

## Korea-Japan English Camp: A Case Study of English Immersion Program in Korea\*

Joo-Kyung Park  
(Honam University)

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English immersion has emerged in Korea only recently as an innovative approach to learning and teaching English. Lack of real life experience of using English has been one of the biggest obstacles for Korean learners of English and has resulted in an increasing number of children being sent to English-speaking countries and a huge amount of dollar outflow. This recent innovation is expected to be the magic wand to resolve all these problems. However, setting up an immersion program in a typical EFL context like Korea has brought in another set of issues and challenges. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of a short-term immersion English program in Korea and provide some empirical data to develop programs that can better cater to the needs of EFL learners. A two-week English immersion program was developed and implemented with 57 Korean and Japanese students whose grade level ranged from 4 to 12. The study results show that the program was successful in terms of changing the participants' attitude toward learning English, improving their English skills, enhancing intercultural understanding and competence, and motivating them for further studies of English and other foreign languages and cultures.

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[English camp/English immersion program, 영어캠프/영어몰입프로그램]

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Korea has gone through many changes and challenges driven by the societal needs and expectations from within and beyond Korea. The emergence of English as a global language has also requested reshaping its goals and approaches to achieve them (Park, 2005). According to the national curricula revised in the last two decades, the TEFL goals have emphasized communicative competence and cultural understanding and the instructional approaches have shifted from grammar-translation method to communicative and functional approach. Also, English has been demanded to be a language of instruction by 'teaching English through English (TETE)' policy. However, the curriculum rhetoric has not been fully practiced in TEFL classes due to many reasons. Amongst them, lack of real life experience of using English has been one of the biggest obstacles for the Korean learners of English. Teachers also do not feel competent and confident enough to conduct their English classes in the way they are expected to. Teacher education programs have been developed and implemented in diverse scales and length but their effectiveness and appropriateness have been constantly questioned. As a result, this has led to dissatisfaction of some parents so that they sent their children to English-speaking countries which has resulted in an enormous amount of dollar outflow and more importantly, a new social stratum called "English divide."

English immersion emerged in Korea as an innovative approach to learning and teaching English in association with 'English Camp,' 'English Village,' or 'English Zone,' often with a motto "Producing Global Korean" by having the participants learn English and feel like they are in a English-speaking country without going there. This recent innovation is expected to be the magic wand to resolve all these problems. However, setting up an immersion program in a typical EFL context like Korea has brought in another set of issues and challenges concerning facilities, programs, native speakers, to name a few. In

order for these programs to be successful, there are a number of things to be done: First, English language teaching (ELT) goals and objectives should be revisited; Second, more integrative goals should be established; Third, more meaningful and authentic ELT contexts should be created for Korean EFL learners to learn and use English; Last, English programs should be developed based on a solid foundation of ELT and second language acquisition (SLA) theory.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of an immersion English program<sup>1)</sup> in Korea and provide some empirical data to develop programs that can better cater to the needs of EFL learners. The following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the effects of Korea-Japan English Camp?
2. What should the goals and functions of English Immersion program be for Korean learners?
3. What facilities and equipment should be provided?
4. What are the major factors in effective English immersion programs?

## II. ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM

### 1. Definition

Two different types of immersion have been discussed in the literature: on the one hand, immersion refers to intensive language programs. It was first used to describe the intensive language programs mounted by the armed forces in the United States during the World War II and is still used in relation to intensive language study and acquisition with learners immersed in the target

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1) It refers to a short-term, quasi-English immersion program. A total immersion program requires a total control of its setting and environment including people and their language use, the facilities and equipment, which can be a major challenge for most of the educational institutions to realize. It also takes a long-term plan and a huge amount of money. A quasi immersion program is an alternative that provides the participants with a maximum target language input without a total control of its environment. This model program is intended to be participant-supportive, autonomous, and reflective learning-oriented.

language and culture (Spolsky, cited in Johnson and Swain 1997). According to Snow (1986), immersion represents the most intensive form of content-based foreign language instruction. In other words, language immersion is an approach to foreign language instruction in which the usual curricular activities are conducted in a foreign language (Bostwick, 2004).

On the other hand, immersion has been widely discussed within bilingual education. Genesee (1987) emphasized the amount of instruction provided through the second language for the program to be regarded as immersion, suggesting it to be at least 50 percent of instruction during a given academic year. Johnson and Swain (1997) claim that the defining characteristics of an immersion program for bilingual education are:

- (1) The L2 is a medium of instruction.
- (2) The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum.
- (3) Overt support exists for the L1.
- (4) The program aims for additive bilingualism.
- (5) Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom.
- (6) Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency.
- (7) The teachers are bilingual.
- (8) The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community (pp. 6-8).

