

Antonio Jimenez-Munoz &
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Empirical Studies in Multilingualism

Multilingualism is a broad term that alludes to the use of several languages (not necessarily proficiently) via the mutual interaction of languages in the mind of the user or with others. Thus, it does not only target language use, but how prior linguistic and cultural experience of such users contributes to determining their communicative competence. Interest in multilingualism is growing fast in research, education, and policy. This volume addresses current research in multilingualism from such diverse education contexts as Spain, Costa Rica, Mexico or Japan in order to provide an insight into the variety and diversity of research problems in the field. Acknowledging that research questions are to still further face the challenges posed by different contexts of practice in primary, secondary and tertiary levels, this collection is divided into ten chapters that approach the selected issues from different empirical perspectives, bringing together research in relevant contextual levels and emphases such as language, content and skills acquisition, learning and teaching effectiveness, policy supervision and motivational factors.

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Analysing Contexts and Outcomes



PETER LANG

Yun, Young H. / Bae, Sung H. / Kang, Im O. / Shin, Kyung H. / Lee, Ran / Im Kwon, So / Park, Young S. / Lee, Eun S. 2004. Cross-cultural Application of the Korean Version of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) Breast-Cancer-Specific Quality of Life Questionnaire (EORTC QLQ-BR23). *Supportive Care in Cancer*. 12/6, 441–445.

MATSUMOTO, K.

Using the European Self-reflective Tool, *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE)* for Intercultural-awareness Raising in Japan

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Definition of Interculturalism*

Interest in intercultural education has been emerging in Japan and many Asian countries, with various attempts to introduce and create programs based on European theories and approaches to interculturalism. However, the definition of intercultural competence, especially its difference from multiculturalism and cross-culturalism is often not clearly delineated in the conceptualizations and approaches of such studies and experiments. Back in 2010, the author and her research team first tried to build a framework of intercultural education tailored to Japan by learning about various programs in other geographical areas, notably the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures, FREPA (Candelier et al. [2010] 2012) and Intercultural Competence for PROFESSIONAL MOBility, ICOPROMO, at the European Center for Modern Languages (2010). This project was funded in Japan by the Society for the Promotion of Science (Project #2232011).

UNESCO declared their support for interculturalism in the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions ([2005] 2017) in its Article 4. Since then, educational institutions in Europe and North America have developed a number of programs emphasizing intercultural competence. These are educational initiatives where students are taught (or their awareness is raised) about

different cultures and peoples of different cultural backgrounds, while at the same time they are reminded of the need to be open-minded to communicate with those with a different background, avoiding stereotypes and prejudices towards different cultures and peoples. Actually, the concept *interculturality* overlaps with multiculturalism and cross-culturalism considerably, but the important factor that differentiates it from the other two concepts is mutuality, reciprocity and equality (UNESCO 2013). Simply put, multiculturalism presupposes different cultures existing separately in peace, while cross-culturalism puts more emphasis on the interactions among them. Though all the three concepts aim at amiable coexistence and communication among people with different cultures, interculturality promotes deeper, more reflexive and reciprocal exchanges on an equal footing, regardless of power relationships among different ethnic/cultural groups. In addition, interculturalism defines a culture and cultural boundary in a looser and more fluid manner; thus, a person with a complex cultural identity can exhibit its different manifestations depending on who they interact with and what context they are situated in. This flexible and fluid interpretation of interculturality and intercultural competence was very comprehensively explained in another UNESCO publication, *Intercultural Competence – Conceptual and Operational Framework* (2013), with major contributions by former advisor to the Council of Europe on language and intercultural issues, Michael Byram and his team.

Intercultural competence is a quality almost indispensable to functioning in this increasingly globalizing world, where those with complex or mixed cultural/ethnic identities are forced to communicate with various implicit difficulties. Even an apparently monocultural, insular country like Japan has a variety of subcultures and inhabitants with mixed personal identities, not to mention those with sexual identities such as often marginalized LGBT groups (cf. Kasai 2017). In fact, Japanese traditionally ethnocentric way of thinking has become outdated in light of the more pluralistic realities of globalization and variation in backgrounds and identities; therefore, intercultural education fits the real needs of the country whose government started to declare nurturing global human resources and global citizenship (Council on Promotion

of Human Resource for Globalization Development 2012). Yet, in some multicultural areas and countries where the demarcation of different ethnic groups has been explicitly established and influenced particular educational policies, interculturalism may be hard to embrace or incorporate in practice (Nagle 2009). As educational aims and approaches of multiculturalism, cross-culturalism and interculturalism appear to overlap at first sight, educators in Japan have adopted the methods and approaches in all of these three distinct areas often interchangeably, based on the contextual conditions and, more often, their preferences and beliefs, which has made Japanese intercultural education rather sporadic, haphazard or unsystematic.

