Republicans or the Democrats. Teenage people who were new supporters could change the direction of the election. The debates and the campaigns were influential for them.

Near Election Day, both President Bush and Senator Kerry traveled to many places, especially the battleground states—for instance Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Those states were significant for both candidates because people did not exactly decide who they were going to vote for, so there were many big fights in those states. For example, President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards came to Gainesville for their campaigns. They were surprising people in Gainesville because no President had come here for a long time. It was a good opportunity to participate in the US Election; unfortunately I did not have time to go to see them; I had to study for both TOEFL and GRE very hard because I did not pass them yet.

In my opinion, I was quite sure that most people and students in Gainesville supported the Democrats since I saw many people with Kerry's buttons or Kerry's stickers on their bags. Also my classmates did not like President Bush because of the Iraq war, so they were against him to be president again and they supported Senator Kerry to win in this election.

Two days before Election Day, I studied about "How to be a voter" and "How to become a president" in the US. It was definitely different from my country; in Thailand, we did not need to register before voting and another thing, the ballot was easier to vote than in the US; we use a number to refer to candidates. I thought the ballot in the US was complicated for people who did not have such knowledge about politics; however, I liked the early voting idea because if you were busy on Election Day, you could vote before Election Day. The last thing I learned was that voters did not directly choose the president. They chose electors to select the president in the Electoral College for them. That means the popular vote was not necessary to be the president while in Thailand, we count the popular vote.

On Election Day I was watching the result of the election with my cousin; we discussed who was going to win. We were very excited; we followed the result until midnight. Finally President Bush won in both the popular vote and the electoral vote, but we have to wait for the vote in the Electoral College to make sure who will be the president.

I believe that there were many people who were disappointed in this election; however, they could not change anything. The popular vote shows that many American people really wanted President Bush to still be the President. Even though the President was going to be either President Bush or Senator Kerry, it is not too important because both of them want to develop the US, take care of the American people and help other countries; they have the same goal.

I learned much about US culture, especially about the election, thanks to my teacher who gave us such knowledge and many election activities in our class.

"I Can Do Everything I Want to Do"

Daihong Kim

R/W 40

Most people have opportunities to make their lives better. These opportunities help people to improve. I had an opportunity like this also. This happened during my first month in the South Korean army, and I learned, "I can do everything I want to do."

I have three older sisters. They are very kind. Therefore, before I went to the army, I always depended on my sisters. Also, when I had trouble, they always helped me. For example, when I could not do my homework, they helped me to do my homework.

When I was 19 years old, I went to the army. When I went to my company in the army, I was chosen as an administration soldier. Administration soldiers always need good typing ability, but I had poor skills - only 60 hits/min. (In South Korea, typing skill is measured by hits per minute, not by words per minute as in the US.) Therefore, I could not work quickly enough so my work piled up continuously and my supervisor kept rushing me; he would say, "Hurry up, hurry up!!" He told me that I seemed to be a "turtle." I was very tired because I slept only 3 hours a night for 2 weeks so I asked my supervisor to help me. However, he refused that and he said, "This is your work." If my sisters had been next to me, they would have helped me. I missed my sisters and I recognized there was nobody to help me.

However, I changed my attitude and I thought, "I can do this." For 2 weeks, I practiced typing while reducing my sleeping time. I discovered a new fact: my ability was rapidly increasing. After 1 week, I got better - 300 hits/min and after 2 weeks more, I got up to 400 hits/min. So, I had self-confidence and I could do other work well, also. Finally, I got a good score at inspection and I got 5 holidays as a reward.

Now, I don't depend on my sisters. Whenever I have trouble, I think about this occasion. So I fix my problems by myself. I can do everything I want to do.

Critical Period Hypothesis and the Limit in Second Language Learning

MinAh Hwang

R/W 500

Language is a tool that allows people to communicate with one another. When people learn their language in their young age, they seem to acquire how to use it naturally. If you have any experience observing children's language using process, you might think they can learn language without any effort, but it is not true. When they start speaking, they repeat and practice.

Most discussions about age and acquisition center on the question of whether there is a critical period for language acquisition: a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire (H. Douglas Brown,

2000). In my opinion, it is true that acquisition of first language is totally applied to Critical Period Hypothesis, whereas learning a second language can only be partly applied to the hypothesis.

Some linguistic researchers noted early learning second language is a better way to acquire a language like native speakers. However, upon reviewing the research on age and accent acquisition, we know about powerful evidence of a critical period for accent and pronunciation, but for accent and pronunciation only! Pronunciation of a language is not by any means the sole criterion for acquisition, nor is it really the most important one.

CPH (Critical Period Hypothesis) has led some to assume, incorrectly, that by the age of twelve or thirteen you are “over the hill” when it comes to the possibility of successful second language learning. According to some neurological theories: for example, Stephen Krashen’s theory (1973) that the development of the charge-language part in the left brain finishes by the age of 5, CPH has limits to explain successful second language learning.

As another support idea, we can see Genesee’s theory (1982). He found support for the participation of the right brain in the complex language process. Adult learners, especially, might have benefits from more encouragement of right-brain activity in the classroom context. Ausubel (1963) claimed that adult learners have such significant cognition ability that they can acquire second languages easier than children. In short, they showed difficulty in learning a second language not because they missed the chance of critical period, but they didn’t practice sufficiently.

Finally, the learning of a language doesn’t mean only pronunciation or accent. Some people might still be afraid of speaking a second language with native speakers. And they might think the reason they can’t speak fluently is because of their age or that they didn’t learn like native children. But, they should think about their behavior before blaming their age. Even adult learners have the ability to learn second languages if they want. It doesn’t matter whether they are old or not. Be confident when you speak another language. Adult learners have a possibility to successfully learn second languages because their right brain can help their learning process!

