きのうは御馳走様でした
Teaching Japanese Re-Thanking Through the Performed Culture Approach*

Etsuyo Yuasa
The Ohio State University

Abstract
Native speakers of Japanese often thank others for what they have previously done for them when they see benefactors again. This phenomenon is called re-thanking or *saido no kansha* (再度の感謝). This seemingly innocuous expression of gratitude is not easy for Japanese language learners to perform. To explicate what is involved in re-thanking in Japanese, I will examine how re-thanking is performed by native speakers of Japanese, how it poses a challenge for Japanese learners, and how re-thanking is not about merely using certain expressions of gratitude but about redressing "the debt-credit equilibrium." I will then discuss how re-thanking can be taught through the Performed Culture Approach (PCA), which aims to foster learners' skills to participate in the flow of social life through compilations of memories and stories.

Key words
Performed Culture Approach, re-thanking, debt-credit equilibrium, Japanese culture

* I thank Mari Noda and Galal Walker for founding the Performed Culture Approach and inspiring us to approach language instruction with new eyes.

1. Introduction

Thanking is perhaps one of the most important behaviors in human society. Ohashi (2011) says thanking is a socially and ethically expected behavior and closely relates to the norms of a society. According to Moriyama (1999), what is at stake behind the act of thanking is psychological imbalance between the benefactor and the beneficiary. Havertake (1988) says expressing gratitude "serves the particular purpose of restoring equilibrium in the cost-benefit relation between speaker and hearer" (p. 391). By thanking appropriately, speakers show consideration for the indebtedness that they have caused to others, which results in projecting a favorable image as a thoughtful person (Ohashi, 2011).

Thanking itself is considered a universal phenomenon, but *how* and *when* to thank *who* as well as *why* thanking is done is different from culture to culture (Coulmas, 1981). In Japanese, speakers are said to express gratitude verbally more often than the speakers of other languages (Kim & Ohe, 2020; Le, 2012). Also, it is common to observe re-thanking or *saido no kansha* (再度の感謝) (Ichihara, 2016; Li, 2014; Tsujihara, 2023). In this paper, I will examine how re-thanking is done by native speakers of Japanese and how it should be taught.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, I will examine how re-thanking is performed by native speakers of Japanese, how it poses a challenge for Japanese learners, and how re-thanking is about "observing and redressing the debt-credit equilibrium" (Ohashi, 2003, p. 270). In Section 3, I will discuss how re-thanking can be taught through the Performed Culture Approach (PCA), which aims to foster learners' skills to participate in the flow of social life through compilations of memories and stories (Walker & Noda, 2000). In Section 4, I will conclude the paper by iterating how we can help learners develop the skills to relate to Japanese speakers by placing culture at the core of Japanese instruction.

2. Re-thanking in Japanese

2.1. Snapshot of re-thanking in Japanese

Re-thanking is defined as "a common practice among Japanese when a beneficiary interacts with a benefactor for another time" (Tsujihara, 2023, p. 75). Even after a beneficiary thanks a benefactor right after receiving a favor, the beneficiary refers to the favor and expresses gratitude again when the beneficiary sees the benefactor the next time. Commonly used expressions for re-thanking include variations of *kinoo wa gochisō-sama deshita* 'it was a feast yesterday' and *senjitsu wa arigatō gozaimasita* 'thank you for the other day.' For example, if a professor had a dinner party for her students on the previous day, a conversation, as shown in (1), would likely take place on the following day between them:

(1) Professor: *Ohayō gozaimasu.*
'Good morning.'
Student: *Ohayō gozaimasu. A,* ***kinō wa gochisō-sama deshita****. Gohan dore mo sugoku oishikatta desu.*
*'*Good morning. And, it was a feast yesterday. The food was all amazing.'
Professor: *Tanoshikatta desu yone. Mata shimashō.*
'It was fun, wasn't it? Let's do it again sometime.'

The students most likely already thanked the professor at the end of the party, but when they see the professor the next time, they re-thank the professor.

Li (2014) examines Japanese re-thanking in detail and reports that Japanese speakers tend to: 1) re-thank benefactors more when the benefits that the benefactors have brought about are considerable, 2) engage in the act of re-thanking more when they already have personal relationships with the benefactors but are socially distanced from them, and 3) employ conventionalized re-thanking expressions. Moreover, Japanese speakers often express re-thanking not just once but repeatedly (Li, 2014; Shi, 2007) and feel obliged to re-thank benefactors for a favor even long after the favor has been performed (Kindaichi, 1987). Svetanant (2016) says expressions of re-thanking are "intrinsically obligatory" and used to show "creditors a constant awareness of the benevolence they have done for you in the past" (p. 58). If someone fails to express re-thanking properly, he will be deemed as *onshirazu* (恩知らず) or an ungrateful person (Kato, 2001; Svetanant, 2016).

2.2. Challenges of learning Japanese re-thanking

Re-thanking is ubiquitous in Japanese. It looks polite and innocuous. One might expect that it is not difficult for learners of Japanese to learn re-thanking and engage in the act of re-thanking. However, as we will see in this section, that is not the case at all.