Unfortunately, there are many instances of discrimination and bullying targeted to those with different cultural/ethnic backgrounds reported in the Japanese media (Arudou 2013). There are as well as many cases of miscommunication in business caused by stereotypical views or simple lack of knowledge of other cultures. Thus, the necessity of intercultural awareness has been called for by educators of different educational levels, not only to avoid unfair treatment of others, but also to produce truly global-minded citizens for the country. It seems that raising intercultural awareness is helping students have a growing interest in other cultures while avoiding stereotypes and prejudices towards foreigners and others with different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Reimann 2012), as many studies in other countries have also shown. An increasing number of intercultural education practices have been tried in tertiary education, often in CLIL environments (cf. Adachi 2011; Davies 2012) and study-abroad programs, which claimed that intercultural competence was being generally raised.

However, the problem is that most practices of intercultural education, especially those at elementary and secondary educational levels, have been done without any solid theoretical basis or systematic method (Nomura 2009). Another instance of discrimination, though more subtle, exists in language use. Foreigners in Japan were traditionally called *gaijin* (meaning *outsider*) because the homogenous culture strictly differentiated between *insiders* with the capacity to understand the intricacies of Japanese culture and those outsiders without such

capacity. Since the term has a derogatory connotation, now young people are instructed to use *gaikokujin* instead (meaning *a person from another country*), which is perceived as a more neutral term. Actually, there are many more derogatory expressions which are being intended to eradicate through formal education, but they are nevertheless still widely used in informal settings in real life. A case in point is a term borrowed from English, *hafu* (meaning *a half*) used for a person with mixed ethnic background. It was actually coined as an euphemism to avoid the more derogatory term *konketuji* (literally *child of mixed blood*), but the Japanese have not yet been able to create a more neutral substitute to *hafu*. In a society that claims to be tolerant to diversity, these terms should have no place, but this phenomena itself conveys the persistence of the parochial, and sometimes ethnocentric views that the Japanese laypeople have about those different from them. As empirical proof of such an assertion, these terms appeared occasionally in students' entries to a self-reflective tool called *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Council of Europe 2008; hereinafter referred to as *AIE*) used in the present study, though, as it will be explained later in the section discussing the study results, the uses of these terms tend to decrease as the subjects were older.

1.2 The Necessity of Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural awareness is the most important precondition for future youths to become successful global citizens; i.e., those who can build fruitful, meaningful relationships with people from other cultures using intercultural communication skills. In Byram's ICC Model (1997), intercultural awareness is situated at the center of the framework, or treated as a foundation to activate other four skills or components: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. Byram attached the word *critical* to emphasize the fact that unbiased criticality should be involved in the awareness raising, and it is defined as 'ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other

cultures and countries' (1997: 101), primarily. This compound skill, in his model, can only be instilled by education or proper guided intervention. Dealing with speakers from another culture inevitably involves the evaluation of a culture, which often leads to an exchange of stereotypes or even a series of conflicts. Therefore, the ability to perform a critical evaluation of another culture as well as one's own is a prerequisite for the development of all the other four components of intercultural competence.

The FREPA (Candelier et al. 2012) has been used as a basis to provide many teacher development workshops and programs in EU countries, and various teaching materials offered on its website focus on intercultural-awareness raising. It is because without such recognition of interculturaliry that happens deep in mind, changes in thinking, attitudes and actions would not be brought about. The author attended one of such workshops held in Croatia in 2016 as an observer (Matsumoto 2017b), and was very much impressed by the volume of materials produced for students at different developmental stages and in different cultural and political situations. Though FREPA also focuses on awareness raising for different languages, referred to as 'awakening to languages' (Candelier et al. 2012: 7), its educational stance is the same as that for cultural awareness, in the sense that awareness raising at an early age is deemed to offer the best start for young people to become global-minded citizens who would contribute to improving the democratic, cohesive Europe in the future.

The self-reflective tool used in the present study, the aforementioned *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, or *AIE*, became available in 2008 in English and French, and later translated to 6 languages in total. After any memorable intercultural encounter, respondents are guided to reflect upon their feelings and thoughts from various standpoints, prompted by approximately 50 questions (some of them being optional), so that they can learn not only about different cultures but also themselves and their own ways of thinking, including hidden biases by considering similarities and differences between themselves and those *foreign others*. Its non-interventional, self-reflective approach is based on the idea that intercultural awareness should first be raised

within oneself so that users could continue to increase their intercultural competence further, most elements of which are built on such self-initiated awareness.

As mentioned above, some studies conducted in Japan have shown the increase in students' intercultural awareness at different educational levels. However, the reported results were mostly qualitative, often based on observation, probably because there has not been any established assessment method for mostly affective changes in the subjects' perceptions. In the reports of our previous public grant project with Japanese university students (Matsumoto 2014; Matsumoto/Koyama 2014), there were some quantified results showing that about a half of the 80 subjects changed their views from negative to positive, to varying degrees, as they made entries into the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (AIE). More importantly, the qualitative semantic analysis shed light on the different kinds of parochial mindsets and stereotypical ideas they unconsciously had and how their ways of thinking and attitudes towards *others* and *otherness* changed considerably or only partially.

