On Japanese equalitarianism[1]

Hiroaki Ishiguro
Miyagi University of Education, Sendai, Japan

Abstract

In this paper, I discuss Japanese idea of an equalitarianism in education.   It is one of fundamental folk theories for teachers.   The idea of the discrimination in Japan is not limited to social ones but also individual internal capitals like an ability, belongs, interests, and so on. A Japanese teacher should uniform every student equally under same standard to avoid discriminating any students.   Their most important task is to make any pupil nothing inferior in their mind by any differences. It is almost self-evident for Japanese teachers that the idea of an equalitarianism is good for a student.   Is it really true that to uniform students for equalizing their individual attributes produces no inferiority complex for students?   Japanese teachers have an inevitable dilemma between individualization and uniformity under the equalitarianism.   How is the equalitarianism made of?   One of the popular answers is that it is spontaneously produced by Japanese homogeneity.   I insist that the idea is only a legend.   Japan is a heterogeneous society from the old days so that it needs the procedures for a homogeneity in some standards.   Both a ranking system and an exclusivity for outsiders are very useful tools to firm a homogeneous group.   Rather, the more the heterogeneity goes on by a recent increase of non Japanese, the more strong a collective consciousness will be reinforced.   Therefore, new comers will be assimilated as low ranking member into a given community or be excluded as outsiders.   One case in a nursery community is presented to discuss the items mentioned above.   It shows that the teacher's support for a new comer sometimes turns to give him an inferior complex to the old timers under the equalitarianism.   At the case, the equalitarian treatment to avoid any discrimination may be changed into the discriminatory one for the new comer.   The irritable connection between the equalitarianism and the discrimination corresponds to Japanese teacher's worry about their recent dilemma between an individualism and a uniformity.

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Japanese equalitarianism

A " poor" packed lunch

At first, I will show you one episode. When I asked one female nursery school teacher about her class, I found an important aspect of Japanese mind.   She explained a school excursion held before few days. It is a special day that every child has his or her own a packed lunch ("Bentou" in Japanese) and some dry confectioneries.   A special treatment in a school excursion is one of custom in Japanese educational institutions or nursery ones.   Japanese usually take a packed lunch.   Many people prefer eating it to taking lunch in a restaurant.   The teacher referred to the Chinese child.   She said as follows;

He took only one rice ball.   It was bought in a convenience store.   The other children had each lunch box and confectioneries. I felt he was very pitiful so that I brought some of my lunch materials and confectioneries to him.

The convenience store is a small store that provides miscellaneous goods and foods for daily use. Teacher's story of a poor boy is very interesting for me but almost Japanese do not think so because it is deep-rooted in Japanese viewpoint of an equality.   I think the story tells me Japanese teacher's equalitarianism in an educational setting.

The Japanese idea of an equality is related with a uniformity.   It is easy for an observer to see all of students in school have same learning tools such as a case of crayon, a notebook, rulers.   As for a non-Japanese children who will come back in few years, one principal said, 'We prepare same tools for child whose parents can't buy them or do not want to buy them as this case.'   He also said, 'It is poor for the child that do not have same tools.'   It was actually happened.   Old tools, that parents of the graduates gave, were presented to some non-Japanese child in the school.   As a consequence of it, the students in a classroom have same tools to study.

Japanese idea of discrimination

Why do Japanese teachers think the child who did not bring a hand-made packed lunch poor?   Why do they think the children, who do not have same learning materials, feel poor?   The questions are related with Japanese sensitivity of discrimination.

"Sabetu" is a Japanese word corresponding to English word for 'discrimination' but the connotation is not same. Kariya(1995) emphasizes the idea of Japanese discrimination (sabetu) can not apply only to different treatments by social categories as class, race, and gender but also to differentiation of ability. Kariya(1995) insists that the discriminatory education in Japan is to make a pupil any inferiority complex by any differences and this folk theory of Japanese discrimination pushes forward a formalized uniformity of education in Japan. Almost Japanese do not doubt that to give equally a uniformalized education to all of child should be discussed as an educational issue. This idea is not limited in school and extended to Japanese whole society so that a Japanese teacher can't escape individually from this educational framework.