In a survey conducted by Kawamura (1991), Japanese learners said that even after receiving a gift or a favor, they would not re-thank benefactors when they saw the benefactors the next time. A Chinese interpreter shared with Kawamura that because re-thanking could be perceived as a solicitation of another favor, it is hard to translate *senjitsu wa dō mo* 'thank you the other day' into Chinese. In Chinese societies, re-thanking does not play an important communicative role (Li, 2014). When Chinese speakers who are not used to re-thanking encounter repeated re-thanking by Japanese speakers, they find it fussy and consider it to be a hurdle to building a good relationship (Li, 2014; Shi, 2007; Tsujihara, 2023). Native speakers of Korean generally do not verbally express gratitude like Japanese speakers do, either (Kim & Ohe, 2020; Le, 2012), presumably because thanking too much is regarded as *mizukusai* or cold and distant (Kim, 2022). Similarly, Hinkel (1994) says, "in other cultures, as in most English-speaking cultures, giving thanks rarely entails indebtedness or establishes social reciprocity" (p. 76). Thus, it is conceivable that speakers in English-speaking cultures do not recognize the importance of re-thanking, which involves "a constant awareness of the benevolence they have done for you in the past" (Svetanant, 2016, p. 58). Even for those who are familiar with Japanese culture, thanking back and forth is not an easy concept to grasp. Tsujihara (2023) describes one heritage learner's difficulty understanding the value of Japanese ways of thanking as follows:

> Rob's impression about Japanese thanking was "humbler" than American culture. Rob's comment that Japanese people, "sometimes engage in a back and forth about who over who is more grateful," shows some understanding, albeit not expressed explicitly, of reciprocity. Rob describes this social norm of reciprocity as "very bureaucratic and sometimes time consuming/tiring." He is aware of differences in thanking processes, but does not value these practices. (p. 202)

For native speakers of Japanese, referring to a favor they received earlier is a way to maintain a good relationship (Kawamura, 1991). However, this way of building a good relationship is not practiced in other cultures. Therefore, it is not easy for learners to recognize the value of re-thanking in Japanese communication, let alone to perform the act of re-thanking in an appropriate manner.

2.3. Debt-credit equilibrium

We have seen that the act of re-thanking does not come naturally for many learners of Japanese. Thus, if they are not taught how to perform the act of re-thanking, they will fail to re-thank properly. To delve into the question of exactly what is at stake and what needs to be taught and learned, let's look at what will happen when re-thanking is not performed properly.

When Japanese speakers encounter situations in which they are not re-thanked properly, they tend to take it personally and extrapolate certain personality traits from the person who did not re-thank them (Kato, 2001; Svetanant, 2016). This applies not only to communication among native speakers of Japanese but also to communication between native and non-native speakers of Japanese. Several postings in *Yahoo! Chiebukuro*, a popular online advice column, illustrate Japanese speakers' puzzlement and negative reactions toward non-native speakers' lack of re-thanking.

(2) a. Yafutarō (2021) [my translation]
アメリカ人がおごってもらった後日にお礼を言わないのはどのような文化があるからなのでしょうか？ また、100 パーセントお礼を言う日本人との文化のちがいも教えていただけますか？
'I wonder what kind of culture is behind it when Americans do not thank days after they were treated a meal. Also, I would like to know how that differs from the Japanese culture in which speakers always thank after a meal is treated.'

b. Mame-san (2020) [my translation]
アメリカ文化について。アメリカ人はお礼などあまり言わないのでしょうか？ 誕生日ギフトをアメリカのパートナーの甥っ子に送りました。それを受け取った写真は送られてきましたが、その親からは何の反応もメールもありません。 別にお礼がほしいわけではなく、気に入らないとお礼をしない文化なのか？迷惑だったのか？わざわざメールで伝えることでもないのか？ 文化なのか単純に人の性格なのかもしれませんが、例えば「わざわざ欲しくない必要のないものを送ってきて」と思われていたら、次回からの買わないようにしますし、もしそういった経験や文化の違いなど教えてください。
'I have a question about American culture. Is it normal for American people not to thank? I sent a birthday gift to a nephew of my partner, who is an American. I received a picture (of him receiving the gift), but his parents have not said anything to me. It is not that I want them to thank me, but in American culture, is it the case that they do not say thank you when they do not like the gift? Was the gift a nuisance? Do they think that it was not important enough to thank me by email? It may be their culture or personalities, but I wouldn't send another gift if they did not appreciate the gift from me. Can I hear from you if you have similar experiences or insights about the cultural differences?'

What is remarkable is their tone. Although the contributor in (2b) says she does not need to be thanked, she contemplates whether she should stop sending gifts altogether. Note that it is not that her partner's family did not react at all. They took a picture and sent it to her. However, the fact that they did not verbally express their gratitude like Japanese speakers invited her puzzlement and frustration. There are many cultural, communicative, and behavioral differences between U.S. and

Japanese cultures. In the U.S., people shake hands, rather than bow, when they meet someone for the first time. They may not think much of the difference between *oyahō* 'good morning (informal)' and *ohayō gozaimasu* 'good morning (formal)' and say *oyahō* to Japanese speakers who are older than them. However, such behaviors do not necessarily elicit the same type of emotional responses that Japanese speakers have toward a lack of thanking/re-thanking. Why do Japanese speakers react to a lack of re-thanking this way?

First, while native speakers of Japanese may see and accommodate obvious cultural differences such as shaking hands, they do not appear to recognize that re-thanking is unique to Japanese culture. Perhaps, because re-thanking is a polite and commonly observed act in Japanese societies, native speakers of Japanese simply assume that speakers of other languages re-thank just like them. In other words, they do not realize that it is a communicative behavior not recognized or valued in other cultures. Tannen (1981) says speakers are often not fully aware of what they do, such as what they choose to say, what they choose not to say, and why they say or do not say it. This unawareness of what they are doing can cause communication breakdowns because speakers "tend to take their conventional habits as self-evident and draw conclusions not about other's linguistic devices but about their intentions or personalities" (Tannen, 1981, p. 144).

