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Intercultural Communicative Competence of Novice-Level Japanese Learners

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Running head: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Intercultural Communicative Competence of Novice-Level Japanese Learners

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Education

California State University, Monterey Bay

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Intercultural Communicative Competence of Novice-Level Japanese Learners

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Abstract

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (ACTFL, 2017) articulate the development of the linguistic and intercultural communicative competence as important outcomes of world language education in secondary and post-secondary schools. The present body of literature lacks research on the topic of intercultural communicative competence of Japanese language learners in the novice level of proficiency. This study attempted to discover if the Observe State Explore Evaluate (OSEE) Tool (Deardorff, 2009) increased the intercultural communicative competence among novice level high school Japanese language learners in a quantitative nonequivalent groups, pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) were used as the pretest and posttest measurements. Study participants were 44 high school students in their second semester of second year Japanese class during the weather report unit. Twenty-one participants in the treatment group received the OSEE Tool intervention. Analyses of the independent and paired t-tests showed that the increase of mean scores between pretest and posttest was bigger and the standard deviation figures were smaller in the treatment group than the control group. However, these figures were not statistically significant. Continued investigation and documentation on this construct is needed to ensure all language learners are developing intercultural communicative competence.

Keywords: interculturality, intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, Japanese language learners

Table of Contents

Abstract.....iii

Literature Review.....1

Method.....9

 Setting and Participants.....11

 Measures.....13

 Intervention.....14

 Procedures.....15

 Ethical Considerations.....17

Results.....18

Discussion.....20

References.....24

Appendix A.....29

Appendix B.....30

Appendix C.....31

Appendix D.....32

Appendix E.....33

Appendix F.....34

Intercultural Communicative Competence of Novice-Level Japanese Learners

Literature Review

In today's global society, numerous contexts, such as international businesses, study-abroad programs, international schools, medical careers, and living abroad, require interaction with people of diverse languages and cultures (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). In addition, many K-16 educational settings offer or require world language classes, where learners acquire language skills and knowledge of various cultures. World language educators and advocates define culture conceptually as what a society creates, how it behaves, and what it believes in and values (ACTFL, 2015b). There is a need for intercultural competence, the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds.

The precise definition of intercultural competence varies according to various models and contexts, yet scholars agree that self-awareness and internal transformation are key components (Deardorff & Bowman, 2011; Furstenberg, 2010; Kramsch, 2004; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). However, Fonseca-Greber (2010) argued that few Americans value seeing the world from the perspective of others. Similarly, Chappelle (2010) echoed that many American students enter world language courses with an unwilling attitude to consider another point of view as well as a lack of awareness of their own culture. Bennett (2004) explained that a person's worldview must shift from avoiding cultural difference to seeking cultural difference. Deardorff (2006) also stated that the transformation of attitude, including self-awareness and openness to new values and beliefs, are vital first steps for acquiring intercultural competence. Furthermore, intercultural competence ensures skills and dispositions, such as acting and speaking with an open and inquisitive mind, listening openly to new points of view, and promoting a willingness to interact

with others from different cultures (Van Houten, Couet, & Fullerson, 2014). Thus, it is important to explore intercultural communicative competence and how they enhance language acquisition.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence does not require the participant to understand or speak a foreign language. In other words, one can gain intercultural competence by reading documents from another culture that have already been translated to one's own language or through non-verbal communication exhibiting cultural sensitivity. On the other hand, intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997) involves incorporating the use of foreign languages in the process of building intercultural competence. Gaining intercultural communicative competence is much more than engaging in simple exchanges. Intercultural communicative competence is characterized by the ability to build relationships while using the target language (ACTFL, 2018b) to engage in communication, even when the participants involved do not share the same worldview. In other words, intercultural communicative competence enables one to use culturally appropriate verbal and nonverbal skills in an interaction with people of different cultures (ACTFL, 2017). World language classrooms are an ideal setting to teach the skills needed for intercultural communicative competence as students are already primed by wanting to learn a second language, and the classroom provides the space for this type of instruction to occur.

World Language Education

World language education pedagogy is transforming to instill intercultural communicative competence in language learners. In the past, world language classes placed emphasis on learners practicing grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary to become native-like speakers (Byram, 1997). That is, little importance was placed on understanding the intricacies of

the culture, and students were solely responsible for the command of the language. Deardorff (2006) argued that acquisition of linguistic knowledge alone does not guarantee the development of intercultural competence, because there must be changes in the attitude or perspective of the learner. For this reason, scholars agreed that the traditional approach of teaching grammar rules, vocabulary, memorized speech acts, and cultural facts are insufficient for successful communication with native speakers (Lazar, Huber-Kreigler, Lussier, Matei, & Peck, 2007). Furthermore, Byram (1997) posited that traditional language learning methods set most students up for failure and resulted in inhibited intercultural competence. New methodologies have developed to ensure the promotion of intercultural communicative competence in world language education setting.