Teacher's dilemma

Cummings(1980) describes that a Japanese teacher often encourages all of student participate a whole class activity. He insists on a positive aspect of Japanese equalitarianism as the previous example and its contribution to improve Japanese education. However, we should see the negative aspect of it. Rampert (1985) describes a teacher as a dilemma manager. It causes Japanese teacher an inevitable dilemma between individualization and uniformity. A teacher thinks one of important tasks for him or her is to develop a student's personality. They hate to stifle a student's individuality. A teacher also thinks it is necessity to eliminate any difference for a student in a school. A teacher praises a unique idea presented by a student in a discussion but also unifies each student's idea into one formal idea that a teacher previously prepared in his or her heart.

The root of Japanese equalitarianism

Yamamura(1993) describes the root of Japanese equalitarianism is the ethical doctrine called 'Seizensetu.' It is the ethical theory that human nature is fundamentally good. It takes the view that any child has equally an excellent ability. It proposes that human character is acquired in the course of its lifetime. If a child behaves badly, the cause is the environment, especially its surrounding people. A student lives under the influence of a teacher. A teacher is the most influential person for a student in a school. A Japanese public school usually adopts a heterogeneous arrangement of a class. A heterogeneous class includes various students without its grade, its course after graduation, or its performance. It is an arrangement only by age. Yamamura(1993) insists that the fundamental logic under such a favorite arrangement is

similar to the Japanese logic of a family. The logic of a traditional institution of family in Japan called "Ie seido" is in contra position to a Western individualism. An individual is treated only as a member of any specific group. Anyone is always a representative of the group. The individual's identity is constructed by an attributing group for people outside the group. A teacher is often called as its school name that he or she belongs to in the case of an introduction to the other school teacher. When parents talk about his or her school teacher, the teacher is called as 'Teacher of classroom number three' instead of his or her name. When one teacher commits a crime, the principal in the school apologizes to all the people for his or her behavior. Any individual belonging to a group should be treated equally because any member with inferiority complex breaks a harmony of the group. A conservation of the group has priority over all other things to live in the group. Any individual should compromise anything for the conservation. This idea of the relation between an individual and a group is called "Shudan shugi(collectivism)" in Japanese. It represents the idea of a first priority for a group. A school is one of important group for children.

What is the issue for Japanese equalitarianism?

In the case that the equalitarianism is self-evident, the nursery school teacher's thinking in the previous episode is very natural. It does not give rise to such issues as: What is the different between the rice ball in a store and a mother's hand made one; Why does the teacher feel that the boy is very poor; Does the teacher have some responsibility for the such a case; and the like There is nothing a teacher thinks but being worried about a child's inferiority complex. Such a teacher's mind triggers the educational care that equalizes the difference among children. Does a teacher's treatment to equalize produce no inferiority complex for children? What does the equality refer to when we think that every people is something different from others? The educational issue we should talk about is not to consider how to treat children well under the equalitarianism but to reconsider the Japanese equalitarianism. Japanese teachers have an inevitable dilemma between individualization and uniformity under the equalitarianism. We should inspect the educational setting influenced by it. It will give us more valuable issue to discuss.

Support to discriminate under equalitarianism

Let me introduce few classroom discourses, which were collected from my observation of a nursery school for ten months from June to

next March.   At the setting, there is one female teacher who had rich experience and twenty children in the class.   Three children do not have Japanese nationality but two of them had already been fluent Japanese speakers before my observation started.   Only one boy called "AD," who came from Ukraine with his parents, was a newcomer child for the nursery school and he was an insufficient Japanese user at the initial time.

