

CONSTRUCTING KOREAN AND JAPANESE INTERCULTURALITY IN TALK: ETHNIC MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZATION AMONG USERS OF JAPANESE

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Abstract

This article investigates how participants accomplish interculturality (Nishizaka 1995, 1999; Mori 2003) when they engage in talk about Korean cultural practices involving labels and descriptions which construct one another's national/ethnic identity. Within the framework of Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks 1972, 1979, 1992), three segments of conversation were analyzed between Korean users of Japanese attending a Japanese university and their Japanese work colleagues or college friends. The analysis challenges key assumptions about intercultural conversation in several ways: 1) by demonstrating that interculturality is not always achieved in talk among speakers from different nations who have different first languages; 2) through illustrating how cultural expertise is often claimed by 'non-members' of the culture; and 3) by showing how presumed cultural experts do not always enact their cultural memberships, even in the face of cultural critique. The study reveals that the various membership categorizations that occur are contingent on how the participants respond to the assessment of various cultural practices. The findings of this study provide further awareness of how cross-cultural identity construction and interculturality are accomplished in talk.

Keywords: cultural practices; Ethnic/national identity; Korean learners of Japanese; Expertise; Membership categorization analysis.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to look at how participants construct interculturality through displaying their cultural expertise in discussions about various cultural practices. The analysis will show how the participants' stance toward various Korean and Japanese cultural practices reveals degrees of interculturality. Recent studies that utilize a Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) or Conversation Analysis (CA) approach demonstrate that participants indicate the relevance or irrelevance of interculturality through interaction (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998; Mori 2003; Nishizaka 1995, 1999). In accordance with this perspective, the relevance of interculturality is a co-constructed accomplishment in which participants show whether or not their cultural differences are important for the interaction. Similarly, this study focuses on moments in Japanese talk where orientations by the participants to attain intercultural understandings occur.

When interculturality becomes a possible topic of talk, the participants may enact or discuss various aspects of their identity. In order to examine the relationship of identity work and the construction of interculturality, this study will use MCA. Identity, as accomplished through membership categorization, is a tradition that developed from

Harvey Sacks' lectures at UCLA (Sacks 1992) and a few of his published writings (1972, 1979). Membership categorization is the process of organizing and reorganizing people into categories or groups and is the "central machinery of social organization" (Sacks 1992: 40). In conversation, we construct and use categories to express who we are and who others are. These categories are a part of the topical talk of conversation, and participants utilize them in local and temporal ways to accomplish social and interpersonal goals.

Sacks' (1972, 1979, 1992) work on membership categorizations provided the foundation for more recent examinations of membership categories as a means for showing how participants orient to their various identities in talk, e.g. Hester and Eglin (1997) and Antaki and Widdicombe (1998). In this study, I utilize the terms *labels* and *descriptions*, as found in Antaki and Widdicombe (1998). The process of *labeling* refers to the discursive practice of producing explicit membership categorizations that are locally occasioned in talk. Labeling shows, first, how a category is attributed to a person in an interaction, and second, how "the business...is transacted with [the categories] by participants" (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998: 10). By examining the local environment where social categories appear, the analyst can determine how the participants employ the labels in their talk. *Description*, on the other hand, is the categorical analysis which speakers do in talk. Unlike labeling, explicit category terms are not found within interactions; instead, speakers allude to category terms through indirectly indexing membership categories. Category labels are implied through *formulations* (Schegloff 1972), i.e., inferences which are grounded in the recipient's response to the previous turns. Because the categories are based on participants' responses to previous turns in talk, any category label that emerges in an analysis is emic in nature, rather than based on the analyst's viewpoint. As Antaki and Widdicombe (1998: 12) note, "the analyst's account will be concerned with how people's descriptions of each other (in all sorts of texts) work, but will not be trying to finesse them or translate them into another language."

Thus, to make the membership categorization in the form of a label or description relevant, the participants must do something with this categorical reference as part of the talk. Not every label or description that appears in talk will be oriented to for making an identity relevant, however. To make a particular identity relevant, the participants must use the identity category to accomplish some activity in their talk.

In order to frame the current study in previous work on cultural categorizations, the next section will discuss how the notion of culture and interculturality has been investigated in Japanese conversation.

2. Previous studies on the construction of culture in Japanese conversation

Iino (1996) and Cook (2006) examined folk beliefs as constructed through conversations among Japanese homestay students and their host families. Iino (1996) found that the Japanese host parents would "*gaijin-ize*" ('foreign-ize') the presentation of Japanese culture. Some of the examples that he provides are differences in food, the use of chopsticks, and compliments about the students' Japanese. He argues that the host parents used these examples to confirm differences between Japanese and other cultures. By code-switching to foreigner talk, host parents created an orientation to the

5 (1.7)

6 Yoshi: *ootomiiru.*
oatmeal
'Oatmeal.'

7 (0.3)

8 David: *O:: ho ho ho [.hh .hh .hh heh heh heh heh*
'O:: ho ho ho .hh .hh .hh heh heh heh heh'9 Toru: [*ootomiiru tte nani?*
Oatmeal QT what
'What is oatmeal?'10 Alan: [*ha ha ha (dooshite?)*
why
'ha ha ha (why?)'11 Yoshi: °(*nanka atta jan*)° *okayu mitaina yatsu.*
Like existed tag rice-porridge like stuff
'It was there, the stuff which looks like rice porridge.'

12 (1.6)

13 Yoshi: *kome tsubushi[ta yoona yatsu.*
Rice mashed like stuff
'The stuff which is like mashed rice.'14 Toru: [*aa: are ka.*
Oh that Q
'Oh:: that one.'15 Toru: *aa aa ootomi/iru*
oh oh oatmeal
'Oh oh oatmeal.'

