

# Trans-Cultural Development and Shadowing<sup>1</sup>

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Keiko was born in Tokyo and went to pre-school and kindergarten for three years. After three months as a first-grader in an elementary school, she went to San Diego, California with her parents. In San Diego, she went to an American elementary and junior high school weekdays and a Japanese supplementary school Saturdays. After six years and ten months, she returned to Japan and entered the eighth grade at a middle school.

In this paper, I first describe a group of children with unusual developmental and socialization experiences and argue that they should be viewed as examples of a phenomenon I call "trans-cultural development." Close examination of their overseas experiences is necessary to understand these children, and also to provide clues to how socialization is carried out in a society. The study can be viewed as a contribution to the relationship between culture and human development. Secondly, I discuss two variations of a person-centered approach to human behavior and experiences: shadowing and extended shadowing. While the former is useful to study human activities in specific target environments, the latter helps us reconstruct developmental experiences of target persons and articulate key socialization variables. I will argue that both are needed for the study of trans-cultural development. I will then discuss the issue of continuity and discontinuity as an important analytical perspective for the study of trans-cultural development. Finally, I will deal with some methodological issues in the use of the shadowing technique in cross-cultural studies.

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## What is Trans-Cultural Development?

In 1991, there were 22,718 children of Japanese nationality aged 6 to 15 staying in North America. They are the children of families whose fathers are sent basically to work in American subsidiaries of parent companies they work for in Japan. In San Diego, there are more than 400 of these "sojourner" children. Some of them may end up remaining and attending American colleges, and eventually working in the United States, but most of them go back to Japan before they enter college. When they return, these children encounter difficulties in Japanese classrooms and the larger society. My dissertation (Minami 1993) pursued the study of the reentry experiences of these returnee children (*kikokushijo* in Japanese).

I have followed 13 families who returned to Japan from San Diego and studied the reentry processes of 29 children, including Keiko (pseudonym). Data on these children have revealed considerable variation in the reentry process. While Keiko did not have any particular problem, another returnee girl did not understand her teacher's lectures and asked many questions in class. As a consequence, she was ridiculed by her classmates. One boy was called "*gaijin* (foreigner)" because of his sojourn. Both children would not have had the problems if they had not been in the United States for several years. There are many factors which could explain the variation in the experiences these children have when they return. Two major categories are distinguishable: situational and personal. Situational factors refer to the nature of the local environments into which a returnee child reenters. Some environments are easier to reenter than others because there have been many prior returnees and the people are used to "receiving" them. Situational factors include the neighborhood, the school, the classroom, teachers and classmates. Personal factors refer to the kind of reentry competence a returnee has. The same local environments for two children would not mean they would reenter in the same way because of different personal factors. A child with a good (rather than a poor) command of Japanese gets along better in environments where every interaction is mediated by Japanese language. Reentry competence consists of a strong command of Japanese, Japanese cultural knowledge such as Japanese school subjects and interactional expectations, and attitudinal/motivational factors such as the extent to which the child is eager to "adapt" to Japanese ways.

As for the two children mentioned above, the boy did not violate codes of conduct. He was called names just because of having been abroad. His classmates felt uneasy because they had never seen a "returnee." The problem was due to situational factors such as the people around him. On the other hand, the girl behaved in a different way from ordinary Japanese children (personal factors). She asked questions about basic things which are considered as "common sense." She fell victim to ridicule. If she had stayed in Japan, she might have learned those things. She could have, at least, known that repeatedly asking about basic things can make her a prey to negative sanctions. In a sense, the developmental experiences of returnee children can be called disrupted and the hardships they encounter in reentry can be attributed to these disruptions. However, to call their experiences disrupted development tends to neglect positive aspects. I propose, instead, to use the term trans-cultural development/socialization (TCD, hereafter).