1.3 Background of This Study

In Europe, the Council of Europe has been promoting the use of the aforementioned self-reflective tool *AIE* for students to analyze and learn from their experiences dealing with citizens with very different ethnic/cultural backgrounds (Koyama 2011). The tool is described as 'a complementary teaching tool to help students exercise independent critical faculties in solving problems in intercultural encounters, by making them reflect critically on their own responses and attitudes to experiences of other cultures' (Council of Europe 2008: 43). In its preface, the purpose is stated as follows:

The *Autobiography* has been produced at a time when we are increasingly aware of the inter-relatedness of our lives and experiences across all kinds of cultural and national divides, and of our need not just to acknowledge each other's existence but to communicate and engage with each other at a deeper level of understanding. The aim of the *Autobiography* is to encourage, through guided reflection on

experience, the development of the skills and intercultural competence required to do just that (Council of Europe 2008: 5).

In 2013, a simplified and scaffolded younger learners' version was added (Council of Europe 2013), and a much awaited digital version called *Images of Others: An Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media* (Council of Europe 2014) became available, allowing the user to choose an image and reflect on it via a structured set of tasks. In our previous study, we had to digitalize and load the both English and translated Japanese versions onto a Learning and Content Management System (LCMS) to ease and simplify the collection and analysis of data, as well as preventing human error in transcription, but the new digital version will definitely facilitate future data collection. More importantly, the younger users' version, which includes more traditional picture cards, has become more attractive in its use of digital images, and will definitely help prevent younger children from giving up in the middle of the task, because of lack of engagement.

The official adult version of *AIE* asks each respondent about a memorable intercultural encounter. It starts with the task of self-definition, then soliciting a first impression of the person foreign to them, and details of the intercultural encounter. It touches upon different ways of interpreting the actions and feelings of both parties involved, as well as changes in interactions and feelings with some reasoning or motivation for them. In this process, the respondents are guided through a number of questions to consider similarities and differences between them and the person or people with different cultural backgrounds they have encountered. In the final section, a summative reflection, at a deeper level, is prompted by questions such as 'If, when you look back, you draw conclusions about the experience, what are they?' and 'How has this experience changed you? Will you decide to do something as a result of doing this *AIE*?' (Council of Europe 2008: 18–19).

Reflecting on the idea of interculturalism, the person or people involved in the intercultural encounter (i.e., those who respondents choose to reflect on through the questions in *AIE*) do not necessarily have to be a foreigner, but any person who is *foreign* to them or whom they consider an *other* who is very different from them. As many as

about 50 questions are posed (the actual number of questions varies because some are follow-up questions, depending on previous answers) in order to make users self-evaluate their experiences from multiple points of view and help them exercise deep reflection on their experiences. The whole activity usually takes about an hour to complete. Sometimes, similar questions are posed by using different wording in different sections; actually, in our two previous studies (Matsumoto / Koyama 2014; Matsumoto 2017a), quite many university students changed their attitudes and views as they moved on, guided to reflect upon their intercultural encounters from various perspectives. It seems that deeper reflection is encouraged as it is done retrospectively, or with hindsight; also interestingly, in our previous studies, the entries made a few months later reflected a greater degree of intercultural awareness compared to those written right after the encounter. Actually, 6 out of 32 university students who participated in both studies wrote reflections about exactly the same encounters, and the entries made for the second time exhibited deeper, more analytical interpretations that included more critical comments on their own narrow-mindedness and biases they might have had in their interactions.

In our first study (Matsumoto/Koyama 2014), an attempt was made to find the tendencies and characteristics of 80 Japanese university students in handling various intercultural encounters by collecting their detailed responses written in the *AIE*, that we had translated into Japanese and digitalized (Matsumoto/Koyama 2014). The study was done as a part of a public grant project (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grant, Project #2232011) which aimed to create teaching models for intercultural competence that would allow Japanese youths to become able to negotiate misunderstandings in various intercultural situations. With almost three million foreigners living in Japan and over 20 million tourists visiting annually, students had many different types of intercultural encounters. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of various entries made by these 80 students clearly showed what specific problems they faced and how they tackled them in various situations of intercultural communication. The most noteworthy finding was their strong dichotomous mindset; that is, their tendency to

perceive interaction mediated through the *us vs. others* lens, which was manifested in their own explanations of their experiences, even in the cases where cultural difference was not so salient. For example, when one student successfully persuaded a foreign customer to use a counter seat at the café he worked part-time (rather than seating at a large table on his own), the student commented that, *these Middle Eastern people argue first, even knowing their requests are unreasonable. On the other hand, Japanese customers always think of others and consider the surrounding situation when they decide where to sit.* In this case, he also argued with the foreigner, and we are aware that there are many Japanese customers, especially those of older generations, who insist on better seating places without a reservation. This mindset is also related to having stereotypes about people from different areas and cultures, seen in various types of overgeneralized remarks made about them. One foreigner's act or behavior was often described as if it collectively represented all the people from a particular area or belonging to a similar cultural group. Intriguingly, the perceptions expressed by those who have successfully dealt with culturally-foreign situations frequently showed the two conflicting aspects of increased tolerance and overgeneralization, sometimes simultaneously; though, having developed a new open-minded attitude towards *the foreign other*, their conclusive comments reflected a rather strengthened parochial view. An instance of such a case is that one student successfully persuaded a foreign student who always came to club meetings late without offering any apology to be more punctual; interestingly, she wrote in her *AIE*-guided reflection that she had *learned that Africans' perception of time is different from us, Japanese, whose culture values discipline and punctuality.* Although she developed a new understanding of a potentially different perception of time, it ended up with giving more support for her primary belief: that discipline and punctuality are a unique virtue of Japanese culture. Of course, there are many other cultures that value these qualities, which are social habits rather than culture-bound, while a single Nigerian student (again collectively referred to an African) does not necessarily represent the sense of time of neither all Nigerians nor all Africans legitimately.