Importantly, re-thanking is not just about uttering *kinoo wa gochisō-sama deshita* or *senjitsu wa arigatō gozaimasita* but involves "observing and redressing the debt-credit equilibrium" in Japanese culture (Ohashi, 2003, p. 270). Coulmas (1981) says Japanese culture is debt-sensitive. According to Ohashi (2003, 2011, 2013), the debt-credit equilibrium is an important concept for developing good relationships in Japanese societies. In the situation we saw in (1), after students attend a party hosted by the professor, the debt-credit equilibrium between the students and the professor is lost. When the students see the professor on the following day, refer to the party, and say *kinō wa gochisō-sama deshita* 'it was a feast yesterday,' they are not merely providing a formulaic remark of gratitude. They convey their intention to repair the imbalance. Moriyama (1999) says Japanese speakers restore a debt-credit imbalance by clearly acknowledging it. If an imbalance is not addressed, the imbalance stays among the stakeholders and tarnishes their relationship (Ohashi & Chang, 2017). That is what we saw in (2). To foster and maintain good relationships, Svetanant (2016) warns Japanese learners to be aware of the intricacy of human relationships, because "failing to conform to certain communicative norms of Japanese politeness … inevitably give the listener an unpleasant impression, and consequently results in a cross-cultural pragmatic failure" (p. 61).

I should note that the debt-credit equilibrium is a concern not only for the beneficiary but also for the benefactor. Once the beneficiary explicitly states how he is indebted to the benefactor and provides expressions of gratitude, the benefactor often denies or downplays the indebtedness brought up by the beneficiary so as not to tip the balance (Ohashi, 2011). According to Ohashi (2011), the sequence of re-thanking typically involves: 1) formulaic expressions of thanking and denying (e.g., *arigatoo* 'thank you' – *ieie* 'no, no'), 2) apology expressions, 3) the use of donatory verbs (e.g., *kureru* 'give*,' morau* 'receive'), and 4) an abrupt shift of topic by the benefactor. In the example in (3) in which A calls B to thank B for lending a station wagon, A re-thanks B in (A3). This is immediately denied by B in (B4). In (A5) and (A7), A also thanks B for visiting A's family earlier using the donatory verb *kureru* 'give.' What A says in (A7) 遠いところからきてくれて *tōi tokoro kara kite kurete* literally means 'you gave us a gift of coming to visit us all the way.' B denies A's thanking right away again in (B6) and (B8) and abruptly starts talking about the station wagon in (B8). Here, we can see that it is not just A who tries to lessen the imbalance caused by

borrowing a car. B also tries to brush off the credit A gave to B to keep the debt-credit equilibrium between them.

(3) A (woman) and B (man) know each other for ten years. B is a friend of A's husband. When B visited A's family several days ago, B found out that they needed a station wagon for a trip and lent them a car.

A1: もしもし、どーも
'Hello. How are you?'

B2: あ、どーも
'Oh, how are you?'

A3: ほんとにありがとね
'Thank you really.'

B4: いえいえとんでもない
'Not at all.'

A5: うん、そいでこないだはありがとね
'And, thank you for the other day.'

B6: いやいやいや
'No, no.'

A7: 遠いところからきてくれて
'You came to visit us all the way.'

B8: いやいやぜんぜん、で　大丈夫そう？
'Not at all. So, is the car OK?'

A9: 快適快適
'Yes, very comfortable.'

(Ohashi, 2011, p. 113) [my translation]

In this section, we have seen how re-thanking is performed by native speakers of Japanese, how it is hard for Japanese learners to perform it, and how re-thanking is about the restoration of the debt-credit equilibrium in Japanese culture. To incorporate these insights into Japanese instruction and to foster learners' skills to engage in the act of re-thanking, in the next section, I will discuss how this behavioral culture can be taught within the Performed Cultural Approach (PCA) framework.

3. How to teach re-thanking in Japanese within PCA

3.1. PCA framework

The goal of the Performed Culture Approach (PCA) (Walker & Noda, 2000) is to foster learners' skills to participate in the flow of social life. Noda (2020) says the goal of learning language is "to participate as a productive member in socialization that are based on the target culture. … language learning occurs through socialization, that is through experiencing social events that often come with consequences that are culture-specific" (p. 146). In PCA, learners do not simply learn how to manipulate linguistic elements. According to Christensen and Warnick (2006), "it is a top-down approach in which the learner looks at the overall context and the intentions in a given situation and learns to participate accordingly" (p. 35).

To teach patterns of socialization in the target culture, PCA adopts performance as its instructional unit, which is analyzed by times, places, roles, scripts, and audiences (Noda, 2020; Walker, 2020; Walker & Noda, 2000). For example, to teach the act of apologizing, learners may be presented with a scene, as shown in (4).

(4) Context: A student goes to her Japanese teacher and tells him that she forgot to bring her homework.
Student: *Sensei, shukudai o motte kimasen deshita. Sumimasen.*
'I forgot to bring my homework. I am sorry.'
Teacher: *Tsugi kara ki o tsukete kudasai ne.*
'Please be careful in the future.'
Student: *Hai, sumimasen.*
'I will be careful. I am sorry.'

