

English Immersion Camp and International Posture

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This study focuses on how children, aged 8-12, built “international posture” through an English immersion camp, at which the instructors, mostly nonnative English speakers, helped the children develop confidence in using English. The paper details (a) how participants’ attitude toward English changes; (b) how instructors motivate children to use English; and (c) what are considered key factors to acquiring international posture (e.g., Yashima, 2009). Several suggestions are made for teaching English in elementary schools in Japan.

この研究は8歳から12歳の子どもたちがイングリッシュイマージョンキャンプ（キャンプリーダーの多くが英語を母語としない者であり、子どもたちが英語を使うことに自信を持てるようにサポートする）を通してどのようにして国際的志向性（e.g., 八島, 2009）を養うのかに注目する。本稿では（1）英語に対する参加者の態度がどのようにして変わるのか、（2）どのようにしてキャンプリーダーたちが子どもたちの英語を使うモチベーションを高めるのか、（3）国際的志向性を養うためにはどんな要素が必要とされるのか、加えて、日本における小学校における英語教育の一助となる提案を試みたい。

It is important to show students how English proficiency can expand their opportunities in the future and how English can be used in any profession and position, according to Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT; 2011). In order to do this, the ministry proposes providing children with a “global perspective” to enhance their motivation for English learning. As Yashima (2009) suggested, international posturing, the acquisition of a tendency to see oneself as connected to the international community, plays a central role in achieving this goal.



Kumon English Immersion Camps (EIC) held for the past 10 years, provide an optimal environment where participants can shape their internal posture. Over the past 3 years, EICs have been held in Hotel Biwako Plaza by Lake Biwa in Shiga prefecture.

Four 1-week camps were held in August 2012. Camp leaders took care of the children and communicated with them in English. The camp leaders were from 17 countries or regions, including America, Botswana, Colombia, Indonesia, and Russia. Most of the leaders were nonnative speakers of English but spoke English fluently as they had learned English as their second or official language. In this respect, all of them shared recognition of the importance of World Englishes (Kachru, 1992) or English as a global language (Crystal, 1997). The goals of these camps are to help children accept each other's differences, have successful experiences communicating in English, and contribute to the global community. One of EIC's core beliefs is that it is meaningful for children to be able to communicate with people from different countries and backgrounds in order to accept cultural differences and become more confident in their own English. With its slogan "Don't be afraid of making mistakes! Let's try communicating in English," EIC is committed to the following three objectives:

1. offering children plenty of opportunities to experience successful communication while using English as a global language;
2. allowing children to share a communal lifestyle with people from different countries and to realize the importance of understanding each other; and
3. fostering a conducive atmosphere for building confidence, allowing children to actively challenge the unfamiliar and to strive for higher goals.

These are the features that distinguish EIC from other English camps held in Japan, and they are essential in studying international posture. Through EIC, participants experience diversity and success in communicating in English with people from different countries and regions. Regarding how that happens, MEXT (2011) argued that "gaining overseas experience at an impressionable age allows one to interact with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, to expand one's view and to deepen one's insight, which is important for cultivation of human resources able to play an active role in the global community."

The Study

We hypothesized that EIC would have an impact on developing international posturing and the participants' motivation to learn English. Except for a few studies that have examined changes in variables such as willingness to communicate and communication anxiety in an immersion and a nonimmersion program (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003), the correlation between international posture and English learning motivation in a short-term English immersion camp has never been studied. Therefore, we deemed that it was our task to attempt to elucidate the outcomes of our program with the two research questions:

1. How did participants' attitudes towards English change throughout the program?
2. What key factors are necessary for raising international posture?

Out of the four camps, we chose the third camp, held August 15 to 20, for our study. The total number of participants was 86. Participants ranged from 3rd to 6th grade (ages 8-12). Their English ability was equivalent to STEP Eiken (Test of Practical English Proficiency) level 4 or above.

Method

Due to the nature of this study, which required both quantitative and qualitative analysis, three methods were utilized: a pre- and postquestionnaire, interviews, and video-recorded observations.

