

In this research, I focused on how Japanese students say and write their self-introduction to other Japanese students and non-Japanese people. I interviewed people who said and wrote downgrading phrases. As a result of my data analysis, I found out that there were two types of the purpose of saying and writing downgrading phrases. Some people used downgrading phrases for Japanese and other people used downgrading phrases for non-Japanese. The former cared about what Japanese people think. The latter tried to tell their level of English skills to non-Japanese people. I hope this study will help people to understand intercultural communication between Japanese and non-Japanese people.

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## **BILINGUALISM AS AN INTEGRATING TOOL**

### **БИЛИНГВИЗМ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ**

The interaction of different cultures is becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted and language as a key component of culture plays a vital role in the process. According to the CAL (Center for Applied Linguistics), “There are many more bilingual or multilingual individuals in the world than there are monolingual”. In view of that, the unavoidable question arises about the effect that bilingualism has on societies.

Taking into consideration numerous challenges such as the migrant crisis that currently shakes Europe and secessionist movements around the world, some people raise concern that bilingualism is a danger for a nation's unity. Others claim that it actually consolidates the society. We aim to prove that it is governmental language policy rather than bilingualism itself that either consolidates or breaks the society.

In this paper, we have analyzed to edge examples. One of the recent examples is Catalonia with its secession referendum. The supporters of Catalonia’s secession name the language difference as the 1st evidence of the nation’s independence and authenticity. The next country is Switzerland, that has been boasting social stability for more than a century already, despite four languages officially spoken there.

The common feature of the two countries is four languages with official status. In Catalonia they are: Catalan, Spanish, Aranese, and Catalan Sign Language, while in Switzerland they are: German, French, Italian and Romansh. According to a 2008

survey there are two main languages in Catalonia Catalan and Spanish. 45.9% of the population spoke Spanish, while 35.6% employed Catalan, and 12% of the population used either language habitually (IDESCAT, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya). The language policy favoring Catalan has become increasingly contentious and controversial during the 2000s. Pro-Catalan language activists claim that some activities cannot be done in Catalan, because almost 500 different rules are forbidding the use of any language except Spanish, or because delegations of the Spanish Government do not accept the use of documents written in Catalan, though it is a co-official language in Catalonia. As a result, public resentment aggravated, contributing to separatist movement activation.

Unlike Spain, Switzerland insists on the language equality policy with all the languages used in official documents despite the heavy disproportion in the amount of speakers (63.0% mainly use German; 22.7% French; 8.4% Italian and 0.6% Romansh (FSO, Swiss Federal Statistical Office)).

This examples clearly show that such issues as language identity, promotion of a language and educating children in a particular language, that inevitably arise if more than one language is spoken in the country, by themselves do not lead to social instability. Moreover, bilingualism can unite people: firstly, it encourages adaptability, flexibility and tolerance. Bilinguals are better at adapting to the communicative situation, as they are more aware of cultural peculiarities. In fact, they continuously face culture-specific differences, get used to the diversity of the world, and as a result become willing to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from their own. Secondly, bilinguals have more words and ways to express themselves and connect to the world better. Thirdly, relating to the inner self in 2 languages allows one to see themselves in different ways, to analyze one's feelings and attitudes. Insight into one's relationships leads to deeper and more meaningful connections. Thus, we believe that bilingualism can serve as a powerful integrating tool.

Political units should adopt bilingualism to ensure successful long-term development. When bilingualism is not supported by an equitable language policy, the members of language minority are likely to promote minority language usage as a reflection of ethnic pride and identity. Meanwhile, equitable bilingualism guarantees favorable conditions for the interrelation and mutual enrichment of cultures, and this undoubtedly contributes to social and political stability.