The Effects of Task-based Intercultural Instruction on the Intercultural Competence of Japanese Secondary EFL Learners

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The present study was designed to investigate the effects of the integration of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and intercultural education on learning outcomes and learners' cross-cultural attitudes. It was a single-factor matched-pairs design with two levels of TBLT instructional conditions: (a) TBLT with intercultural education; (b) TBLT without intercultural education. Thirty-eight Japanese high school EFL learners (M=12, F=26) participated in this experiment. A culture assimilator (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), one of the most researched and effective intercultural educational methods, was incorporated into the decision-making task. Regarding individual differences (ID) in learning, the study also drew on aptitude-treatment interaction theory (Cronbach & Snow, 1977) and examined main and interaction effects of ID and treatment on learning outcomes. The results showed that there was no significant post-/delayed-test mean difference between the experimental and control groups. However, some interaction effects between ID and treatment condition on cross-cultural attitudes and a main effect of treatment on how much English the participants learned in the oral communication lessons were found to be statistically significant. This study suggests that integrating FL/L2 education and intercultural education enhances both students' cross-cultural attitudes and English learning.