Questionnaires

In devising a questionnaire for this study, we drew on the questionnaire used in a large-scale motivational research study by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) because the questionnaire was well organized with questions that could be divided into 16 categories based on the type of attitude or motivation. In our questionnaire, the 86 participants were asked to self-evaluate their attitudes towards English and their motivation for studying English on a 6-point Likert scale. Considering the differences in our research setting compared to that of Taguchi et al., we selected 42 questions (see Appendix B) under 18 categories (see Appendix A), along with two open-ended questions that were significant for our motivational study and that could supplement responses to the Likert-scale questions. Eight questions were included under two new categories we developed and labeled *International posture* and *Tolerance for world Englishes*. The questions were arranged in random order on the questionnaire. Also, taking participants' age into consideration, we translated all the questions into Japanese and used simple wording so that children would have no trouble understanding the questions.

Interviews

To take part in the interviews and observations, one representative student, Hiroto (alias), was selected based on both his responses to the questionnaire and self-confidence in his own English skills prior to the camp. Hiroto was a 6th grader who had already passed STEP Eiken level 3. In order to bet-

ter understand motivational changes in him, we conducted three types of interviews: a preinterview, a postinterview, and a daily interview. The preinterview was structured, as almost all questions were prepared in advance. We asked him why he had decided to participate in the program, how he usually studied English, why he thought he needed to study English, what his dream for the future was, and so forth. The postinterview with Hiroto was unstructured in that we had not prepared a set of questions because we assumed that it would be better for him to talk frankly about how he felt about the program. In addition to those two interviews, Hiroto was also interviewed at the end of each camp day and asked what activity was the most enjoyable, how he thought his English skills had improved, and what he wanted to try the following camp day. Except for a couple of questions asked in English, all the questions in the interviews were in Japanese. All the interviews were videotaped for later analysis.

Observations

Observations were used to understand how Hiroto communicated with camp leaders, how he changed in the ways he responded to them, and ultimately how he became motivated to use English more spontaneously. So as to not hinder him by making him too conscious of our existence, we videotaped him during the following four activities only.

Love chain

This activity enables participants to learn about and accept differences in cultures. Camp leaders explain some differences related to culture, such as food, greetings, and how to eat. One of the ETC aims, to share a communal lifestyle with people from different countries, and to realize the importance of understanding each other, is particularly connected to our research.

Traveling Around the World

In this activity, participants learn about the different countries and cultures of the camp leaders. The presentations are hands-on. Participants experience national dance, food, traditional clothes, and so on. By doing this, participants are able to expand their views, learn more, and boost their interest in other countries of the world.

Wonder-Land

Participants listen to a presentation about world problems, such as global warming and poverty. They learn about the reality of what is happening in the world. They start to think about what they can do for society and take self-motivated action.

World Food Market

Participants learn how to negotiate in English as well as have fun and discover different foods of the world. They are given a set amount of money and a recipe for one international dish. Camp leaders work at a market, selling ingredients for the foods at stalls. Participants go shopping and buy the necessary ingredients by negotiating for a lower price.

Unlike most classroom observations in which a camera is set up on a tripod, we carried around a hand-held camcorder during the four activities so that we could quickly approach Hiroto and zoom in on the scene with him. In so doing, we expected that we could examine what type of activity was effective to elicit a meaningful response from Hiroto and how he responded to camp leaders' questions (e.g., by smiling or by spontaneous speech). Since the four activities centered on the importance of cultural or international understanding, the evidence we gathered from the observations demonstrated that the activities nurtured Hiroto's international posture and helped to change his attitude toward English over time.

Data Analysis and Results

Questionnaires

Applying a *t* test to the questionnaire data, we found that answers to 15 out of the 42 question items showed significant differences ($p < .05$) before and after the camp. Table 1 shows the results of the *t* test.

Table 1. Questions That Showed a *t*-Test Significant Difference ($N = 57$)

Category	Question no.	Mean		SD		<i>p</i> -value
		pre	post	pre	post	
(1)	Q31	4.473	4.982	1.141	1.017	< .001
(2)	Q24	4.035	4.482	1.128	1.124	.028
(6)	Q13	3.053	2.500	1.563	1.362	.031
	Q39	4.321	3.875	1.501	1.669	.004
(11)	Q21	4.315	4.789	1.230	1.135	.003
(12)	Q37	4.105	4.631	1.346	1.070	.005
(13)	Q7	4.363	3.236	1.312	1.560	< .001
	Q34	4.596	3.105	1.268	1.459	< .001
(15)	Q30	3.160	3.642	1.372	1.368	.027
(17)	Q3	4.561	4.929	1.124	0.988	.013
	Q15	5.196	5.446	0.989	0.822	.038
	Q36	4.232	3.821	1.253	1.151	.037
(18)	Q9	4.456	3.157	1.229	1.507	< .001
	Q23	4.789	4.263	1.088	1.207	.002
	Q29	4.982	4.526	1.177	1.141	.009