David begins this segment by asking a question in line 1 about the topic of food. This question directly memberships the participants into national categories, because if Yoshi and Toru were Americans, it would not follow that he would ask about food in this way. In this segment of talk, the participants topicalize an orientation to a difference in national culture, which thereby categorizes the Japanese participants as others. In response to this question, Yoshi replies that he does not like oatmeal, and Toru then generates a response that displays his lack of knowledge of this American food item. Yoshi's response provides a comparison to a Japanese food item, *okayu* ('rice porridge'). There is a delay in uptake, as indicated by the 1.6 second pause. It is after this that Toru

displays further lack of knowledge about oatmeal, which is responded to by Yoshi with definitional information. Notably, Toru's elicitation for help from Yoshi forms a team through their collaborative moves to clarify the meaning of oatmeal. In other words, Yoshi and Toru create a boundary around themselves as Japanese by collaboratively clarifying a cultural observation.

Though not on Japanese conversation, Day's (1998) study also sheds light on the ways that participants display an affiliation or disaffiliation with the membership/non-membership of a national or ethnic category. In his study of co-workers in two factories in Sweden, Day found that the participants often oriented to the topic of ethnic categorization in their talk. The following example in which co-workers are planning a work party shows how T's response actively avoids ethnic categorization.

(2) Segment 2 (adapted from Day 1998: 167)

- 58 M: eh: (0.5) underhålling(.)man skulle kunna
'eh entertainment one could have'
- 59→ ha med chin chon huang ((skratt)) men det
'have chin chon huang ((laughter)) but it's a little'
- 60 är lite svårt.
'hard'
- 61 MA: mm:,
'mm'
- 62 T: ah!>det är det<
'yeah it is'
- 63 M: underhålling (0.2) å först å sen ska vi ta vilk
'entertainment first and then we can take'
- 64 En mat (.)å drick o sen underhålling. Det
'which food and drink and then entertainment,'
- 65 Tar vi sist.
'we'll take it last'
- 66 MA: [ja!
'yeah'
- 67 T: [mm
'mm'

In Day's analysis, M's use of the (fabricated Chinese) expression *chin chon huang* in line 59 alludes to a national/ethnic category by proposing a particular type of activity for the company party (Chinese entertainment). Instead of questioning what *chin chon*

huang is, T chooses to agree with M that arranging for this type of entertainment would be difficult. Day (1998: 167) calls this avoidance of ethnic categorization, or “interactive avoidance.” Through not questioning this term, T avoids indicating resistance to this categorization. Day’s study shows the importance of looking at ethnic categorization made relevant by participants in sequential turn taking.

Informed by these previous studies, the present study also examines how the cultural practices of the “other” are constructed in interactions. As seen in the previous examples from Day (1998), Nishizaka (1995, 1999) and Mori (2003), the Japanese and Korean participants in the data below sometimes use categorical language to group themselves and others into categories based on nationality and/or ethnicity. Interestingly, however, the Japanese participants often enact the identity of Korean ‘cultural expert,’ thereby challenging essentialist notions of ethnic/national identity that presume a perfect correlation between cultural identity and race or nationality. In fact, the data show that in their talk about Korean and Japanese cultural practices, both sets of participants enact ethnic/national identities that do not consistently align with their *prima facie* ethnicities/nationalities. In the analysis below, the first segment examines how the identity of cultural expert is achieved through the participants’ alignments with one other when one of the Japanese participants takes on the role of Korean cultural expert. The second two segments show how Japanese narrators frame their experiences in Korea as different or strange. As the data show, however, the Korean participants do not invoke their own ethnic/national identity as ‘Korean cultural expert’ in their responses to these assessments.

3. Data and analysis

The data for this study comes from 17 hours of audio-recorded conversations recorded by five Korean users of Japanese. The data was transcribed using CA transcription conventions (ten Have 1999). The main participants, Sang Ki Ha, Ji Eun Han, and Hee Jung Yoon¹ are three Korean users of Japanese who were studying at a Japanese university in the Chubu area. They were highly advanced learners of Japanese. Segment (3) was an interaction recorded among friends, and segments (4) and (5) took place with co-workers.

3.1. Cultural expertise: Kimuchi and tsukemono

This section will show how the participants construct the role of ‘cultural expert’ when discussing a cultural practice. The cultural expert identity is constructed through the participants’ orientation to an elicitation of information about Korean culture, and specifically, through the ways the participants align as teams in providing responses. In segment (3), the recipients of the ongoing talk indicate their alignments with each other by making comparisons about cultural practices involving food. The membership categories they construct are the result of description, rather than labeling, as the categories are formed through the alignment of participants into ‘teams’ in talk about

¹ The names are all pseudonyms.

two cultural food icons, *kimuchi* and *tsukemono*. *Kimuchi* and *tsukemono* are pickled vegetables such as cabbage or radish served in Korea and Japan, but *kimuchi* is spicy. Before this segment began, the four participants were already engaged in talk about *kimuchi*, as they were about to share this dish. Two of the participants are native Korean speakers (Hee Jung Yoon and Mi Hi) and two are native Japanese speakers (Fumie and Saho). The participants are having a *nabe* (a pot used to cook the meal which is placed in the center of the table) party at the home of Mi Hi. Mi Hi has brought to the table some *kimuchi* for the participants to eat. Prior to the transcript, Hee Jung Yoon had told the participants about the benefits of eating *kimuchi*. These actions thereby occasioned the talk about *kimuchi* that follows.