World language education standards have been revised to prepare language learners for the globalizing world (ACTFL, 2015b). World language educators are training learners to thrive in a foreign culture, instead of to survive through communicating without error (Byram, 1997). The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (ACTFL, 2015b) define the central role of world languages in the learning career of every student. The five goal areas of the standards (i.e., communication, culture, connection, comparison, and community) explain the link between communication and culture, which is applied in making connections and comparisons, and in using this competence to be part of local and global communities. In addition, they guide learners to develop cultural competence to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. Moreover, the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (ACTFL, 2015b) articulate the acquisition of basic language skills and the development of intercultural communicative competence as outcomes of global language education in secondary and post-secondary schools. With the revision of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

(ACTFL, 2015b), it becomes important for educators to assess students' mastery of the new standards and their abilities to be both linguistically and interculturally competent.

Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Since students enter the classroom with differing abilities, viewpoints, and worldviews, educators cannot expect all students to grow in these aspects at the same rate. Therefore, intercultural communicative competence may be difficult to evaluate (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Nevertheless, educators can assess intercultural competence according to the learner's language proficiency (ACTFL, 2017). According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), language learners' proficiency levels are categorized into novice, intermediate, advanced, distinguished, and superior levels (ACTFL, 2012). Therefore, assessment tools and methods of linguistic and cultural learning depend on the learners' proficiency levels.

Traditional measurements and assessment methods, such as multiple-choice questions, short-answers, essay tests, and role-plays, are no longer effective, because they often force students to engage in broad generalizations or stereotyping (Schulz, 2007). Fonseca-Greber (2010) posited that it is vital for teachers to first guide their students to reflect on their preconceived ideas and misunderstandings of the target culture. Then, students will be open to the possibility of self-awareness and identity transformation in addition to learning the language content. Therefore, alternative forms of assessment, such as self-assessment, reflective journals, diaries, peer review, interviews, and portfolios are preferable ways to assess intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Lange, 2003; Ramirez, 2004).

Much like language learning, the development of cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding is a process that occurs over a period of time. Schulz (2007) explained that novice

level learners would most likely communicate their intercultural understanding in their first language because of limited proficiency in the target language. However, as the learners advance in proficiency level, they are better able to communicate their reactions and analyses of intercultural competence in the target language. Thus, it is up to the world language educators to engage students in the types of instruction that foster intercultural communicative competence in an effort to move students toward proficiency in the target language. Examples of instructional ideas to foster intercultural communicative competence in the world language classroom are National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)-ACTFL Can-Do statements (ACTFL, 2017) and the Observe State Explore Evaluate (OSEE) Tool (Deardorff, 2006).

Can-Do statements. World language educators are exploring effective ways to evaluate and assess intercultural communicative competence of their learners. One such example is the use of NCSSFL–ACTFL Can-Do Statements (Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014; Summers, 2017; Tigchelaar, Bowles, Winke, & Gass, 2017). The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements allow learners to identify and set learning goals, chart their progress towards language proficiency, and describe what learners can do consistently over time. Also, they are written as Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals (Elias, 2014). Moreover, NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements allow learners to monitor their learning through self-assessment and self-reflection. The statements are aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012) in order to reflect the continuum of growth in communication skills through the five proficiency levels (i.e., novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished).

Under each proficiency level, the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements are organized into proficiency benchmarks, performance indicators, and examples. Proficiency benchmarks refer to the overarching features of language performance (i.e., context, text type, and function).

The benchmarks support learners in setting long-term goals. Performance indicators deconstruct the benchmark by focusing on certain aspects of language performance. The indicators describe the steps toward reaching the benchmark goals. They support learners in tracking progress toward meeting language learning goals. Example statements illustrate the specific language performance in a variety of learning contexts that are a part of the lesson or learning activities. World language educators customize the “I can...” example statements to fit the content, context, and the targeted proficiency level of their specific learners (ACTFL, 2017).

In 2017, the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication was added to the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (2017). This revision highlights and explains the growing demand for learners to develop intercultural communicative competence. Simply knowing about the language and the culture does not demonstrate intercultural communicative competence. Learners need to participate actively in communicating with those from other cultures, which will lead them to experience and discover other cultures through an inherent curiosity. Then, they will realize that their intercultural communicative competence has deepened, as evidenced by their renewed self-identity and attitude.