Nine categories out of 18 showed significant differences, such as (13) *English anxiety*, (17) *International posture*, and (18) *Tolerance for world Englishes*. Therefore, we concluded that through this par-

ticular EIC, participants were motivated to learn English, raised their international posture through activities such as Traveling Around the World, and decreased their fear and anxiety about speaking English by communicating with camp leaders. Furthermore, we can argue that through this program, participants came to realize that English is a useful tool for communicating with people from different countries and backgrounds.

Correlational Analyses

In order to understand the motivational factors related to raising international posture, a correlation analysis was applied to the data collected after the camp. Question items that we found correlated with the questions measuring international posture (Q3, Q15, Q28, and Q36) are shown in Table 2. According to the results, four factors are related to international posture. In particular, Q15 “I study English to make friends with people from different countries” was inversely correlated to Q7, “I feel uneasy when I see foreigners who speak English,” and is strongly correlated to Q6, “I want to get to know people from different countries.” Also, Q17 “Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for what I want to do in the future,” in the *Ideal L2 self* category, shows a moderate correlation with three questions (Q3, Q28, Q36) in the *International posture* category. Furthermore, Q30 “I like English magazines, newspapers, and books,” in the *Cultural interest* category, also shows a moderate correlation with three questions in the *International posture* category. From these results, it can be argued that three key factors are important to raise international posture through the program: (a) it is imperative to remove fear, nervousness, and anxiety about speaking English; (b) it is necessary to become more interested in cultures and customs of different countries; and (c) it is desirable for participants themselves to feel the need to study English in order to pursue their own future goals.

Table 2. Questions Correlated With International Posture Questions

Intern. post. Q.	Positive correlation		Negative correlation	
	Moderate*	Strong**	Moderate***	Strong****
Q3	Q6, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q24, Q25, Q28, Q30, Q35, Q37, Q40	none	none	none
Q15	Q1, Q2, Q12, Q14, Q18, Q21, Q28, Q30, Q31, Q37, Q38, Q40	Q6, Q35	Q7	none
Q28	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q12, Q14, Q15, Q17, Q19, Q22, Q30, Q32, Q36, Q37, Q38, Q42	Q6, Q21, Q35, Q40	none	none
Q36	Q2, Q17, Q20, Q25, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q39, Q41	none	none	none

Note. * $.4 < r \leq .7$; ** $.7 < r < 1$ *** $-.7 < r \leq -.4$; **** $-.4 < r < 1$

Interviews and Observations

The data collected from interviews and observations were also examined. Before the camp started, target participant Hiroto self-evaluated his own reading and writing skills as 5 on a scale of 1 (less confident) to 5 (more confident) on the prequestionnaire. However, he gave a relatively low score to his listening and speaking skills, each of which was 3. In the precamp interview, he also stated that he had never had meaningful communication in English with people from other countries.

However, in the postinterview a month later, Hiroto said that he now enjoys exchanging emails in English with some of the camp leaders. In addition, one significant change for him is in regards to his future dreams. According to the postques-

tionnaire, after the EIC his dream changed from “becoming a doctor” to becoming an “internationally minded doctor” who can contribute to the world. Also, his attitude toward studying English changed. To an open-ended question in the postquestionnaire that asked about his reasons for studying English, Hiroto responded by stating “for myself and for my future job.” Moreover, to a question that asked what kind of English skills he wanted to acquire, he wrote, “I want to speak (English) without being afraid of making mistakes.” Therefore, it is safe to say that through successful communication with camp leaders and by participating in meaningful activities, his fear, nervousness, and anxiety about speaking English were considerably lessened.

Conclusion

Through the EIC, participants became more motivated to learn English, improved their international posture through activities, and decreased their fear and anxiety about speaking English by communicating with camp leaders, according to the *t* test results. It would appear that participants had come to realize that English is a useful tool for communicating with people from different countries and backgrounds.

