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Around the World

Trip to Turkey

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Last month, I went to Turkey for almost a week. I went to many beautiful World Heritage Sites, for example the rock sites of Cappadocia, the Blue-mosque in Istanbul, and other wonderful places. It was very nice. This trip inspired me to study many things: history, geography, and foreign languages, especially English.

In Turkey, people use Turkish as their official language. Therefore, I thought they wouldn't be able to speak Japanese or

English; however, I was pleasantly surprised. When I went to a turquoise shop in Cappadocia market, many clerks introduced their goods and the history of turquoise in fluent Japanese. Not only could they speak Japanese well, but they could also use honorific words fluently. At first, I thought that this shop was a more exclusive

shop than the other shops in the market, so the clerks could speak Japanese, but this was a mistake. The clerks in many other shops that I visited could also speak Japanese. Moreover, they could speak English, Chinese, Korean, and French. I was very surprised to hear them speak so many different languages! I wondered why they could speak so many foreign languages. Finally, I asked a young clerk who I saw speaking Japanese, Chinese, and English. He said, "I like Japan, so I study Japanese!" and "I could progress by speaking actively and not being shy." (Of course he

said this in Japanese.) This was very good advice for me, because it made me more determined to speak English. Before I went to Turkey, I had many chances to speak English, but I didn't try to speak because I would be ashamed if I made mistakes. However, I realized that I have to change my way of thinking for my English to progress. Since then, when I have had a chance to speak English, I try to speak English at hotels or shops. At first, I felt nervous, so I didn't

speak well, but gradually I relaxed and came to speak better. An incident in Turkey where I noticed that I was improving was when I tried to negotiate a discount at a shop. I felt very happy because I could talk in English with a clerk and I got a four hundred yen discount!

Signs at the airport and the

shopping malls in Turkey were of course written in Turkish, but almost all signs were written in English, too. On my way back to Japan, I noticed that it was the same in China and Qatar, too. I realized that if I know English, I can go anywhere in the world. In the future, I want visit many countries. So I have decided to study English much harder than before, and try to speak in English if I have a chance. In addition, I want to learn more about geography and history.

This trip changed my attitude toward studying many things, especially English. It was a very nice trip.

About the author: Mami Kawabata is a student at the University of the Ryūkyūs.



Figure 1. The Blue Mosque in Istanbul. (Photo by Benh Lieu Song, reprinted under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.)

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