This scene is analyzed to take place: 1) when she forgot to submit homework (time); 2) at a classroom (place); 3) between a student and a teacher (roles); 4) consisting of an apology, a warning by the teacher (e.g., *tsugi kara ki o tsukete kudasai ne* 'please be careful in the future'), and another apology (script); and 5) in the presence of other students (audience). By learning not just the specific apology expression of *sumimasen* 'I am sorry' but also these elements of performance, learners will know when to say it, where to say it, to whom to say it, how to say it in a longer stretch of dialogue, and who may be present when the act is performed.

PCA, which recognizes socialization as the goal of instruction and uses performance as its instructional unit, is particularly fitting to teach re-thanking in Japanese. This is because re-thanking is not just about specific expressions of gratitude but also about how Japanese speakers socialize by expressing an intention to redress the credit-debt imbalance, showing considerations for others, and collaboratively building good relationships. In PCA, target language and culture are introduced and taught through FACT and ACT sessions (Christensen & Noda, 2002). FACT sessions are for the development of declarative knowledge such as "what one knows about the language," whereas ACT sessions are for procedural knowledge and for learners to learn "which one can do with the language … or perform in the language" (Christensen & Noda, 2002, p. 15). In the following sections, let's look at how re-thanking can be taught in FACT and ACT.

3.2. FACT of re-thanking

In the *NihonGo Now* textbook, a clear instance of re-thanking is first introduced in ACT 7 Scene 4. In this dialogue, Brian thanks Suzuki for taking care of his mother at an event that took place earlier using a typical expression of re-thanking このあいだはありがとうございました *kono aida wa arigatō gozaimasita* 'thank you for the other day.'

(5) *NihonGo Now* Level 1 Volume 2 Act 7 Scene 4
Context: Brian's mother is visiting from the U.S. and has come to an event with his aikido club, but became ill. Later, he thanks Suzuki-san for looking after her.
Brian: このあいだはありがとうございました。
'Thank you for the other day.'
Suzuki: 楽しかったですね。
'It was fun, wasn't it!'

Brian: 母がご迷惑をおかけして、すみませんでした。
'I'm sorry that my mother was a hassle for you.'
Suzuki: とんでもない。お加減、どうですか？
'Not at all, how is she feeling?'
Brian: はい、おかげさまで、もう大丈夫だと思います。
'Yes, thanks to you, she's fine now, I think.'
Suzuki: どうぞお大事になさってください。
'Please tell her to take care of herself.'
Brian: ありがとうございます。すみませんでした。
'Thank you. Again, I'm sorry.'
Suzuki: いえいえ。
'No, no.'

(Noda et. al., 2021e, p. 23)

With the introduction of (5), the instructor should point out that: 1) thanking someone again when the beneficiary sees the benefactor the next time is de facto obligatory (Svetanant, 2016), 2) re-thanking is a way to restore a credit-debt imbalance (Ohashi, 2003), and 3) a lack of concern for the credit-debt imbalance can severely damage the development and maintenance of good relationships with Japanese speakers (Ohashi & Chang, 2017).

The act of re-thanking is understood fully if we analyze it with the five elements of performance. It goes without saying that the most important element of re-thanking is timing. In (5), Brian expresses gratitude to Suzuki when he sees her the next time after she looked after his mother. As noted in Section 2.1, re-thanking does not necessarily take place right away (Kindaichi, 1987). In fact, it is common to re-thank someone for a favor in New Year's cards even if the kind act took place many months earlier. As Li (2014) points out, who the beneficiary and the benefactor are (roles) is also quite important: The beneficiary most likely re-thanks the benefactor if they already have a personal relationship and if what the benefactor did was considerable. Thus, if Brian's mother got sick in a train station and was helped by a station staff member, because Brian does not have a personal relationship with the staff member, he wouldn't necessarily go out of his way to find the staff member and re-thank him later. If what Suzuki did for Brian was not to look after his mother but to let him use her pen for a moment, he probably wouldn't bother to re-thank her when he sees her the next time, either. In terms of the element of script, learners should be informed that Brian keeps thanking and apologizing to restore the debt-credit imbalance caused by his mother's illness. Similarly, Suzuki brushes off his gratitude and apologies out of consideration for not tipping the imbalance. Learners should know that what Brian and Suzuki do is not an empty exchange of formulaic expressions. This is their way to show consideration for each other in order to keep a good relationship between them.

Because what needs to be taught is a socialization pattern, while the typical expression of re-thanking このあいだはありがとうございました *kono aida wa arigatō gozaimashita* 'thank you for the other day' in (5) is useful, it does not have to be used all the time. In re-thanking, the beneficiary first refers to the occasion when the favor was done and then provides expressions of gratitude. Thus, it should be pointed out that このあいだはありがとうございました *kono aida wa arigatō gozaimashita* 'thank you for the other day' can be substituted with other expressions related to the specific favor that was performed, such as あのイベントでは、ありがとうござ

いました ‘thank you for the event’ and 先日は、母を助けてくださってありがとうございました *senjitsu wa, haha o tasukete kudasatte arigatō gozaimashita* ‘thank you for looking after my mother the other day.’

Learners need to be introduced to these facts of re-thanking in FACT sessions. Otherwise, learners won’t think much of what Brian does at the start of the dialogue and may assume that it is just one of many random ways to start a conversation. What is worse, they may think that Brian is being solicitous, cold and distant, or bureaucratic (see Section 2.2). Once the concept and pattern of re-thanking is introduced, however, the instructor should encourage learners to identify the pattern in similar cases on their own (Noda et al., 2017). For example, recognizing its importance and ubiquity, the *NihonGo Now* textbooks continue to introduce instances of re-thanking in other dialogues. When learners study these dialogues, the instructor should check whether they notice the pattern of re-thanking and how all the characters try to keep the debt-credit equilibrium.