In the correlational analysis, we found three important points to consider in fostering international posture. On the basis of the results, we can argue, though with minimal certainty, that (a) relieving the fear or anxiety that they have when they use English; (b) stimulating them to take a strong interest in a variety of cultures and customs; and (c) encouraging them to develop a clear awareness of their own objectives of learning English may all play a crucial role in helping participants build their international posture.

We strongly believe that if these three points are incorporated into English education at the elementary school level, there will

be a noticeable impact on children’s English ability and motivation. English language education will be more effective if an environment where children can communicate in English with people from different countries and backgrounds is created. In the future, it will be feasible for children in Japan to have such opportunities by utilizing available resources in the community where their school is located.

Bio Data

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Appendix A

Motivational Categories

- (1) Criterion measures / Intended effort
- (2) Ideal L2 self
- (3) Ought-to L2 self
- (4) Parental engagement / Family influence
- (5) Instrumentality-promotion
- (6) Instrumentality-prevention
- (7) Linguistic self-confidence
- (8) Attitudes toward learning English
- (9) Travel orientation
- (10) Fear of assimilation
- (11) Ethnocentrism
- (12) Interest in the English language
- (13) English anxiety

- (14) Integration
- (15) Cultural interest
- (16) Attitudes toward L2 community
- (17) International posture
- (18) Tolerance for world Englishes

Appendix B

Question Items in English

Note. Category numbers are shown in parentheses.

- Q1. I like English. (14)
- Q2. I find learning English really interesting. (8)
- Q3. Studying English is important to me because I would like to work in different countries. (17)
- Q4. I think that I am doing my best to learn English. (1)
- Q5. I am sure I will be able to write in English comfortably if I continue studying. (7)
- Q6. I want to get to know people from different countries. (16)
- Q7. I feel uneasy when I meet a foreigner who speaks English. (13)
- Q8. I think I have a talent for English learning. (7)
- Q9. I think we shouldn't make mistakes when we use English. (18)
- Q10. My parents encourage me to study English. (4)
- Q11. It is important to me to study English because I want to travel abroad. (9)
- Q12. It is important to communicate even though pronunciation may be different. (18)
- Q13. I have to study English because if I do not study it, people will think I'm not a good student. (6)

- Q14. I like the rhythm of English. (12)
- Q15. I want to get along with people from different countries by studying English. (17)
- Q16. Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Japanese language has been corrupted. (10)
- Q17. Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for what I want to do in the future. (2)
- Q18. I like English music, like pop music. (15)
- Q19. It is important to study English because if I can use it, I can work anywhere in the world. (5)
- Q20. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so. (3)
- Q21. I am very interested in ways of thinking and customs of other cultures. (11)
- Q22. If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English. (7)
- Q23. It is important to speak perfect English as foreigners who speak English do. (18)
- Q24. I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners. (2)
- Q25. I always look forward studying English. (8)
- Q26. I think that there is a danger of Japanese people forgetting the importance of Japanese culture as a result of internationalization. (10)
- Q27. My parents encourage me to take every opportunity to use my English (e.g., speaking and reading). (4)
- Q28. I want to understand different cultures of various countries by studying English. (17)
- Q29. I should learn perfect English pronunciation. (18)
- Q30. I like English magazines, newspapers, and books. (15)
- Q31. If an English course was offered in school or somewhere else in the future, I would like to take it. (1)
- Q32. Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful for getting a good job. (5)
- Q33. I study English because with English I can enjoy traveling abroad. (9)
- Q34. I would feel uneasy speaking English with a foreigner who can speak English. (13)
- Q35. I want to get along with people from countries where English is spoken. (14)
- Q36. I study English because I want to contribute to the world. (17)
- Q37. I feel excited when hearing English spoken. (12)
- Q38. I respect the ways of thinking and customs of other cultures. (11)
- Q39. I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks or fail in it (e.g., STEP). (6)
- Q40. I want to know more about people from different countries. (16)
- Q41. I have to study English, because if I do not study it, I think my parents will be disappointed in me. (3)
- Q42. If I keep on studying English, I think I will be able to read English sentences comfortably and understand it. (7)