(3) Segment 3: Hee Jung Yoon MD 9 Track 1

HY= Hee Jung Yoon, M= Mi Hi, F= Fumie S=Saho

- 1615 S: *soo na no? nanka sa;*,
that NOM? like IP:;
'is that so? well:.'
- 1616 S: *nanchuu, [(nanka omise toka de shika tabeta koto nai anmari.*
its like, like restaurant for example LOC only eat thing not not a lot.
'its like, well for example I have only eaten at restaurants not a lot
though'
- 1617 F: [()
- 1618 F: *karai:.*
spicy:.
'its spicy:.'
- 1619 S: *demo omise iku to:, dooshitemo kimuchi tabetakuna(h)ru(h). ha ha ha.*
but restaurant go if:., for some reason Kimuchi want to e(h)a(h)t. ha
'but if ((I)) go to a restaurant:., for some reason ((I)) want to e(h)a(h)t'
- 1620 *ha ha. anmari tabehen tte ima. (0.4) uchi da to.*
not a lot not eat QT now. (0.4) home Cop if.
'kimuchi. ha ha ha. But I don't eat it often now. (0.4) when I am at
home.'
- 1621 (1.5)
- 1622 S: *demo soto de taberu yatsu toka tte, Hee chan to-*
but outside LOC eat stuff for example QT, Hee Ms. (informal) if-
'but the stuff (you) can eat outside for example, Hee if- (0.6)'
- 1623 *(0.6) (teki) ni wa oishikunai no kana?*
(0.6) (teki) DAT TM not delicious NOM IP?
'(0.6) (teki) it doesn't taste good right?'

- 1624 (1.0)
- 1625 HY: *n::, bimyo da na::*
 hmm::, complicated Cop IP::
 ‘hmm::, it’s complicated.’
- 1626 M: ((makes a sound after she eats something))
- 1627 (1.3)
- 1628 HY: *kimuchi tabetaku naru. (0.2) tama ni ne↑*
 kimuchi eat want. (0.2) occasionally IP↑
 ‘((I)) want to eat kimuchi. (0.2) sometimes ↑’
- 1629 S: *aa:::.*
- 1630 HY: *de, mukoo mukoo da to:, nanka (0.3) tonkatsu toka taberu n jan.*
 and, over there over there Cop if., well (0.3) pork cutlet for example eat NOM IP.
 ‘and, if over there over there:, well (0.3) for example I want to eat pork cutlets right.’
- 1631 (0.5)
- 1632 S: *tonkatsu?*
 pork cutlets?
 ‘pork cutlets?’
- 1633 HY: *un. resutoran de.*
 yes. restaurant LOC.
 ‘yes. at a restaurant.’
- 1634 S: *fu:[n.*
 hm:[m.
 ‘hm:[m.’
- 1635 HY: *[de, [sore ga, sore, koo tanomu to ne, kimuchi ga futsuu ni=*
 and, that S, that, like order if IP, kimuchi S usually DAT
 ‘and, that, that, like if ((you)) order ((it)), usually ((it)) comes’
- 1636 F: *[°(oishii no?)° ((appears to be addressing this to Mi Hi))*
 °(is it delicious?)° ((appears to be addressing this to Mi Hi))
 ‘°(is it delicious?)° ((appears to be addressing this to Mi Hi))’
- 1637 HY: *=detekuru n da tte yo.*
 come out NOM Cop QT IP.
 ‘with kimuchi it’s said.’

- 1638 S: *aa:.a son[na no,*
aa: really NOM,
'aa: oh really,'
- 1639 HY: *[isshoni isshoni tabetari suru [n dakedo, koko detekonai*
together together eat do NOM but, here not come out
'we eat ((them)) together together but, here ((it)) doesn't come
with ((it))'
- 1640 F: *[ha ha ha Ha ha ha.*
- 1641 HY: *janai?*
right?
'right?'
- 1642 S: *dete ko(h)na(h)i(h) ne(h).*
not come out IP.
'((it)) doesn't come with ((it))'
- 1643 HY: *un dakara, tabetakunaru.*
yes so, (I) want to eat (it).
'yes so, ((I))want to eat ((it)).'
- 1644 X: *he he he*
- 1645 S: *aa[:.*
- 1646 F: *[e nani nani? tonkatsu ni kimuchi ga tsuite kuru no?*
e what what? pork cutlets DAT kimuchi S attach come NOM?
'e what what? ((you)) get kimuchi with pork cutlets?'
- 1647 S: *e dakara nandemo tsuite kuru tte kan[ji?*
e because anything attach come QT like?
'e isn't it like ((it)) comes with anything?'
- 1648 HY: *[soo soo soo, hanbaagaa toka.*
yes yes yes, hamburger for example.
'yes yes yes, hamburger for'
- 1649 (1.3)
- 1650 F: *ja kyabetsu no sengiri wa?*
well cabbage LK shredded TM?
'well what about shredded cabbage?'

1651 (1.2)

1652 HY: *aru yo sore mo.*
exist IP that also.
'there is that too.'

1653 F: *he::.*

1654 (0.9)

1655 F: *he he*

1656 M: *sore, tsuitekuru no mo aru shi tsuitekonai no mo aru.*
that, come with LK also exist also not come with LK also exist.
'that, there are ones that have ((it)) also, ((and)) ones that don't have ((it)).'