The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) aim to drive language instruction toward a more natural integration of culture and help the educators facilitate the development of an intercultural mindset in their learners (Van Houten & Shelton, 2018). In the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication, each proficiency benchmark has two performance indicators (i.e., Investigate products and practices to understand cultural perspectives, and Interact with others in and from another culture). These performance indicators are further organized into examples of “I can...” statements that will be customized by the instructor to reflect the specific content and proficiency

level of the learners (ACTFL, 2017). The use of NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for the Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) guides the learners to gain deeper understanding of the target culture. Then, it moves the learners to use the language to exchange ideas and cultural norms effectively and appropriately. This results in attitudinal changes toward one's own and other cultures, as well as the ability to build or deepen relationships, which is intercultural communicative competence (Van Houten & Shelton, 2018). Although the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements offer a way for educators to assess intercultural communicative competence, instructors still need instructional activities that highlight this type of thinking. One such instructional tool, the Observe State Explore Evaluate (OSEE) Tool by Deardorff (2009) is a way that world language instructors can incorporate this type of mindset into their classrooms.

The OSEE Tool. Moeller and Nugent (2014) believed that world language educators were no longer the source of transmitting target culture information. Instead, the educator's role is to facilitate the learners to actively explore, discover, analyze, and evaluate meaningful information through primary and authentic materials (Byram, Bribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Authentic materials are resources developed by speakers of the language for communication with native speakers (e.g., news clips, newspaper or magazine articles, and web pages); and not materials manipulated or modified for language learning purposes in textbooks or workbooks (ACTFL, 2018a). Moller and Osborn (2014) recommended the OSEE tool (Deardorff, 2009) to be used in world language classrooms for a multitude of reasons. First, it is a way for language learners to explore their own attitudes and assumptions of the target culture in a non-judgmental way. Second, it allows the learners to gain a deeper understanding of the products (i.e., what people have), practices (i.e., what people do), and perspectives (i.e., what people value) of the target culture through interpreting authentic material (Van Houten, 2012). Therefore, the OSSEE

Tool is used in world language classrooms to promote intercultural communicative competence; however, teachers must first understand how to implement the tool with fidelity.

The OSEE Tool consists of four stages; Observe what is happening, State what is happening, Explore possible explanations for what is happening, and Evaluate the most likely explanation (Deardorff, 2006). In the initial Observe state, learners observe actual products or images and videos of those products and practices from the target culture. They may draw what they observed in a simple sketch to demonstrate engagement. In the State phase, learners state objectively what they noticed or what is happening in the previous stage. They may orally share or write down their objective observation of the products and practices, such as the shape, color, patterns, or sizes. In the Explore portion, learners explore possible explanation for the perspectives behind the cultural products and practices they have examined. Up to this point, the instructor's role is to facilitate the conversation, and not to provide answers or reveal their expertise. Finally, in the Evaluate stage, learners are provided with authentic resources to engage in further research to evaluate the cultural perspectives, or the actual explanations of the beliefs and values related to the cultural products and practices. The written work and oral discussion can be in the target language or the learner's first language, depending on their proficiency level. Thus, the OSEE Tool allows language learners to gain linguistic and cultural understanding as well as reflect on their own views and possible stereotypes through interpreting authentic material (Deardorff, 2009). The world language profession benefits from documentation of practices and strategies, such as this OSEE Tool, that address intercultural communicative competence.

Current literature on intercultural communicative competence is available for languages such as French, Spanish, and German, but scarce for Japanese. Among the academic articles for

Japanese language and culture learning, most target college level language learners, and the study participants tend to be intermediate or advanced in their proficiency level (Ishida, 2009; Masuda, 2010; Taguchi, 2014). There is a need to ensure that learners are developing and growing in this construct from the initial stage of proficiency; novice-level. Yet, documentation and research related to intercultural communicative assessment of novice level Japanese learners are lacking. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the intercultural communicative competence of novice level high school Japanese language learners.

Method

Research Question

World language education is transforming instruction and assessment to build the learners' intercultural communicative competence, the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds through using the target language (ACTFL, 2017). Learners need to reflect on their worldviews and stereotypes, investigate and deepen cultural awareness, and use the target language effectively to build relationships that results in further identity and attitudinal changes (Fonseca-Greber, 2010). Currently, studies addressing intercultural communicative competence are limited to the more commonly taught world languages, such as French, German and English. On the contrary, studies of Japanese language learners, particularly for novice level learners, on this topic is lacking and needs further investigation and documentation. The research question that drove this study was: Will the use of the Observe State Explore Evaluate (OSEE) Tool (Deardorff, 2009; Moeller, 2014) during instruction increase the intercultural communicative competence of novice-level high school Japanese language learners?