My Cultural Identity

Diana M. Mejia

R/W 60

If I ask myself who am I the first thing that comes to my mind is my country, the place where I came from, in which I grew up and formed myself as a person. I think it is not going to be easy to define myself as a person as if I was enclosed in a frame; however, I still could outline some factors that can tell others about me and define a part of the qualities and features that express who am I. Basically I can enumerate some factors as following: geography, weather, culture, history, and race/appearance.

Geography is definitely an important factor because it is the place where I was born and I grew up. Located in

Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, Colombia is a beautiful country that is very appreciated by tourists. My country has a tropical rainforest, fertile valleys, snow-covered mountains, white-sand beaches and astounding architectural treasures built by the ancient Indians. Cali, the city where I was born, is a major commercial and industrial center where sugar, coffee, cotton, bananas, rice and, corn are raised. All of these exist because of the tropical weather typical in a torrid-zone country.

Weather is a second factor. There is not just one kind of weather in Colombia. We have a diversity of weathers. We have no seasons, or maybe we could say we have winter and summer, but there is not a special definition about when the winter begins or when the summer finishes. The weather is tropical; warm in some places especially the ones close to the coasts and cooler in the highlands. The tropical weather identifies and defines us as a warm, joyful and friendly people. Agriculture, economy, industry and culture are defined because of the weather, even our ways of dressing.

Another important factor is culture, in which I will include language. Spanish is the principal language in my country. It was introduced by missionaries and it defines us as Latin People. Also arts, like music, are important characteristics that define Colombian culture. Salsa style music and dancing are symbols of unity and national pride, especially in my city, Cali, famous for “La Feria de Cali”, which is a special feast that we celebrate during Christmas (five days) and we have many kinds of events like concerts, parades, competitions, bull baiting, food selling, sports and of course, music. “Every self-respecting caleño (from Cali) must participate in ‘La Feria de Cali’”, is one of our quotes. Cali’s Feria is very famous in the whole country. Many compatriots from other cities like Bogotá and Medellín take advantage of this event to visit Cali, enjoy parties and meet friends. Besides Cali’s Feria other carnivals, arising from Europe culture, are famous in cities like Barranquilla, Manizales and Pasto. No one can escape from enjoying parties because we have them everywhere in different year’s epoch. Entertainment and culture, principal objectives of these celebrations, define us as a friendly, warm, and cheerful people.

History, a crucial factor too long to come out in a short essay, is what gave us our identity. The place we name Colombia was inhabited in ancient times (before 1500) by some tribes that came from North and Central America and established their homes in different places in South America. The most outstanding ones were named Tayrona, Sinú, Muisca, Quimbaya, Calima and, San Agustín. The richness of these native people attracted some Hispanic colonizers who came to our lands to establish their residences there. For example, Cali was founded in 1536 by a Hispanic settler called Sebastian de Belalcazar.

Thanks to that combination between Hispanics and American Indians, which occurred more than 500 years ago, various racial groups descended: Indians, black, and whites, which were mixed together to originate mestizos (50% of the population), whites (25%), and mulattoes, zambos, black and Indians with the remaining percentage. Therefore our physical appearance, defined by skin and hair color, hair texture, face

and body shape is a combination from all of these mixes. With those things in mind it is not going to be difficult for others to recognize us as a Latin people.

All of those factors mentioned above provide a good profile about Colombia and its people. Significant aspects like diversity, history, origin, and culture define what we are, our ways of feeling, and our ways of thinking. In spite of the hard crisis we are facing which is weakening our identity, we are energetic, idealistic, joyful, positive-minded and proud, who certainly will have someday our desirable peace.

Endurance

Ki Don Kim

R/W 50

Some people are ready to quit easily when they cannot endure the difficulties of some work or cannot find a way to finish the required task. Those kind of people usually become upset and disappointed of failure and lose their self-confidence that they can really get the work done. On the other hand, there are people who become more confident, organized and hard working when they experience some difficulties. In my view, the second type of people are more willing to succeed in life, have a better job, and enjoy many friends. The motto "never, never give up" is very important in people's lives because those people who follow it can survive almost everything and take the opportunities of the next step in their lives.

First of all, a positive attitude can help a person to survive and live with some disease or when he suffers an inconvenient situation or disaster. In fact, many people endure a disease or obstacles that put them in a desperate situation. However, only ones with a positive view and unbelievable hope make the difference and find a way to overcome their disabilities and continue to live and enjoy life. On the other hand, people who lose hope and give up end in awful situations and are more inclined to addiction to alcohol and drugs or committing suicide.

Second, a strong positive attitude can help a person to make bigger career. From my observation, people who do not quit because of some obstacles but keep working make inevitable progress in their job and studies. For example, students with positive attitude who fail a quiz or do not do well on an important test are more willing to try again and do well the next time. This is true for the working people too. Indeed, many executive managers save their almost bankrupt company and success primarily because they do not quit.

In conclusion, believing in a second chance is very important for an individual because we live in a constant changeable society that forces us to endure many difficulties in our studies, complicated situations in our jobs, unexpected events like car accidents or a disease or natural disasters. There is not insurance that can save us of from happening of these things. However, the attitude of never give up can help us to endure and overcome the difficulties and make a progress and achieve our goals.

Toothpaste: Luck or Superstition

Weian Chen

R/W 40

I have always felt lucky since I was a kid especially when I needed luck a lot. When I was in the military in Taiwan, I worked as an emergency rescuer at the emergency room. It was an easy job to do if I compared it with other soldiers. When soldiers were training under the sun, I was working in the ER with air-conditioning on. When they were running on the field, I was sitting in the ambulance waiting for the injured. That was my good luck during military service.

All the jobs we would do were decided by the lottery at the end of our rookie training and toothpaste was involved. I went through rookie training before I worked in the ER. It was a really hard time. I did not have any vacation for six weeks; that was why every one of us wanted to get out of training faster. However, we were all scared of the lottery which told us about our future jobs in the army. If we had bad luck, we would serve in a bad position. One of my friends gave me a fantasy talk the night before the lottery day. He told me to wash my hands with toothpaste before I touched the tickets. I did not believe him at all but I still washed my hands with toothpaste just for luck.