1657 HY: *un. tsukete dashite betsu ni koo,*
yes. attach server not especially like,
'yes. ((they)) put ((it on the plate)) serve ((it)) it is not particularly like,'

1658 F: *un.*
uh-huh.
'uh-huh.'

1659 S: *nihon ni nihon da to tsukemono ga [aru yoona=*
Japan DAT Japan Cop if tsukemono ((pickled radish)) S exist that kind of=
'in Japan if ((it)) is in Japan, there is a tsukemono like thing='

1660 F: *[(tsukemono)*

1661 (0.4)

1662 S: *[=kanji ya ne:.*
=like IP IP:.
'=like right:.'

1663 HY: *[soo soo [un soo soo*
yes yes yes yes yes
'yes yes yes yes yes'

1664 F: *[uchi ne.*
our IP.
'our.'

In lines 1615-1616, Saho provides an account of her *kimuchi* eating practices at restaurants. In line 1622-1623, Saho asks a question that elicits alignment from Hee Jung Yoon. This is a move towards solidarity and affiliation with Hee Jung Yoon, as it seeks Hee Jung Yoon's assessment of Japanese-style *kimuchi*. The reference to Japanese restaurants here is indicated by *soto* ('outside'), a clear *place formulation* (Schegloff 1972). Hee Jung Yoon provides an acknowledgement marker (*n::*), but does not follow with agreement. Instead, she just states that it is complicated, which may allow her to avoid providing a negative assessment of Japanese style *kimuchi*. Next, in lines 1628-1630, she provides an example of when she likes to eat *kimuchi*. In line 1630, she uses another place formulation, *mukoo* ('over there'), thereby distinguishing Korean-made *kimuchi* from Japanese-made *kimuchi*, which Saho has just mentioned. This move establishes that now she will shift the talk about *kimuchi* to the context of Korea. By doing so, she is now talking about Korean practices in general, and her talk indexes her as someone with Korean cultural expertise.

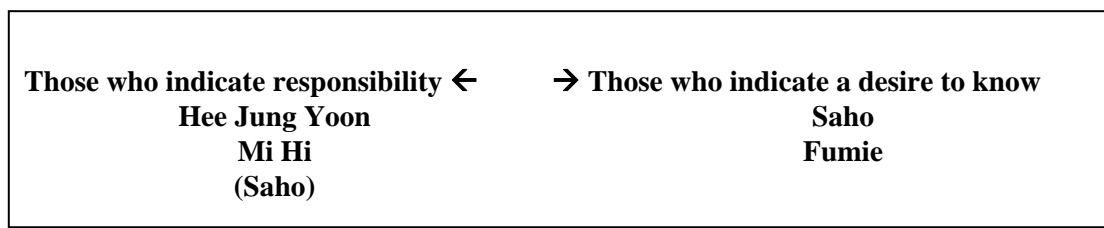
In response to Hee Jung Yoon's comments about eating *kimuchi* with pork cutlets in Korea, Saho repeats *tonkatsu* ('pork cutlet') (line 1632) with rising intonation. This rising intonation indexes her stance of surprise, which indicates that for her, the practice of eating pork cutlets with *kimuchi* is marked or unusual. In response, Hee Jung Yoon points out the normalcy of the practice in Korea, thus enacting her Korean cultural expertise once again, and then she provides a contrast of this with Japan in line 1639. It is important to note that Hee Jung Yoon does not take on the stance of a Japanese cultural expert in making this contrast, however. She asks Saho to confirm her observation, thus instantiating Saho as a Japanese cultural expert.

Fumie then asks a question in line 1646. Fumie, who has been silent for the most part so far, asks the question to clarify what she has heard as a side recipient in the conversation between Hee Jung Yoon and Saho. The way in which she formulates the question indicates she was not paying close attention, and her question brings her into the conversation as a fully ratified participant, slightly changing the roles of the participants.

Until this point in the conversation, Saho had been receiving information about Korean cultural practices from Hee Jung Yoon. In line 1647, however, Saho becomes a tentative co-giver of this information when she acts as a Korean cultural expert. In this turn, she displays her "congruent understanding" (Goodwin & Goodwin 1987) of the information provided by Hee Jung Yoon and her newfound knowledge about Korean food. In response, Hee Jung Yoon takes on the role of co-giver of information and provides Saho with validation as a Korean cultural expert in line 1648 when she ratifies Saho's utterance with *soo soo* ('yes, yes'). Hee Jung Yoon then provides another example to supplement Saho's answer, thus forming a team with Saho to answer Fumie's question. Fumie pursues this line of questioning to get even more information about "how different" the food practices are in Korea. In response, Mi Hi, who has basically been silent until this point, and Hee Jung Yoon form a team to provide further explanations about Korean culinary practices in lines 1656-1657, thereby enacting the identity of Korean cultural experts. Then, Saho wraps up this segment by comparing the similarities among the participants, rather than the differences, with her comment about *tsukemono*.

In this segment, the participants group themselves into two 'teams'. This grouping is similar to the teams found in Goodwin's (1981, 1984, 1986, 1987) and

Mori's (2003) work which also showed how participants affiliated with one another as givers and receivers of information in order to clarify cultural items that were unknown to some of the participants. Here, Saho and Hee Jung Yoon's collaboration strongly resembles the way that Mori's (2003) Japanese participants formed teams to discuss oatmeal. In this case, Saho took responsibility for her status as someone who could make inferences based on what she has just learned to further the information exchange, and in doing so, she temporarily crossed a national/cultural boundary. She demonstrated that she was able to take responsibility as an active participant in intercultural talk in two ways: First, when she participated and was ratified by Hee Jung Yoon about the Korean cultural practice in question, and second, when she was able to make a connection between *kimuchi* and *tsukemono*. This is depicted in Figure 1. The last section of the data demonstrate the reinstantiation of interculturality based on difference in nationality, when Hee Jung Yoon and Mi Hi formed a team and took the floor from Saho to provide knowledge about Korean culture, thereby indexing their status as Korean cultural experts. Saho and Fumie used questions to elicit information to work towards intercultural understanding and the ability to take responsibility for knowledge.