Hypothesis

Use of the OSEE Tool (Deardorff, 2009; Moeller, 2014) will further the intercultural communicative competence of novice-level high school Japanese learners as measured by changes in their self-assessment of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017).

Research Design

The present study was a quantitative nonequivalent groups, pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of the OSEE Tool (Deardorff, 2009) on the intercultural communicative competence of novice-level high school Japanese language learners. The OSEE Tool was applied to the treatment group twice through a four-week unit. The unit consisted of two lessons, each lasting two weeks. All participants (i.e., treatment and control groups) took the pretest on the first day, and the posttest on the last day of the unit.

Dependent variable. The participants' intercultural communicative competence, the ability to use target language to demonstrate cultural understanding (Byram, 1997), was the dependent variable. This construct was measured by comparing the pretest and posttest self-assessment of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication. NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) are "I can..." statements that are categorized according to proficiency benchmarks, performance indicators, and example statements. The statements are intended to be customized by the instructor to match the content and proficiency level of the learners (ACTFL, 2017). In this study, the researcher created a set of six Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication that aligned with the novice level proficiency benchmark, and performance indicators on the topic of weather report, with specific "I can..." statements relevant to the lesson content.

Independent variable. The OSEE Tool (Deardorff, 2009) was the intervention implemented to the treatment group with the intention to deepen and build intercultural communicative competence of the participants. The intervention was applied twice, once for each of the two lessons within the four-week unit. Participants observed images or videos of cultural products and practices. Then, they stated what they saw or viewed, explored possible explanations for the products and practices, and finally evaluated the perspectives behind the cultural products and practices that related to the lesson content. They discussed and documented their ideas and findings on a graphic organizer prepared by the instructor. Moreover, the treatment group participants reflected and compared the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture and their own through interpreting authentic materials. This process is vital in deepening intercultural communicative competence (Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). The OSEE Tool is unlike the traditional methods of teaching cultural understanding, such as the use of multiple-choice questions, short-answers, essay tests, and role-plays. These interventions are no longer considered effective in deepening learners' worldview and self-awareness, because they tend to reinforce stereotypes or do not result in attitudinal changes (Schulz, 2007).

Setting and Participants

This research was conducted at a public high school in Central California with a student population of approximately 2,600. The school's enrollment by ethnicity was: 68.8% Hispanic, 23.5% Caucasian, 2.8 % Asian, 2.2 % Filipino, 1.1% African American, and 1.7% others (California Department of Education, 2017). The study participants were 46 students enrolled in level two Japanese class, which is equivalent to novice level according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, 2012). They were sampled for convenience and purpose, as the

participants met the criterion of being novice level Japanese language learners. All participants were in the second semester of their second year in learning Japanese. The participants were between 15 and 18 years of age and ranged from sophomores to seniors in grade level. Since there were two sections of level two Japanese class, one section was the control group and the other section was the treatment group. See Table 1 for detailed demographic information of participants.

Treatment group. The treatment group consisted of 21 students. The male to female ratio was 13 to 8. Ethnicities of participants were 52.4% Hispanic, 28.6% Caucasian, and a small group of others. The treatment group met Monday through Friday, from 1:57p.m. to 2:52p.m.

Control group. The control group consisted of 23 students. The male to female ratio was 17 to 6. Ethnicities of participants were 65.3% Hispanic, 26.1% Caucasian, and a small group of others. The control group met Monday through Friday, from 8:00a.m. to 8:58a.m.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

	Treatment Group	(%)	Control Group	(%)
Grade				
10	12	59.1	18	78.3
11	8	36.4	3	13.0
12	1	4.5	2	8.7
Gender				
Male	13	61.9	17	73.4
Female	8	38.1	6	26.6
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	11	52.4	15	65.3
Caucasian	6	28.6	6	26.1
Asian	4	19.0	1	4.3
African American	0	0.0	1	4.3
IEP	3	14.3	1	4.3
504 Plan	0	0.0	2	8.6
GATE	5	23.8	4	17.2

Note. IEP = Individualized Education Plan. GATE = Gifted and Talented Education.

