Superior Ethnocentrism, Avoidance, and TOEIC Score:A Case of the Japanese Learning English at the Collegiate Level

Dai Tanno[※]

The globalization of the Japanese economy has required many Japanese business organizations to enhance the English proficiency of their employees. The English proficiency necessary for Japanese business persons is now measured by TOEIC (Test of English as International Communication) because this test is particularly designed to assess the general English proficiency of non-native English speakers who work in the global workplace. Thus, the English education of the Japanese business world has narrowed its focus to instructing learners to achieve higher TOEIC scores. In fact, a growing number of Japanese companies (e.g., NISSAN, IBM Japan, Yanmer Diesel) have requested their employees to achieve higher TOEIC scores. Japanese workers who want to engage in international business also know that 730 on TOEIC is a crucial number that qualifies them to become functional in actual international management, domestically or abroad.

These market forces have finally triggered Japan's educational institutions to reform their English programs. In an attempt to respond to these market forces, an increasing number of Japanese colleges and universities have created TOEIC preparation courses to enhance the TOEIC scores of their students. In conjunction with the effort to create TOEIC preparation courses, some efforts are underway to examine which elements affect learners' TOEIC scores at the collegiate level. However, few empirical studies have been completed in a large scale, and no comprehensive answers have been found by any study in a convincing manner. Consequently, little is known about which elements affect TOEIC scores. These lacks of knowledge have induced this study to pose the general research question: What elements affect TOEIC scores of Japanese students learning English at the collegiate level? In an attempt to answer this question, this study examines the degree to which two elements of intercultural sensitivity affect learners' TOEIC scores. Intercultural sensitivity is defined as an individual's sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences and to the viewpoints of culturally different others (e.g., Hammer & Bennet, 1998). Intercultural sensitivity has been recognized by many researchers as an important attribute of those who actually engage in international business because effective international business requires managers to become sensitive to intercultural communication needed for handling possible cultural diversity of workplaces (e.g., Fatehi, 1996). It is, therefore, routine for researchers of

※Aomori Public College

intercultural communication to examine the effects of intercultural sensitivity elements on intercultural situations (e.g., Bennet, 1993; Koester, Wiseman, & Sanders, 1993).

Why Are Two Intercultural Sensitivity Elements Examined?

The majority of Japanese people learn English as a communication tool. This fact is particularly true in the Japanese business world. Japanese business people now view TOEIC as a measure of the English proficiency of international communication in the workplace. Despite an urgent necessity to investigate elements affecting TOEIC scores of the Japanese, little attention has been paid to the effects of intercultural sensitivity elements on the English proficiency of the Japanese. This study examines two elements of intercultural sensitivity: (1) superior ethnocentrism and (2) avoidance. Because these two elements are considered to be negative toward outgroup members and other cultures, they deserve serious attention when researchers examine any culprits that are alleged to ruin the English proficiency of the Japanese.

Superior Ethnocentrism

Why is the effect of superior ethnocentrism examined? Many academic fields have found that ethnocentrism exerts a negative impact on intercultural issues. This negativity of ethnocentrism has been most notably present in the field of multicultural and intercultural education (e.g., Banks, 1981 & 1993; Condon, 1986; Martin, 1985; Pahnos & Butt, 1992; Schopmeyer & Fisher, 1993; Unks, 1983; Zevin, 1993). This negativity has been also recognized in the field of intercultural communication (e.g., Burk, 1976; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989). Thus, a recent study of intercultural communication incorporated ethnocentrism as part of its intercultural sensitivity scale (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

As far as foreign language education is concerned, many researchers have suggested a possible negative effect of ethnocentrism on foreign language learning in a general sense (e.g., Eoyang, 1989; Gardner & Lambert, 1959 & 1972). Some attempts have been made to reduce learners' ethnocentrism in classroom (e.g., Cadd, 1994). The possible negative effect of Japanese ethnocentric cultural traits on their English proficiency has also been suggested by several researchers (e.g., Hayes, 1979; Miller, 1982; Reishauer, 1981). The alleged negative effect of ethnocentric cultural traits on the English proficiency of the Japanese was tested by two recent empirical studies (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000; Matsubara, Nishimata, & Tanno, 2001).

The study of Hinenoya and Gatbonton provided interesting findings: not general ethnocentrism but ethnospecificity (emphasis on special traits of the participants' own Japanese culture) negatively affects the English proficiency of the participants. Despite the interesting findings of their study, it fell short in some aspects, other than using Japanese adults (n = 108) living in Montreal, Canada. (1) Part of the English proficiency was

measured by self-rated ability and a self-rated performance test. (2) Some construct variables were not well constructed. (3) Ethnocentrism was measured as general ethnocentrism that deviated from the original implication of ethnocentrism coined by anthropology.

