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

Eriko ISHII
Sophia University
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

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.

Introduction

Developing intercultural competence, including positive cross-cultural attitudes, is seen as an important goal of language education (e.g.,