When the young learners' version of *AIE* was launched (Council of Europe 2013), a new experiment was carried out with Japanese elementary school children as informants, hoping that the comparison with university students may elucidate when and how the dichotomous and stereotypical way of looking at foreigners or those with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds is gradually formed (Matsumoto 2017). The young learners' version of *AIE* has both spoken interview and written self-reflection versions, and is generally much simpler than the original version. Since their experience might be more limited than that of adults, it tries to bring out natural responses from children about either an imaginary intercultural encounter (by showing pictures cards) or the one most memorable to them in real life, if they have had such an encounter. Both versions were translated into Japanese and used interchangeably, depending on the ages of the children. In the study with 41 university students and 35 elementary school students, the text analysis was carried out using a text-mining software, *SPSS Modeler Text*, and the semantic-network analysis by *KH Coder* (Higuchi 2013). Both pieces of software provide the number of occurrences of key words as tokens together with collocational relationships among them that are meaningful for interpretation and further analysis. An advantage of *KH Coder*, a free software that can treat up to seven languages (including Japanese) is that it shows both the frequency of key words and the degrees of significance in collocational relationships by graphic visualization (cf. Figure 1 in section 4).

The results revealed that the children's responses were much more idiosyncratic and intuitive, though often simplistic; they showed much less dichotomous, stereotypical mindset compared to the university students. It seems that stereotypical views of people from other areas and cultures may derive from the depictions of foreigners in different types of media, which frequently include overgeneralization, as well as simplistic comparisons between the Japanese and groups with different ethnicities and/or nationalities (Matsumoto 2017a). This new line of inquiry was funded by another public grant project (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grant: Project #16H03456), aiming at constructing teaching models for intercultural competence for children,

which are closely tied to the secondary and tertiary models previously established. The reason for our research team getting the two public grants consecutively is probably another proof for the fact that Japan and its Ministry of Education have started to recognize the necessity of more consistent, systematic approach to nurture intercultural competence from early ages, which may also be the case in other countries.

2. Purpose of the study

The aim of the study presented in this chapter is twofold; first, to confirm the tendencies or characteristics of Japanese university and elementary school students when dealing with culturally-foreign people by replicating the previous studies with a larger number of subjects from different schools. Secondly, by adding junior high school students as subjects, to be better informed about the developmental changes in the attitudes and views of Japanese youths when going through various intercultural encounters and solving problems, from their answers to the questions posed in *AIE*. By doing a systematic text and semantic-network analysis of the data, together with basic quantitative analysis, an attempt was made to track the developmental process of Japanese youth generation to form the above-mentioned dichotomous perspective, which often involves stereotypes.

Historically, Japanese stereotypes about foreigners centered around visual images of Caucasians who appeared in various types of media, including comic books, and their appearance and behavior in them (Arudou 2013; Ritter 2016), such as being portrayed usually tall and big, self-confident but too loud and direct in communication and, especially, almost always speaking English and not being sensitive enough to understand Japanese cultural ways. This typically leads to problems, the fuel for funny or awkward scenes when some required culturally-specific behavior is not present. At the same time, these Japanese stereotypes of foreigners have an embedded racism, because they tend

to see people who are *not white* as opposed to these overgeneralized perceptions of Caucasians (Russell 2017). When some children in the study described their first encounter with their new English teacher, who was an Asian-American from Hawaii, one wrote *I was surprised because he didn't look like American or British people*. Another student remarked that *He looked like an Asian, but I was surprised he spoke natural English*. The main purpose of this research is to elicit the characteristics and tendencies in cultural understanding of students at different educational levels, as exhibited in such *AIE* entries, and explicate the effectiveness of self-reflective learning via *AIE* in making the subjects more aware of their own misconceived and biased views. Finally, this informs a proposal towards the type and method of intercultural education appropriate for each educational level, which, hopefully, would lead to the creation of more maturity-based instructional models.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

121 students in seven different English classes at two private universities were asked to reflect on the intercultural encounter that was most influential to them, in response to various questions included in *AIE*. Concurrently, the responses of 145 junior high school students and 158 elementary school students were collected using the written type of young learners' version of *AIE*.

