A Comparative Study of Cross-Cultural Awareness using Place Oriented Internet Radio

Ayaka Ito
Graduate School of Media and Governance
Keio University
Fujisawa, Japan
e-mail: ayk@sfc.keio.ac.jp

Katsuhiko Ogawa
Faculty of Environment and Information Studies
Keio University
Fujisawa, Japan
e-mail: ogw@sfc.keio.ac.jp

Abstract—**Japan is accepting a number of foreign visitors in the trend of cultural diversity; hence, building mutual understanding with who has different cultural background becomes essential nowadays. To provide opportunities for international visitors to grasp better idea about Japanese culture, we proposed Internet radio CCR (Cross-Cultural Radio), which offers place oriented contents including local's talk and international listener's comments. Sequentially, an original measurement CCUS (Cross-Cultural Understanding Scale) was used to evaluate participants' level of cultural awareness, through the fieldwork experiment conducted in Tokyo. A comparative study was designed for Japanese and international participants. The experimental result illustrates that CCR is effective in all dimensions of cross-cultural awareness for international participants, whereas some Japanese participants showed lower CCUS score improvement than internationals. This paper intends to clarify that CCR is more effective for international visitors than Japanese, because of their cultural awareness in the face of "otherness".**

Keywords— comparative study; place orientation; Internet radio; cross-cultural awareness; fieldwork; evaluation.

I. INTRODUCTION

General knowledge of the host culture such as language or values and attitude toward the host culture and its members has been consistently posited to play an important role in influencing effective communication across cultures [1]. Like Damasio [2], who claimed that "culture is a regulator of human life and identity," scholars have attempted to conceptualize their understanding of culture. Although historically it has been regarded as mono-lingual/cultural country, with a drastic increase of foreign visitors [3], Japan is no exception to appreciate cultural diversity. We have to be aware that all foreigners are unique individuals, and we should not generalize them by nationality, race, and religion. Foreigners are visiting Japan for several purposes, such as sightseeing, studying abroad or working. Likewise, depending on their cultural backgrounds, problems they encounter as well as their interests to explore greatly vary, and there will never be a solution applicable for everyone. To propose a way to support foreign individuals, creating new media to provide them the opportunities to know Japanese culture at a deeper level is meaningful from a cross-cultural viewpoint.

Related literature (Yoon [4] and Bramwell [5]) has demonstrated that the effect of motivation and satisfaction is prominent in the decision of tourists to re-visit places. Osti [6] and Pike [7] also pointed out the eagerness of tourists' revisiting in relation to the characteristics of specific places, such as sporting event destinations. In terms of information system, Nakatani [8] and Masuda [9] suggested a recommendation system for tourists, which provides customized tour information depending on user's need, including using smartphone applications. However, there is almost no research of using Internet radio specifically as a tool for raising cross-cultural awareness in Japan, until Ito [10] suggested web-based platform focused on international visitor's behaviors while sightseeing. In this paper, we stretch the concept of previously proposed place oriented Internet radio CCR (Cross-Cultural Radio), which helps foreigners to recognize Japan from a cross-cultural perspective. CCR provides several types of contents, including information from popular tour guidebook, local people's interview, listener's impression and comments of other contents. In addition, we conducted several evaluation experiments in Tokyo to measure the effectiveness of CCR, using criteria called CCUS (Cross-Cultural Understanding Scale), which was also suggested by Ito [11].

The crucial aim of this paper is to analyze the cultural exchange amongst individual experiment participants through the observation of their behaviors, by conducting comparative research for internationals and Japanese.

The paper structure is explained as follows: First, Section II describes a design process of CCR including its concept and system configuration, as well as specific contents architecture. Section III gives a complete set of evaluation experiments conducted in Tokyo for international and Japanese participants. Section IV digs the result into a further behavioral analysis as a comparative study. Lastly, the conclusion and future works are mentioned in Section V.

II. Design of Cross-Cultural Radio

A. Concept

The above-mentioned previous research, particularly Nakatani and Masuda's recommender system for tourists, is designed for usage in a specific place. However, the information they provide to listeners only focuses on tourists' preferences and does not include the cultural perspective of the host country, which promotes cross-cultural understanding amongst international listeners.