In the end, the cultural practice of eating *kimuchi* as being “different” is illustrated to be “similar” to a Japanese practice of eating *tsukemono*. Notice that the above division is not completely drawn based on ethnicity/nationality. Saho was able to cross over to the “taking responsibility side” for part of the conversation. In the end, it was Saho who brought about alignment for the practices of eating *kimuchi* and *tsukemono*, as “they are alike.”

The participants also oriented to the ethnic/national categorization of their identities as Japanese and Korean. Through the topical talk, they constructed descriptions of membership categorizations. However, the specific identities were not labeled directly in the conversation, but rather, were formulated and became inferable from the participants' descriptive work and the alignments in the conversation. In sections of the talk, Hee Jung Yoon and Mi Hi formulated their own Korean identity through taking responsibility for explaining Korean food practices. Fumie and Saho were seekers of information about those cultural practices, and in displaying an interest in this information, they enacted their identities as non-Koreans, or ‘others.’ This division of teams was clearly along national/ethnic lines. The categories of the national/ethnic identities and the cultural practices are found in Figure 2.

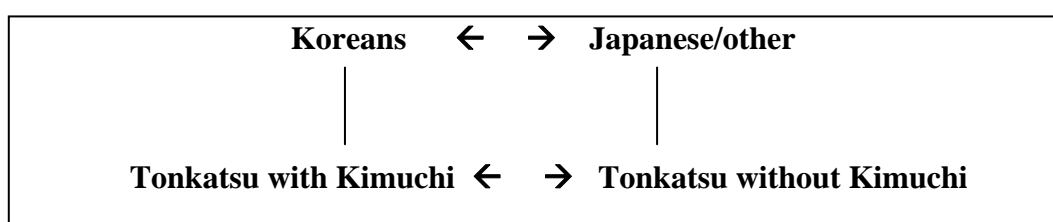


Figure 2. With *Kimuchi*/without *Kimuchi*

At first, the participants constructed the ethnic/national identity categories of Koreans and Japanese to explain the different practices involved in serving *kimuchi* with *tonkatsu*. However, the participants then worked toward finding common ground. While eating *kimuchi* with *tonkatsu* was at first seen as a difference, Saho then treated the *kimuchi/tsukemono* pair as a link of similarity between the two groups, just as *tonkatsu* and *kyabetsu sengiri* are. This is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. *Kimuchi/Tsukemono*

Therefore, despite this particular food being different, the participants achieved common ground for the idea of serving something that is fermented or pickled (*kimuchi* and *tsukemono*).

3.2. “Korean culture is strange”

In the previous segment, the participants worked together to explore the cultural practices of eating *kimuchi* and *tsukemono*. In the next two segments, Japanese participants tell narratives in which they provide assessments that show degrees of surprise at Korean cultural practices. Interculturality among the participants is not made relevant in talk in segment (4), but it is explicitly used as a label in (5). In both cases, the Korean recipients of these narratives, Ji Eun Han and Sang Ki Ha, are interacting with older male co-workers during work breaks. Ji Eun Han works for her aunt, a Korean national, who has a small art import business, and Sang Ki Ha works at a *nomiya* (a bar) that is Korean-owned. Their co-workers (A and B respectively) tell narratives that display negative stances toward Korean practices. In telling these narratives, A and B do not appeal to the Korean recipients as cultural experts, as in segment (3); rather, they just provide their own assessments of the events as unpleasant or strange. Interestingly, these negative assessments are not elaborated on or challenged or by Ji Eun Han or Sang Ki Ha. In segment (4), Ji Eun Han provides an acknowledgement of her co-worker’s position, and she aligns with him. In segment (5),

Sang Ki Ha provides a non-committal response to a negative description of the cultural practice in question.

In segment (4), Ji Eun Han and her co-worker, A, draw on knowledge of cultural practices that are specific to Korea and Japan through the stances they take up with each other in their talk. In this case, the topic of the talk is the way food is wrapped and displayed in Korea and Japan. In the segment below, A is recalling a time when he was in Korea and wanted to buy Korean snacks. It is relevant that Ji Eun Han refers to A as someone whom she calls *sensei*, a title used to address or refer to teachers, doctors, and other authority figures. A is older than Ji Eun Han, and he has taught her a great deal about many work-related matters. Prior to and throughout the segment below, the co-workers are eating donuts and discussing the topic of food.

(4) Segment 4 Ji Eun Han MD 2 Track 1

- 37 (12.0)
- 38 A: *ano:: kankoku no ne,*
well:: Korea LK IP,
'well:: Korea's'
- 39 JH: *un,*
uh-huh,
'uh-huh,'
- 40 (1.7) ((someone makes chewing sound))
- 41 A: *ano depa:to ne,*
well department stores IP,
'well department stores,'
- 42 JH: *un,*
uh-huh,
'uh-huh,'
- 43 A: *de:, okashi: utteru toko, aru ja nai? soko itte ne, (1.9)*
and:, sweets/snacks: selling place, exist right? there go IP, (1.9)
'and:, there are places where they sell sweets/snacks right? (I) went there,
(1.9)'
- 44 *kaoo to omou n dakedo ne, (1.2) yappa mitame wa ne:, anmari:,*
buy QT think NOM but IP, (1.2) just as I thought looks TP IP:, not so:,
'I was thinking about buying (some) but, (1.2) just as I thought as for the
appearance: ((of the packaging)), not really:,'
- 45 (2.6) *nanka oishiku (0.4) [nai kanji de ne↑*
(2.6) something delicious (0.4) not appear COP IP↑?
'(2.6) it did not appear (0.4) to look like [something delicious↑'