3.2 Experiment

The original version of *AIE* translated into Japanese was prepared for online use, so that the responses would be automatically collected and tabulated for analysis. University students were able to respond to *AIE*

without much introduction because the purpose and questions of the tool are quite self-explanatory. On the other hand, an introductory lesson had to be prepared and conducted to the elementary school children and junior high school students, so as to explain the meaning of intercultural encounters and the definition of those with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds. Since most elementary school students cannot still use the computer keyboard, they were asked to write their responses in the paper-based version, which were then typed by research assistants at a later stage. In the case of very young children (namely, first, second and third graders of elementary school) recorded personal interviews were conducted using the same questions and prompts, and answers were transcribed in the same manner.

3.3 Statistical data analysis

First, a qualitative, holistic analysis was done to obtain overall tendencies, followed by the statistical text-mining analysis and the semantic-network analysis. The statistical analysis includes the tabulation of words in terms of frequency as well as evaluation of collocational relationships of important words that indicate the agency, attitudes, and mental states of students' management of intercultural communication both at the time of the encounters and in their subsequent reflection. Then, the comparison was made to the tabulated and categorized/coded data of these three groups.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 University Students' Responses

University students' responses were expectedly different, partly because they used the longer, original version of *AIE* and, more importantly,

because the *foreign* people they encountered were more diverse, which was a welcome finding both in previous studies and this study. Compared to a variety of experiences university students had, the world of elementary and junior high school students seems understandably limited, so quite a few of these younger students wrote about the foreign English teachers who would regularly visit their schools once a week. The following is the basic data about the *foreign* people university students reflected on:

1. The types of 211 encounters, with 148 encounters in Japan and 63 abroad
2. Areas of the people they wrote about are from, including 68 on Asia (10 different countries), 28 on The United States and Canada, 26 on Europe (6 different countries), 25 on the Middle East, 18 on Oceania (incl. Micronesia), 14 on Latin America, 14 on Russia, and 10 on Africa. 8 students wrote about Japanese people with varied ethnic or cultural backgrounds.
3. Ages, 9 being underage (0–12), 98 university students (17–25), 83 adult citizens (19–59), and 21 more mature (60 or over).

SPSS text analysis can show the number of all the tokens (words and expressions) and the occurrences of important collocational relationships among them, but it is nevertheless difficult to integrate these elements into meaningful conclusive statements, particularly to serve the objectives of this research. For this reason, *KH Coder* was used to visualize the relationships among various ideas and concepts more clearly. Figure 1 is an example of such visualization of the connections among ideas, where related concepts are closer, larger circles reflect a greater number of occurrences, and thicker lines represent greater collocational relatedness. This particular figure visualizes all the responses of university students to one of the summative questions, *How has this experience changed you? Would you decide to do something as a result of doing this AIE?* Red circles were added by the author to bundle related ideas qualitatively together in an attempt to capture overall tendencies of the responses to this question. Since the analysis was originally done in Japanese, English translations of major ideas were added for the purposes of this chapter:

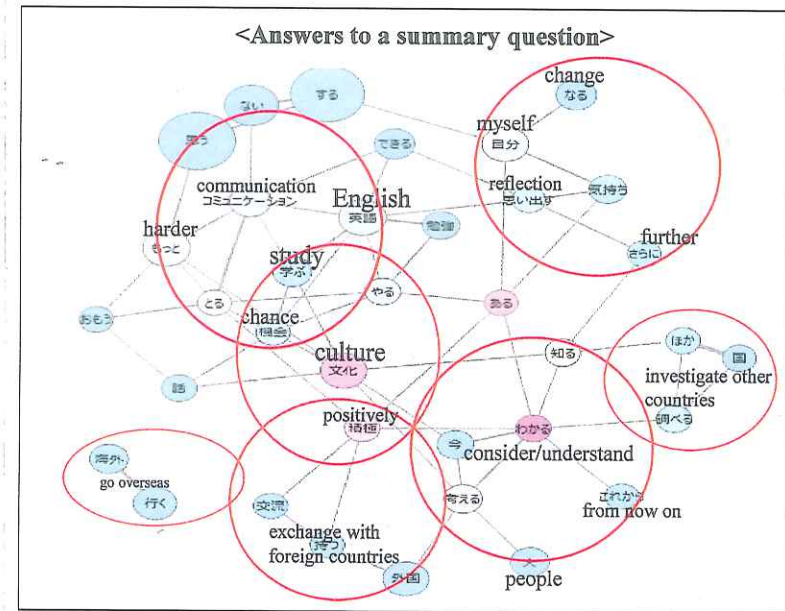


Figure 1. Visualization sample of answers to a question using KH Coder.

These two types of analysis by *SPSS Modeler Text Analytics* and *KH Coder* were conducted on the responses to all the *AIE* questions in order to extract the tendencies and characteristics within the three groups of students. University students' responses were quite similar to those of the two previous studies aforementioned.