Minoura (1979) was one of the first to study Japanese children in the United States. In her study, the idea of TCD was implied. She conceived socialization in Japan as "experimental condition I" and socialization in the United States as "experimental condition II," and found that "age-linked factors played the primary role in the acquisition of an interpersonal grammar" (1979) and that there is "a sensitive period for the incorporation of cultural meaning systems" (1992). In short, TCD refers to developmental experiences which include elements acquired while staying in a foreign culture. Take, for example, the case of Keiko. If she had not left Japan, Keiko would have led the life of an "ordinary" Japanese girl. Because of her father's overseas posting, she stayed in San Diego and experienced the life of an overseas child for almost seven years. Her "ordinary" Japanese developmental experiences between ages 7 and 13 were replaced by American ones (see Figure 1):<sup>2</sup>

The schema shown in Figure 1 is a useful way to investigate how so-called "Japanese national characters" are reproduced among children. I have found that middle school experiences are critical for making Japanese children diligent and oriented to others. Returnee children who returned to Japan after this period tend to show different

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<sup>2</sup>For convenience, Figure 1 assumes that Keiko was in San Diego from age 7 until just before her birthday of age 13.

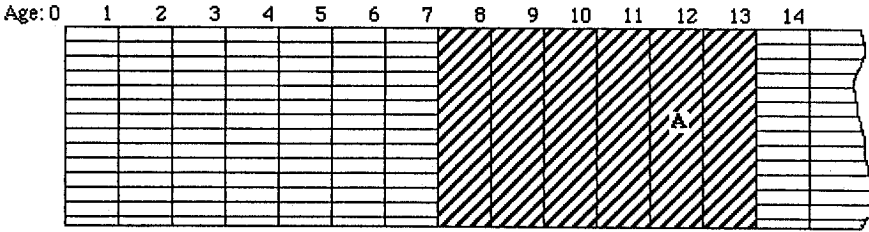


Figure 1

Trans-Cultural Development: Keiko's Case



characteristics. It is speculated that the experiences of going through high school entrance examinations make Japanese students study hard and lay a foundation for them to become a diligent work force. Senior-junior relationships in extra-curricular clubs in Japanese middle schools are considered to be important in helping children learn how to behave in group-oriented ways.

Person-Centered Approach and Shadowing

The conceptualization of culture as an independent variable is not new in cross-cultural cognitive psychology. In a review by the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (1979), the point is reaffirmed and "the need to 'unpack' culture as an independent variable" is urged. We need to know in what ways "experimental condition II" differs from "experimental condition I" and account for the "personal factors" as in the girl's case. Through my research of overseas and returnee children, "unpacking" has been a primary concern. Close examinations of overseas and returning experiences have been pursued. An organizing research principle, which I call here extended shadowing, has guided this endeavor.

Shadowing is a data gathering principle, in which an individual is closely followed and observed, and data are collected of her/his every (relevant) movement or activity. Reder and Schwab (1989;1990) utilized this technique to study "the structure of communication and

collaboration among members of workgroups." As the original meaning of the term implies, "shadow" refers to *closely following* a person. In this sense, shadowing is a person-centered way of data collection and reconstructing her/his behavior.

When we are to conduct research in natural settings, there seems to be two distinct ways of organizing research. One strategy is to select a certain setting or social organization and to focus on it. The other is a person-centered strategy. Generally speaking, most social science studies have preferred the former kind of environment-centered approach. Social scientists attempt to describe and analyze socially and culturally significant environments and activities which take place therein. Environment-centered studies collect the information relevant to the target setting or organization. The information about each participant in the setting or each member of the organization is included in the analysis as far as it is "relevant" to the setting or the organization. Personal, idiosyncratic matters are often left out as "irrelevant." In contrast, studies of human development have to be person-centered. Researchers collect data whatever is related to the target individual.

Shadowing, as I understand, is a variation of the person-centered way of data collection. Roger Barker and his associates used an intensive shadowing technique and produced a detailed description and analysis of one boy's day (Barker and Wright, 1951). Their original concern was apparently person-centered as seen in the following quote.