When we entered the lottery room I saw about fifty kinds of positions on the wall and there was a position working in the hospital; however, there was only one ticket for that position. I really felt hopeless. I could even almost imagine myself running and sweating on the field under the sun.

Anyway, I used my lucky hand with toothpaste on it to pick my ticket and showed the ticket up high. Believe or not, the ticket showed I got the position working in the hospital!

That was how I got my easy job during my military service. I still can't believe the probability of that lottery even now. Maybe the toothpaste was really helpful for the lottery.

Or I can say that I am a really lucky guy.

Gender Differences

SeungChan Lim

R/W 60

Women use a telephone for 2 hours to talk with their friend, and before they hang up, they say, "And let's talk details tomorrow." In contrast, men use their phone for just 1 minute to ask something or say hello. Men try to figure out what their children are thinking, but it is impossible for them. On the other hand, women know everything about their children, for example when they have to go dentist, what their friends' names are, what they want for dinner, etc. Throughout our life, we experience these different traits between men and women, and it could be not only a pleasant happening but also horrible trouble. In my class, we discussed the best requirements to choose a partner or spouse, and I could find an interesting thing from the result list. Intelligence, wealth, enthusiasm, responsibility, and even good cooking, these things were the parts of the requirements for men and women to choose their partner, and both men and women wanted to rely on their partner. I admit that this survey cannot be 100 % reliable, but I

could see that most of the students recognized a gender difference, and they wanted to take advantage of each other. Men and women basically have a different characteristic, behavior pattern, and thought. And when these things are revealed as a gender difference, trouble, sometimes, occurs between men and women. However, the relationship between men and women is a very important part of our life, so they have been living, and will live with each other. In this unavoidable situation, it is necessary to realize clearly gender differences, such as their different interest, way of communication, and ability for job, and try to consider how to solve troubles between men and women to make a better relationship.

If a man and woman don't have a common interest, it is hard to build a good relationship between them. And it is true that everybody wants to meet a person who has a common interest. When I was young, I liked to enjoy and challenge dangerous things though I could meet a big risk. I wanted to break windows in my school and sometimes I imagined that I was beating someone with my friends. Actually, my friends and I often went to a field of construction work to break everything, and astonished people with a firecracker or gunpowder. However, my friends who were not boys were very different from us. They usually liked to read a book or play with a little thing like a pebble, doll, and colored paper. So I thought girls are very strange creatures that cannot play soccer, catch an ugly bug, and fight with me. Eventually, they were not my friends but just known-people, and my friends and I believed that getting along with girls is not good behavior. While I've been growing up, my childish thinking has appeared, but I have met another different interest between men and women. Between those new different interests, shopping was one of the best advantages for women to overwhelm men. Mitch Stacy, Associated Press writer, said in [The Gainesville Sun](#) that women generally feel more comfortable to go shopping and enjoy it more than men. According to this article, men usually don't like to go shopping, especially domestic shopping, and it can cause even serious health problem for men. However, there is an interesting thing that, in some cases, men don't feel stressful to go shopping but like to buy some products which they have interest in like a computer, toy for kids, or a Porsche. We generally think that men hate to go shopping, but it is not true. They CAN go shopping if they are going to buy a computer or screwdriver. In contrast, if we make women go only to 'Sears' or 'Best Buy' with men to buy these things, they might feel sick about it. That is, the general idea that men are shopping-denied-animals is wrong, but they just don't have an interest about the shopping.

There is another gender difference between men and women in communication that generates many side effects like a quarrel. Therefore, sometimes no conversation is better in their relationship though a man and woman haven't talked to each other for a long time. In speaking style of men and women, men usually use more violent and insulting words, which could make women get frightened or dreadful. They are generally tough and strong whereas women are expected to be obedient and passive. Besides, women speak more indirectly than men, so it is possible that comments from women can

make a misunderstanding for men because of unclear communication between them. These troubles are basically caused from men and women's different characteristic and expected nurturing role, so they could have hardship in their communication. And there is actually another difference between men and women that people haven't considered. Men are usually regarded as not good listeners in conversation, and it was scientifically proved by the research "Men Listen with Half of Brain," written by Lindsey Tanner, AP medical writer. Women could feel that men are not listening to them or don't care that much when men and women talk to each other. It is not just because men are too lazy to listen however, according to this research, it is a kind of natural reason that men use only left sides of the brains, whereas women use both sides when they listen to conversation. Therefore, women who have a good advantage to listen to conversation might feel upset with men who are not listening to them. Although the conversation, between men and women, could be the strongest arms to solve their problems, all these things are actually the worst things to make troubles in the communication.

Can you imagine if there is a football or wrestling match between a male and female? Both male and female are affected by nature and nurture while they have been growing up, and it finally causes a big gap in their physical or mental ability. Now, these differences are eventually affecting a job choice for men and women, and, sometimes, inappropriate discriminative thoughts could be a problem in the society. Especially in Korea, it is still common for women to be discriminated against because of their sex. They are regarded as incompetent people and have a restriction about promotion, kinds of job which they can choose, and even opportunity to work. It is very inappropriate, and this thinking should be fixed. However, there are definitely acceptable different abilities which can affect job choice for men and women. When I was a young elementary student, my teacher asked boys to move heavy desks in the classroom, and girls to sweep and scrub the floor. It was quite a good idea with consideration for both boys and girls because they had a big physical difference. Like this case, there are many reasonable situations; for example, there is a much higher number of men who go to military or work physical hard labor than women. In addition, because women have much more emotional sense and they are good at listening to a conversation, a counselor can be a better job for them than men. Of course, we must not give up to reduce these differences which can be a discrimination however, we should admit it, and respect each other's differences to make a better relationship.