Regarding the type of information available, visual material, such as detailed information on smartphones, contributes to a certain extent to obtaining a general idea about a place. Nevertheless, aural information is far superior to visual information to induce listener's flexibility, by allowing them to stretch their imagination regarding what they have heard. Furthermore, aural information can provide direct interaction with the place, including local people's stories or comments from other visitors. This may also be a trigger to increase international listeners' understanding of Japanese culture.

For these reasons, we choose place oriented Internet radio CCR, which Ito has suggested to examine its effectiveness as a sound-focused media. In terms of comparative study, we critically analyze the experimental result with international and Japanese participants. The detailed concept is originally focused on international listeners and is shown in Figure 1.
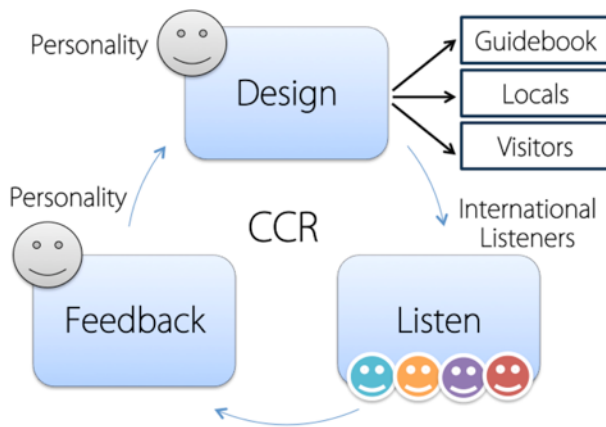

Figure 1.   Concept of Cross-Cultural Radio "CCR"

CCR works in three steps. The first step consists in content design for different listeners. The second step is the listening process, which various listeners engage in. The third step is obtaining feedback from listeners, plus revision of the content. To maximize the influence of content, the preferred target of CCR is international visitors who are staying in Japan for a relatively long period of time, from a few months to years, rather than just for a couple of days. The reason of selecting target users is that presumably they are choosing Japan as destinations because they are having stronger aspirations of exploring its culture more than short-term visitors.

B. System

Previous research [12]-[14] has shown that an acceptable duration of content should be approximately 1 to 1 and a half minutes. Several companies produce audio guide players, supporting the delivery of such content as described above.

Once contents in the form of audio clips are prepared, they are stored in the website and linked to clickable icons using JavaScript code. When the listener clicks on an icon, the associated audio clip is played. The website can be accessed [15] or using the QR code shown in Figure 5.

Three types of content are available, such as guidebook (audio clips from the famous tour guidebook), the locals (stories or tips from local people), and visitors (feedback from the listener to be shared with other visitors).

1) Selecting Location

As CCR is designed for various listeners from different cultural backgrounds, the selection of the place, where the content is mapped, is also important. In this research, Asakusa, one of the most famous and popular tourist spots in Tokyo was chosen. The reason is that Asakusa has a rich cultural heritage, such as Japanese traditional temples or shrines, as well as dining venues and souvenir shops that attract many tourists. Besides Asakusa is located in the heart of Tokyo and has great accessibility, which enables us to conduct fieldwork effortlessly.

2) Content "Guidebook"

For guidebook content, several tips of accommodation, introduction of restaurants and explanation of famous architecture or sightseeing object were picked from Lonely Planet Tokyo [16] and recorded using voice synthesis software (Figure 2).

"Needle funeral"
In Senso-ji temple's western garden Awashimado Hall stands, home to an unusual ceremony: the needle funeral. Annually on 8th February, dozens of kimono women gather with monks to perform lasting rites for broken or old sewing needles. Kimono fabric makers and seamstresses express their thanks to the needles by sticking them in a block of soft tofu. Needle funeral reflects ancient animistic Shintoism beliefs, and also marks the end of New Year celebrations.

Figure 2.   Example of guidebook content

3) Content "Locals"

For locals content, a couple of interviews with locals were conducted in Japanese and stories related to their daily lives in Asakusa were selected. Each story was translated into English and supplementary explanation about cultural activity was added if needed (Figure 3).