Immersion in this paper refers to an intensive foreign language instruction program where the learner is surrounded by the target language for extended periods of time. The immersion programs for bilingual education are not further discussed.

## 2. English Immersion Programs in Korea

Immersion is a relatively new concept in Korea and not many studies have been conducted on immersion programs since Park (1998) initiated discussion of its applicability in Korean educational context. Recently, a short-term English camp, one of the most popular format of immersion, has become a burgeoning ELT business. Hundreds of them are boasting their programs through diverse mass media, particularly through the internet websites. However, they are mostly developed and run for business purposes, not for research purposes and even if so, professional program reviews are not available either because the

programs are too young to be evaluated or they are not to be released to the public. Therefore, the literature on this topic is limited in its quantity but represents diversity in its design in terms of its subjects, duration, and the major activities.

Some studies report on the programs developed for university students: 5-week intensive, simulated immersion English program, POSTECH Live-in English Program developed at the Pohang University of Science and Technology (Cho, 1998; Cho, 2006); English Village Course, a 5-week summer intensive program, developed by Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) (Park, 1999). These residential programs were designed to increase the opportunities for natural communication in English, and to strengthen students' English proficiency, and to increase self-confidence in using English.

Park (2003) examines a 2-week English immersion teacher education program for Gwangju secondary school teachers. The goal of the program was to develop the participants' English interpersonal communicative skills as well as their professional skills in teaching in English.

Others show the results of the program for elementary and secondary students: Park (2001) describes a four-week program developed for the grades 3-11; Choi and Park (2002) and Kim (2004) examine the effectiveness of their English immersion program developed for middle and high school students for three and two weeks respectively.

The common elements of these programs include the following: First, all the programs were developed by universities; Second, their primary goal was to develop the participants' English communicative skills and confidence; and third, all the participants were Korean learners of English taught by native English-speaking instructors.<sup>2)</sup>

'English Village' or 'English Town' is another very revealing format of

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2) The public faith in native English-speaker (NES) is so strong in Korea that it is considered a must for any ELT institutions to have them. Such extreme demand of NES brought in a large number of them whose qualification ranges from backpacking tourists to TEFL professionals with high credentials, who then brought in a lot of different issues and problems with them. Roh (2006) suggests that NES need to be appropriately trained or qualified teachers in order to successfully educate their students. Furthermore, NES teachers need to constantly review their teaching styles and strategies to allow for professional development and to ensure an improvement in their teaching methodology.

English immersion program developed in Korea recently. Choe Sang-Hun (Mar. 25, 2006, *International Herald Tribune*) depicts, "Paju English Village, the largest one of its kind in the world, is a language camp which looks like a minitown scooped up from a European country and transplanted into South Korean countryside. It has its own immigration office, city hall, bookstore, cafeteria, gym, a main street with western storefronts, police officers, and a live-in population of some hundreds native English speakers. All signs are in English, the only language allowed." The other English villages have the similar physical environment in different sizes and scales, educational programs, and management. They are funded by regional governments and six of them have been established nationwide, including the following:

- (1) Gyeonggi Province English Villages in Anshan and Paju  
(<http://english-village.gg.go.kr>)
- (2) Seoul City English Village (<http://www.sev.go.kr>)
- (3) Jeonju English Village (<http://jev.or.kr>)
- (4) Incheon English Village (<http://icev.go.kr>)
- (5) Seongnam English Town (<http://snet.or.kr>)

More of these English immersion facilities will be built in Gwangju, Suwon, Busan, Yangpyeong, and Gangwon by 2008 at the latest. Three city governments in Wonju, Ulsan, Gunsan are also considering to build their own in the near future (June 15, 2006, Women News. <http://www.womennews.co.kr>).

Most of these English villages have the following facilities and equipment: (1) Life Experience Center which consists of topic-based residential corners and simulated tour-related corners such as immigration, hotel information, stores, and restaurant; (2) Cultural Experience Center including Art Performance Center and English library; (3) Virtual Experience Center; (4) Administration and Education Center which hosts Self-access learning center and English Camp; (5) English Park including thematic miniature park, free conversation zone, and networking walk; and (6) Dormitory & Foreign faculty housing.

Various educational programs are offered including the following: (1) Self-directed learning programs through Pronunciation clinic, Satellite TV, Internet, CD-ROMs; (2) English only zone where all the actions and transactions are conducted in English with some English-speaking helpers and facilitators; (3) Virtual Learn-Play Center where cyber English-speaking

experience can be built through English-speaking computer games; (4) English Camp designed for students, teachers, and other professional groups; (5) Tourist Housing; (6) English Learn & Play Walks in English Park; (7) Rendezvous corner; (8) International understanding through miniatures built in thematic parks.

