**109學年度第一學期『英語文競賽』七年級朗讀**

【編目：01】

**Language Gaps**

Joe Smith is an American businessman. He does a lot of business in Germany. Joe’s German partners know him very well, but they always call him Mr. Smith.

This confuses Joe. Why don’t the German just call him by his first name? If the Germans did that, everything would be friendlier and more relaxed. When the Germans call Joe Mr. Smith, they seem too formal. However, the Germans are just trying to show respect. They think that it would be impolite to use a business partner’s first name.

If you often go abroad, you might have similar problems sometimes. You might misunderstand a foreigner, even if you are both speaking English! This is because customs and ideas are different in every country.

Also, people use language differently in every country. Let’s look at two examples: Japan and the USA. People in these two countries often express opinions in different ways. In the USA, people tend to be frank. If an American wants to reject someone’s idea, he’ll usually say “no.” That might seem rude to a Japanese person.

A Japanese person is less likely to say “no.” He might say, “That would be difficult.” When he says this, he’s indicating “no.” However, an American might misunderstand. The American might say, “How can I solve your problems?”

When you have problems like this, don’t give up. Try to understand the other person’s culture. Try to talk to that person. You’ll gain a lot of knowledge, and things will be better.

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