> **"Ninja Dojo"**
> Not so many people know there is a small size amusement park called Hanayashiki in the heart of Tokyo. Here is the story from locals who work in Hanayashiki as a promotion staff.
> "We opened Ninja Dojo, where visitors can experience to be a ninja about 1 hour. The entrance is separated from the amusement park, so you don't have to purchase a park ticket to get in. Around 30% of visitors here are foreigners, and ninja is very popular amongst them. Since it's just an hour, it is even possible to put into small group tour." (translated in English, original talk is spoken in Japanese)
> Hanayashiki recently started Ninja Dojo, where you can meet real ninja and experience their principles, as well as special martial arts techniques. The interactive tour takes about an hour is available, hence amongst group of international tourists this cultural activity is becoming popular options for tour package.

Figure 3.   Example of locals content

4)   Contents "Visitors"

After the listeners listened to either guidebook or locals content, they have free discussion about comparison with their own culture. Listener's conversation is recorded and added to the previous two types of contents (Fig. 4). Therefore, this type of content encloses the real voice of listeners, both spoken in English or Japanese.

> **"Asakusa Jinja"**
> The proximity of Shintō shrine Asakusa Jinja, behind Senso-ji temple to the northeast, testifies to the coexistence of Japan's two major religions. Asakusa Jinja was built in honor of the brothers who discovered the Can-non statue, and is renowned as a fine example of an architectural style. It's also the epicenter of one of Tokyo's most important festivals, May's San-ja Matsuri, a three-day extravaganza of costumed parades, 100 or so lurching portable shrines what we call Mikoshi, and stripped to the waist Yakuza, kind of Japanese mafia sporting remarkable tattoos.
> How did other tourists feel about the story? Listen to them, they are from England and the United States.
> "I was just wondering if there are monks there, because monks usually try to be in some kind of solitude. Well, this is very busy."
> "We really don't have a specific religion, even though it's Buddhism, or Buddhist, not many people practice it, as people like in the States, as they are like Christianity or specific religion, right?"
> "Hmm."
> "Japanese are very spiritual, but they are not that religious, if that makes sense."

Figure 4.   Example of visitors content

III.   EVALUATION EXPERIMENT

A. Method

Fieldwork was conducted for 11 international and 5 Japanese visitors as CCR listeners, using the same scheme to explore how the cycle of CCR works as a set of evaluation experiment. In order to observe various cultural exchanges, we tried to select participants who have diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as their length of stay in Japan. Fieldwork details and participants' attributes are below (Table 1).

TABLE I.   FIELDWORK DETAILS AND PARTICIPANTS' ATTRIBUTES

Nationality / Code (xx)	Participants' Attributes		
	Age	*Sex*	*Date / Time*
China (CH1)	25	F	February 1st, 2016 / 16:30 – 18:00
China (CH2)	24	F	February 1st, 2016 / 16:30 – 18:00
Uzbekistan (UZ)	22	M	February 1st, 2016 / 14:00 – 16:00
China (CH3)	28	F	March 14th, 2016 / 11:00 – 13:00
China (CH4)	28	F	March 14th, 2016 / 11:00 – 13:00
Russia (RU1)	28	M	March 19th, 2016 / 13:30 – 15:30
Taiwan (TW1)	20	F	March 19th, 2016 / 16:00 – 17:30
Malaysia (ML)	23	F	March 20th, 2016 / 16:00 – 18:00
Russia (RU2)	27	F	June 11th, 2016 / 15:00 – 17:00
Taiwan (TW2)	27	M	June 26th, 2016 / 11:00 – 13:00
Vietnam (VN)	22	M	August 5th, 2016 / 14:00 – 16:00
Japan (JP1)	22	F	October 15th, 2016 / 12:00 – 14:00
Japan (JP2)	20	F	October 15th, 2016 / 12:00 – 14:00
Japan (JP3)	22	F	October 22nd, 2016 / 10:00 – 12:00
Japan (JP4)	20	M	October 24th, 2016 / 16:00 – 18:00
Japan (JP5)	21	M	October 24th, 2016 / 16:00 – 18:00

However, as for internationals, the nationality distribution is leaning toward Asian countries, which appropriately reflects recent international visitors arrival ratio in Japan [17].