(6) *NihonGo Now* Level 1 Volume 2 Act 11 Scene 1
Context: Sasha takes a call at the office.

Sasha: はい、大垣商会、企画部、サーシャ・モリスです。
‘Hello, Ogaki Trading, Planning Division. This is Sasha Morris.’

Shirai: あ、モリスさん、吉田運送の白井です。いつもお世話になっています。
‘Ah, Morris-san. It’s Shirai from Yoshida Transport. We always appreciate your business.’

Sasha: あ、白井さん。いつもお世話になっております。
‘Ah, Shirai-san. We are grateful to you.’

Shirai: **この間はありがとうございました。**
‘Thank you for the other day.’

Sasha: いえいえ、ご丁寧にありがとうございます。
‘No, no. You’re very polite (to say so).’

Shirai: いや、本当に助かりました。
‘No, it really helped.’

Sasha: もしまた必要でしたら、いつでもおっしゃってください。
‘If you need it again, then please say so any time.’

Shirai: モリスさんと神田さんのお陰で、社長も喜んでいます。
‘Thanks to you and Kanda-san, our president is very happy.’

Sasha: あの、神田と代わりましょうか。
‘Um, shall I switch you over to Kanda-san?’

Shirai: いえいえ、お忙しいでしょうから結構です。どうぞよろしくお伝えください。
‘No, no. He must be busy, so it’s fine. Please pass along our regards.’

Sasha: 承知いたしました。申し伝えます。
‘Understood. I will tell him.’

Shirai: では、またこれからもよろしくお願いいたします。
‘Well, then, we look forward (to working with) you again.’

Sasha: はい、こちらこそ、よろしくお願いいいたします。
‘Yes. Not at all. We look forward to (working with you).’

Shirai: どうも失礼いたしました。
'Well then, sorry to bother you.'
Sasha: では、失礼いたします。
'So then, excuse me.'
Shirai: どうも失礼いたします。
'Excuse me.'

(Noda et al. 2021e, p. 173) [emphasis added]

(7) *NihonGo Now* Level 2 Volume 1 Act 13 Scene 3
Context: Kanda-san thanks Sasha for her foresight about the document that he almost threw away a few days ago.
Kanda: **サーシャさん、この間はありがとう。**
'Sasha, thanks for the other day.'
Sasha: え、何のことですか？
'Huh? What are you talking about?'
Kanda: 例の書類、サーシャさんが言ったとおりに、取っておいてよかったですよ。
'Just as you said it was a good thing we kept those documents.'
Sasha: ああ…何かありました？
'Oh, did something happen?'
Kanda: あの後社長が来てね、見たいって。
'Afterwards the president of the company came, you know, and wanted to look at them.'
Sasha: 社長が？へえ。わざわざ見に来られたんですか？
'The president? Wow. He came all the way here to look at them?'
Kanda: ええ、とにかく助かりました。
'Yeah. Anyway, you saved the day.'
Sasha: よかったです。
'Good thing.'

(Noda et al., 2021a, p. 12) [emphasis added]

3.3. ACT of re-thanking

Understanding what is taught in FACT sessions—the declarative knowledge of re-thanking—is crucial for learners to recognize this socialization pattern in Japanese culture, but knowing the facts of re-thanking alone will never be enough to foster learners' skills to perform the act (Christensen & Noda, 2002; Christensen & Warnick, 2006). For learners to become able to perform, they need to accumulate "a sufficient level of performance experience and cultural memory to permit them to recognize and learn from new situations" (Walker & Noda, 2000, p. 194). This time-consuming process of recognizing, simulating, and internalizing the socialization patterns of the target culture takes place in ACT sessions (Christensen & Warnick, 2006).

ACT sessions provide "plenty of opportunities for learners to practice the material they have learned and reviewed outside the class with audio, video, and print materials" (Christensen & Noda 2002, p. 19). A typical ACT session consists of a dialogue performance (the enactment of a dialogue), substitution activities, and improvisation, all of which are conducted in authentic

contexts (Christensen & Warnick, 2006). Having learned how re-thanking is done in FACT sessions, learners will first recognize not only how words and phrases are used in (5) but also how Brian and Suzuki express their intentions in the multimedia learning materials. More specifically, when learners hear or see Brian saying このあいだはありがとうございました *kono aida wa arigatō gozaimashita* 'thank you for the other day' or Suzuki saying とんでもない。お加減、どうですか *Tondemo nai. Okagen dō desuka?* 'not at all, how is the feeling?' they should notice that their appreciative or caring tones convey their intentions to maintain the debt-credit equilibrium. When they enact the part of Brian, they will directly experience and feel how Suzuki appreciates the act of re-thanking, which in turn becomes a valuable foundational experience of re-thanking.[1] Before practicing the dialogue, it is likely that learners have never engaged in the act of re-thanking. Only through the enactment of the script and the experience of seeing the benefactor's positive reaction to re-thanking will learners gain "subjective social experiences outside the boundaries of one's prior life" (Walker, 2021, p. 146).

To provide sufficient background to the dialogue and simulate a realistic flow of life, the instructor can have learners enact a conversation along the lines of (8) that takes place before (5). Conversations like (8) always precede a re-thanking scene. Therefore, by enacting (8) and (5) together, learners go through the actual flow of events.