When, early in our work at the Field Station, we made long records of children's behavior in real-life settings in accordance with a traditional *person-centered* approach, we found that some attributes of behavior varied less across children within settings than across settings within the days of children. We found, in short, that we could predict some aspects of children's behavior more adequately from knowledge of the behavior characteristics of the drugstores, arithmetic classes, and basketball games they inhabited than from knowledge of the behavior tendencies of particular children. (Barker, 1968, p. 4, italics added)

Barker and Wright (1955) found that there are some "persisting, extra-individual, behavior phenomena" and called them "the *standing behavior patterns* of Midwest" (p.4, italics original). They have come to assume that people conform to what and how they are supposed to

**Table 1**  
**Time-Budget of Japanese Elementary School Pupils, 1985**

Activity	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Sleep	9.04	9.02	10.04
Eating	1.31	1.25	1.34
Personal care	1.02	0.57	1.00
Work	0.01	0.00	0.01
Attend school	5.32	3.44	0.16
Extra-curricular activity	0.20	0.15	0.05
Study outside school	1.16	0.57	1.01
Total study	7.08	4.56	1.22
Home chores	0.18	0.28	1.01
Travel to school	0.45	0.44	0.03
Total travel	1.02	1.08	0.48
Friends	0.07	0.14	0.35
Leisure activity	1.40	2.59	4.29
Newspaper, magazine, book	0.20	0.30	0.37
Radio	0.03	0.03	0.04
TV	1.55	2.46	2.41

Time spent per day: (hour)(minute).

Source: NHK 1991, p. 10. It is not known if any U.S. institution has the copy of the original report on 1985 survey. Copies of the original report on 1980 survey (NHK1981a; 1981b) are held by Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

I have also included the same kind of data on middle school students (Grade 7 to 9) and high school students (Grade 10 to 12) in Chapter 5 of my dissertation (Minami, 1993).

behave in a setting. As a consequence, Barker has argued for ecological psychology, in which the following is a major research question: "What are the structural and dynamic properties of the environments to which people must adapt?" (Barker, 1968, p. 3-4)

Little is known about Japanese children overseas. Although we define "culture" as an independent variable and make up the model shown in Figure 1, we know little about the content of "culture." For example, how different Keiko's experiences of age 11 in San Diego (portion A in Figure 1) are from what she would have had if she had stayed in Japan? In what

ways do cultural differences affect the everyday life experiences of Keiko? In order to investigate fairly unknown issue such as TCD, we have to start from the scratch. Since we have little knowledge about how "culture" becomes experience of these children, we need to examine every aspect of their daily life. One way to do this is take the person-centered approach and first reconstruct event structures of everyday life. By organizing interviews with the mother about the past chronologically, and by asking her about the activities of her child as it happened, as if actually shadowing the child, we can cover a broad range of the child's behavior. We do not necessarily shadow the child in person to come up with a complete list.

One way to obtain comprehensive data of everyday life is to start with a temporal and quantitative aspect, time-budget. Temporal distribution of behavior was one of the basic components of the Barker group's studies (Barker and Wright, 1951; 1955). Time-allocation (cf. Gross, 1984) or time-budget (cf. Andorka, 1987) studies collect data on time allocation of a given population. These illustrate how much time a population spends in different behavior settings. In Japan, NHK (Japan's BBC) conducts the biggest and the most systematic survey every five years. Table 1 shows the average time-budget of children ages between 10 and 12 in 1985.