There are a lot of cases about gender differences around us. A different interest, way of communication, and ability for job, these are just parts of things to show the differences between men and women, but very common things that make a trouble in our life. In my personal experience, I couldn't get along with girls well when I was young because girls had different interests from me, I couldn't succeed to make a good conversation with them, and they couldn't do what I could do. The big barrier, which blocked me from girls, was not easy to break because I was too young to understand differences between boys and girls. There are always big tensions between men and women in our life as if a little war. Because of gender

differences, we might be faced with troubles; however, we know how it is necessary for men and women to get along as my class survey showed. To solve problems in men and women relationship, we have to realize the differences between each gender, and consider how we can be a crutch for each male or female to fill their weak points. Without knowing each gender, men and women will just insist that they are right and reasonable. We definitely have a big difference; however, if we put our first step to try to know this difference, we might make an effort to make a good relationship between men and women.

Croissants Recipe

Isabel Meister
R/W 50

I was walking early in the morning down the street to my job. The air was cool and dry, the sky big and blue light, without a cloud, and the birds had been singing for two hours already. It was the beginning of a hot summer day in France. I was walking and thinking about the insurance problems of a client, when suddenly a little smell interrupted my thoughts. I stopped and sniffed. A delicious smell of fresh bread was coming from a near bakery. A picture of a golden croissant dispelled my concerns. I walked around the corner, and five minutes later I reappeared triumphant with my croissant in a paper bag. I sat on a bench and ate my booty with delight, forgetting my contracts.

This is an example of a situation that always happens to someone walking near a bakery and by accident thinks about a croissant. Nobody can resist the desire of eating one. How can it be that a so little and innocent piece of puff pastry has such impact on the people? Anybody who wants to understand why it is so good has to try to make it. The secret is in the recipe, which needs all the care, patience, and time.

First of all, dissolve 20 grams of yeast into 200 milliliters of lukewarm water. Pour it in 500gr of white flour and add 50gr of sugar and a teaspoon of salt. Knead it until obtaining a firm dough. Add more water if necessary. Cover it with a cloth and let it rise 1 hour in a cool temperature.

After that, knead it a few minutes and put it in the refrigerator half an hour. Meanwhile, on a baking sheet, spread 300gr of butter with a rolling pin in a square shape, not too thick.

Then take the dough out of the refrigerator and spread it with the rolling pin on a lightly floured surface. It has to be 1cm thin, in a rectangle shape bigger than the butter square. Next, put the butter down on the center of the dough, wrap it with the dough's borders, and flatten it in a rectangle shape. Now, fold the ends of the rectangle toward its center, refold it in 2, and chill it 10 minutes in the refrigerator. Then flatten it again in a rectangle, fold it in 3, and chill it 10 minutes. Begin the same operation again, and chill it 30 minutes.

After that, spread the dough in a rectangle 32cm wide and 4mm thick. Cut it in 2 in the length, and, in each strip, cut out triangles of 10cm of base. Roll each triangle on itself starting from the base. Cover them with a cloth and put them near a source of heat. After 1 hour, their volume will have

doubled. Brush them with egg and bake them in the oven preheated at 377 Fahrenheit. After 15 minutes, they are golden and finally ready to eat.

In conclusion, the croissant recipe is somewhat long and difficult, but the result is highly satisfactory. Moreover, it can also be used for baking the famous "pains au chocolat"; instead of cutting triangles, cut rectangles and roll each with a piece of chocolate inside. Also, by putting in only 30gr of sugar, the croissants become salty; fill them with jam, cover them with grated cheese, and serve them with a green salad.

The Best Pet

Tae Hong Chang
R/W 20

I think the best pet is quite a personal view. Therefore, it differs in accordance with each owner's personality or lifestyle. Actually, if you ask people about the best pet, almost everyone says dogs or cats. However, some of them say other pets like goldfish, mice, or rabbits.

Anyway, the best pet has to have a minimum of two characteristics. The first quality is to be satisfying to the owner. Simply, how useful is the pet? Second, the pet should not be harmful to the neighbors or its owner if at all possible.

The first requisite of the best pet is this. A human being has strong egoism. Consequently, the pet which merely wants something is just an encumbrance. No matter how you love that pet, it is useless. And think about this situation. You like a wild dog, and your roommate likes a cute dog. This is a big problem when you go to the pet market to buy a dog, because if you buy a Doberman pinscher, your roommate might even hate it. And also, if you buy a poodle, your roommate might like it, but you won't be satisfied. Accordingly, the pet has to follow the master's personality.

The next requirement is some kind of polite manners for the neighborhood. Think, if your neighbor rears a dog and you really like that dog. However, the dog is too noisy. Of course, you're very happy and don't care about that noise the first time. But you are probably irritated by the bark when it continues. Thus, the best pet doesn't cause any damage to its owner's friends.

This is just my opinion about the best pet. Surely, impossible. However, if you need the BEST PET, you ought to think about how it influences other people and how useful it is to you.

Learning English the Korean Way

Ki Don Kim
R/W 50

English is the language that the greatest number of people use all over the world, so it is called an international language. A country cannot survive by itself; all countries have to help each other. That's why English is very important as an international language. The English-speaking world as well as the non English-speaking world needs to speak English. English

is a very important subject to get a job or join a needed University. But it's hard to learn English in Korea. This essay discusses the problems and difficulties faced by Korean students learning English, and how they can overcome them.

The basic problem for Korean students learning English lies with the difference of grammar structure between the two languages. For example, if you look at a simple sentence, "I go to school," English has a pronoun, a verb, "to" and the subject. But the Korean equivalent of that sentence would go, "I school to go." This makes Korean students learning English get confused when they are trying to write up sentences often missing many prepositions some of which are not existent in Korean language. Poor vocabulary would be another problem. English having a totally different origin compared to Korean, learning new vocabulary is much harder than learning Japanese that has many similar words because of the use of Chinese characters. Also, many Korean students find it difficult to pronounce English words properly.

For students to overcome such problems, they should be exposed to English as much as possible. However, considering the Korean education system, this is very difficult. Having up to 15 subjects to study, many high school students only have around 4 to 5 English lessons per week. They don't have sufficient time to put in to studying English only. Even if they want to, there are not many native English speakers who can help them improve their learning of the language. So in order to have more exposure to English, many students choose to attend school or universities outside their home countries.