(8) Context: Brian's mother is visiting from the U.S. and has come to an event with his aikido club. While watching aikido demonstrations, she became ill. Brian tells Suzuki that they need to leave.

Brian: すみません、母が具合が悪いんです。
'I am sorry. My mother is not feeling well.'

Suzuki: 本当ですか？大丈夫ですか？
'Really? Is she all right?'

Brian: すみませんが、今日は失礼します。すみません。
'I am sorry, but we are leaving. I am sorry.'

The compilation of individual stories leads to the development of a series of stories—a saga. Walker and Noda (2000) say "the compilation of sagas in the course of language study gives learners the impression of continuity and connectedness in their studied language" (pp. 204–205). Therefore, expanding the dialogue in (5) with other scenes like (8) and having learners enact a series of stories will allow them to remember conversations related to re-thanking in a coherent manner (see also Meng, 2020).[2]

Textbooks introduce specific dialogues and texts, but the goal of language instruction is not just to have learners simply master these specific instances but also become able to communicate in similar but new situations with the patterns they have learned (Yuasa, n.d.). To generalize a

[1] Takada and Dan-Glauser (2004) say "the combination of cultural norms, gender norms, normative emotions, and interaction content and flexibility all significantly contribute to different aspects of emotion socialization" (p. 2).

[2] Seeing the world through stories is human nature. Harari (2018) says:

> Homo sapiens is a storytelling animal that thinks in stories rather than in numbers or graphs, and believes that the universe itself works like a story, replete with heroes and villains, conflicts and resolutions, climaxes and happy endings. When we look for the meaning of life, we want a story that will explain what reality is all about and what my particular role is in the cosmic drama. This role makes me a part of something bigger than myself, and gives meaning to all my experiences and choices. (p. 11)

specific instance of re-thanking, learners need to practice variations of (5) with other expressions to convey the same intention and in other situations (substitution activity). For example, the instructor can follow up on what has been taught in FACT sessions and encourage learners to use other expressions of re-thanking, such as あのイベントでは、ありがとうございました 'thank you at the event.' By providing a slightly different situation in which it was Brian, not his mother, who became ill at an event, the instructor can let learners adjust the script and re-thank Suzuki for help that she gave Brian himself. The slightly modified versions of (8) and (5) are shown in (8') and (5').

(8') Brian: **すみません、僕ちょっと具合が悪いんです。**
'I am sorry. I am not feeling well.'
Suzuki: 本当ですか？大丈夫ですか？
'Really? Are you all right?'
Brian: すみませんが、今日は失礼します。すみません。
'I am sorry, but we are leaving. I am sorry.'

(5') Brian: **あのイベントでは、ありがとうございました**
'Thank you for the event.'
Suzuki: 楽しかったですね。
'It was fun, wasn't it!'
Brian: **ご迷惑をおかけして、すみませんでした。**
'I'm sorry that I was a hassle for you.'
Suzuki: とんでもない。お加減、どうですか？
'Not at all, how are you feeling?'
Brian: **はい、おかげさまで、もう大丈夫です。**
'Yes, thanks to you, I'm fine now.'
Suzuki: どうぞお大事になさってください。
'Please take care of yourself.'
Brian: ありがとうございます。すみませんでした。
'Thank you. Again, I'm sorry.'
Suzuki: いえいえ。
'No, no.'

Once learners become used to modifying the pattern in (5), the instructor can provide more contexts to have learners simulate different situations of re-thanking, as suggested in the *NihonGo Now Activity Book* (Noda et al., 2021d, p. 12). For example, the instructor can ask learners what they would do if they were invited to their colleague's dinner party. Learners can enact a scene like (9) using what they already know.[3] Then, they can simulate how they should re-thank the colleague later to redress the debt-credit imbalance they caused. Because the reason for re-thanking is different in this new context, instead of apologizing, learners can, for example, try providing

[3] In an earlier lesson, *NihonGo Now* Level 1 Volume 1 ACT 5 Scene 5 (Noda et al., 2021c), learners practiced the enactment of *yonde kudasatte arigatō gozaimasu* 'thank you for inviting me.' Therefore, the dialogue in (9) is an improvisation and a review at the same time.

compliments using what they already know, such as さすがグルメの～さん *sasuga gurume no ~-san* 'so-and-so, the gourmet.' A sample improvisation is given in (5").

(9) Context: You were invited to a colleague's dinner party and ate lots of delicious homemade food. You thank her as you leave.
You: 今日は呼んでくださってありがとうございました。
'Thank you for inviting me today.'
Colleague: 楽しかったですね。
'It was fun, wasn't it!'
You: ご馳走様でした。失礼します。
'It was a feast. Excuse me.'

(5") You: このあいだはありがとうございました。
'Thank you for the other day.'
Colleague: 楽しかったですね。
'It was fun, wasn't it!'
You: **ごはん、すごくおいしかったです。さすがグルメの~さん！**
'The food was all delicious. So-and-so, the gourmet!'
Colleague: いえいえ。
'No, no.'
You: **ご馳走様でした。**
'It was a feast.'

