

Stirk 先生のインタビュースクリプト（その3）

Interviewer:

Do you find any change in attitude or general atmosphere of students?

Stirk:

Yes, things have change a lot. When I first came, the students were extremely quiet. Unless they thought they knew a perfect answer to some question, they would prefer to stay completely silent. I think when I asked a questions in class, then heads would go down and I couldn't catch anybody's eye for an answer. But, yes, in maybe the last ten to fifteen years they've become much less shy of. . . of getting on to the native English speaker and so on. So that hasn't been a problem at all in last ten years, and the students are talkative, talkative enough. And even in the last few years, they're quite, quite cheeky which makes a, makes a pleasant change when they answer back or criticize in class. So that's. . . yes, I found, rather more, rather easier to cope with than silence. So, yes, in fact, I've enjoyed teaching much more the last ten years than I, I had done before that.

Interviewer:

So you are a very distinguished teacher. I'd like you to give some advice to students, um, English learners. And because you have studied many foreign languages so far, so some useful advice is much appreciated.

Stirk:

I see. Well, something that has been striking me in the last few years. . . I've been trying to work it out is that, eh, how can I express it. . . I think, what you need to do is. . . . I think, learning grammar from grammar books is maybe not really very helpful especially for adults. And I think what you really need to do is to, well, if you can't manage to speak so much, then reading, reading is always a good idea. And I think rather than trying to learn grammar then, well, something that a French teacher at school, years ago, told me was just to get some French novels that amuse you, I mean, I was really keen on science-fiction in those days, so I got some French novels on science fiction and just read them, and his advice was just carry on reading, and as long as you can follow the story, so then that's okay, you're getting enough out of the, out of the novel. And parts of things you don't understand, I mean, the descriptions and so on, then just don't bother and you know, instead of looking up every word, which is, really, really awfully dispiriting. Then, if you just read through a novel, and, as long as you're enjoying the story and following it, then that's okay. And then when you finish that, you read another novel, and gradually, gradually things will work their way into your mind and you'll remember them. And maybe I'd like to add to that, that when you, sometimes when you're reading a novel or hearing, hearing something spoken in some language or you read some poem or something, then maybe some, some sentence or phrase will attract you, or you learn some new word in it. And it seems to be an interesting phrase. So then I think a good idea is just to repeat

it to yourself and maybe a dozen times, and let it come into your mind from time to time. And gradually you'll learn bits of phrases and so on, and I think that helps grammar as well as vocabulary in the end. And so you gradually learn to compose new sentences according to what you've half-remembered. I think that's the. . . well, that would be my advice these days, yes.

Interviewer:

I see.

Stirk:

Well, and thinking about people's customs, and their different customs and habits in. . . from countries, it suddenly struck me the other day about how a lot of our, a lot of our sort of social and cultural awareness is rather unconscious. I mean because, thinking of the cats again and those amusing incidents. . . some years ago, when. . . no, I usually, well, always call my wife by her name and she calls me by my name. But when we first got the cats, then I used to say to the cats, you know, "Come along darlings" and "How are you today sweetheart", and so on. My wife suddenly said "Why don't you ever use words like 'darling' and 'sweetheart' to me?" and I was really puzzled, but I knew I never would. And then gradually I realized that in the, in the community where I was brought up, then, you don't use words like darling or sweetheart to someone you'd regard as an equal. You'd only use them to someone you regarded as inferior, well, not inferior, but not at the same level, like a child or a pet, for instance. And of course I was just following, following that custom automatically, and instinctively. So I would never call my wife "darling", because I would think that's insulting to her. Of course with the cat, it's okay isn't it? And that's where I think British people are more like Japanese, I think. So when we hear Americans, I mean, we sort of think of them as rather being too effusive in saying, "I love you so much", and it's. . . that makes us feel a little bit sort of uncomfortable or different, anyway.

Interviewer:

So it is often said that Japanese people say "I'm sorry" or "Excuse me" so easily. And but. . . I just visited London last. . . this February, uh, March. So, then I noticed that people in London say "I'm sorry", you know, very much, So it was rather natural to me because I'm also from a culture in which people say "I'm sorry" or "Excuse me".

Stirk:

Yes, I think that's certainly one similarity, culturally. And I think British people are famous in Europe for this, for saying "I'm sorry" all the time. So if someone treads on your foot, then you say "I'm sorry" to them rather than the other way around.