B. Measurement CCUS

To validate the credibility of CCR, an evaluation process with appropriate criteria is essential. Since CCR has a unique concept, inventing a new and suitable measurement tool is more realistic rather than using conventional criteria

without localization. Related literature about measurement design and cross-cultural adjustment are demonstrated by Benson [18], Cui & Awa [19] and Yellen [20] and many other scholars. Sequentially, ten dimensions of cross-cultural understanding have been determined in previous Ito's research, which are mobility, food/diet, flexibility, knowledge, language skills, interaction, awareness of cultural difference, nonverbal communication, respect, and relationship. Since we are conducting a comparative study, some dimensions hold different implication depending on the participants. For instance, to internationals "interaction" means the nature and frequency of interactions with host country (Japanese) individuals, whereas to Japanese participant that involves one's ability to initiate interaction toward any other nationalities, as well as the extent of one's eagerness to communicate with international people, regardless of their language ability.

C. Instruction

First, a sheet of paper was distributed to the participants as an experiment instruction. The route of fieldwork and accessible QR code to the website are printed, and they were asked to walk and listen to the content mapped into the route in the numeric order (Figure 5).

Figure 5.   Evaluation experiment scenario

Before they started walking, they filled in the self-evaluation form about their current level of cultural understanding, which CCUS 10 dimensions are explained. We observed and took pictures of participants while they are walking, and asked questions to participants for each content such as "what did you think about the place or object, which is explained in the content?" or "do you have any implication or comments compared to your home culture?" (see Figure 6).   For Japanese participants, we prepared guidebook contents spoken in Japanese.

Figure 6.   Participants engaging in the evaluation experiment in Asakusa

Fieldwork was done either in English or Japanese, depending on participant's language ability. Conversation and route of their walk were recorded (Figure 7) and after they listened to all content, they answered the CCUS form again.
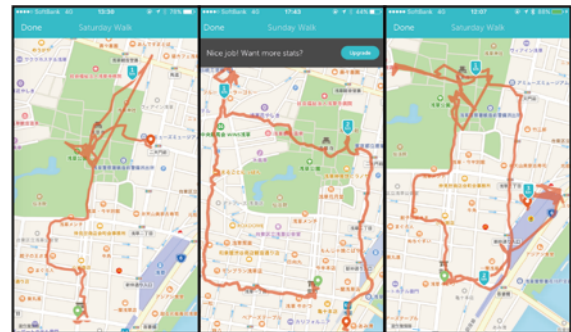

Figure 7.   Fieldwork route of participants (excerpts)

D. Result

Figure 8 shows the average score of 11 international participants, and Figure 9 shows 5 Japanese participants for each dimension. The green line shows the results prior to the test and the orange line shows the results after the test was finished.
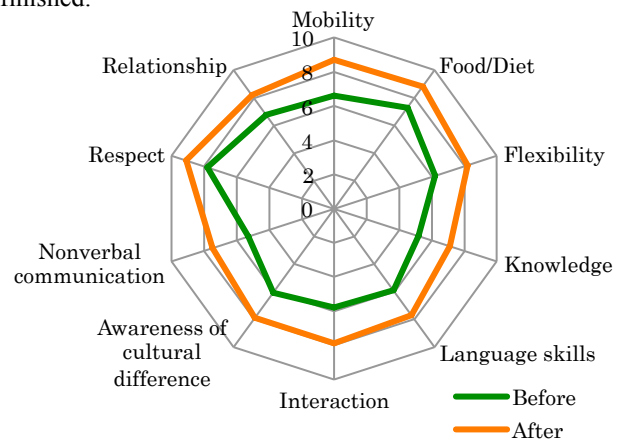

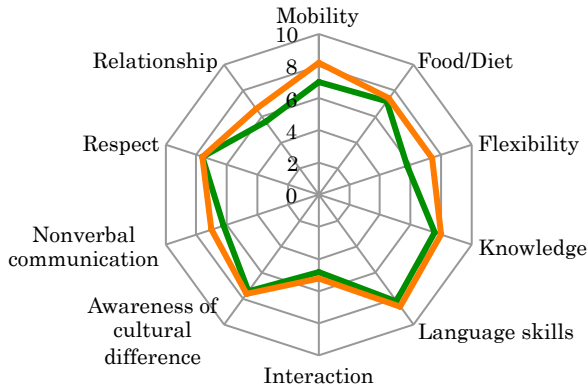Figure 8.   11 international participants' average CCUS score

Figure 9. 5 Japanese participants' average CCUS score

As shown in Figure 8, CCR has enriched most aspects of dimensions for 11 international participants. On the other hand, the score improvement of 5 Japanese participants does not seem as much as that of internationals. In addition, Japanese participants recorded much lower score for "Interaction" overall, compared to internationals.