The common expected effects of these English immersion complexes are: (1) To reduce the outflow of learners and dollars to English-speaking countries by providing the learners with an equal or similar quality and amount of English-learning experience within Korea; (2) To narrow English divide by providing a larger number of Korean learners of English including the underprivileged with an equal opportunity for English education; (3) To produce internationally competitive professionals by developing Korean learners' English proficiency (Park, 2004).

It needs a thorough evaluation of these programs in order to examine if these effects can be achieved or not. Krashen (2006), however, expresses a strong skepticism, saying that "First, the Villages are not real. The buildings are simulations of banks, post offices, airline offices, etc. and the interactions are simulations. Second, to my knowledge, there have been no formal evaluations of the English villages. We have no idea if they are really helping children acquire English. Third, contrary to the claims that they save money, English Villages are very expensive. Korea is paying an enormous amount of money to provide an untested English experience to just one percent of its school-age children." Further, he suggests that a priority should be given to improve public English education and teacher education, which will benefit more of the school children and teachers.

There are some other issues and concerns in regard to these mock-buildings and simulation education: First, their cultural representation. No language is culturally neutral. In a simulated English village, the cultural representation can be misleading, confusing, and somewhat unidentifiable; Second, they may also cause incomplete learning. Having Korean learners interact with native English speakers who dominantly take an older and superior role may limit the range and scope of the Korean learners' English learning experiences; Third, it is also questionable if English Village creates real needs of English usage. Interacting with their classmates or other participants who are all Korean-dominant

speakers in English can make their English interaction somewhat artificial, unauthentic, and not meaningful. Studies need to be conducted focusing on these issues and concerns.

In addition to English camps and English villages, English zone has gained popularity in Korea as another form of English immersion. As English immersion has been introduced and perceived as a powerful tool for successful English language learning, many schools and universities have set up some kind of 'English zone' on their campus, which ranges from one corner of a classroom or hallway to one whole building.

The success of these programs depends on the level of understanding of and commitment to ELT and English immersion program that the program related people have, including school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Most of all, however, the biggest problem of the existing immersion programs in Korea lies in that all the participants, except the native English-speaking instructors are the Korean learners of English. They share the language and culture, and a lower English proficiency and a higher anxiety of having to speak English. When they are required to speak in English only with other Koreans and even get some penalty for disobeying the 'English only' rule as they do in some programs, it makes the situations very artificial. The participants' learning experience becomes very insignificant and even traumatic. It only humiliates and belittles the learners, rather than enriching and empowering them.

One of the most realistic and feasible ways of resolving these problems is to create a mixed language and cultural contexts or environment where English emerges naturally as a common language with little or no inequality or dependency among the speakers. It can be done by bringing people to the program who have different languages and cultural backgrounds. These learners will have the same or similar foreign language learning experience, motivation, interests, and more importantly, difficulties and pains. Being immersed in English with a mixed peer group will provide the participants with opportunities to learn and use English in a more diverse register with no or little sense of intimidation or helplessness. They see each other as someone who equally lacks and pursues prestige, power, and proficiency in English. This spirit of comradeship can hardly be acquired through their interaction with native



English speaker instructors who do not share their status of language learners. Most of all, they would appreciate English as a common means of communication and enjoy the ownership of English.

### III. KOREA-JAPAN ENGLISH CAMP: A CASE STUDY OF SHORT-TERM ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM IN KOREA

In order to suggest a model of an effective short-term English immersion program, which can resolve some of the problems and concerns, if not all, described above and better cater to the needs of Korean learners of English, a two-week program was developed for Korean and Japanese students. It was implemented at the International Culture Education Center, Honam University of which the author was the director, in cooperation with D High School in Gwangju, Korea, and Association for International Education for High Schools in Kanagawa and Council on International Educational Exchange, Japan.<sup>3)</sup>

#### 1. Participants

A total number of 57 students participated in the camp, including 44 Korean students in grades 4-11, 25 boys and 19 girls and 13 Japanese students in

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3) It took about a year to go through all the necessary process to make the 2-week program happen: developing a program proposal, contacting individuals and organizations in Korea and Japan to find partnership, making an agreement with the official partners, getting an approval from my university, advertising the program through mass media, giving pre-program orientation for the student participants, to name some. Domestic and international network and cooperation is one of the most important factors of the success of the program of this kind. I am most grateful to Ms. Sakae Suzuki, former president of Kanagawa High School English Teachers Association, who liased me with two Japanese organizations and worked with them throughout the program preparation and operation. Also, a strong support from D High School in Gwangju, Korea was another indispensable element of this program. As most of the Korean high school students spend their vacations on studying for the college entrance exam, it would have been almost impossible to recruit enough number of high school students to match up with the Japanese students without them. I cannot thank enough the principal, teachers, students, and the parents of D High School for their trust and active participation in the program.