- 46 JH: *[oishiku (nasasoo-)*
delicious (not seem-)
'it does not seem (delicious-)'
- 47 (1.7)
- 48 A: *yappari ne, nihon no hoo ga sono hen no tokoro wa ne;*
just as I thought IP, Japan LK side S that side LK place TM IP:,
'just as I thought, on the Japan side as for that side:,'
- 49 *(1.1) ma (0.3) ((clears throat)) (0.6) oishisoo ni tsukutte*
(1.1) well (0.3) ((clears throat)) (0.6) delicious appear DAT make
'(1.1) well (0.3) ((clears throat)) (0.6) they make it look delicious,'
- 50 *[a- aru, seihin (wa ne)*
e- exist, products (TM IP)
'the products (that is)'
- 51 JH: *[a, soo desu ne↑ u:n. mitame wa kekkoo ne:, ano: (0.3) .hh*
a, that Cop IP↑, ye:s. appearanceTM considerably:, well: (0.3) .hh
'a, that's right↑, yes. ((the)) looks are considerably:, well: (0.3) .hh'
- 52 *oishisoo ni miemasu kara:, minna ne:, nanka mise no:*
delicious looking DAT appear because:, everyone IP:, something store LK
'because it appears to look delicious:, everyone:, puts something'
- 53 *soto ni mo nanka aru ja nai desu ka.*
outside DAT also: something exist right Cop Q
'outside of their stores right?'
- 54 (1.4) ((chewing sound))
- 55 A: *depaa[to- kankoku no depaato de kore da na: to=*
department [store- Korea LK department store LOC this Cop IP: QT=
'I was thinking department [store- at a Korean department store it is
just='
- 58 JH: *[u::n.*
uh-hu::h.
'uh-hu::h.'
- 59 A: *=omotte:, (1.9) kaoo ka kawanai ka mayotte miteru to, yappari*
=think:, (1.9) by Q not buy QT waver looking if, just as I thought didn't
'=this,(1.9) do I want to buy this or do I not want to buy this I was
wavering as I looked at it, and just as I thought,'

- 60 *kawanai na.*
 buy IP.
 ‘I didn’t buy it.’
- 61 JH: *a:: ((lip smack)) soo nan da.*
 a:: ((lip smack)) that NOM Cop.
 ‘*a:: ((lip smack)) I see.*’
- 62 (4.6)

Ji Eun Han and A accomplish the categorization of their own and one another’s identities through discussing how Korean and Japanese companies package their food products. A uses a place formulation, Korea, to establish the topic and location of the explanation that will follow. This place formulation establishes a level of contrast in the way that the Korean and Japanese sweets are packaged. A treats *okashi* (‘sweets,’ line 43), as something that is culturally similar at first glance, but then he specifically contrasts the appearance of the Korean and Japanese sweets/snacks, thereby establishing a marked distinction. In addition, A uses *soko* as a formulation for the previous reference to the market in Korea in line 43. He then continues to contrast the appearance (*mitame*) of the packaging in Korea with the packaging that is *nihon no hoo* (‘on the Japan side’). He provides a further contrast in lines 48-50 by stating that he expected that the Korean packaging would not look very appealing. Surprisingly, Ji Eun Han aligns with A’s negative evaluation of Korean packaged foods by supplying the phrase “not seem so delicious” in line 46.

Ji Eun Han continues to align with A in line 51, where he provides an agreement token (*a soo desu ne*) with rising intonation. She then provides an elaboration of A’s narrative by adding a positive description of her own observation of Japanese food culture². She validates A’s categorization of what the packaging represents in Japan in contrast to Korea. A follows by explaining that he did not buy the product. Here, he uses the epistemic marker *yappari* to show that his prior orientation to this event was to doubt the worth of the product. In line 61, Ji Eun Han responds, as if to indicate “I have heard you.” This provides acknowledgement without providing any alignment, which could be viewed as a strategy for avoiding conflict.

In sum, the descriptive work for membership categorization that occurs constructs the differences in the cultural practice of displaying snacks/sweets in Korea and Japan. However, no evidence for cultural difference among the participants themselves is apparent in the talk. The participants accomplish shared membership identity work through their stances as the speaker and the recipient. A’s description of the situation places him as someone who is claiming knowledge and expertise of this particular Korean practice, even though he is a ‘Japanese’ on the face of it. In her own talk, Ji Eun Han also creates memberships for herself as someone with cultural knowledge of both countries. She claims cultural expertise about Japan specifically

² The topicalization of *wa* in line 51 seems to imply that “the taste is not my concern, but at least for the appearance I think it is good.” The overlap here shows that she is continuing with the topic proposed by A and facilitating his comparison of Japanese and Korean sweets.

through lines 51-53, where she describes the Japanese practice of putting plastic food in the windows to entice customers. A takes on the role of cultural critic for this Korean practice, and surprisingly, Ji Eun Han does not challenge it. In fact, she shows alignment with this critique. In the end, interculturality between the participants is not made relevant and hence, cannot be claimed. At the level of talk, both participants display shared memberships in the same ethnic/national categories through their demonstrations of Korean and Japanese cultural knowledge, and through their shared stance toward the food packaging practices of both cultures.