By calculating the area surrounded by green and orange lines, international participants have improved 26% for overall scores. Japanese participants have improved 9%.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' BEHAVIOR

Brislin [21] points out that the general approach applicable to all comparative studies is the plausible rival hypothesis analysis which forces the research to examine each and every potential explanation for any data set. In terms of CCR evaluation experiment, the number of participants for the is only 16, therefore conducting additional analysis focused on participant's behavior is more important than discussing their average performance. We chose 4 participants specifically (ML and RU2 for internationals, and JP2 and JP5 for Japanese) as a comparative study samples.

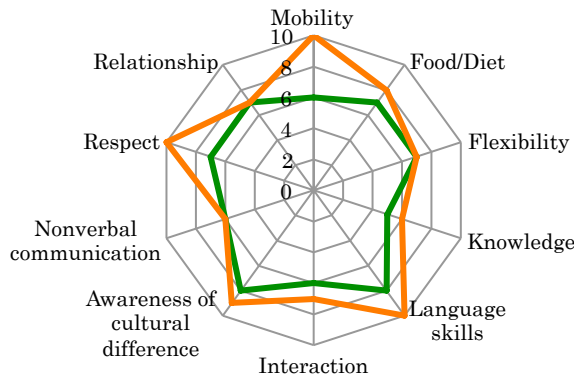### A. Participant ML (Figure 10)

Figure 10. Participant ML's CCUS score

ML is a full-time university student and has been living in Japan for approximately 3 years. Although she speaks fluent Japanese, the fieldwork was conducted in English, as it is still the language she can comfortably communicate with. After she listened to the local's talk about the history of theme park Hanayashiki (refer Figure 3), she found a statue of panda close to the entrance gate. She took a brochure there, read its founding story and learned initially it was established as a botanical garden (Hanayashiki literally means "flower-mansion") then re-opened as a zoo before World War II. She said even though she is interested in watching panda, so far she never had a chance to see one. Presumably, her 3-year stay in Japan made her to recognize herself as a proper resident rather than a temporary visitor, and she might have a mindset of locals more than before. She commented, "I think an audio guide is a lot more interesting than a book, and I also think the local's opinions are more valuable than a tourists." By listening to the local's story, she cultivated the respect and sympathy toward locals, which is demonstrated as an improvement of dimension "Respect" as shown in Figure 10.

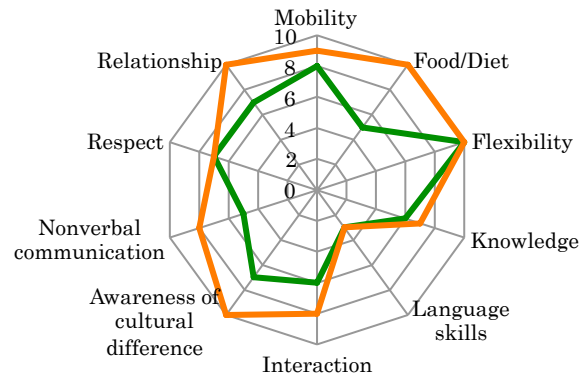### B. Participant RU2 (Figure 11)

Figure 11. Participant RU2's CCUS score

RU2 is a visiting fellow researcher who has been in Japan around 2 months, and is supposed to stay few years more. This stay is not her first time though: she once visited Jap an about a decade ago for an exchange program, when she was a high school student. After she listened to visitor's comment about range of tourists who are gathering in front of Senso-ji temple, she recalled her first visit and explained her current stay in Japan. "Compared to my previous stay, it (current stay) is totally changed. I can see their normal life like other Japanese people, because I visit not only tourist attractions (but also local places). For me it's much more interesting than visiting touristy place like Asakusa. I want to see the way of people living here, and compare to the life in my country." As she said she is rather interested in knowing daily life setting of Japan not from a temporary

tourist, but from the local's viewpoint. Her mindset certainly has changed compared to her first stay, and now she recognizes herself as a Japan resident, not as a temporary visitor. To make sure whether the contents listening experience has directly contributed to her self-recognition needs more exploration, however her comment above would not be irrelevant to her score improvement of "Relationship" (with local people in this context), "Nonverbal communication" and "Awareness of cultural difference" as shown in Figure 11.