Measures

The pretest and posttest were self-assessment surveys with a set of six Can-Do Statements based on the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017). Each Can-Do statement addressed one of the two performance indicators (i.e., Investigate products and practices to understand cultural perspectives, or Interact with others in and from another culture). Furthermore, the Can-Do statements were deconstructed into specific “I can...” example statements to address specific lesson content according to novice level proficiency. For example, a sample intercultural communication Can-Do statement was “I can identify and name some cultural products for weather-related disaster protection that are unique to my culture and Japan” (see Appendix A). For each statement, the language learners checked off a box from the four options: *Yes, with confidence*; *Yes, with some help*; *Yes, with much help*;

and *Not yet*. These four self-assessment statements were coded with a number for data collection and analyses.

Validity. Tigchelaar and colleagues (2017) selected 50 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2015a) for use with postsecondary Spanish language learners. The 50 statements were analyzed to fit the Rasch model (Rasch, 1960), and their study revealed that 35 out of 50 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements provided evidence of construct validity. They attributed the misfit of 15 statements to several reasons (e.g., they were vague and described experiences that college-age students may not have had but affirms the validity of this measure); however, this study did not use any of the 15 misfit statements.

Reliability. Brown and colleagues (2014) found that Russian language learners' self-assessment on NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements (ACTFL, 2013) matched their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) test results, and thus supported the reliability of this assessment tool. They documented that the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements and OPIs showed gain, but the effect was small, perhaps due to the relatively small sample size. Similarly, Summers (2017) cited that NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2013) was a highly reliable tool for placing students in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at a private university setting.

Intervention

In this study, the instructor utilized a digital platform called Padlet (padlet.com) to present cultural products and practices on the topic of the weather report. Padlet (Wallwisher, 2013) is a free online application for users to post text, images, and video links on a Padlet wall; a bulletin-board like digital page that is customized by the user. Links to Padlet walls can be shared with others to view or add comments.

The researcher created two sets of Padlet walls, Part one and Part two, for each of the two interventions, one for lesson one (see Appendix B) and another for lesson two (see Appendix C). Part one was used for the first three stages of the OSEE Tool; Observe what is happening, State objectively what is happening, and Explore possible explanations for what is happening. In the initial observe state, participants viewed images or videos of cultural products and practices through Part one of the Padlet wall. They drew the items in a simple sketch to demonstrate engagement on the graphic organizer (see Appendix D). This stage was followed by the state phase, where participants objectively stated what they noticed, viewed, and saw from the previous stage. Learners shared their observation with a partner and wrote in the graphic organizer. Then, learners explored possible explanations for the images and videos they examined with their partners and continued adding their ideas to the graphic organizer. For the final stage of OSEE Tool, the evaluate stage, learners accessed Part two of the Padlet wall that had links to authentic resources to further their learning to understand the cultural perspectives, the values and beliefs of the target culture. Learners continued to document their findings on the graphic organizer as evidence of their learning. This OSEE Tool intervention was completed within a class period.

This intervention was intended to promote language learners to take on the role of a cultural anthropologist, as they explored their views and ideas first then become aware of the perspectives behind cultural products and practices of the target culture through interpreting authentic materials. The instructor was a facilitator for this learning approach and not the dispenser of knowledge that students passively received. Furthermore, as learners learned about the products, practices and perspectives of the target culture, they also compared them to and reflected on their own cultural products, practices, and perspectives. In addition, researching and

interpreting authentic resources and sharing ideas with their peers and instructor fostered their linguistic skills.

Fidelity. Fidelity of the treatment group was checked by the special education aid who was present every day in the classroom. The fidelity of the control group was accounted for by an adult staff on site. This study took place over a four-week span with 20 class meetings, so the fidelity was checked at least four times for a minimum of 20% (see Appendix E).

Procedures

This study aimed to measure the intercultural communicative competence of novice level Japanese learners and evaluate the effectiveness of the OSEE Tool to increase this construct. The study was conducted during the second semester of second year high school Japanese learners studying the weather report unit. It was a four-week unit, consisting of two lessons, two weeks on each lesson. On the first day of the weather report unit, all participants took the pretest survey of NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017), which the instructor had adapted to fit the lesson content and learner proficiency level.

As the four-week long weather report unit progressed, treatment group participants received the OSEE Tool twice. The first intervention was on the first day of lesson one, and the second intervention was on the first day of lesson two. The control group participants received instruction without the OSEE Tool. The instructors for each group were different, but they collaborated and ensured that same lesson material, activities, and assessments were used, except for the OSEE Tool intervention.