grades 11 and 12, 2 boys and 9 girls.<sup>4)</sup> According to the students' self-evaluation, the majority of the participants were beginners, with 15 intermediate and 1 near-native English speaker. None of them except for one Japanese girl had visited any English-speaking countries or had any English camp experience before. They were placed in three co-ed groups, with 19, 20, 18 students each, based on their grade level, not by their English proficiency,<sup>5)</sup> and their groups were named in colors: Yellow, Green, and Blue. The student placement for the classroom and dormitory was done mainly for the purpose of facilitating intercultural experiences between Korean and Japanese students, which was one of the major goals of the program. The Korean and Japanese students in grades 8-12 were divided into 2 co-ed, culturally mixed classes. The Korean students in grades 4-7 were placed in one class and the opportunities for them to have intercultural experience were provided by matching them with Japanese students for sharing a room in the university dormitory.

There were six native English-speaking instructors, 2 males from U.S.A., 1 male from U.K., 1 male from Canada, 1 female from Australia, and 1 female from South Africa. All of them had a master's degree in TESOL or education-related fields and TEFL experience of 2 to more than 20 years.

Due to a close Korea-U.S.A. relationship, a strong influence of the Korean

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4) As this camp was the very first endeavour, we decided to recruit high school students only from Japan but agreed to expand this program for Japanese elementary and middle school children as well in the future. It is also true that there is a larger demand of the English immersion programs for the younger children both in Korea and Japan, based on 'the younger, the better' myth and the realistic fact that they are under little or less pressure of college entrance exam. The demographics of the student participants were as follows: 13 11th and 12th grade Japanese students, 2 boys, 11 girls; 44 Korean students, 25 boys and 19 girls including 7 11th graders (5 boys, 2 girls), 10 10th graders (6 boys, 4 girls), 6 9th graders (2 boys, 4 girls), 3 8th graders (1 boy, 2 girls), 2 7th grade girls, 9 6th graders (4 boys, 5 girls), 5 5th grade boys, and 2 4th grade boys.

5) This program was originally designed to have proficiency-based classes but had to be changed into grade (or age) level-based one as it was suggested that some school children (and their parents) would get upset and demotivated when they are placed in a lower level class, and particularly lower than that of some children who are younger than them (Park, 2001). Studies have shown controversial results of an ability group and the significant impact of learner's affective factor on the achievement. It needs further investigation to examine which is more effective, the same level group or a mixed level group.

elites who were educated in the States on Korean education, and the power and prestige that America and its culture have, ELT in Korea has been excessively America-centered in its goals, methods, and materials. In most of the public and private English language education, American English has been taught with materials mostly published in the U.S. TOEFL and TOEIC are two most widely used tests in Korea. Armitage (1999) states that American culture has been influencing Korean society for over 50 years and this influence has colored Koreans' perceptions of other non-American 'western' societies. Accordingly, Koreans mean 'American English' by 'English' and think they should go to America to learn English (Lee, 2000). All these got exacerbated for and by 'globalization', which as Min (2000) argues, has been misinterpreted as adopting American language and culture one-sidedly in Korea. This America-centered ELT seems to have misled Korean learners of English by overgeneralizing and stereotyping English speakers and their languages and cultures. Therefore, it was one of the goals of this program to break English language and cultural stereotypes and biases that the students may have had. It was done by providing them with a variety of English language and culture represented by multi-national English speakers.<sup>6)</sup> They taught language and special activity classes that they chose according to their expertise and experiences. Three of them served as homeroom teachers as well.

Three Korean-English bilingual assistants, HE, JW, and DH were selected through a competitive screening process and worked as an aide for the instructors as well as the students. They also served as residential assistants and group leaders. They were selected based on their English proficiency, people skill, enthusiasm and commitment to the program shown in an autobiography and an oral interview in English. None of them had any professional knowledge and experience in ELT but their personal characteristics and attributes immensely contributed to the success of the program.

HE, a female graduate student majoring in law, had studied in Canada for 1 year and speaks very fluent English. Her maturity and Korean-English

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6) Regrettably, however, there was not much ethnic diversity, which is a far more difficult goal to be achieved in the current Korean context, due to a deep-rooted stereotypical ideas of 'English native speaker' that Korean people have, e.g. those represented by 'white, blond, blue eyed' Americans or 'inner circle' (Kachru, 1985) English speakers.

intercultural understanding enabled her to be a good bridge between the students, the instructors, and administrators. JW, a male college freshman majoring in industrial design, had spent 6 years as a child in the U.S.A. and speaks near-native English. His caring personality and artistic talents along with his English language and cultural competence were a delight to the students. DH, a male, English-majoring senior, had never been to any English-speaking countries but speaks English well enough to manage all his duties and responsibilities as a camp assistant. He was a good role model of a successful English learner. He helped much to identify the problems and concerns that the student participants had during the camp as he could relate well to them. All three of them played such an important role throughout the program and their significance was reconfirmed in the program evaluation and the student journal.