C. Participant JP2 (Figure 12)

JP2 has spent her life mostly in western area of Japan (Tokyo is considered to be in eastern area), and came Tokyo when she becomes a university student. She is in Tokyo for 2 years now, and has few opportunities of visiting Asakusa so far.
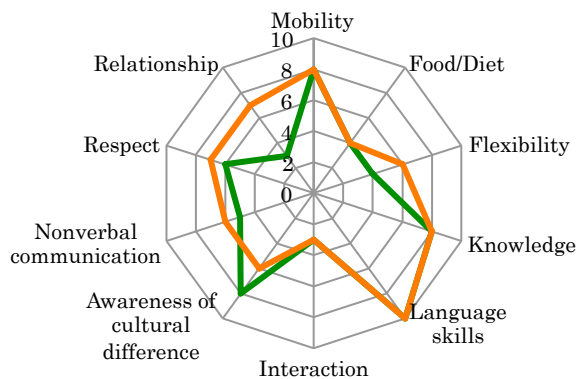

Figure 12. Participant JP2's CCUS score

Through the fieldwork, her overall impression of Asakusa stroll was "very enjoyable" according to her comment. She is from Himeji city, a middle-sized city in the west that is known for Himeji Castle, regarded as the most visited and the finest surviving Japanese castle. She has lived in a walking distance from the UNESCO World Heritage registered site [22], and knows how is being a local surrounded by full of tourists from the world. She continuously compared the city of Himeji to Asakusa, and explained what she feels something in common with Asakusa locals. "Asakusa has Senso-ji, Himeji has Himeji Castle. It must be something memorable for tourists, but for me it is nothing special. It is always there, and I can even see it from my house window. But it doesn't mean Himeji locals are underestimating the Castle, it just resides in our daily life and we are not particularly paying attention to it." As a local person in touristy place, she self-evaluated "Interaction" quite low score compared to other dimensions. However, this might be reflecting her reserved personality well (she was describing herself as very shy and easily get nervous when she encounters with foreigners). To the

contrary, as shown in Figure 12 she enhanced "Relationship" well, possibly because she recognized her mindset as a local by Asakusa local's talk, and felt sympathy.

D. Participant JP5 (Figure 13)

JP5 was born and raised in Tokyo. Since he went to high school in Asakusa, the area has always been a familiar place to him.
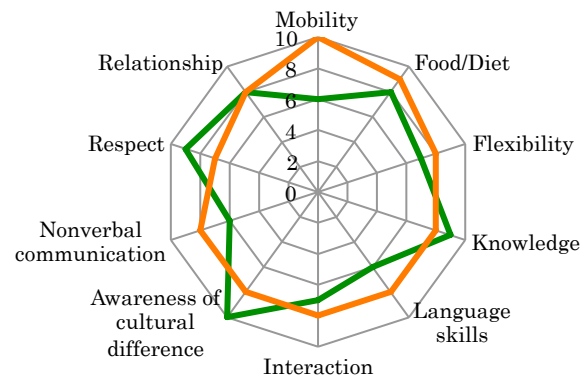

Figure 13. Participant JP5's CCUS score

After he listened to the content about the statues beside Senso-ji's entrance gate, he pointed out there are two signboards there written in English to explain the gate specifically. He noticed the tone of writing was slightly different, one signboard focused on general information such as size, materials and contributors of establishment, while the other explained its history in detail, including the interaction with locals. He found that the former was built by ward office, therefore only official information matters. On the other hand, the latter was built by Senso-ji, which shows they care about its founding story focused on people. Looking at the crowd around the gate taking pictures, he said he is a bit sorry that not so many international visitors seem to pay attention to the signboard, even if they have a chance to know its deeper history right there.

He told the impression of the fieldwork as "a good experience", and said "I came Asakusa countless times since high school, maybe that's why I can look over the surroundings and therefore pay attention to something else from myself, like other internationals' behavior, or just simply other cultures."