### Continuity and Discontinuity

As pointed out in a review of the study of language socialization, many studies "emphasize continuity and discontinuity of expectations regarding appropriate language behavior across social contexts" (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986, p. 167). It has been found that there are great intranational variations across subgroups of many kinds in the United States. Problems such as poor academic performance of certain groups are attributed to discontinuity in "language behaviors necessary for children's successful participation in everyday social life" between school and home. Returnee children are said to face discontinuity when they return to Japan. While they were taught to be unique in the United States, in Japan they are expected to learn as much as possible by rote to compete in entrance examinations. Even the language they are expected to speak changes from English to Japanese. The issue of continuity and discontinuity among developmental experiences makes TCD a major research topic. Pursuit of the topic should take the person-centered approach since there are great deals of

variations among experiences of overseas Japanese children. Enrollment in full-time Japanese schools is one critical factor.<sup>3</sup> Because of huge potential variations, we need to study each child thoroughly and longitudinally.

Thorough reconstruction of everyday life events and experiences can begin with time-budget study. Time-budget data help us reconstruct event structures. Time-budget studies have produced average time-budgets, which include typical and possible activities of the population. With the help of a complete directory of event/setting/activity, we can conduct interviews and reconstruct event structures of children. Then, we can proceed to study cultural differences among each event/setting/activity. Change in time-budget (discontinuity) which takes place when a child goes to San Diego or returns to Japan is an interesting topic itself. If we learn that Japanese children in San Diego attend the supplementary Saturday school from 8:30 to 3:00 every week, it makes sense that some children feel relieved after they return to Japan because of the lessened workload. This can be called quantitative discontinuity in TCD. Generally speaking, organization of everyday life of Japanese school-age children does not change radically in terms of time-budget by going to San Diego or returning to Japan. They attend school weekdays and on Saturday in Japan and attend the supplementary school on Saturday in San Diego. Basic routines of everyday life do not change very much.

Once we reconstruct the event structures of children's daily life with the person-centered approach and obtain complete time-budget data, we can go on to examine *qualitative* continuity and discontinuity among Japanese and American counterparts. For example, home environments of these children do not change very much because most of the children go and return with their parents. Japanese parents usually maintain the same approach to their children after they arrive in San Diego. It takes a long time for Japanese mothers to start incorporating American ways of child-rearing. In spite of the requests from ESL teachers to speak English at home in order to facilitate acquisition of English by

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<sup>3</sup>There were just three full-time Japanese schools in North America (in New York, Chicago, and Guam) and 780 children were enrolled in 1991. While 36.0% of the overseas Japanese children attended full-time Japanese schools in the world, the ratio was 3.4% in North



children, very few Japanese parents talk to their children in English. In this sense, the conceptualization shown in Figure 1 can be misleading and needs modification. Keiko was not placed in a WASP family in San Diego. Basically, she lived an "ordinary" home life of Japanese children in San Diego.

It is school environments that change radically when children go to San Diego and return to Japan. Japanese and American classrooms are operated according to different principles which are heavily influenced by "mainstream" values of their larger societies. In order to inquire into the differences, we need a detailed study. The intensive shadowing technique is effective once target environments are specified. Cross-cultural comparative study of classroom activities can be achieved with the technique. However, for the study of TCD, we need to keep the person-centered attitude thereafter. Children who do not speak English may not be able to understand messages as intended. Degree of integration to the scene has to be included into the description and the analysis.

### TCD and Shadowing

Articulation of key developmental events is a major initial task for the study of TCD. From interviews with mothers, it is easily found that home environments do not radically change after returning. Time-budget data can also be collected by interview. Most large-scale time-budget studies such as the one by NHK are conducted with the method of self-report while some time-allocation studies by anthropologists rely on direct observation. There is a trade-off between accuracy and cost of collection. In order to observe and record one day of each of the 16 children, Barker and Wright had as many as 19 research assistants (Barker and Wright, 1955, p.vi). Direct observation such as shadowing can produce accurate data but costs a great amount of money.

The Japanese supplementary school in San Diego includes many key socialization events for the Japanese children. My research at the school has been rather exploratory. Although I argue for the person-centered approach in this paper, my approach to the school has been primarily environment-centered. Through my research, however, one setting/event has come up as a key research topic. It is recess in the school.

