

A Comparative Study on Topic Selection in the First Meeting Focusing on the University Students in Sri Lanka and Japan

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Abstract

The first meeting conversation is the starting point for forming new relationships. The impressions built in the first meeting greatly influence and advance interpersonal relationships. There are both similarities and differences between Japanese and Sri Lankans on the topic selection in their first meetings. According to further research that this depends on the personal territory which can be different from one culture to another. However, most of the studies on this matter mainly focus on countries like Japan, Korea and China. Therefore, researching on above topic which will be useful for Sri Lankan Japanese learners to understand the intercultural background in the first meeting of both countries. For this research, 20 Sri Lankan Non-Japanese learning Sinhalese university students and 20 Japanese university students were surveyed, and the collected data were analyzed in order to understand the difference between Sri Lankans and Japanese on the topic selection in their first meetings. Based on the research findings, there were both similarities and differences in the stages of personal territories in both countries, depending on cultural and social backgrounds. It was interesting to find that Sri Lankans had fewer topics to discuss in their first meeting compared to Japanese people. However, Sri Lankan males tend to speak more comfortably than Japanese males even in their first meetings. It was difficult to find any significant differences between females in both countries. In a nutshell, this study attempts to make an advancement in intercultural communication which helps to build natural conversations with native Japanese speakers.

Key words: First meeting, Intercultural communication, Japan, Personal Territory, Sri Lanka

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