The adult as a teacher in the class used two types of voices for the new comer.   One is a TEACHING VOICE, which leads children into a classroom activity and gives them knowledge of a teacher, of a school child, and of the communication style between a teacher and a student in an educational institution.   The Q-R-Ack (question-response-acknowledgment) sequence is a fundamental resource to construct an educational institution.   AD as a student also should be a child who can respond something to the teacher to acknowledge.   As time passed, he had learned to participate in the sequence at the nursery school.

The other voice that an adult in the nursery school took a NURSING VOICE, especially mother's voice.

Teaching voice for a new comer

An interaction pattern when I started to observe was very simple and the teacher led AD's response strongly.   I will present two examples that have occurred in a sing activity and a short game.   One day, the teacher decided to sing a round with the children and she asked the every child of their preference of the order (first or second)   to sing a round at the start of the morning meeting.   Extract 1 presents a transcription of a negotiation between the teacher and AD for the order.

Extract 1: Decision of order to sing a round-------------------------------
(June: Two months passed form AD's entrance)

0   T: O.K./ It is two (parts)/ First two (about the singing parts of a round song)
1   T: Which do you like, primarily or later?
2   (AD did not respond at all)
3   T:(Which do you want to sing a song) Earlier or later?
4   (AD leaned his head to his side)
5   T: (Do you want to) be a first group or a second group (to sing a round)?   (She demonstrated a specific finger form representing the figure of one and two)
6   (AD presented his finger to demonstrate two)
7   (T nodded her head to consent to his action)

8   (AD opened his arms)

Notes: An original transcription was described in Japanese.   The transcription presented here was translated only for keeping a functional role of each utterance, in which a subtle difference in nuance between the original transcription and English one was not considered well.   I think the transcription is fundamentally written by   the original language that used by participants but I describe only English lines to represent the event because of reducing a reader's difficulties to understand the points, which I will discuss later.

Transcription symbols:
/ : boundary of action or utterance
?: utterance for question
( ): interpreter's explanation of action or utterance
(?): inarticulate sounds

The utterance and the action were analyzed by a function in each interaction (question, acknowledgment, and reply), and channels (verbal or nonverbal), and a relation to the previous utterance or action (repeat or paraphrase) as table 2.   Table 2 indicates the interaction structure of Extract 1.   The teacher asked AD verbally (1) but he did not respond explicitly at all (2) so that she repeated her question to him in different expressions' again (3). AD responded to the question nonverbally but it did not include information requested by her (4).   Then the teacher tried to paraphrase her previous question again verbally with her nonverbal cue, which demonstrated a number of two (5).   AD imitated the previous teacher's gesture representing 'two'(6).   AD's imitative action permitted the teacher to close the question sequence so that she went forward to the other children (7).   I felt that AD's action of opening his arms in (8) indicated his disappointment of their miscommunication.

Table 2: Interaction for making up AD's order to sing in June (Two months passed form AD's entrance)

	Teacher						AD		
	Q	Ack	V	NV	RP	P	R	V	NV
1	O		O						
2									
3	O		O		O	O			
4							O		O
5	O		O	O	O	O			
6							O		O
7		O		O					

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notes: Q for Question, R for Reply, Ack for ACKnowledgment, V for Verbal, NV for NonVerbal, RP for RePeat, and P for Paraphrase

There were three times to   approach to AD by the teacher and two responses by AD in Table 3 as follows.

TEACHER	AD	TEACHER
Question(1)		
Question(3)	Reply(4)	
Question(5)	Reply(6)	Acknowledgment(7)

The sequence has a simple structure as same as IRE (Mehan,1979) one in a school lesson.   The teacher could not close the interaction before it brought about AD's utterance triggering her acknowledgment, so that she tried to paraphrase the initial question twice after that. There seems much difference between an elementary school and a nursery school in Japan. Japanese nursery school is not a school but "Hoikusho" (a day care center for working families) in both literal and practical meanings.   There are some similarities between them. Teachers in both a school and a nursery school in Japan make children to call themselves "sensei" (teacher).   They call themselves "sensei" for children, such as "Sensei ni sore wo kudasai" (Give it Teacher), too.   The Extract 1 demonstrates that a teacher in a nursery school has high responsibility to manage children's activity as well as an elementary school.   The interaction sequence does not only come about for AD but also for other child in the class.   The Q-R-Ack sequence is a general feature for   the institutional discourse between an adult and a child.