In the Japanese supplementary school, Keiko spoke English with friends during recess when she was in the third and fourth grades. But in the fifth grade, she had switched back to Japanese.

(From interview with Keiko's mother)

I was very intrigued when I heard this from her mother. In the interview with Keiko which was conducted after her return to Japan, I inquired into this. According to Keiko, when she was in the third and fourth grades, she associated with the girls who was born in America or had gone to America at age 1 or 2. When she was in the fifth grade, many girls came from Japan. Keiko became friends and spoke in Japanese with them. As she recalled, the reason for the switch was a kind of topics. Her old friends preferred talking about American movies and movie stars. Her new friends liked to talk about Japanese pop songs and idols. Keiko reported she did not enjoy the conversations with her old friends very much and formed a clique with the new girls. The change in use of language was a consequence of the change of her friendships.<sup>4</sup>

During recess in the Japanese supplementary school, some speak Japanese with their friends while others use English. It is obvious that descriptions such as "talked with friends during recess" are not good enough data to deal with TCD. We need to study who talk with whom about what in what language. Such information provides data for studies of TCD and cultural identity. Cultural identity of overseas and returnee children is a major topic in studies of TCD (cf. Minoura, 1993). However, because of its subjective nature, it is very difficult to treat "identity" in an objective, comparable, systematic way. Self-reports are often utilized but the data obtained are hardly comparable because of their subjectivity. The story by Keiko has the same deficiencies. In addition, she recalled and talked about what had happened more than three years earlier. The on-going processes observed with shadowing technique meet the methodological challenge of the enterprise. By shadowing a child and recording with whom s/he talks about what, we can have data about behavior during recess. The data measures culture as both independent and dependent variable: independent in the sense that

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<sup>4</sup>The interview transcripts and their detailed analyses can be found in Chapter 7 of my dissertation (Minami, 1993).

the child receives the culturally loaded messages, and dependent, in the sense that the child shows her/his cultural preference (identity) by choosing the topic and the clique.

One of the most important issues when we are to conduct a close observational study using the shadowing technique is the problem of observational effects. It is particularly significant when we attempt to study rather "private" setting such as the recess interaction of children. Because of possible observational effects, the shadowing technique has been used to study rather "normative" activities in "public" settings. Studies by Reder and Schwab (1989; 1990) were concerned with "the structure of communication and collaboration among members of workgroups." It is no wonder that the research by Barker and his associates has lead to discovery of "standing behavior patterns." People tend to behave as they are supposed to when they are observed.

By using recording equipments such as tape recorder and video camera, we can lessen the obtrusiveness of observation, but this equipment can have other limitations. Technically, it is impossible to make observations of human behavior "as it is." Even an attempt of self-monitoring can change a person's behavior. We have to stop pursuing what is impossible and attempt to articulate the degree of observational effects of each observation. It may be helpful to place an observation on the assumed spectrum of no observational effect and "full" observational effect.<sup>5</sup>

There are very few adults in Japanese schools who are not "teachers." Parents are not allowed in classrooms except for designated open house days. It is very difficult to maintain a status of observer in Japanese schools. Not only children but also teachers are unaccustomed to being observed. From my research experiences at American and Japanese schools, it is apparent that there are some systematic differences in "accustomedness" to being observed between Japanese and American schools. If we are concerned about observational effects, we have to deal with this "cultural" difference. One important question is how susceptible to observational effects are the activities in the Japanese supplementary school in San Diego are,

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<sup>5</sup>Aaron Cicourel (1993) has argued that we have to think about constraints on human behavior in terms of ecology of settings. He thinks of behavior observed in experimental setting as a special kind of cultural ecology.

compared to similar effects in Japanese and American schools. This issue can be a fruitful research topic.