Learners acquire and internalize socialization patterns through repeated exposures and practice (Christensen & Noda, 2002). Therefore, whenever there is a chance, the pattern of re-thanking should be enacted and reinforced. For example, in a later lesson in *NihonGo Now* Level 1 Volume 2 (Noda et al., 2021e), there are scenes in which a character receives a birthday gift from her roommate and the character visits the roommate's family in Kyoto. After these scenes are enacted, the instructor can ask learners what to say to the roommate the day after the birthday celebration or to the roommate's mother over the phone after they return from Kyoto. If learners remember the importance of keeping the debt-credit equilibrium, they should be able to perform the act of re-thanking. By enacting and simulating a series of events that take place in Japanese culture repeatedly and compiling memories of re-thanking, learners will no longer assume that re-thanking is one of many random ways to start a conversation or simply an empty ritual. Such internalization of socialization patterns will help learners develop a second-culture worldview and build meaningful relationships with speakers of the target culture (Walker & Noda, 2000).

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have seen how the act of re-thanking is performed in Japanese culture and how to teach it within the PCA framework. Teaching Japanese learners how to recognize this socialization pattern is important because they likely won't be able to recognize it and its value on their own. Similarly, while Japanese speakers, including Japanese instructors, regularly engage in

the act, many of them are not conscious of doing so, either.[4] If the concept of re-thanking and its mechanism are not understood clearly, instructors won't be able to direct learners' attention to it. In the worst-case scenario, because we tend to extrapolate personality traits from people's actions, instructors may misjudge learners' failure to perform the act of re-thanking as a character flaw. Importantly for Japanese instruction, once we know how re-thanking is done, we need to closely examine how to teach it. We are being naïve if we assume that what we know about Japanese language and culture is somehow eventually incorporated into Japanese instruction (Yuasa, 2017). Therefore, we have demonstrated how the socialization pattern can be taught step by step within the PCA framework.

Walker and Noda (2000) say "when learning to communicate in a foreign language, our students are really learning the cultures" (p. 189). When we place culture at the center of language instruction, the landscape of language instruction changes. To teach re-thanking, the focus becomes not just teaching what to say, but helping learners understand why speakers do what they do. To become able to re-thank properly, learners ultimately need to become able to maintain the debt-credit equilibrium. It is worth mentioning that the debt-credit equilibrium plays an important role in many other Japanese socialization patterns, too. For example, Ohashi (2003) says the debt-credit equilibrium explains when and why Japanese speakers often use *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* 'I make a request and I hope things go well.' *NihonGo Now* Level 1 Volume 2 (Noda et al., 2021e) also refers to this sense of indebtedness to explain how donatory verbs are used.[5] Kawamura (1991) says that in any culture, people closely pay attention to the benefits they receive and the psychological debts they have caused to others. However, how people deal with such debts and credits is different from culture to culture. She suggests that the source of intercultural miscommunication is often an inability to deal with debts and credits in a way that is meaningful to both cultures. Therefore, by placing culture at the core of Japanese instruction and teaching how the debt-credit equilibrium is maintained thorough a variety of communicative acts in Japanese, we can help learners develop the skills to relate to Japanese speakers in a meaningful manner.

[4] Japanese speakers and instructors here include both native speakers and non-native speakers who are highly proficient in Japanese. Whether Japanese is a person's native language or not, it is not easy to understand behavioral patterns, although it is possible for non-native speakers who are proficient in Japanese to have more insights because they had to learn how to socialize in Japanese culture.

[5] As reported in Section 2.3, donatory verbs are frequently used with re-thanking. This co-occurrence is not an accident, because they are both closely tied to the debt-credit equilibrium. See also *NihonGo Now* Level 2 Volume 2 (Noda et al., 2021b, p. 236) in which the concepts of indebtedness and obligation are discussed.

References

Christensen, M. B., & Noda, M. (2002). *A performance-based pedagogy for communicating in cultures: Training teachers for East Asian languages*. National East Asian Languages Resource Center, Ohio State University.

Christensen, M. B., & Warnick, J. P. (2006). *Performed culture: An approach to East Asian language pedagogy*. National East Asian Languages Resource Center, Ohio State University.

Coulmas, F. (1981). "Poison to your soul" Thanks and apologies contrastively viewed. In F. Coulmas (Ed.), *Conversational routine* (Vol. 2) (pp. 69–92). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110809145.69

Harari, Y. N. (2018). *21 lessons for the 21st century*. Random House.

Haverkate, H. (1988). Toward a typology of politeness strategies in communicative interaction. *Multilingua*, *7*(4), 385–410. https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.1988.7.4.385

Hinkel, E. (1994). Pragmatics of interaction: Expressing thanks in a second language. *Applied Language Learning*, *5*(1), 73–91.

Ichihara, A. (2016). "Re-thanking on previous indebtedness" as a thanking strategy of Japanese language: Compared with Chinese language discourse. *Nihongo-Bunka to Nihongo-Kyōiku*, *51*, 21–29.

Kato, M. (2001). Nihongo no kōdō-hyōgen no kōzō [Structure of Behavioral Expressions in Japanese]. In Y. Hida (Ed.), *Nihongo kōdō-ron* [Theory of Japanese behaviors] (pp. 129–150). Ōfū. https://bibdb.ninjal.ac.jp/bunken/ja/article/200000193456

Kawamura, Y. (1991). Nihonjin no gengo-kōdō no tokusei [Features of Japanese speakers' communicative behaviors. *Nihongo-gaku*, *10*(5), 51–60.

Kim, M. (2022, July 7). Kankoku to tettei-hikaku! Nihon wa sekai saidai-kyu no "orei taikoku." [Comparison with Korea! Japan the gratitude superpower. *Tōyō Keizai Online*. https://toyokeizai.net/articles/-/600938

Kim, M.-H., & Ohe, H.-G. (2020). Nichi-kan ni okeru daigakusei no kansha-hyōgen no hikaku kenkyū [A comparative study on the expressions of gratitude of the college students in Japan and Korea]. *Kyōiku Kenkyū*, *62*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.34577/00004651

Kindaichi, H. (1987). Orei to owabi no kotoba [Language for gratitude and apology]. *Gengo*, *16*, 75–83.