Nursing voices for a new comer

Extract 1 has the other feature in addition to the Q-R-Ack sequence. It is like a parent's talk to a child.   A parent usually tries to communicate with his or her child who can't speak yet at all in his or her life as if he or she would be a fluent speaker.   In the case, a parent often repeats his or her own previous utterance in the other expression or guess the intention of child's inarticulate utterance.   I call this as a paraphrasing strategy.   In Extract 1, at first, the teacher said "Which of order do you like to choose, primarily or later?"(to sing a round).   After a while, she paraphrased it as "Earlier or later?"   AD's response did not indicate his understanding of the previous question by her, so that she

paraphrased it again.   In sum, the teacher asked a same question three times in three different expressions but the strategy used by the teacher were in vain in Extract 1.

The other strategy usually used by a parent to a child is an expressed guess strategy (Ochs,1987).   When a speaker says an incomprehensive utterance, there are two possibilities to do at the next step for a hearer.   The hearer often asks the meaning or the intention of the previous utterance to the speaker when the hearer thinks that the speaker is essentially able to copy with a comprehensive language.   A hearer seldom asks like that, when a speaker is an infant child.   Then a hearer guesses the intention of a speaker.

In the following extract 2, the teacher guessed the word uttered by AD.   This game assigned a child to say a kind of flower name.   The teacher used the paraphrasing strategy for AD's understanding of her question in (3, 5, 7, 9).   The teacher could not close the interaction with AD because she could not complete the Q-R-Ack sequence for the insufficient response by AD in the sequence.   After several tries, AD said anything that no one could catch as Japanese words and the boy (OS) sitting near AD pointed that AD said one of flower name "ume" (a Japanese apricot).   In a sense, OS relieved the teacher for her completing the interaction sequence.   The teacher reconfirmed AD's previous utterance verbally to AD with her pointing gesture and to OS by her physical turn (13).   OS nodded his head as "yes" to her reconfirmation but AD did not respond to it.

In this sequence, the teacher guessed the word that AD uttered with the assistance of OS but she changed into the question as "How about a tulip?" because AD gave an unsuitable reply to the teacher.

Extract 2: A short game of gathering flowers in word---------------------
(June: Two months passed form AD's entrance)

   1   T: Hi /What shall we play while waiting for the members on duty until their coming back?/Today ('s game) is to gather a kind of family /Today ('s game) is to gather a kind of family.   /What do we gather (in word)?
   2   C: Flower / Flower
   3   T: Flower?   The family of flower/ (When Teacher went forward to AD) /Flower/ Flower that you know/ what?
   4   (AD leaned his head to his side)
   5   T: Flower/ Do you understand a flower? (with pointing to the side of a blackboard)/ Flower
   6 AD: (I) understand (a flower)
   7   T: Are there flowers that you know?
   8 (AD leaned his head to his side)

9 T: What (flower) do you know?
10 AD:(Whispering) ume (a Japanese apricot)/ Umenai (?)
11 T: (You) can't understand, can you?/ (You) can't understand a name of flower, can you?
12 OS: (With looking at teacher's face) (He) said 'ume' now
13 T: Did (you) say 'ume'?/ Now   (with pointing at AD)/ Did (you) say (it) now ?/   (with turning to OS) Did (he) say 'ume'?
14 (OS nodded his head)
15 T: Do (you) know 'Ume'?/   How about a tulip?
16 (AD nodded)
17 T:(With pointing at AD and looking at OS) Oh (you or he) know(s) a tulip?