Two Japanese teachers, 1 female and 1 male, came as the chaperones for the Japanese students. Ms. Suzuki was a liaison between me and the Japanese organizations, through which Mr. Takahashi got involved with the program. They both helped to recruit the students, and traveled with them to Korea. They participated in the program as classroom observers and the program reviewers. They sat in all the classes, conducted a daily meeting with the Japanese students in Japanese every afternoon and gave their feedback to the program organizer.

All the program staff and the participants were asked to speak English throughout the camp but there were no penalties for speaking Korean or Japanese, which occurred from time to time particularly during the breaks.<sup>7)</sup>

## 2. Program Goals and Activities

The program goals were twofold: To acquire communication skills in English,

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7) Being immersed in English-speaking environment creates a lot of mental and physical stress to the students, particularly when they have never been away from their family. It was the case for the majority of the participants. Speaking in languages that they feel most comfortable helped them to get over the mental burden and eventually most of them tried to communicate more in English as they spent more time in the camp. Park (1999) also supported the positive aspect of allowing the participants to speak their first language in English immersion program.

both in spoken and written languages and to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures, including English as the target culture, and each other's culture, Korean and Japanese. In order to achieve these goals, the curriculum consisted of four parts: Language skills—Pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture; Special activities—Music, movie, sports, and Internet English; Group projects—Talent show, group presentations; and Cultural exploration—Visit to historical sites and local community.

Table 1 shows the schedule for the daily activities.

**TABLE 1**  
**Daily Schedule**

Time	Activities
7:00 - 8:00 a.m.	Wake up & Exercise
8:00 - 8:40	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:50	<b>1st Period - Speech/Pronunciation</b>
10:00 - 10:50	<b>2nd Period - Listening</b>
11:00 - 11:50	<b>3rd Period - Speaking</b>
12:00 - 12:50 p.m.	<b>4th Period - Reading</b>
1:00 - 1:50	Lunch
2:00 - 2:50	<b>5th Period - Writing</b>
3:00 - 3:50	<b>6th Period - Culture</b>
3:50 - 4:20	Break
4:30 - 5:30	<b>Special Activity</b>
5:30 - 6:50	Break & Dinner
7:00 - 7:50	<b>Group Activity</b>
8:00 - 10:00	<b>Homework &amp; Self-study</b>
10:00 - 10:30	Group Discussion & Reflection
10:30	Go to Bed

The theme of the camp was "From 'I' and 'You' to 'We'." The first week of the program was geared towards identifying individual, national, and cultural differences. The students were expected to go through the first and second stages of culture shock which were characterized by curiosity, excitement and then, frustration and pains. The Talent Show, the final activity of the first week, was to show what they brought in to the program, including their language, culture, gifts, and talents, focusing on their differences. The second

week, on the other hand, was aimed at adjustment to each other and to the target culture and building a common bond through English as their lingua franca. The group presentation, the very final program activity was set up for actualising these aims, by focusing on common goals and joint efforts to achieve them.

All the students were identified not by their nationality but their group color throughout the program. Each group consisted of one native English-speaking home room teacher, one Korean-English bilingual assistant, and the students. Two Japanese teachers also helped the two groups where Japanese students were placed.

A core textbook, *ICON Intro*, was chosen and used for all the core subjects namely pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Kim Knight, one of the camp instructors suggested the reasons for this, "It is important to set some standard for the students and a guideline for the instructors and a text does help to do this. By using the same text or texts in the classes, the material is reinforced by the different instructors in the different classes in different ways. The camps are usually very high paced and there is not much if no time at all for instructors to prepare materials and to photocopy necessary worksheets. The textbook should provide all that is needed for the student and the teacher so that copying and searching for materials can be eliminated. It may be said that it is a waste of money to buy a textbook for 2 weeks of study, but we have 2 weeks and a chapter a day could be an objective. Of course in this case the instructor would carefully select the sections in the chapter that are most important and not teach every single page or item" (Personal communication).

In addition to the textbook, a variety of songs, games, and other materials and activities were used in order to activate and personalize the student learning. The language skill classes were conducted with a combination of structured, guided, and free activities.

Table 2 shows the schedule for special events and activities.