Unlike the two previous segments where alignment is indicated to some degree, the participants in segment (5) do not show an indication of alignment with each other. In this segment, B is recalling a past experience about going to a funeral in Korea during a meal break at work with his Japanese boss. Before this segment, B was making comparisons between Japanese and Korean people in regard to loyalty toward people they care about. This previous talk established B's frame for telling this narrative as a comparison of these two cultures.

(5) Segment 5 Sang Ki Ha MD 5 Track 5

- 209 (2.4)
- 210 B: *(geki na) sugoi shi na. (1.2) ore mo ichi ban saisho ni*
(drama IP) really also IP. (1.2) I also one number first DAT
'(dramatic) it is like wow. (1.2) but I also it was the very'
- 211 *bikkurishita n dakedo, kankoku no (chuukyookeibajoo) no gakkoo ga*
surprised NOM Cop but, Korea LK (chuukyookeibajoo) LK school S
'first time I was surprised, there is a Korean (chuukyoo racetracking)
school'
- 212 *aru no. kankoku no.*
exist NOM. Korea LK.
'(it's) Korean.'
- 213 SH: *hai.*
uh-huh.
'uh-huh.'
- 214 (0.4)
- 215 B: *soko de:, moo ore wa honto (kaikaku o matteta) hito ga:*
there LOC:, already I TM really (revolution O waited) person S:
'there:, as for me the person who really (waited for a revolution)'
- 216 *(0.2) nakunatte:, (0.9) sooshiki atta (mon) na? hajimete kankoku no*
(0.2) passed away:, (0.9) funeral had IP IP? first Korea LK

- ‘(world) passed away. (0.9) and there was a funeral right? it was the first time’
- 217 B: *sooshiki itta (wake yo).*
funeral went (reason IP).
‘to go to a Korean funeral.’
- 218 SH: *hai.*
uh-huh.
‘uh-huh.’
- 219 B: *soshitara, haitta totan ni nonde mitai:[: yo. odori yo(h)t(h)ta(h)=*
and, go in as soon as DAT drink seems IP dance di(h)d(h)=
‘and, as soon as I went in I wanted to try to drink:: danc(h)in(h)g =’
- 220 SH: [a::
- 221 B: =*ke(h)do(h) hehehe. .hh na(h)n(h)da(h) ko(h)re(h) futsuu nihon*
=bu(h)t(h) hehehe. .hh what's this IP. usually Japan
‘=wha(h)t's(h) th(h)i(h)s. usually if in Japan,’
- 222 *da to, shuu:n to shite ko: >oshookoo [shite()<,*
Cop if, resentfully do filler incense do
‘they’d be burning incenses and behave resentfully.’
- 223 SH: [*hai.*
uh-huh.
‘uh-huh.’
- 224 B: [*kan(h)koku(h) .hh nomeya utaeya nanka kekko:nshiki mitai ni=*
Korea .hh lively gathering drinking singing weddi:ng seems like NOM=
‘Korean .hh it was like a lively gathering with drinking and singing it
seemed like a weddi:ng=’
- 225 SH: [*soo desu ne.*
that Cop IP.
‘that is right.’
- 226 B: =*sawaidoru mon ne.*
=make noise IP IP.
‘=they were making noises.’
- 227 SH: *nanka ja:, [(tsuya- wa)*
something then: [(wake- TM)
‘something then: [(as for wake-)’
- 228 B: [*moo:::*

yet:::
‘yet:::’

- 229 B: *nan ja kore toka tte omotta. are ichiban saishoo bikkurishita mon na[:.*
what's this fore example QT thought. that one number first surprised IP IP[:.
‘I thought for example what's this. It was the very first time (I) was surprised[:.’
- 230 SH: *[u::n.*
uh-hu::h.
‘uh-hu::h.’
- 231 (0.9)
- 232 B: *are ni odoroiita na:*
that DAT surprised IP.
‘that really shocked (me).’
- 233 SH: *un.*
uh-huh.
‘uh-huh.’
- 234 (1.0)
- 235 B: *un. hehe*
uh-huh. hehe
‘uh-huh. hehe’
- 236 SH: *yappari bunka wa chotto chigau kara.*
just as I thought culture TM a little different because.
‘just as I thought (it’s) because the cultures are a little different.’
- 237 B: *un un. (1.2) ((sniffs)) sono hito mo sa, kodomo gonin otte sa,*
yes yes. (1.2) ((sniffs)) that person also IP, child five existed IP,
‘yes yes. (1.2) ((sniffs)) that guy also, had five children,’
- 238 *yonjuu:: (0.9) gojuu chikaku ni shinda kana.*
forty:: (0.9) fifty near DAT died IP.
‘(he was) forty:: (0.9) near fifty when he died.’
- 239 SH: *un.*
uh-huh.
‘uh-huh.’

B’s actions construct his role as a narrator of a strange cross-cultural experience. He presents his stance toward the funeral through prefacing the narrative as the first time he was surprised in Korea (line 210-211). In response to B’s narrative, Sang Ki Ha only

provides acknowledgement tokens to indicate that he is listening attentively. When B provides a characterization of funerals in Japan in lines 221-222, Sang Ki Ha provides an agreement token “*soo desu ne*” (‘that is right’) in line 225 in response to B’s formulation of Japanese funerals.³ This is followed by B’s characterization of funerals in Korea. Line 227 can be seen as an effort by Sang Ki Ha to confirm his understanding of the previous utterance. However, Sang Ki Ha aborts his turn when B overlaps his talk. Sang Ki Ha does not venture to take the floor again until line 236. He does not provide an account as a Korean cultural expert for what B has described, nor does he seek clarification from B. Instead, he employs the practice of labeling to establish interculturality between B and himself with “*yappari bunka wa chotto chigau kara*” (Just as I thought, (it’s) because our cultures are a little different).