On the days of the OSEE Tool intervention, the treatment group participants viewed images or videos of cultural products and practices related to weather report in Japan through Padlet Walls (Wallwisher, 2013); an on-line bulletin board application to post digital images and

videos, created by the instructor. Treatment group participants accessed the Padlet walls through individual electronic devices (e.g., Chromebook or cell phone). They used Padlet wall Part one to complete the first three steps of the OSEE Tool (i.e., observe what is happening; state what is happening objectively; and explore possible explanations for what is happening). Then, they accessed Padlet wall Part two to evaluate the explanations for what is happening through links to more websites and videos in the target language. Treatment group participants wrote down their thoughts, ideas, and findings on a graphic organizer. The intervention ended with a whole-class discussion to share comments, questions, and reflections about their discoveries. On the final day of the weather report unit, all study participants took the self-assessment survey of NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication as the posttest (ACTFL, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed so that all participants were treated with respect and justice. There was no reported risk for participating in this study. The researcher used the collected data and analyses to reflect and improve instruction for the benefit of all students at the end of the study. In addition, the responses provided by participants on the pretest and posttest were kept confidential, and not used for evaluative purposes affecting their class performance.

Validity threats. Due to the non-equivalent design in the educational setting, the randomness of the treatment and control groups could not be completely controlled. Both groups met in the same classroom, but the class times of the groups were different (i.e., control group was a first period class from 8:00a.m. to 8:58a.m. and the treatment group was a sixth period class from 1:56p.m. to 2:52p.m.). This time variable may have affected the energy level and mood of participants, and how they responded to the interventions, pretest, and posttest. Pretest/posttest effect of participants, their expectation to improve between pretest and posttest,

was another factor taken into consideration. These validity threats were minimized by having instructor scripts for the pretest and posttest to simulate an environment as identical as possible for both groups of participants. Refer to Appendix F for the pretest and posttest instruction script.

Data Analyses

All participants' pretest and posttest measures were collected by coding the responses on the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) with a number. All data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences® (SPSS®) for Windows, version 24.0.0 (SPSS, 2016). No names or identifying information were included in the data analyses. Before analyses were conducted, all data were cleaned to ensure no outliers were present (Dimitrov, 2012). During data collection one student from the treatment group was dropped due to prolonged absences. After cleaning the data, independent and paired samples t-tests were conducted to determine the difference in the intercultural communicative competence between the control and treatment groups. Further, before interpreting the analytical output, Levene's Homogeneity of Variance was examined to see if the assumption of equivalence has been violated (Levene, 1960). If Levene's Homogeneity of Variance was not violated, data were interpreted for the assumption of equivalence; however, if the variances were not equal across groups the corrected output was used for interpretation.

Results

Two independent samples t-tests were conducted on the whole sample ($n = 44$) for both the pre and post assessment scores. Results for the pretest were: Levene's Homogeneity of Variance was not violated ($p > .05$), meaning the variance between groups was not statistically different and no correction was needed. The t-test showed non-significant differences between the mean scores on the pretests between the two groups $t(42) = .98, p > .05$. The pretest means of

both groups were similar, and the two groups were not statistically different and could be compared without issues (See Table 2). Results for the posttests were: Levene's Homogeneity of Variance was not violated ($p > .05$), meaning the variance between groups was not statistically different and no correction was needed. Additionally, the t-test showed non-significant differences between the mean scores on the posttests between the two groups $t(42) = -1.56, p > .05$ (See Table 2). For both groups (i.e., treatment and control) the posttest mean scores and standard deviation figures increased from the pretest; however, neither increases were statistically significant.

Table 2

Results of Independent Sample T-Tests

	Mean	SD
Pre Test		
Treatment	7.71	3.02
Control	8.65	3.33
Post Test		
Treatment	19.95	3.15
Control	18.04	4.73

Note. SD = Standard Deviation.

After determining the difference between pre and post assessment scores between groups, two paired t-tests were run for both groups (i.e., treatment and control) to determine if participants' mean scores from pretest to posttest were significantly different within each group (See Table 3). Results for each group were as follows: treatment group, $t(20) = .80, p > .05$; control group, $t(22) = .18, p > .05$. Therefore, neither group saw significant growth from pretest to posttest. Both the treatment group and the control group increased both the mean and standard deviation from pretest to posttest (See Table 3). Although neither group saw a significant

difference, the treatment group scores increased by an average of 12.24 points and the control group scores increased by 9.39. Therefore, even though the treatment group did not score statically higher than the control group, they had a higher average gain than the control group.