**TABLE 2**  
**Special Events and Activities**

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
<b>8/1</b>						<b>8/7</b>
-Opening ceremony	<b>8/2</b> Music	<b>8/3</b> Movie	<b>8/4</b> Sports activity	<b>8/5</b> Talent show	<b>8/6</b> Visiting historic sites	-Visiting church
-Internet English	activity				-Damyang	-Going downtown
-Welcome party						-Shopping
				<b>8/12</b>		
				-Group presentation	<b>8/13</b>	
<b>8/8</b>	<b>8/9</b>	<b>8/10</b>	<b>8/11</b>	-Closing ceremony	Returning home	
Internet English	Music activity	Movie	Sports activity	-Farewell party		

Special activities such as movies, sports, music, and Internet English were organized in order to expose the participants to a diverse contextual English language and culture in a way that was natural, practical and exciting. For the movie nights, English Cafe in English Experience Learning Center (EELC)<sup>8)</sup> was used as a movie theatre where the students bought some drinks and pop corn using a coupon that the instructor gave them beforehand and enjoyed the movie in a fun and stress-free environment. In the music class, the instructor presented several kinds of musical instruments, played music and sang songs along with the students. In the sports activity classes, they played soccer on the university soccer field. In the Internet English class they learned about emailing and how to play computer games which some of the students were

8) Honam Univeristy English Experience Learning Center (HU EELC) was designed and built in 2004, a year before the camp in order to promote real life English learning and cultural experiences. It houses an English cafe, a self-access learning center with tutorials, reading and internet corners, and a multi-purpose multi-media room. Its unique facilities and educational programs became a prototype for the similar ones established later within and beyond the region.

already experts in.

The talent show and the final group presentation were more unique in that the talent show was more like a cultural exchange forum between Korea and Japan, featuring Korean martial arts, Japanese dance and magic, and the traditional costumes which highlighted the wonder of cultural differences. The final group presentation, which was organized and performed by the student in groups showed how they got over their language and cultural differences, if not completely, and became friends through a common language spoken in different accents. The highlight of the presentations was "Winter Love Story," a Korean soap opera which was very popular in Japan. The Korean and Japanese students wrote the English script, performed in it, decorated the stage and used special effects and gadgets. All of this was achieved in English.

A cultural excursion was made to Damyang, where a diverse form of Korean folk arts are preserved, for Japanese students to learn about Korean culture and for Korean students to learn how to present their own culture in English to their Japanese guests. Different aspects of life in Korea were presented to the Japanese students at a local church visit and a shopping spree in the downtown Gwangju. Korean students showed their Japanese friends around, using their imperfect, but very functional English.

The English camp was held mostly on the university campus. Sixty-hour English language instructions were given in the classrooms that were equipped with computers, projection TVs, white boards, opaque projectors, cassette/CD players, movable desks and chairs. Special activities such as movies and Internet English were held in the EELC. Sport activities were held on the soccer field.

University dormitory and Student Union were used as core facilities to maximize English immersion experience. Four students were placed in a studio-type furnished apartment which has a refrigerator, and electrical stove in the kitchen area, 2 bunk beds, 4 desks and chairs, and 4 dressers, and one bathroom. As one of the primary goals of this immersion program was to build intercultural experience among the participants, the roommates were assigned in to ensure mixing of groups. The foreign instructors, bilingual assistants, and the Japanese teachers stayed at the dorm throughout the program, spending time with the students around the clock.



A variety of Western and Asian buffet foods were specifically prepared for the camp. English food labels were placed on the table. Snack coupons were provided for the students every day. They could use the coupons to buy snack or other personal necessities at a convenient store located at the University Student Union. The camp assistants helped the store clerk to communicate with the students in English. English signs were posted at the store throughout the camp.

### 3. Results: Reflection Journal, Student Letters, and Open-ended Questionnaire

In order to reflect and get some immediate feedback about the daily activities, a group discussion session was held every evening as part of the group activity. The student assistants led the discussion and recorded the results of the group discussion on behalf of their own group in the reflection journal. The question items were about the contents and quality of 1) meals in terms of foods, environment, and communication; 2) class and special activities; 3) group activities; 4) overview and suggestions. They were rated on a scale from 1 to 5: 1. Very good, 2. good, 3. So so, 4. Bad, 5. Very bad. Other comments, suggestions, questions were added in brief statements. The camp director and the staff reviewed the journals from the previous day every morning and made necessary changes and adjustments immediately. For instance, some foods were added or taken out of the menu and some flavor and spice of the foods were adjusted; The time for using the computers was lengthened. Other requests, however, such as more sports activities and less writing homework were reserved for the future programs. The group journals reflected an overall satisfaction on the daily life and activities at the camp.