Notes: Japanese word 'wakaru' corresponds to both of 'understand' and 'know' in English.   The usage is almost never clearly judged to either of them by both a speaker and a hearer.

Both a paraphrasing strategy and an expressed strategy are as same as voices of a parent.   When a mother explains something, if her child seems not to understand what she says, she paraphrases the previous explanation in other expression. When a young child cry, the mother usually asks the reason in a form of wh-question to her child. When the young child replies no clear utterance to the question, she asks yes-no question to guess the intention of the child at the time. That is an expressed guess strategy.   The usage of both strategies is not rare for Japanese parents.

However, we should consider that AD is not so young child to need special care as same as a very young child.   When these baby-talks are used for non baby, what does the child who is spoken in such a style of talk feel?   We can see such talks in a special school for a mental retarded child.   The teachers in the special school talk with their children in special expressions, which correspond to younger children than they are.   AD is not a mental retarded child but only a non-Japanese user.   A minority language user in a nursery school is usually treated as a younger child than he or she is or as a retarded child in the educational institutional system in Japan.

Educational story under an equalitarian teacher

The interaction for language minorities should not attribute to each teacher's personality or ability to manage a classroom activity.   It fundamentally derives from the   system itself.   The system naturally imposed the teachers to use the Q-R-Ack sequence to manage a classroom activity.   Then if a teacher tries to take a Q-R-Ack sequence,

the teacher can't close before making up the complete sequence.   When I ask someone the time, the person does not answer it.   At the time in a street, there are two choices for me.   One is to say "Thank you, Bye" to the person.   The other is to repeat the previous question as the other expression.   However, there is only one option for a teacher in school, because the teacher should complete a Q-R-Ack sequence under the equalitarianism. A teacher should use the sequence for all of students equally.   The equal treatment for each child is very important in Japanese education.   Therefore, the AD's teacher has come to use such a baby-talk to get out a reply from AD.

The fact is only that AD is a Russian native user and non-Japanese user.   The teacher asked AD "Do you understand a flower?" For it, he leaned this head to his side in Extract 2.   His action might be interpreted his disability to understand the question, to think it and to reply it for the other participants including the teacher.   I think as a matter of course that he knew some names of flowers in Russian.   He just could not understand the question in Japanese or he could not say a name of flower in Japanese.   In short, he could not use flexibly Japanese language.   His attitude at the time should be attributed to his Japanese language level.

A note for "a kind of language" was always omitted in the teacher's questions. The teacher asked AD in Japanese without the notice of the language medium, such as "Do you know the name of flower IN JAPANESE?" The omission of the notice of a language media may convert AD's language problem to his ability for all of participants including the teacher and AD.   Every language media is essentially juxtaposed side by side at a same right as in a horizontal line.   As in the case, horizontal differences are changed into vertical differences in one ability scale in mind.

In sum, an equalitarian teacher in Japan lightens the difference between children by his or her support under equalitarianism.   They have to be noticed their difference from an average by the interaction. Some of them feel superior to their classmates.   Some of them get a sense of inferiority.

Think about a scene of an informal language test in the nursery school, such as the nursery school teacher said to him, "Do you know a name of flower?" in the morning meeting.   He could not reply anything clearly so that the teacher and one of his classmates inferred the intended meaning of his vague utterances.   These discourse sequence is usually looked as a supportive interactive chain but at the same time it is a distinctive one for a new comer. As for the theory of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1934), it is always recognized as constructing a supportive zone to development a relatively immature participant. However, it also contributes to the distinction of membership and it

involves a newcomer in a given power game.   We should ask what zones will be extended by an appropriation (Leont'ev, 1965)*2.

Heterogeneity and Equalitarianism

Japanese legend

There is a story that the Japanese belong to one homogeneous culture and the homogeneity leads to a strong collectivism.   They use a same frame of thinking by a same Japanese.   This is an only legend. There are two mistakes about the story.   One is about the homogeneity. In fact, Japanese belongs to several kinds of language community (Maher, 1994).   As for the root of Japanese, there was not an original Japanese still in old time.   The idea of Japanese as original has been constructed politically during long time (Sakai, 1996).   The folk theory that the Japanese homogeneity leads to a collectivism should be reconsidered, too.