First, the awareness of and willingness to understand *others* were clearly observed in most of their entries. However, again, they tend to evaluate the encounters by *we vs. others* dichotomy, even in the cases where not much difference exists, meaning that they did not realize the diversity among the *others*. For instance, their comments often included expressions such as *unlike us, Japanese, he is...*; *Middle Eastern people always like to ... though it's not in our culture*; *I understand her points because she is an American, but we, Japanese don't act that way*, and *I know that all westerners are more direct compared to us, Japanese*. First, students constantly compared the behavior and attitude of the

person they had interacted with, when comparison was not necessary for reflection, even when they were simply asked to explain what they did or how they felt in the interaction. Secondly, their views were not nuanced: they often failed to perceive the diversity among people from other areas, and appeared to have stereotypical, overgeneralized understanding of people from the same area or country. Such a mindset was more frequently observed when they commented on other Asian nationalities; a typical response was *I can understand her better because we share the similar Asian culture.*

Secondly, motivation towards English study as well as interests in other cultures seem to have been raised by the act of reflection itself. When each student's trajectory of records was analyzed qualitatively, approximately a third of them were able to change their parochial views through the reflective process. Typical responses were *Maybe I was wrong in the beginning to think he was rude. He was just trying to do ...;* and *After all, both of us were trying to be nice to each other in different ways. It's just how we realize that feeling was a bit different.* In general, regardless of whether there were any changes in students' attitudes or views, the main purpose of such AIE-guided reflection was the facilitation of the raising of intercultural awareness by way of autonomous learning, which in this case has been proven because there was no teacher intervention whatsoever.

Finally, various types of media influence were detected, notably in their use of stereotypical, sometimes biased or prejudiced sweeping statements. Quite many student comments included allusions of such kind, often appearing with explicit reference to the media, or in a less explicit manner, such as *I learned about that national character in some famous TV series.* Media influence is obviously related to students' tendency to overgeneralize those from neighboring geographical areas as a homogenous group without much diversity or variation, and to juxtapose Japanese (as *we*) to those with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds as a bulk. Incidentally, many uses of expressions that denote inclusiveness and generality were used such as *all, most* and *typical* (adjectives) and *usually, generally, most of the time* and *as always* (adverbs and adverbial phrases).

4.2 Responses from Elementary and Junior High School Students

The main purpose of this study is to compare different ways perceptions of *otherness* were formed and functioned at various stages of education, by analyzing the intercultural encounters that children, junior high school students, and university students had experienced. Most importantly, it was the first time that junior high school students were included as subjects in order to find developmental changes that may take place between elementary and tertiary education. Thus, the inquiry into university students' responses and those of children was replicated, first to confirm their characteristics in a larger study, and then to ascertain developmental changes in junior high school students' responses in a single experiment, with the same conditions applied to these three groups. The hypothesis arising from the findings in the two previous studies is that the tendencies and characteristics found in university students' responses in previous studies emerge in childhood, and are strengthened further as students grow up.

As in the case of university students, the tendencies found in elementary school students' responses were similar to those found in the previous study. The elementary school students' responses were more emotional and idiosyncratic than those by university students; they reflected on the feelings they had at the time of the intercultural encounter as directed, though often in a manner which was simplistic or trite. The dichotomous perspectives seen in the university students' responses appeared sporadically, but the data analysis showed more natural, individualistic or self-centered reactions and interpretations of the intercultural events. It is partly because they are not, generally, cognitively mature enough to review the encounter objectively and structure their thoughts, and thus they tend to express what they thought and felt at the time. Many comments revolved around whether they liked or disliked the person they encountered, with the use of many simple adjectives describing both the person and the encounter (*nice, kind, happy, interesting, cold, mean, scary, etc.*).

As hypothesized, the responses of junior high school students were somewhere in between those by elementary school and university

students. The stereotypical, overgeneralized comments increased, when compared to elementary school children, but with many individualistic and/or intuitive perceptions also being exhibited. All groups, to varying degrees, have tendencies of making stereotypical, sweeping statements about people different from themselves, which seems quite understandable, as Japanese young people still live in a mostly homogeneous environment: Japan has 1.95% foreigners according to official statistics, but only 0.003% are enrolled at school (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2017). Yet, we found such stereotypical remarks had increased as Japanese children proceeded from elementary school to junior high school. To show the change quantitatively, researchers and their assistants looked into all the comments and tried to find those which included stereotypes and unsupported overgeneralizations. Though such a more subjective manual quantification cannot always be scientifically rigorous, it nonetheless revealed a developmental change. Of all the comments made by 3 groups, 24% of statements of university students reflected some stereotypes and unsupported overgeneralizations, compared to 18% of those made by junior high school students, and 13% of those made by elementary school students. During this time-consuming coding and tabulation, it was also found that the comments reflecting media influence increased gradually from elementary school students' responses to those of university students. Actually, elementary school students' responses sometimes showed the influence of parents, relatives and those closer to them more: some of them answered, *My mother said that Americans are...* when asked to elaborate on their assertions via the question *Why do you think so?* In these cases, adults could be feeding stereotypes in the media into the minds of children, without direct exposure to these media sources on their part. On the other hand, the responses by junior high schoolers more often reflected media influence, just like those by university students; their answers included comments such as *I saw many Arabic people act like that in movies*, and *Many TV programs show Chinese people in that way*.