According to Zarate [23], the notion of culture occupies a central position within the field of human and social sciences as a whole. Culture is simultaneous action and a state of being, while the representation of "otherness" forms part of the development of individuality. What JP5 implies here is about the encounter with the "other" internationals, and his self-awareness was brought by his experience as a Tokyo local who is already familiar to Asakusa.

V.   DISCUSSION

From both international and Japanese participants' episodes found in behavioral analysis, we assume CCR listening experience contributes to listeners' awareness of cultural aspects to some extent, through the interaction between users. Furthermore, based on the episodes explored, possibly we can relate the 10 CCUS dimensions into four categories of recognition (Figure 14). Hence, observing the CCUS score distribution enables us to roughly categorize each participant's mode of cultural awareness for these four types; recognition of difference between others, recognition about oneself, recognition about Japanese culture itself, or not particularly recognize anything (Not applicable to previous three). This time we observed 11 international and 5 Japanese participants. Adding more participants will validate the effectiveness of this categorization.
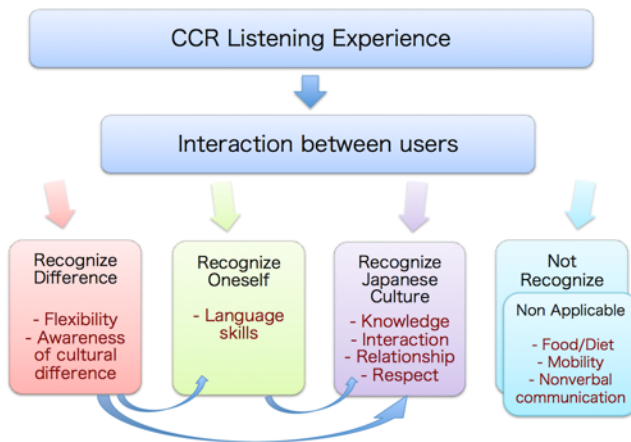

Figure 14. Contribution of CCR listening experience

ML enhanced the dimension "Respect" and "Mobility" at the same level, and thought opinions of local people are more valuable than tourists. She got to know the way of thinking of Japanese local in her 3-year stay in Japan and recognized some part of Japanese culture through real conversation. The reason she enhanced "Mobility" is unknown, and further background exploration is needed, possibly in the form of follow-up interview.

Although RU2's enhancement of "Food and Diet" is still unknown, she improved many dimensions such as interaction, nonverbal communication and awareness of cultural difference. Her inclination to assimilate Japanese locals encouraged her to compare and associate Japanese lifestyle with her Russian background.

Compared to internationals, Japanese participants did not necessarily enhance all dimensions. For instance, JP2's "Awareness of cultural difference" has actually decreased, and JP5's overall score distribution seems a little fluctuated after the fieldwork.

These results might be explained by the difference of mindset toward Japanese culture depending on their nationalities. Holliday [24] points out the recognition toward others would not necessarily occur in the culturally homogeneous setting, however in the face of "otherness" or being surrounded by something (or someone) different from themselves, people tend to realize their cultural identity and thus raise self-awareness. The overall result of CCUS distribution gap between internationals and Japanese supports this argument. In this sense, CCR can be more influential to international listeners than Japanese, because place oriented contents of CCR are designed focusing on Japanese cultural implication and therefore leave stronger impression of "difference" or "otherness" to internationals.

VI.   CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

In this paper, place oriented Internet radio called CCR, which provides three types of content, "Guidebook", "Locals" and "Visitors" which give listeners ideas about cultural aspects of Japan was explained. To get a profound indication from users and to scale the effectiveness of this media, we used CCUS as criteria specifically designed by Ito to measure the level of cross-cultural awareness.

According to the overall result of evaluation experiment conducted in Tokyo for 11 international and 5 Japanese participants, CCR has reasonably contributed to the enhancement of all dimensions for internationals; nevertheless some Japanese participants decreased the scores. As for average CCUS score, Japanese also showed much smaller improvement than internationals. This is because international participants are surrounded by Japanese cultural implication via place oriented contents, and therefore they could easily conceptualize the concept of "otherness" than Japanese participants from their conversation or other interaction with locals.

For the future work, adding the number of participants for evaluation experiment is needed, not only internationals but also Japanese to backup the argument of comparative study. By adding participants, we will be able to find more clues focused on individual context, which explain the contribution of CCR listening experience toward each participants at a deeper level.

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