Students who have gone to study abroad have more opportunities to increase their knowledge in learning the language and culture of the host country. Unlike the situation in their own country, the students are put in a situation where daily communication is possible only in the target language. In addition, everything around them, including TV shows, movies, shopping or visiting the barbershop displays the target culture. As months and years go by the foreign students find themselves gradually adjusting to this new environment. This process of acculturation is another good reason for studying abroad because it will broaden their mental horizon as well as enrich their life. The downside of this is that it costs a lot of money to live and study overseas and many students simply will not be able to afford it.

In my opinion, the best way for learning English without going overseas would be trying to be exposed to English as much as possible through listening to the tapes, reading books, watching movies and writing.

Learning English makes Korean students to be confused because it is very different from their mother language, Korean, especially, in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and so on. Even if they learn and study English a lot, they don't have many chances to put their knowledge of English to practical use. In order to have more exposure to English, some students choose to study abroad. However this costs a lot of money and not a very affordable way for most students. So in my opinion, students learning English should try to make opportunities to read, write, listen and speak English as much as possible to improve their ability to master the language.

Coquí, The Puerto Rican Nocturnal Singer

Lila Carrasquillo

R/W 30



The Coquí is a Puerto Rican nocturnal singer. It is very symbolic for the Puerto Rican people because it always sings for them. Therefore, the Coquí is our unofficial symbol. First of all, it is a little frog; it has a brown color belonging to one of the two males whose species sing "¡Co-quí, Co-quí!". The species "Eleutherodactylus coqui" is found in almost all the towns and fields of the island and has a somewhat slow song. On the other hand, the species "Eleutherodactylus Portoricensis" is found in the mountains and sings faster and in a higher tone. That unique song serves two purposes: the "co" is to call to the female and the "quí" is a warning to the other males in the nearby area. The Coquí of Puerto Rico is specifically different from any other coquí or frogs. All the efforts to introduce the Coquí in other places had bad results since they do not survive outside of Puerto Rico. However, a species of the *Eleutherodactylus* has been brought to Hawaii with successful results, but the Hawaiians do not appreciate their song and they have tried to exterminate them without success. In other words, the Coquí is very important and symbolic to Puerto Ricans, because when we do not hear it, it is very strange and we miss it. We have different kinds of Coquí and the Hawaiians do too. In Puerto Rico the people say sometimes: "I'm as Puerto Rican as a Coquí." (*Soy de aquí como el Coquí.*)

Japanese Cultural Identity

Makiko Kasahara

R/W 60

Sushi is the most famous Japanese food. Believe it or not, this traditional Japanese food tells us what Japanese cultural identity is. This little portion, beautiful shape, simple ingredients, complicated cooking technique, and harmonized art world are an essence of Japanese characteristic.

The sound of Sushi reminds us of, of course, fish, especially raw fish. Representative Sushi is a combination of fish and rice. Japanese use not only fish but also use many kinds of vegetables and eggs, even meat. Here is the first characteristic of Japan: geography. Japan is surrounded by the oceans and shaped like a long narrow country. The northernmost island's latitude is the same as Calgary, Canada, and the southernmost island's the same as Jacksonville, Florida. Mountain ranges run through Japan just like a human's backbone, and mountains cover the land more than 70%. Japanese have little flat land to live on. This means that we are very close to both mountain environment and ocean

environment. We can easily get products of the sea and riches of the soil. Then we got an idea to combine those natures.

As I mentioned, Japanese use a lot of kinds of raw fish for Sushi. This raw fish explains the other Japanese characteristic. In fact, many Asian countries eat fish: Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and so on. But none of them eat fish raw as much as Japanese do. The reason why is that Japanese prefer nature and simplicity. We enjoy the natural taste of food itself and we think it is the most luxurious and important. This belief is common to Japanese lifestyle. For example, when we decorate our room, we put the main garnish in it and few sub-garnishes support it. We never fill the wall with pictures, posters, and paintings, like western decoration. The other factor of decoration is color. We don't use vivid colors, such as red, blue, green, etc., and don't mix them up. We prefer to use natural colors, such as white, brown, light green, and pale yellow. We don't want to make a gorgeous room but a comfortable room. Originally, Japanese culture came from ancient China. But now it's totally different from it. (Chinese use vivid red a lot.) We like to live closer to nature, and respect it as a part of our life. "Simple is the best" is our favorite conclusion.

We eat a lot of raw fish for Sushi. It looks very simple and easy to cook, but actually, a Sushi chef uses high cooking techniques for it. They don't just cut fish but they use different spices, cutting styles, way of cooking, and timings based on every kind of fish and seasons. For example, mackerel is marinated but salmon isn't. White meat fish are served with citrus juice. Eel is necessary to put sweet soy sauce dip on it. Salmon roe is on rice surrounded by seaweed. These complicated Sushi cooking techniques show our Japanese curiosity and ingenuity. We found differences among the fish, tried many ways, and sought the best use of each fish. I can say this is the same as development of Japanese high technology. It is the most important factor of Japanese characteristic to improve something to adopt and adjust for people. For instance, we imported computers a long time ago. Early computers were like raw fish. They had many possibilities to be improved. We found differences between business use and personal use, difference of way of use among countries, and adopted them, improved them, adjusted them, and made top-level computers in the world. This Japanese characteristic was nurtured by geographical conditions. Japanese land doesn't have many natural resources, so since an ancient period, we needed to import important stuff from foreign countries, mainly from China. We imported Japanese letters, cloths, religions, food, technology, and so on; basically all life-living stuff. We have managed to make the best use of limited resources and environment. Interestingly, poverty of land created Japanese creativity.