Naturally, reflections by university students were more varied and complex, thanks to their more varied learning about other countries and cultures, and wider exposure to various intercultural encounters,

which can happen more frequently on their campuses nowadays due to increasing academic exchange and the rising numbers in international students (Japan Student Services Organization 2017). Yet, such learning and exposure without sufficient intercultural competence may lead to inappropriate stereotypes and overgeneralized understanding of people from other areas and cultures, especially under omnipresent media influence. However, as previously mentioned, about a third of them were able to change their rather parochial views through the reflective process; on the contrary, such a change was only observed in the entries of 21 junior high school students. This was due partly because the young learners' version of *AIE* does not ask as many questions as the one for adults, which facilitates deeper reflection. Yet, the adult version would be too long for younger students, and it includes questions that often are too complicated for them, conceptually or experientially. If another version of *AIE* for adolescents were developed (one that fits junior high school students' cognitive developmental stage), we are convinced we could have brought out further evidence for such positive developmental changes. Still, in sum, it is apparent from our data analysis that the proclivity for stereotyping often emerges or is strengthened during elementary and junior high school days, presumably by the influence of media and people surrounding these students. Therefore, it seems that proper intervention or scaffolding in elementary and junior high school education to raise intercultural awareness to facilitate avoiding simplistic generalizations and stereotypes would be highly beneficial.

4.3 Media influence

After stronger media influence was observed in university students' responses compared to those of elementary school children in the previous study (Matsumoto 2017a), an additional question was added after the last question of *AIE*, asking each subject to choose the kinds of media they frequently use daily from a given list. Each student could select up to three kinds of media, but most of them only chose either one or two of them. In the comparison of comments made by elementary school

children with those by university students, it was noticeable that these two cohorts were dependent on different types of media, and that their interactions with media were also different. Therefore, the responses to this added question seemed worthy of investigation and analysis. Table 1 below shows the percentage of frequently-used media by each group, out of the total number of choices made:

Table 1. Media sources frequently used by students, per level.

	Elementary School Students	Junior High School Students	University Students
TV	46%	32%	29%
Print Media	26%	15%	5%
Internet	21%	34%	45%
SNS	4%	16%	20%
Others	3%	3%	1%

There are overlaps in between media categories, as print media or TV can be also accessed on the Internet. Yet, present-day Japanese students rely on so-called e-media (the Internet and Social Networking Sites, SNS) more and more as they age. Media influences have already been detected both explicitly and implicitly in their responses to *AIE*. The reason why print media is still used by elementary and junior high school students is probably because the use of newspaper and magazine articles at school has been promoted as an educational tool, and often connected with their class activities and homework. Also, elementary schools usually prohibit or limit the use of smartphones at school, so elementary school students' responses included many references to popular TV programs rather than the information obtained from e-media. However, the influence of beliefs and attitudes of their parents and relatives related to foreigners appeared frequently, which could reflect the stereotypical views that these adults have formed due to the influence of some media. On the other hand, university students' responses often reflected the information and images they received or exchanged via e-media, especially the Internet. What made their responses different from the other two groups was the reliance of rather individual,

personal information exchanged on the Internet and through SNS. They often referred to real experiences of themselves and their friends that had been shared on the Internet via services such as YouTube or other SNS, to support the opinions and particular reactions exhibited towards people with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds. A positive side of this phenomenon is their attempt to grasp and treat cultural differences individually, based on real experiences; if they depend on the information provided by their friends through SNS, however, the information itself may be colored or tainted by the influence of other types of media that these people had been exposed to in the past.

A possible substantial influence of media (which was not reflected in this kind of official questionnaire inquiry), yet quite powerful, comes from comic books, anime and music lyrics. Many researchers in media study or sociolinguistics continue to find various stereotypes in them, especially about gender roles (Ueno 2006), but these kinds of media have also become of-late an arena where diverse and marginalized interests and identities find voice and freedom of expression. Recently, themes in comics, anime and music have become varied from feminized boys being controlled by strong women to love affairs among LGBT people, addressing varied interests of the audience. Together with the diverse genres of music younger generations are immersed in, the emerging subcultures of youths are generally norm-free, thus resisting the traditional values the society imposes on them; socially, they function not only as a vent for frustration but as a new venues for the expressions of their true selves. If such changes in comics, anime and music are mixed with new ways of digital communication represented by text-based SNS and YouTube or other video-based SNS, young people may be getting starkly different, sometimes unexpected stimuli for intercultural awareness, whether they are positive or negative, biased or not at all (Fellezs 2012). Some of the *AIE* entries by university students may have shown such state of mind, a typical comment being *I don't care what they (foreigners) think of me and my attitude, because it naturally came out of me and I can't change who I am catering to their needs.*