Characteristics of Japanese community

Nakane(1978) describes that Japanese collectivism is connected to a heterogeneity of group members.   She presents two principles to construct a collective.   One type of a group is made by qualifications. The other type of group is made by a place in common.   She insists that Western people attach greater importance to qualifications to construct a group but Japanese regard a common ownership of a place as most important.   For example, the secretary in a company may be not introduced as the work position but as only one of the company's member to people outside company.   It is well known that there is a discrimination for applicants to get a job in Japanese universities. People in a personnel section often select applicants only by their graduated university name.   They neglect what they acquired in the undergraduate period, what they can do, and so on.   At the situation, a student life in a particular university as a common place is considered as a measure of a possibility to participate in a company.   The student is not regarded as an individual with some abilities but one of common place member.   In fact, there are many members with their ability and qualifications in a common place.   The variability is an obstacle to make a unity of the group members belonging to a common place.   To defense the collective, a consciousness of rank in a group   and an exclusiveness for the other groups is required.   In sum, the collectivism presupposes a heterogeneity of people belonging to a common place.   Japanese community has the character of a Japanese collectivism besides general idea of one.   Sakuta(1995) calls the Japanese community as "Seken(the

public)." "Seken" gives a primary referenced norm to Japanese to feel their inferiority or superiority.

Can heterogeneity break Japanese equalitarianism?

There is one hypothesis that heterogeneous situation of a recent increase of non-Japanese people in Japan will break Japanese equalitarianism. If the equalitarianism is supported by a fundamental equality of Japanese, it may be true. However, Japan is originally heterogeneous society and the logic of collective to uniform the heterogeneous society causes the Japanese style of equalitarianism as the previous discussion.

A heterogeneity in a collective brings about a defense response to it so that the members in the group have a strong consciousness of a rank inside the group and are exclusionary cold to outsiders. Therefore, the increase of new comers into Japan accelerates the heterogeneity in Japan, to be sure, but it may not undermine Japanese idea of equalitarianism. Rather, the more the heterogeneity goes on, the stronger a collective consciousness will be reinforced and it will contribute to keep a collective consciousness of each group. The case of AD in the nursery classroom illustrates an implicit ranking system in one of Japanese language communities. He was a full able child but he was ranked lowly in the class like an immature child by teacher's voices to him because of his being weak in Japanese. He has been increasingly assimilated to the community under the equalitarian teacher. It goes without saying that the Japanese idea of equalitarianism continues to exist at the situation.

Footnotes

1.   Owing to the recent increase of non-Japanese people, a new educational issue was happened.   The new members of Japanese society are commonly known as "New Comer." It corresponds to the development of economics of Japan. There are two reasons for their increase. One is a change of a corporate policy to employ. Many Japanese companies decided to employ non-Japanese worker because of their suffering from a physical labor shortage. The other reason is an increase of foreign students. The Japanese government decided to receive one million foreign students. There are several cities to receive many foreigners. The ratio of non-Japanese to Japanese in one of the cities is twenty percentage to eighty percentage.
    Many new comers come to Japan with their family including children. They have no obligation of making their children go to school in Japan. Most of their children go to a nursery school, an elementary school or a junior high school because of few educational costs. Japanese is a primary and privileged language in Japanese

educational institutes.   There is no administrative support for non-native Japanese or non-Japanese language user, so that there is no formal investigation for them.   The nursery office in Sendai city, in which population is about one million, took an investigation for a provision of nursery school meals once a year, such as to exclude a pork for a religious reason.   However, there was no investigation for a language care. The investigation in 1996 found that there were eighty-four non-Japanese children in the city, who were Chinese, Korean, North Korean, Bangladesh, Pakistani, English, Egyptian, Iranian, Taiwanese, and Russian.   The most number of them was Chinese.