Turning to the identity work being accomplished here, B formulates the ethnic/national identity of both himself and the person who died through contrasting Japanese and Korean funerals in lines 210-226. His assessment and his surprise at the funeral practices in Korea establish his identity as a non-member in that particular event. He further aligns with Japaneseness through descriptions of how the funeral of his friend differed from a Japanese funeral. His surprise reveals his negative stance towards this cultural practice as strange or unusual.

Sang Ki Ha does not challenge or question B’s account, but rather, points to the interculturality that has been established. This is in direct contrast to the previous segments where the participants work together either to find common ground between their cultures (as in segment (3)), or to provide alignment to a negative assessment of a Korean cultural practice (segment (4)).

4. Conclusions

This article has examined what occurs in talk about cultural matters to see how the participants go about constructing interculturality. Similar to what Mori (2003) found, the participants in segment (3) worked together as teams to come to an understanding of the cultural practices related to food by making a comparison. In doing so, some of them established themselves as sharing expertise in the same cultural practices. In (3), Saho switched teams momentarily to show her ability to make a supposition and to indicate her alignment with the Korean cultural experts. In the end, she made the leap to link two seemingly different foods, *kimuchi* and *tsukemono*, as being similar cultural items, thereby reducing the significance of the recently established interculturality.

Perhaps the most interesting finding of the study is that people of different cultural backgrounds will align with negative assessments about their own cultures, thereby creating ambiguous cultural identities. This was the case in segment (4), which demonstrated how a Korean participant aligned with a negative assessment about Korean cultural practices made by her Japanese interlocutor. The study also shows that negative assessments may not yield interculturality if participants do not challenge the negative assessments of their own cultures. Segments (4) and (5) illustrated this

³ The expression ‘usually in Japan’ could be interpreted as a way to emphasize the cultural differences being described, or it could be argued that B’s use of this phrase treats Sang Ki Ha as a person who needs to be informed of the usual cultural practices of Japanese, and that this utterance thereby constructs him as culturally different.

outcome. One possible reason for this difference is the participants' interpersonal relationships. As mentioned before, in the first segment analyzed, Hee Jung Yoon was interacting with her close friends. In the last two segments, however, Ji Eun Han and Sang Ki Ha were interacting with a superior at work, an identity which was made relevant in other parts of the data through address terms. Ji Eun Han called A *sensei* (teacher) while Sang Ki Ha addressed B as *buchoo* (boss). These two contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982) provide a possible explanation for the lack of challenges to these negative categorizations. Furthermore, it is significant that neither Korean participant successfully enacted the identity of Korean cultural expert in segments (4) and (5). This is in direct contrast to what happened in segment (3) where the participants established teams of cultural experts and then worked to achieve a positive stance toward their interculturality. In segments (4) and (5), Korean cultural expertise was assumed by the Japanese speakers, and in (4), the Korean participant aligned with the negative assessments made of a Korean cultural practice. In (5), the Korean participant explicitly named interculturality to index the participants' different memberships.

The data show that the various membership categorizations that occur depend on how participants respond to their co-participants' assessments of the cultural practices under discussion. This study proposes that interculturality is dependent upon the orientation to, or lack of orientation to, the identity of 'cultural expert.' Descriptive work based on this identity formed the basis for nearly all categorizations in the data. In segment (5), the participants only turned to the explicit labeling of interculturality after this descriptive work had first been attempted. This may reveal a preference for subtlety or indirectness in marking cultural sameness or difference, but further research would need to be done in order to justify such a claim.

In the end, the findings here suggest that face-to-face interactions about specific cultural practices do not necessarily lead to the enactment of cultural difference among participants. Instead, participants may choose to find common ground, thereby dismissing cultural difference, as Saho did in (3). Or, they may claim cultural expertise in another's cultural practices, as demonstrated by participant A in (4) when talking about Korean retail practices. Furthermore, participants may avoid the enactment of specific cultural affiliations by choosing to let certain topics pass, including critiques of their own cultural practices, as Sang Ki Ha did in (5). This study does not provide the definitive answer to how interculturality works. Rather, the analysis provides additional possibilities for how interculturality can be constructed and treated as irrelevant in talk.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions

.	Falling intonation, declarative intonation
,	Falling-rising, continuing intonation
?	Rising intonation, question intonation

-	False start
:	Elongated vowel
=	Latched turn with no gap or overlap, or continuation by same speaker from non-adjacent line
[Overlap
(0.5)	Length of pause
(difficulty)	Unsure hearings
()	Unclear speech
(())	Comments: laugh, breath out.
°e::to°	Quieter than rest of speech
<u>li</u>	Greater than normal stress
ha	Laughter token
(h)	Laughter token within a word
h	Audible outbreath, more letters indicate longer outbreath
.h	Audible inbreath, more letters indicate longer inbreath
↑↓	A shift to a higher or lower pitch
X:	Indicates speaker unknown
> <	Fast talk

Interlinear Gloss Abbreviations

Aux:	Auxiliary
Cop:	Various forms of copula verb be
Cop-tent:	Various forms of copula verb be in its tentative form
CONJ	Conjunction
DAT:	Dative
FP:	Final particle
IP:	Interactional particle
LK:	Linking nominal – occurs between two nouns
LOC:	Locative
Neg:	Negative morpheme
NOM:	Nominalizer
O:	Object marker
PST:	Past tense morpheme
S:	Subject marker

SF:	Speech filler
Q:	Question marker
QT:	Quotative marker
Tag:	Tag-like expression
TM:	Topic marker

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