Le, J. (2012). Ningen-kankei ni yoru ishiki to gengo/higengokōdō no chigai [How consciousness and verbal/non-verbal behaviors are affected by relationships]. *Gengo Kagaku Ronshū*, *16*, 1–12.

Li, H. (2014). *Nihongo to Chūgokugo ni okeru "kansha no gengo-kōdō" no taishō-kenkyū* [Comparative study of communicative behaviors of gratitude in Japanese and Chinese] [Doctoral dissertation, Osaka University]. https://doi.org/10.18910/50573

Mame-san. (2020, December 26). *Yahoo! Chiebukuro*. https://detail.chiebukuro.yahoo.co.jp/qa/question_detail/q13236353268

Meng, N. (2020). Creating an immersive cultural environment at the beginning level. *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, *27*(2), 151–155.

Moriyama, T. (1999). Orei to owabi–kankei-shūfuku no shisutemu to shite [Gratitude and apology as the restorative system of relationship]. *Gokugogaku*, *44*(6), 78–82.

Noda, M. (2020). The role of pedagogical material in the performed culture approach. *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, *27*(2), 146–150.

Noda, M., Ramdeen, Y. I., Luft, S. D., & Mason, J. T. (2017). *Action! Japan: A field guide to using Japanese in the community*. Taylor and Francis.

Noda, M., Wetzel, P. J., Marcus, G., Luft, S. D., & Tsuchiya, S. (2021a). *NihonGo now! Performing Japanese culture level 2 volume 1 textbook*. Routledge.

Noda, M., Wetzel, P. J., Marcus, G., Luft, S. D., & Tsuchiya, S. (2021b). *NihonGo now! Performing Japanese culture level 2 volume 2 textbook*. Routledge.

Noda, M., Wetzel, P. J., Marcus, G., Luft, S. D., Tsuchiya, S., & Itomitsu, M. (Eds.). (2021c). *NihonGo now! Performing Japanese culture level 1 volume 1 textbook*. Routledge.

Noda, M., Wetzel, P. J., Marcus, G., Luft, S. D., Tsuchiya, S., & Itomitsu, M. (Eds.). (2021d). *NihonGo now! Performing Japanese culture level 1 volume 2 activity book*. Routledge.

Noda, M., Wetzel, P. J., Marcus, G., Luft, S. D., Tsuchiya, S., & Itomitsu, M. (Eds.). (2021e). *NihonGo now! Performing Japanese culture level 1 volume 2 textbook*. Routledge.

Ohashi, J. (2003). Japanese culture specific face and politeness orientation: A pragmatic investigation of yoroshiku onegaishimasu. *Multilingua*, *22*(3), 257–274. https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.2003.013

Ohashi, J. (2011). The speech act of o-rei as a subdivision concept of thanking: An investigation from the perspective of reciprocity and politeness. *Nihongo · Nihongaku Kenkyū*, *1*, 109–122.

Ohashi, J. (2013). *Thanking and politeness in Japanese: Balancing acts in interaction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ohashi, J., & Chang, W.-L. M. (2017). (Im)politeness and relationality. In J. Culpeper, M. Haugh, & D. Z. Kádár (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of linguistic (im)politeness* (pp. 257–285). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-37508-7_11

Shi, H. (2007). Saikansha-hyōgen ni tsuite no nitchū hikaku [Comparative study of re-thanking expressions in Japanese and Chinese]. *Chūgoku-gaku Kenkyū Ronshū*, *19*, 108–100.

Svetanant, C. (2016). Acknowledging a debt of gratitude in Japanese persuasive discourse: An interpersonal pragmatic perspective. *Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, *42*, 54–70.

Takada, A., & Dan-Glauser, E. (2024). Decoding the complexities of emotion socialization: Cultures, individual features and shared information. *Scientific Reports*, *14*(1), 3536. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-52885-9

Tannen, D. (1981). New York Jewish conversational style. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 30*, 133–150. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1981.30.133

Tsujihara, R. (2023). *Expressing gratitude in a foreign language: Concept-based language instruction to teach thanking in L2 Japanese* (Publication No. 30524146) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Washington]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Walker, G. (2020). Mindreading and the performed culture approach. *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, *27*(2), 142–146.

Walker, G. (2021). Why we perform. In X. Zhang, and X. Jian (Eds.), *The third space and Chinese language pedagogy* (pp. 139–158). Routledge.

Walker, G., & Noda, M. (2000). Remembering the future: Compiling knowledge of another culture. In D. W. Birckbichler & R. M. Terry (Eds.), *Reflecting on the past to shape the future* (pp. 187–212). National Textbook Company.

Yafutarō. (2021, June 9). Yahoo! Chiebukuro. https://detail.chiebukuro.yahoo.co.jp/qa/question_detail/q13244426648

Yuasa, E. (n.d.). *How to teach Japanese grammar: From fundamentals to practical applications*.

Yuasa, E. (2017). Practical linguistics of Japanese: Japanese linguistics' contributions to teaching dareka/nanika. *Journal of Japanese Linguistics*, *33*(1), 43–63. https://doi.org/10.1515/jjl-2017-0104

yuasa.1@osu.edu