In contrast of a nursery school, both a primary school and a junior high school have a subject of Japanese language, so that the ministry of education, science, sports and culture in Japan investigates a number of foreigner students who need a special support to learn the subject of Japanese language.   The following is the data presenting the number of foreigner student in Japanese elementary and junior high school in 1994 and the number of foreigner student who need a special support for Japanese learning in 1993 (The ministry of education, science, sports and culture, 1994).   The percentage of foreigner students for all of students is 0.57 in 1994.   The investigation makes us infer the situation of preschool children.

It is important to recognize that there is institutionally no teacher who can speak non-Japanese languages both in a preschool and a school in terms of Japanese educational policy for non-Japanese.   We should consider the interaction in AD's class from the standpoint of this situation.   Maher(1994) pointed that Japan has been in linguistic diversity form the past to now.   The participants there were in "Multicultural-but-Monolingual" situation in a sense.

Table 1: The number of foreigner students recognized by Japanese ministry of education in 1993

	Elementary	Junior high	Total
Number of foreigner student	50333	25940	76273
Number of foreigner to need a special support for learning Japanese language	7569	2881	8450
	(2611)	(1094)	(3705)

Notes: The parenthesis indicates that the number of schools in which there are students who need a special support of the subject of Japanese language.

2.   Leont'ev, A. N. (1965) borrowed the term of "appropriation" from Marx.   It refers to the word "aneignung" (making of a thing private property) in German.   The term emphasizes human development in contrast to animal one.   Every person gets an operational meaning of tool through his or her experience with the surrounding expert persons.   The idea is recently considered as worth studying human developmental process in terms of indifference to spatial metaphor, which gives the dichotomy of internal plane and external one (Wertsch, 1995).

I think there are three important points to use the term to explain human development.   First of all, the meaning that we perceive about an object is not in the object itself but generated in subject's interaction with the object.   Second, there is usually a supportive environment for the new user's interaction with an object by the relatively expert others as a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1934/1962). Finally, the mastery of the object meaning leads the sociohistorical activity system

related with the object.   These points correspond to the Vygotskian perspective, which insists on the tool mediated activity for mind, and the position insisted by Legitimate peripheral participation theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which both a learning process and a developmental one aren't an individualistic one of knowledge acquisition and emphasized a participation itself to a community of practice.

On the other hand, the idea of appropriation described by Leont'ev (1965/1979) emphasizes the formation of an internal plane as same as a collaboration. When a child uses a spoon with an adult, he or she forms an operational ability of it in him or her. I agree with the idea that the acquisition of object in collaborative others is a primary condition for an enculturation and a humanization as a social person.   While the mastery of an object leads to an enculturation in one community, we must say that it may cause an alienation of subject from the identity being constituted in the other community at a same time.   The object refers to both technological tool and psychological one, such as language, number, sign, diagram, logic, etc. (Vygotsky, 1930/1979).

Leont'ev used the idea of "appropriation" to characterize a human being and differentiated it from an animal by the term. He described a biological adaptation of animal as an adjusting process of an innate behavior on demand of its environment. On the other hand, he thought of a human appropriation as a reproductive process of socio-historical characters.   I think he introduced the cultural boundary between a human-being and an animal but he did not consider a cultural difference among specific human communities.   The position metaphor as high and low is a remarkable feature common to Vygotskian contemporaries.   Vygotsky preferred the distinction between a higher mental function   and lower mental one, too.

It should be emphasized for a human society that each of us participates in plural communities of practice at the same time, such as a family, a school class, a particular section of work place, a special interest group, a sport center and so on.   Any of the communities provides a specific environment for an appropriation so that the conflict between cultures of each community of practice may develop.   In the situation, an appropriation for one culture depending on community of practice may lead an dis-appropriation for the other community of practice.

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