Nowadays, many kinds of toppings are used for Sushi. The most famous new Sushi topping is California roll. This roll shows our Japanese curiousness and cooperativeness. The roll uses salmon, avocado, and mayonnaise. Fifty years ago, nobody could imagine that avocado and mayonnaise would be used for Sushi. But now, California roll is a very popular roll in the world, of course in Japan, too. Not only California roll but also curious Japanese adopted and use a lot of western culture:

language and food. For example, Japanese use a word "Paso-Kon." This means a personal computer in Japanese. We took the beginning of both letters and connected them and made our original Japanese-English. Also we have many American food restaurants: McDonald's, Wendy's, T.G.I. Friday's, Hard Rock Café, and so on. Now they even threaten traditional Japanese culture. However, our curious blood cannot stop doing this. We don't have resistance against importing the other cultures because from an ancient time, Japanese have been importing culture. Japanese have to keep seeking new interesting stuff due to the blood history. The other aspect of California roll, Japanese traditional food allowed using western ingredients, such as avocado and mayonnaise, because it is delicious and many people like it. If many people are happy, that's a good thing. If many people like it, that's okay. When Japanese judge the situation, we think about other people's feeling first. When Japanese talk to someone, they think about the person's situation whether the person has time to talk with them. When Japanese make a phone call they avoid dinner time and morning time because dinnertime is for the family to have relaxed time and people are usually busy to get ready for the day in the morning. If Japanese disturb someone, they feel very sorry about it. This cooperative character was also formed by geographic situation. We don't have enough land to live so our community is literally small. Due to living in a small society, we developed the ability of cooperativeness.

Sushi, such a tiny food, but it contains uncountable elements of Japanese characteristics. It's developed by geographic situation, preference of nature and simplicity, seeking the best use for improvement, adoption and adjustment, historical curiosity and cooperative blood. And I believe that a representative Japanese identity essence is "curiosity." Geographically, Japan is isolated and it made us homogeneous but our curiosity encourages trying new influence and helped to develop our country. Our cultural identity never changes, until we lose curiosity formed by geographical and historical situations. And those two elements never can be changed.

How My Friend's Cat Changed My Mind About Cats

Hye-Won Jeon

R/W 30

My American friend has a cat, a really big, black cat! When I saw her cat for the first time, I was really scared! I don't like cats, but some younger people in Korea like cats. Generally, the older generation in Korea does not like cats, because they are symbols of bad luck. There is even a Korean proverb that says cats turn good into evil. I used to agree with that and prefer dogs anyhow. Unlike Koreans, my American friend loves her cat. Her cat is like her boyfriend! She told me that cats are cleaner than dogs. It seems weird to me! My friend told me that her cat wakes her up every morning at 7 a.m. At that time, the cat is always crying: mew...mew...! That means she has to get up, otherwise she will be late for her class. So, she can't keep sleeping. Her cat is very intelligent and has

become her alarm clock. I thought that was a very interesting story, and after I heard her story, I changed my opinion about cats!

Jack O' Lantern

YiFeng Kao (Lwind)

Alumnus

I didn't buy that pumpkin, but there is one question left in my mind . . .

"What are you going to wear for a costume?" Samir asked me in Publix on the day before Halloween last year.

"I don't know," I said. "I am not an American. Do I have to?"

"Yes, you have to." Samir grinned.

"All right," I said, "I guess I will dress up as an Asian."

"Oh man!" Samir yelled. "It's Halloween! Look around! Look at the brooms, capes and pumpkins. Look at the people. Can't you feel? It's Halloween! We're going to celebrate!"

As he wished, I looked at the brooms, looked at the capes, and looked at the pumpkins. And then I saw a person standing in front of those pumpkins and picking.

"Right!" Samir said, "Look at that guy, that's what we should do. Buy a pumpkin to make a lantern."

Samir and I walked to the pumpkins. That person didn't notice us because he was choosing a pumpkin very carefully. I felt he was weird when we were close to him. I don't like criticizing people's appearance, but his eyes and mouth were really bigger and darker than normal. And he was speaking to the pumpkin in his hands, "Yes, it is. The very, very beautiful pumpkin." That made me uncomfortable.

He used his nail to mark a small letter "J" on the bottom of the pumpkin, and put it back to the basket. He didn't buy that pumpkin and left. Then, Samir bought THAT pumpkin.

"Bad Samir! You are so mean!" On our way back, I said to Samir, "Maybe he just went home for money."

"He should've brought money or a credit card to the market," said Samir. "It's really a beautiful pumpkin, ain't it?"

"It's not your pumpkin." I was a little angry.

"No, it will be my lantern," Samir answered, "and you will see how beautiful the lantern is."

On Halloween, Samir dressed up as a vampire and I dressed up as a student – right, I didn't do a costume. And Samir showed me his pumpkin lantern. I had to say, that was a really nice craft. In addition to the new moon eyes and wavy mouth, Samir made a lightning scar on its forehead, and he called the lantern Jacky Porter. The Vampire with Jacky Porter and I walked around in the town. We had a lot of fun that night.

But Samir didn't go to school after Halloween, so I went to his place after school at the third day. I went to his room although his mom told me that he didn't want to see anyone.

"How are you?" I asked Samir who laid on the bed. He used the blanket to cover his body and head.

"Leave me alone," Samir said.

"Are you sick?" I asked again. "Do you need the notes for the lecture?"

"I said, leave me alone."

"Don't be mean, dude. We are friends, aren't we?" I said and took his blanket away.

Then I saw Samir's face. His eyes were different, and there was a shallow lightning scar on his forehead.

"What . . . what happened?" I was scared.

"You are right," Samir yelled. "I should've not bought that pumpkin."

"What?" I said, "What happened?"

"I am becoming my lantern!!" Samir cried. "Jack is looking for his heads. Don't you understand? I made his head! And I am becoming his head! You are damn right!"

I didn't understand what curse it was. I am not an American and I don't really know Halloween. I was sad I couldn't help Samir, and his mom didn't let me see him anymore. Samir stopped going to school and I've not seen him. Until yesterday.