One common technique to lessen observational effects is to become a part of the scenery. It seems to be generally assumed that when the observed lose their awareness of being observed due to psychological concentration on the task at hand or getting used to being observed, the observed behave as if they are not being observed. Ethnographers often assume that once good relationships are established, the observed start to behave "naturally." Since any kind of "observation" can affect and alter human behavior, we need a practical and effective way to lessen its effects. And, again, we need to monitor how observational effects change as relationships develop. It seems to me that cultural factors also intervene in the process. It is said that Japanese seems to be less conscious of the presence of others once they start to recognize them as member of an "in-group." Americans seem to be affected similarly.

Access is an important, relevant issue. In my research, American schools seemed to be much more accessible than Japanese schools. I had to spend much more time and energy obtaining permission for observation in Japan. The Japanese supplementary school stands somewhere inbetween, probably closer to American schools. It is a real challenge to articulate and include such systematic bias into cross-cultural studies. There is no doubt that "culture" is a big factor here and that this issue is related to the matter of observational effects.

From the above discussion, it is suggested that the use of a shadowing technique is useful for the investigation of "normative" behavior but weaker if we want to study behavior which may be heavily affected by continuous or frequent observation. Another point I want to discuss is also related to "normativeness." The research developed by Barker and his associates made a major contribution to the understanding of everyday behavior and everyday environments. However, their emphasis on environments (ecology) and "normative" behavior tends to neglect individual variations. There are numerous sources of individual variation of behavior, from highly idiosyncratic to highly systematic. One systematic source of variation is the degree of "acquaintedness" with a certain environment and its behavior patterns. For example, five-year-old children in the first-grade class on day one usually do not know how to behave "properly" as pupils. They have to learn what to do

and in which way. Human development and socialization are the realms in which the issue of "learning" new behavior patterns really matters. It is especially the case with study of TCD. It is one of my assumptions (following work by Goodenough, 1957) that when a person acquires the necessary cultural knowledge and language skills and is able to function as a "full-fledged" member, her/his feeling towards the culture and society (cultural identity) is solidified.

When we raise a question about the mechanism by which children come to behave in conformity to standing behavior patterns, shadowing needs to be conducted very carefully. With careful, close observation, we can infer whether a child is merely imitating children around her/him and pretending s/he understands instructions by the teacher or s/he fully understands the instructions.

Since we know little about TCD, the study alluded to here is exploratory. Can the shadowing technique produce data that are comparable to behavior found across cultures? As pointed out by Gross, time-allocation studies contain "the necessity for *coding* or labeling behavior as an example of a general class of phenomena" (1984, p. 520, italics in original). In time-allocation studies, observers usually carry out this crucial enterprise. TCD can produce data which can be used to examine how comparable behaviors are felt and perceived by people who experience them. Children may "experience" "going to school" in America and Japan differently. Inquiry into this topic can be seen as a variation of determining continuity and discontinuity of "corresponding" behaviors. I am arguing that this topic can be used to help evaluate cross-cultural time-allocation and time-budget data.

Higher educational institutions in Japan did not reward the overseas experiences of returnee children before. They required that returnee children also take the same entrance examinations as all students. Recently, they started to administer different admittance procedures for returnee applicants. The acquisition of second languages is highly regarded. Returnee children are praised by the public for their "foreign culture experiences (*ibunka taiken*)."

However, the reality is that 36% of the Japanese children overseas attend full-time Japanese schools. Most of the children who stay in North America and go to local schools also attend supplementary Japanese schools. Living this "dual life," it usually takes more than five

years to acquire a "good" command of English, but children do not stay that long.<sup>6</sup>

In this paper, I have introduced a group of children whose experiences can help us clarify research on culture and development. Because very little has been known about their everyday behavior, the shadowing technique can be a powerful exploratory strategy that fits the investigation of TCD. Returnee children are not always able to obtain a "fabulous" command of English. We need to closely examine many details of their overseas experiences.

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<sup>6</sup>I have information of 129 children who returned from the United States. Just 33 of them (25.6%) stayed in America for more than 5 years.

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