5. Conclusions

From this experiment, a number of relevant conclusions can be extracted. First, the most important finding was that it appears that the proclivity for stereotyping often emerges and is strengthened as children grow, being exposed to different types of media and interacting with people who have stereotypical views, including their family and friends. The tendencies and characteristics of university and elementary school students found in the previous two studies were mostly replicated and confirmed with a larger number of subjects. When junior high school students' responses were added to the comparison, the developmental pattern of the dichotomous, *we Japanese vs. others* mindset was clearly revealed, namely, positing themselves (Japanese) as opposed to other people from different areas and cultures, while neglecting the diversity among them. This could be a general tendency of those without sufficient exposure to different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, but it was alarmingly prevalent in Japanese youths who should become global citizens in the future, and who would need to form fruitful relationships with these peoples at work and home. The same stereotypical view was even applied to themselves, in the manner they failed to see the diversity among the Japanese in terms of background, subculture and personal traits. Junior high school students, compared to elementary school children, are more cognitively mature; thus, as their world expands with increased exposure to different types of media, they become more prone to stereotypical, overgeneralized conceptualization of people foreign to them than elementary school children.

As expected, the responses of university students were more varied, depending on their learning histories and experiences rather than their original dispositions, particularly when compared to their counterparts at elementary school or junior high school. However, at least about a third of them were able to change their ethnocentric views, though to varying degrees, through the reflective process that *AIE* prompted and facilitated. Quite a few of them arrived at positive learning by reviewing the intercultural encounters that they described negatively in the

beginning. It means that the original version of *AIE* partially served its purpose for the fostering of autonomous intercultural learning, and it could be an effective learning tool to post-adolescents. Still, from the larger picture of educational perspective, it is evident that the introduction of intercultural-awareness raising at earlier ages is imperative, and the use of young learners' version of *AIE* has promising possibilities to nurture intercultural competence if efforts are made for proper intervention and scaffolding.

Many practices to mix cultural and language learning to raise the level of cultural awareness have been conducted with different types of scaffolding. They include, of course, careful stepwise material creation by teachers often using multi-media representations, and creating a program that prepares for (and ends with) real exchanges with students in other countries via tele-conferencing (Donnellan/Rydbloma 2015), or study-abroad experiences (Yashima 2010). For this ongoing project, which started in 2016 and will continue until March 2020, different types of scaffolding have been tried; so far the most successful one for elementary and junior high school students is making them first think about cultural differences by multimedia stimulus material, and then have a group discussion where university foreign-exchange students from the corresponding cultures are invited. Then, from the debate and discussion, a possibly stereotyped or biased view is picked up with the help of the instructor, about which students will further investigate by using a special worksheet that calls for critical judgment on the facts they have discovered. With the newly-introduced digital version of *AIE*, the creation of scaffolding activities related to the visual representations included in it (especially, those in the version for young learners) will become easier. Actually, the example images of intercultural encounters included in the Young Learners' Version of *AIE* (2013) were sometimes too foreign to Japanese mono-cultural children, such as the one with a person wearing a Jewish *Kippah*. So, in using the Young Learners' Version in the present experiment, we substituted some readily comprehensible Asian-oriented examples for those too foreign to Japanese youths.

6. Future directions

Our project team is in the process of constructing a series of maturity-based instructional models of intercultural competence and critical thinking, which reflect accumulated data from both the past and ongoing studies. They consist of the types and methods of intercultural education appropriate for each level, which have been tested at various schools of different characteristics in different educational environments: from progressive private schools to other more traditional publicly-funded ones. As expected, we had to make changes in the instructional models after each trial lesson; however, in general, we have been successful in fostering intercultural competence in elementary school and junior high school students, which are evident from the comparison between their pre-lesson and post-lesson entries in *AIE*. Likewise, first, second and third graders of elementary school showed more interest in (and less bias towards) people with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds in the follow-up interview after the small-group introductory lesson.

One major difficulty we have been facing is Japanese people's excessive attention to English, and the centralized educational system which controls the curricula for elementary and secondary education, thus preventing new lessons to raise intercultural competence from being tested or introduced easily. The Japanese Ministry Education has been keen on the development of English-medium instruction and methods, and new criteria for curricular design and testing, so the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe 2001) has been adopted in language education, especially English teaching and its assessment from its early stages. Sometimes, this almost exclusive emphasis placed on English runs counter to more pluralistic approaches to other foreign language and cultures prevalent in Europe (Council of Europe 2006). Hopefully, our attempt to create programs and curriculums to raise intercultural consciousness and nurture intercultural competence will attract the interest of more researchers, including instructors of languages other than English, and help change the beliefs of policy makers as well as

general public so that the importance of this type of intercultural education would be more prominent.

Continuous efforts are being made to do further fine-tuning of the instructional models we are developing, with modifications and adjustments, with an eye towards arriving at more feasible, optimal and consistent intercultural education instructional models that are conducive to different types/levels of classes at elementary, secondary, and tertiary education in Japan. To this end, the empirical analysis of the results of responses to *AIE* questions has been essential. It will continue to be used, firstly to validate these teaching models and materials and secondly, to evidence the actual presence of autonomous, reflective learning as fostered by *AIE*, which is its original function. It is hoped that the further collection of real intercultural experiences from different age groups of younger generations would also help make the teaching models and methods better suited to the developmental stages and actual needs of Japanese students.

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