In addition to the reflection journal, the overall program evaluation was made in two ways: First, in a personal letter from each student to the program director. It was written as one of the class activities at the end of the program. The students were asked to write about their thoughts and feelings about the program in general and what they had learned in particular; Second, an open-ended questionnaire survey was conducted for all the student participants. They were allowed to respond in the language they felt most comfortable. The

Japanese responses were translated into Korean for the program review and then into English for this paper.

The results of the analysis of the student letters and their questionnaires are summarized as follows:

First, change in attitude toward learning English and English camp. Several students described their feelings about learning English and English camp and how this English immersion experience changed their attitudes, as shown in the following excerpts:

My favorite subject is [was] math but I like English now (K2, 5th grade).; I don't [didn't] want to go [come to] this camp. But at last, I know English is not boring, English is funny [fun]! (K5, 6th grade).; At the beginning of the camp, I was nervous but the English classes were fun and I felt like time flew away (J6, 11th grade).; Before coming to Korea, I was afraid of many things, yet, now I feel that two weeks are very short (J8, 12th grade).

Most of the Korean participants joined the camp on their parents' recommendation and the expectations for them were to become better English speakers. However, in the Japanese students' case, it was their own choice to be part of the camp. As a result, it seemed that for the Korean students, the change was made mostly in their attitude toward learning English, whereas it was mostly in the attitude toward English camp for the Japanese participants, particularly the one held in Korea.

Second, improvement in English skills. Two weeks is not long enough to make any dramatic change or improvement in the students' English skills. However, in the students' self-perception and self-evaluation these thoughts were expressed.

I enjoyed this summer camp, communicating in English, and making many new friends (J1, 11th grade).; My English ability has developed. Meeting many people is the most precious memory (J2, 11th grade).; I came, made many friends, and got better skills in my English (J3, 11th grade).

There was no pre-/post-test for verifying the actual improvement of the students' English skills as the program was designed to provide them with a stress-free learning environment. In Park (2003), a study of 2-week English immersion teacher training program, the thirty participants unanimously suggested that short-term programs like the one they had should be totally stress-free. They claimed that the program should facilitate more learning and experiencing English rather than 'wasting their precious time' testing their achievement. It was not as significant as their fluency and confidence.

Third, enhancement of intercultural understanding and competence. This was the most significant area of development throughout the English immersion program. Both Korean and Japanese students described their feelings and thoughts about this area frequently and very expressively. They said,

First, I don't [didn't] like Japan. But I meet [met] Japanese [people]. [Now] I think [the] Japanese are kind (K1, 4th grade); Japan[ese] students are very good. They are same[like] my friends (K3, 5th grade); I was surprised that Japanese students came to English camp here but Japan sisters are very kind. (K5, 4th grade); They [the foreign teachers] teach me, a lot of England [English] cultures (K7, 6th grade); Teachers helped us broaden my [our] views to the world. And some Korean teachers and friends are good. Korean teachers were help [helped] me and friends were study [studied] with me (J1, 11th grade); At first, it was difficult to get along with the Korean students because of the difference in culture and the way of thinking. However, as time passed by, I realized that we have a lot in common (J4, 11th grade); It was easy to get meaning across to my Korean classmates in English because of the cultural similarities (J5, 11th grade); I made many Korean friends. I am happy that I have a better understanding of the Korean culture (J7, 11th grade).

Fourth, motivation for further studies in English and other languages and cultures. It seems very natural that the students became more eager to communicate with each other as they got over their linguistic, cultural, and psychological barriers. Some of them expressed their desire for better understanding of each other and the target language and culture and for

continuing their relationships that they had ignited through this camp.

I wish I could speak English so well that I could talk to my Korean friends fluently. I also want to learn Korean. The camp was such a good opportunity for my personal growth in many ways (J7, 11th grade); It was good that we could develop some friendship and bond with Korean students. I would like to understand Korean culture better and learn Korean language (J13, 11th grade).

In addition, the farewell party was full of hugs and tears. Many wishes and promises were made to meet again at the next camp or in Japan.

Fifth, dissatisfaction with the program length and the class and dorm placement. Some concerns and problems were raised in regard to the length of the program and the way that the students were placed in the classroom and dormitory rooms.

Two weeks are very short (K10, 10th grade; J8, 12th grade); I think it would have been better if we had had a class according to our [English] level (J5, 11th grade); I wished I had had roommates of my age (J7, 11th grade).

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following conclusions are drawn from the results of this study:

First, the effects of Korea-Japan English Camp were found out to be very positive, affecting the participants' attitude towards learning English and English camp, English communicative skills, intercultural understanding, and motivation for further studies in English and other languages and cultures.