Table 3

Results of Paired T-Tests

	Mean	SD
Treatment Group		
Pre	7.71	3.02
Post	19.95	3.15
Control Group		
Pre	8.65	3.33
Post	18.04	4.73

Note. SD = Standard Deviation.

Discussion

In today's global society, the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds is a growing need. World language classrooms are an ideal setting to foster the learners' linguistic skills and cultural understanding of the target culture (ACTFL, 2015b; Byram, 1997). Traditional methods of teaching languages that focus solely on the production of linguistic accuracy is ineffective to foster intercultural communicative competence, because the learners' attitude and misunderstanding about the target culture remains unchanged (Deardorff, 2006). Therefore, current world language instruction aims to develop the learners' intercultural communicative competence, the ability to use the target language to engage in an exchange of ideas and deepen cultural perspectives of the other and themselves (ACTFL, 2017).

Published literature on intercultural communicative competence is scarce, particularly for Japanese language learners in the novice level proficiency level. This study was conducted to

investigate if the use of the OSEE Tool (Deardorff, 2009; Moeller & Osborn, 2014) impacted the intercultural communicative competence of novice-level high school Japanese learners as measured by the changes in their self-assessment of NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017). The OSEE Tool intervention was applied twice to the treatment group over a four-week lesson. The control group received instruction on the same lesson without the intervention. Pretest and posttest measures of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (ACTFL, 2017) were administered to both groups and analyzed for independent and dependent samples *t*-tests to compare the means within groups and between tests. Data analyses showed that mean scores increased from pretest to posttest in both groups. This increase was expected, since new content was learned through the four-week weather report unit. The treatment group's mean score was higher than the control group's figure (See Table 3) and the treatment group's posttest standard deviation was smaller than the control group's posttest standard deviation (See Table 2); meaning that the treatment group was able to score more consistently than the control group. However, these figures were not statistically significant.

This study concludes that regardless of the intervention, intercultural communicative competence of all participants increased, but the change could not be attributed to the OSEE Tool intervention. The result is similar to the previous research finding that the use of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2013) with Russian language learners resulted in an increased measure, but not enough to show statistical significance (Brown et al., 2014). One possible explanation may be that some of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements used were not appropriate for this study. For example, the statement "I can identify common household items for natural disaster protection in my culture and in Japan," may have been misfit, since the

types and frequency of natural disasters experienced by the study participants was limited due to their young age and life experiences. Tigchelaar and colleagues (2017) validated the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2015a), yet they found that 15 out of 50 statements were misfit for their study, because they addressed unfamiliar situations for the learners. Taking these discussion topics into consideration, the current study reveals several limitations and suggests future directions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the results of this study that implementation of the OSEE Tool did not produce the expected findings, incorporating new instructional tools to address and promote intercultural communicative competence will continue to add to the body of knowledge. This study may have had different results if the sample groups were truly randomized and larger. Current study participants were sampled for convenience, which limited the randomness of the control and treatment groups. In particular, a demographic factor, the number of participants with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), was larger in the treatment group. In addition, the sample size was small ($n = 44$) and there was an attrition of a participant in the treatment group. The researcher recommends replicating the study with a larger sample size, such as applying this study within the school district so that students from one school become the control group, and students from another school become the treatment group.

Additional limiting component was the intervention duration and frequency. The study duration was four weeks, but the OSEE Tool intervention was applied only twice, once in each lesson. The OSEE Tool intervention generated active student engagement and participation by the treatment group participants. They seemed to enjoy learning about the target culture from authentic materials posted on the Padlet walls (Wallwisher, 2013) through reflection, discussion,

and comparing the target culture with their own. More frequent application of the intervention, such as once a week, and revising the scope and sequence of this unit to incorporate more OSEE Tool opportunities for the treatment group, may have generated differing results. Also, attempting the intervention in other units and collecting more data long-term, such as over a quarter, semester, or a school year, is recommended.

In conclusion, further investigation and documentation on the construct of intercultural communicative competence is encouraged at all proficiency levels and with more languages. This is because, world language educators need to ensure both the linguistic and intercultural communicative competence of their learners. Then, our students, the future leaders and global citizens, will communicate effectively and appropriately with people of diverse cultures. Regardless of one's age, where one lives, and what language one speaks and is learning to speak, possessing intercultural communicative competence is a positive attribute to today's global society.

