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Unit 1 Office Communication

Vocabulary

restructuring	(名)	改変
department	(名)	部署
independent	(形)	独立した
counterpart	(名)	相對する人
subordinate	(名)	部下
conflict	(名)	対立
convention	(名)	慣習
common sense	(名)	常識
psychology	(名)	心理
custom	(名)	習慣、癖
religion	(名)	宗教
anthropologist	(名)	人類学者
diversity	(名)	多様性
relevant (to ~)	(形)	~に関係のある
awareness	(名)	認識、気づき
meta-cognitive	(形)	メタ認知の



Pre-reading tasks

- 01: How do you define “mergers and acquisitions”? What’s your impression about that corporate activity?
- 02: Make pairs. Compare your answers with your partner’s. Find similarities and differences.
- 03: What would you do if your current employer suddenly announced that your company was being acquired by a foreign company? What are the positive and negative aspects?

Dialogue

Read the dialogue.

Nagahama : Are you alright, Mark-san? You look quite ¹_____.

Mark : Well, actually I am. I am having trouble concentrating on my work.

Nagahama : Why is that ?

Mark : Well, you know, Nagahama-san, the working ²_____ here in Tokyo is totally different from what we usually have in London. You're the manager of this department, and I am ³_____ manager, right? In London, people in managerial positions are given their own offices. But here, we all have to work in the same space.

Nagahama : Oh, is that a big problem for you?

Mark : Well, yes and no. It looks quite interactive, so I can communicate more with the other employees. But sometimes, my work ⁴_____ concentration, especially when checking these documents. Well, Nagahama-san, I have a request. May I tentatively use the meeting space over there? Nobody is using the room right now, so I think it's fine.

Nagahama : You mean that meeting room in the corner? No, you can't use that space without a ⁵_____. Even after making a reservation, if you use the space alone, it looks so strange to everyone else. Please work at your desk, OK?

Mark : Why? It doesn't make sense. If you want me to concentrate on document checking here at my desk, you have to ask them to ⁶_____ their voices and stop talking about office ⁷_____. Look, the people over there are just wasting time chatting.

Nagahama : You know, Mark, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do", as they say.

Mark : I KNOW! But, I don't understand this.

Task 1

Answer the following questions about the dialogue.

Q1: What's the possible relationship between Nagahama and Mark?

- (A) Business counterparts
- (B) Boss and subordinate
- (C) Service provider and client
- (D) Employer and employee

Q2: What did Mark mean when he said "yes and no"?

- (A) He does not like this working environment at all.
- (B) He thinks he was given incorrect information about his job description.
- (C) He wants to work independently in the unused room.
- (D) He has mixed feelings about his working environment.

Q3: What probably frustrates Mark the most in this working environment?

- (A) The discrepancy in working conditions between Tokyo and London
- (B) Long working hours in Japanese companies
- (C) The seniority-based promotion system
- (D) The top-management being so vague about his management policy

Task 2

Read the following four voices about the dialogue.

A

It is easy for me to visualize the scenario described in the dialogue. Both Nagahama-san and Mark-san are experienced and successful business people who have established confidence in their respective styles of working as well as expectations of what an acceptable working space layout should be for managers. The way they are both handling the conflict between their expectations gives me the impression that neither of them have reached a truly professional level of global business expertise yet. I also can imagine that if I were to tell them my opinion on this matter face-to-face they would disagree with me, however I stand by this evaluation.

B

I think this conflict arose from the differences of the social culture between London and Tokyo. In the context of Japanese society, there is the tendency to observe rules which are decided by general convention whether they are good or bad. Mark-san should have adjusted his attitude because he works in Japan now. However, I can sympathize with Mark-san. So when he wants to work alone in the meeting space, he should reserve in advance and ask Nagahama-san to persuade the co-workers.

C

It is so unprofessional of Mark to ask for an independent workspace. Everybody else works under the same circumstances, so he shouldn't be so selfish. As Nagahama-san pointed out, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." He should get used to the working environment of Japanese companies. He is not in London.

D

As is often the case with organizational restructuring, people will get really frustrated in unfamiliar working environments. In this situation, any minor issues, including noisy office space, can easily get on one's nerves. In this light, Nagahama-san's imposition of a single-sided perspective on Mark-san must be considered ineffective. Nagahama-san, being a manager of this office, should take more time discussing intercultural differences with Mark-san, I think.