Second, in a short-term English immersion program, it is important to focus both on improving English communicative skills and enhancing international and multicultural understanding. Corbet (2003) suggests that the goal of ELT in a global era is not the mastery of native speaker competence but intercultural competence. In order to promote intercultural competence, however, the program

should include not only the language and culture of inner circle English speakers but also those of the outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1985). By doing this, we can be engaged in a critical pedagogical project to use English to oppose the dominant discourses of the West and to stop the global inequalities caused by the English spread (Pennycook, 2001). Also, we can help our students to get an equal and independent ownership of English.

Third, in order to achieve the program goals suggested above, it is strongly recommended to have the following: 1) Multi-media equipped classrooms: The classrooms need to have enough space for the instructor and the students to move around. It is good to have comfortable and movable desks and chairs in order to change the seat arrangement when it is necessary. Multi-media equipment enables the instructor to conduct more lively and dynamic classes. More importantly, it can be used to present a diverse English-speaking culture; 2) Sports facilities: It is necessary to include physical exercises in a camp program. They do release mental stress and fatigue. In addition, sports activities serve as opportunities for the students to use the target language for natural and meaningful purposes; 3) Nice, safe housing and living environment: Dormitory and other residential facilities should be comfortable and safe with good management and maintenance. More real cultural differences are experienced when living together, so a careful orientation and on-going monitoring of the dorms should be provided for the participants; 4) No high-cost, mock western buildings and facilities: The make-believe architecture does not fully represent the target culture and may even falsify it. More cost-effective and authentic cultural representation can be done through well thought-out intercultural activities and materials, and with the multi-media equipment.

Last, the key factors of a successful short-term English immersion program include the following:

(1) Creating needs and contexts for meaningful usage of English. The success of Korea-Japan English camp is greatly indebted to this. Its uniqueness is in that it involved the students with other learners who are different in language and culture but the same or similar in terms of their status, power (or no power), interests and goals. It made their learning and using English very natural and meaningful, generating joy and happiness without being intimidated

or humiliated. English is not somebody else's language any more but it is now their own means of sharing, exchanging, bonding and empowering each other.

(2) Participant-supportive curriculum and instruction which engage the participants in the classes in a friendly manner. Within the pre-fixed main framework, the students should be able to create their own learning goal individually and collectively and work hard to achieve it throughout the program. It is important particularly for mixed-level classes.

(3) A professional group of faculty and staff who understand the goals of the program and the needs of the participants well. You can never overemphasize the importance of good instructors. The students in this study nominated compassion and kindness as the most important attributes of a good instructor, followed by professional expertise and experience. This was true particularly because all the camp instructors were native English speakers who are 'the haves' in terms of their language and culture, whereas the students are 'the have-nots'. Those who help the students sense little or less inequalities by understanding and encouraging them create more positive and successful learning outcomes. Bilingual student assistants fill the void and gaps between the students and the instructors by bridging them.

(4) A strong support system established through active dialogue and interaction among the program coordinator, instructors and the participants. You can never be fully prepared for a program, particularly when it involves young learners. On-going monitoring and discussion should be conducted among the program organizers and the participants. Reflection journals were found to be very useful tools as they enabled the program organizer to make the necessary changes promptly.

(5) The participants' enthusiasm and commitment to the program and encouragement and reward rather than 'penalties.' In general, the more English-proficient students are more enthusiastic and committed to the program. They enjoy speaking in English and advocate the 'English only' policy. The less proficient students tend to be the victims of the 'penalty' system, which is counterproductive. It causes them to keep completely quiet and not speak in order to avoid any further trouble instead of encouraging them to speak more in English. More importantly, speaking first language serves them as an emotional outlet and eventually it diminishes as the learner acquires more English.

(6) Domestic and international network and cooperation. It is an indispensable element of developing an international program like the one presented in this paper. It takes time, effort, and most of all, a strong sense of professionalism and commitment among all the participating parties. However, it is such a powerful resource with which we can get the most worthwhile and rewarding results: differences in the learner's life and changes in the world.

No studies have been conducted on immersion programs for international students in EFL context like the one presented in this paper. I hope the results of this study to get the attention of ELT theorists and practitioners in general and those related to immersion programs in EFL contexts in particular and help more studies to be done.

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**예시 언어(Examples in): English**

**적용가능 언어(Applicable Languages): English**

**적용가능 수준(Applicable Levels): Primary, Secondary**

Joo-Kyung Park  
Dept. English Language & Literature (ESL/TESOL)  
Honam University  
59-1, Seobong-dong, Gwangsan-gu,  
Gwangju, 506-714, S. Korea  
Tel: (062) 940-5310  
Fax: (062) 940-5654  
Email: english58@hanmail.net

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