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Appendix A

Weather Report Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication

Name _____

I can...	Yes, with confidence	Yes, with some help	Yes, with much help	Not Yet
1. Identify and name characteristics of weather reports on TV or websites in my culture and in Japan.				
2. Identify and name characteristics of weather patterns of various geographic regions in my country and in Japan.				
3. Identify common household items for natural disaster protection in my culture and in Japan.				
4. Recognize and imitate culturally appropriate behavior for natural disasters in my culture and in Japan.				
5. Identify school items for natural disaster protection in my culture and in Japan.				
6. Identify what people do for natural disaster protection in my culture and in Japan.				

Appendix B

Links and Screen-shot Images of Padlet Walls for Lesson One

Lesson1 Part 1 (<https://padlet.com/minakokamimura/nhsnqetq4ske>)



Lesson 1 Part 2 (<https://padlet.com/minakokamimura/t8dd7fo1gk5s>)

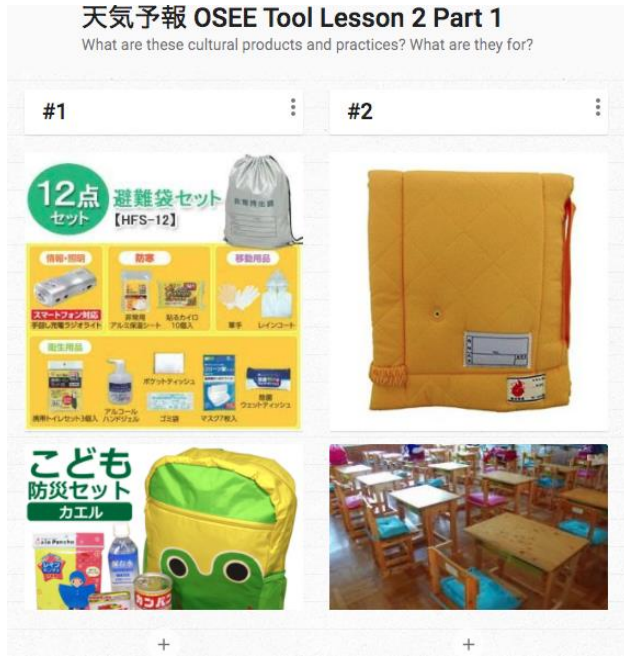
天気予報 OSEE Tool Lesson 1 Part 2



Appendix C

Links and Screen-shot Images of Padlet Walls for Lesson Two

Lesson2 Part 1 (<https://padlet.com/minakokamimura/3z63my24g5kt>)



Lesson2 Part 2 (<https://padlet.com/minakokamimura/u1h9haf7p6hp>)



Appendix D

The OSEE Tool Graphic Organizer

The OSEE TOOL: You are a Cultural Anthropologist!

Name _____

Let's explore cultural products and practices that are unique in Japan related to weather reports.

Fill out the graphic organizer as you work with your partner.



O: Observe ---what do I see or notice in the image or video?

S: State --- objectively state what you see or what is happening.

E: Explore --- what are possible explanations or reasons for this product/ practice?

E: Evaluate ---what is the value or beliefs associated with the cultural product/ practice?

Use Padlet Part 1			Use Padlet Part 2
Observe Draw what you are observing/viewing 絵をかいて	State What do I see? What is happening? 何ですか?	Explore What are the possible explanations? どうしてだろう?	Evaluate Research and find the cultural significance. 何のため?
#1			Name:
#2			Name:

Appendix E

Fidelity Table

Date	Treatment/Control	Signature/Initial
Week 1 Wednesday	Treatment	
Week 1 Friday	Control	
Week 2 Wednesday	Control	
Week 2 Friday	Treatment	
Week 3 Wednesday	Treatment	
Week 3 Friday	Control	
Week 4 Wednesday	Treatment	
Week 4 Friday	Control	

Appendix F

Instructor's pretest instruction script

Today, we are beginning a new lesson on the topic of weather report in Japan. First, you will take a short survey. The purpose of this survey is to self-assess your current intercultural communication skill related to topics from the weather report unit. Your responses are not evaluative and does not affect your class performance, so please respond with honesty. For each of the statements, please indicate how well you can do them today by checking off the box, Yes, with confidence, Yes, with some help, Yes, with much help or Not yet. You have three minutes for this task. Please fill this out silently and wait until I come and collect it.

Instructor's posttest instruction script

Today, we completed the weather report unit. Now, you will take a survey. The purpose of this survey is to self-assess your current intercultural communication skill related to topics from the weather report topic. It is not evaluative and does not affect your class performance, so please respond with honesty. For each of the statements, please indicate how well you can do them today by checking off the box, Yes, with confidence, Yes, with some help, Yes with much help or Not yet. You have three minutes for this task. Please fill this out silently and wait until I come and collect it.