Yesterday, I went to Publix for groceries, and I saw Samir. I knew it was him.

"Samir!" I tried being nice. "It's me, Windy, where have you been?"

Then I saw his face when I walked to him. It was scary. He had new moon eyes, a big wavy mouth, and a deep lightning scar on his forehead, just like his lantern. Samir didn't notice me. He stared at the pumpkin in his hands and repeated one sentence, "Right, the very, very beautiful pumpkin."

Samir marked a small letter "J" on the bottom of the pumpkin, and put it back to the basket. He didn't buy it and left. I wanted to say something to him, but suddenly I didn't know what I should say. I looked at that pumpkin with "J" and I knew Jack is still looking for his heads.

So I didn't buy that pumpkin. But the only question left is . . .
Did you?

My Small Classroom

Lorena Perez

R/W 40

It is a cold morning and I am on my way to my small classroom; I hope to get there soon, because it is warm there. When I finally get there I find a lot of things in it. In the front, there is a green blackboard: it is always full of white chalky letters, so I can find "snow" all over the place. I can see three huge windows on the left side; those are the ones that let the sunshine in. And there is a little white clock telling us in its own unique rhythm every second that has passed. Sitting close together are people from around the world; we are learning English now, so we can talk between us.

The Difference Between Men and Women

Yenyu Hung

R/W 60

Are the women and men the same? Or are they different? If they are the same, why do they always complain about the opposite sex: "He doesn't understand me" and "She always

misunderstands what I mean?" If they are different, what are the differences between each other? When can the war between both sexes stop? If we spend some time to analyze and realize the difference between females and males, we will find out a very interesting phenomenon between females and males. After that, maybe it will be easier for us to get along with each other peaceably.

There are at least three parts where we can detect the disagreements between both sexes. The first part is interest. The most obvious part of the interests is shopping habit. For females, shopping is a very important part of their lives. If I exaggerate the shopping's importance that will be "females live for shopping." And I've heard women say "Shop till you drop." For example, women can spend all day in one mall, even though it's just Wal-Mart or Publix. They won't feel exhausted and if they have much more time they can keep shopping. Shopping, shopping, keep shopping, until they bought everything including something they need or something they don't need. Is it ridiculous? If your answer is "yes" then I can guess you are a male person. For men, the greatest waste of time in the world is shopping. I have already verified the viewpoint from my boyfriend, both of my brothers, and my father. It doesn't mean they don't shop. They still buy something, but only "boy's toys." And before they go shopping they usually have specific shopping plans or they already know what they are going to buy. They seldom just look around if they don't have plans to buy something. But for females they don't have to have shopping plans, they can just look around then buy a lot of things. Furthermore, according to the article "Shopping too tough for men," maybe part of the reason that males dislike to shop is when males are exposed to crowded environment, their heart rate and blood pressure will rise. No matter natural or nurturing reason, they are quite different, thus the war between both sexes starts.

One of the unreasonable reasons for women's zeal for shopping maybe is self-image. This part is the second apparent difference between females and males. Females value their body image much more than males do. According to the article "Swimsuits affect math ability" which was taken from [The Gainesville Sun](#), it said that when women wore swimsuits they usually felt ashamed, instead of feeling funny or stupid, which were men's feelings. Due to the most common expectation about women's body shape, that is pretty women should be thin, women always stand in front of the mirror to decide which clothes to wear, when they have a date or they have to go outside. After that, they have to put on makeup, and polish nails etc. Women always have to spend a lot of time getting ready. On the other hand, men just choose clothes that are not dirty or not wrinkled, and then they can go out quickly. Sometimes, men feel women overvalue their appearance and they spend too much time and money on such worthless stuff, but they don't understand that part of women's self-image pressure is from men. For men, one of the most common topics between male's conversations is how sexy the women look who are just walking past them. So the war between both sexes starts again.

Finally, the third obvious difference between females and males is the thought about intimacy and independence. Humans need both intimacy and independence; however, compared to

women, men pursue independence more than women do. Furthermore, females and males have different definitions of intimacy and independence. For females, the intimacy means when each of them wants to make a decision, even a small not vital decision, he or she should discuss with the other. This behavior shows they respect each other and they value the other's opinion and feelings. If not, it means we are not an intimate couple; instead of discussing with me, you just inform me about your final decision. But for men, if they should discuss with their wives or girlfriends before they make any decision, they will feel like children who require permission before doing something. This feeling about asking for permission is so bad for them. However, for females, it doesn't mean asking for permission, it is just about intimacy and caring about each other. Such a big gap between the definitions about one simple word "intimacy" sometimes could result in big and worse problem, such as divorce or break up.

When God created creatures he created two kinds of sexes, males and females. If they are the same, he didn't have to create both sexes. Thus men and women are destined to be different and maybe the war between both sexes is destined to keep going. However, due to these disagreements between both sexes, our daily life is no longer boring, instead it is full of a lot of fun and challenges. Are you ready for the challenge? Good luck!

A Scary Flight

Marta Ciolek

R/W 40

During my flight to the USA, I passed through a most anxious time because I am so scatterbrained and unorganized.

On the 10th of August this year, I had a flight to the USA with my friend Gosia. In the airport in Frankfurt, a nice male airline employee gave us 1st class tickets. We didn't realize it until we went on the plane. We were so excited because it was our first time in the 1st class section. During the flight, a steward gave us sheets of paper we needed to fill out to present at immigration when we landed. Then the nightmare started. First, I couldn't find my passport or Gosia's; then I couldn't find our tickets in my purse either. I thought that we had left them in the airport in Frankfurt. I was so scared, so I asked the steward to give me my carry on-luggage. Fortunately, I finally found them; however, that was not the end. After I thought everything was OK, I started to read the documents with my passport. While I was reading, I found the information sheet linked to my student visa; I read that students can not come to the USA more than 30 days before they started school. I was shocked and scared because we were already on the plane and it was 2 months before our school started. It meant that we were already not following the law, and we could be returned to Poland because I hadn't read this information before. Finally, we met a very nice man at the Washington airport, and, luckily, he didn't look closely at our immigration documents and notice the dates.