Task 3

Choose the opinions you agree and disagree with the most, and explain why you think so. Compare your answers with your partners.

Task 4

Do you have any other opinions about the dialogue?

Reading

Read the following text.

What is ethnocentrism ?

Human beings are judgmental creatures. But, where does your judgement basically come from? Ethics? Common sense? A sense of values? Well, one possible answer, although some may argue about this, may be your "culture" deeply inscribed in your psychology. This judgement process based on your culture-specific perception often becomes a problem when you think about another culture in particular

Ethnocentrism is the act of judging another culture. You often base your judgement upon cultural standards. You may find yourself ethnocentric very often when you judge another group's collective behavior, including linguistic behavior, customs, and religion, which are all unique to each ethnicity's cultural identity.

According to cultural anthropologist, William Sumner, ethnocentrism is defined as "the technical name for the view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it." In the 21st century, which is the era of cultural diversity, an increasing number of people face problems, the cause of which is more or less relevant to one's ethnocentrism, even in daily communication situations. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but one way to improve this situation is to raise people's awareness about cultural diversity and thus to be more aware of ethnocentrism at a meta-cognitive level.

Task 1

Go back to the dialogue. Analyze what kind of ethnocentrism you observe in the dialogue? Compare your answers with your partner's.

Task 2

Make pairs. In order to improve this communication, think how you (as Nagahama-san) should address the issues. Write your own improved dialogue.

Task 3

Listen to three groups' improved dialogues. What did you learn from the other groups' dialogues?

Topic 1: Office & Clerical work

- Smoking is prohibited in **表** このエリアでは禁煙です this area.
- a cardboard box **名** 段ボール箱
- a company directory **名** 社員名簿
- a file drawer **名** 書類整理棚
- a photocopier **名** コピー機
- a stapler **名** ホチキス
- air-conditioning equipment **名** 空調設備
- atmosphere **名** 雰囲気
- certificate **名** 証明書
- deadline **名** 締め切り
- document **名** 書類
- facilities **名** 施設
- to introduce a new system **動** 新システムを導入する
- to laminate a paper **動** 紙をラミネートする
- to make a photocopy **動** コピーを取る
- office equipment **名** オフィスの設備
- office layout **名** オフィスの配置
- office supplies **名** 事務用品
- office gossip **名** 社内のごossip
- out of order **句** 故障している
- overhaul **名** 点検整備
- partition **名** 間仕切り
- pending **形** 保留の
- procedures **名** 手続き
- put things in order **動** ものを整頓する
- to renovate an office **動** オフィスを改装する
- stationery **名** 文房具
- to relocate the office **動** オフィスを移転する
- to shred papers **動** 紙を裁断する
- under repair **句** 修理中
- restructuring **名** 改変
- department **名** 部署
- independent **形** 独立した
- counterpart **名** 相対する人
- subordinate **名** 部下
- conflict **名** 対立
- convention **名** 慣習
- common sense **名** 常識
- psychology **名** 心理、性格

- custom **名** 習慣、癖
- religion **名** 宗教
- anthropologist **名** 人類学者
- diversity **名** 多様性
- relevant (to ~) **形** ~に関係のある
- awareness **名** 認識、気付き
- meta-cognitive **形** メタ認知の

Topic 2: Organization

- CEO (Chief Executive Officer) **名** 最高経営責任者
- *CFO (Chief Financial Officer) **名** 最高財務責任者
- a cooperative association **名** 協同組合
- a deputy chairman **名** 副議長
- a general manager **名** 部長
- a subsidiary **名** 子会社
- *a parent company **名** 親会社
- advisor **名** 顧問
- an acting manager **名** 部長代理
- an affiliated company **名** 系列会社
- an assistant chief **名** 課長代理
- an incumbent officer **名** 現役の職員
- auditor **名** 監査役
- colleague **名** 同僚
- executive **名** 幹部
- president **名** 社長
- receptionist **名** 受付
- secretary **名** 秘書
- subordinate **名** 部下
- boss **名** 上司
- the accounting section **名** 会計課
- the board of directors **名** 理事会
- the finance department **名** 経理部
- the general affairs department **名** 総務部
- the human resources department **名** 人事部
- the labor relations section **名** 労務課
- the liaison section **名** 渉外部
- the maintenance crew **名** 整備班
- the procurement section **名** 調達部
- the public relations department **名** 広報部