Now I laugh when I think about this incident. I got a very good lesson: that I have to pay more attention to my

documents and read everything very carefully. I should be more attentive before my scatterbrained ways ruin me.

A Dream Come True

Lorena Perez

R/W 40

My favorite band is Incubus; I have been listening to them since 2000, but the band began in 1997. I already have all their CD's; people can notice the evolution of their music from the first CD to their last CD. So, earlier this semester I saw the band playing live; even though it was difficult, I got tickets through my father's effort.

As soon as I got to the TD Waterhouse Centre in Orlando, I couldn't believe I was really there, and so near the stage. I started to have goose pimples! When the concert began, everybody was singing, jumping and screaming, including me. It was so loud that you could feel the music bounce in your head. I never sat; I was always standing up seeing every move the musicians made. I like to play the drums; that's why the drummer is my favorite; he has a nice funk style. I would like to play like him one day soon. So during the concert, I was visualizing me playing all the songs just like the drummer.

Now, I'm very grateful and happy because I saw them in concert; it was an unbelievable experience that for years I thought would be an impossible dream.

Men and Women: Different But Complementary

Diana M. Mejia

R/W 60

Men and women, intelligent and perfect creatures, with similarities and differences have cohabited since their first appearance on Earth. Can we imagine how men and women could live separate from each other in the world? How the world would be if only men existed? How about only women? Even though some women assure they do not need men for anything in life, and possibly a disappointed and depressed man could think the same if he finds himself in a break up in his relationship, we must not ignore both sexes need each other.

When the Bible says in Genesis 2, 18: "*The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'*" it is not difficult to perceive the good intentions God had when he created the man for the development of earth. Later in Gen. 2, 22, the Bible says "*Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*" According to this, God did not want for men or women to be alone; notwithstanding, He wanted them to live together, help themselves and share their feelings with each other.

God's intentions were not fulfilled completely in normal life. When men and women discovered they liked them each other and decided to live together, at first they were happy and they did not imagine that their differences could make a big breach between them. But when this was realized they started

fighting each other, and in the worst cases they decided to separate to live by themselves. Divorce is very common in the modern world. Men and women think differently, feel differently, communicate feelings and ideas differently and in most of the cases diverge in the way they make decisions.

The existence of these dissimilarities has not been ignored during the passage of time. Nowadays, men and women concerned about it maybe have perceived their differences but they still do not take it seriously. Several investigations have been done, and scientists, doctors, psychiatrics and psychologists have provided some results. They have focused basically on four aspects as following: communication, relationships, interests and navigation.

An assistant radiology professor at Indiana University School of Medicine studied the brain activity of a group of women and men who were asked to wear headphones and listen to a passage from a book. The experiment showed more blood flowing between both hemispheres of the brain of women while men's brains revealed more activity in their left hemisphere, in which it is thought language and speech take place. This investigation showed that men of course do hear, but differently than women, contrary to what many women think about the lack of listening from their partners. Hopelessly many wives and girlfriends complain about their husbands and boyfriends assuring their lack of understanding and listening. Maybe ladies do not want an opinion or a wonderful and exact solution to their problem. Sometimes they want for their mates to just listen in a comprehensive way.

Since men and women have their own way of listening, it is not difficult to assume that communication sometimes could break apart their relationship. Women like to talk and their tendency is to express their emotions easier than men, however men's tendency is to speak only when it is absolutely necessary. A fatigued wife getting home from work could not find support in her adorable husband when she wants to share with him everything in her workday. Disappointed and sad she will probably think she made a mistake when she chose him as her spouse. But this does not end here. Women are more willing to make plans and make decisions jointly, for example, a lady will like her husband to consult with her about inviting a friend to come home. Men do not think this is necessary; on the contrary, they feel like a child asking for permission.

Things seem to turn arduous when couples have to make decisions about shopping for stuff for the home. Men do not need to think too much in choosing things while women need to go to many stores to make sure they will buy exactly what they want. Hopelessly, for men shopping has to be done quickly, which is almost impossible for women. In fact, men hate to go shopping; their hearts beat as if they were in danger, unless they want to buy equipment like cars, toys or computers. Indeed, women want to share this activity with their husbands, especially if they are going to buy something for home. Men seem to agree to buy and, then just come back. Women do not just go shopping, they like to look, to hang around, and to enjoy the stuff at the store, especially clothing even though it is not in their minds to buy it. In my own experience I can say that when I go shopping with my boyfriend he almost wants to run away when I am taking too much time looking at clothes or jewelry.

He immediately starts asking me: "Are you going to buy this? Now? Just decide." But, If I say, "I just want to look," he seems to be in a hurry and not interested. Of course, he turns different when we look at computers, machines or stuff like that.

Another aspect in which men and women diverge is navigation. According to Dr. Matthias Rieppe, neurologist of the University of Ulm in Germany, men use the left hippocampus, a curved-shaped part of the brain that plays a special role in navigation, while women use the right one when finding their ways. Studies suggest that men tend to associate directions with maps or geometry whereas women depend on landmarks to navigate. Life experience shows that men believe they are really good in navigation. They use their own mental map that tells them where the point is they need to go. Even though when they find themselves lost, or in an unknown place, they do not like to ask for help as women would do it is because they feel sure their own scheme is going to work. But if the woman insists in asking for help, finally they accept and, paradoxically, they would say: " Oh, it was like I just told you" or "I was pretty sure it was this way." Now we can understand why we see more frequently men taxi drivers than women.

In spite of those differences that scientists have found and maybe others not mentioned here men and women can still learn from each other to understand their differences, minimize their conflicts, diminish their burdens, and have a better relationship. This does not mean that they are not going to diverge in ways of thinking since this is one of the rights for the human beings, but they can cooperate in order to construct a relation based on respect and mutual comprehension.

Thanks from the Editor

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