In order to address these shortcomings, the study of Matsubara et al. used (1) sufficiently-constructed predictor variables whose internal consistency was higher than .7 in Cronbach's alpha, (2) TOEIC scores as the measure of English proficiency, and (3) superior ethnocentrism that represented the original implication of ethnocentrism. By analyzing the data of Japanese students (n = 99) living in Japan, Matsubara et al.'s study found that superior ethnocentrism was negatively associated with the TEOIC scores of the participants ($r = -.23$, $p < .05$) although the effect of superior ethnocentrism was attenuated when other elements (e.g., integrative motivation) were included into a multiple regression analysis. One drawback of the study of Matsubara et al. was that the participants were drawn from one small college. The scale of Matsubara et al.'s study was too small to support the major claim of the negative effect of superior ethnocentrism on the English proficiency of the Japanese.

In short, these two empirical studies, though providing useful findings, still leave a great deal of room for further investigation regarding the effect of cultural elements or ethnocentrism on the English proficiency of the Japanese. Thus, the degree to which cultural elements and ethnocentrism exert negative effects on the English proficiency of the Japanese has remained inconclusive and still underexplored yet.

Avoidance

Why does the author test the effect of avoidance (a person's stance to avoid foreigners) on the English proficiency of the Japanese? Avoidance is not the same as shyness. It is similar to xenophobia. The reasons for examining this element are twofold.

The first reason stems from the author's classroom observations. For many years, the author has observed that some Japanese students display an indifferent manner to foreigners or maintain a physical distance from native English speakers who are invited to classrooms, while other Japanese students are willing to talk to native English speakers whenever possible. Whenever the author has observed these two different manners among the students, he has wondered what underlies the students' minds and behaviors and how much the avoiding behaviors contribute to the students' English proficiency, whether the contribution is negative or positive. While it is difficult to observe the degree of ethnocentrism envisioned by the minds of Japanese students, it is easy to observe the avoiding behaviors in which students avoid speaking with native English speakers by maintaining a physical distance between themselves and foreigners. Compared with the ethnocentrism or being shy, the behavior of avoidance is inarguably visible and appears

firmly imprinted in the minds of some Japanese students. The author's observations of the avoiding manner demonstrated by the students in the classroom over the years have motivated the author to test the effect of this element on students' English proficiency.

The second reason is technical. It is in 2000 that the full-scale Japanese translation of the original version of the intercultural sensitivity scale of Hammner and Bennet (1998) finally became available through a recent study (Yamamoto & Tanno, 2000). The first full-scale Japanese translation of the intercultural sensitivity scale simply enabled this study to use the avoidance element as one of the predictor variables.

Two Specific Research Questions

The general research question of this study is "What elements affect TOEIC scores of Japanese students learning English at the collegiate level?" This general research question is further examined by the following two specific research questions. The first specific research question is "To what extent does each of the two intercultural sensitivity elements affect the TOEIC scores of Japanese students?" The author hypothesizes that each of the two elements negatively affects the TOEIC scores of Japanese students. The second specific research question is "Which of the two intercultural sensitivity elements more negatively affects TOEIC scores of Japanese students?" Many previous studies suggesting the adverse effect of ethnocentrism on the proficiency allow this study to assume that superior ethnocentrism more negatively affects TOEIC scores of Japanese students. The second specific research question is literally posed to find any negative element that works to ruin the English proficiency of the Japanese. The Japanese are notorious and reputed as a social group that fails to achieve even a decent proficiency in spite of long years of formal education in English (e.g., Hayes, 1979; Matsumoto, 1994; Miller, 1982; Ota, 1994). It is all the more urgent to detect any element that prevents the Japanese from improving their English proficiency. Considering that foreign language education is part of all programs to enhance cross-cultural competence for international business management, it is a task of Japanese institutions of higher education to find any element undermining the proficiency of foreign languages of their own students.

Besides these two specific research questions, this study tests the effects of gender and age differences on TOEIC scores, while not central to the major concern of this study. Because many researchers have mentioned that gender difference does not make a difference in terms of performance (e.g., Ehrman, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995), this study assumes that the conventional finding is replicated in the case of the TOEIC scores of Japanese participants, too.

Methods

Instruments of Data Collection

An anonymous self-administered questionnaire form was developed to collect data. This

type of questionnaire was known to be more economical and efficient than the face-to-face interview for obtaining candid responses from learners (Sudman & Bradburn, 1988). The questionnaire form consisted of the following components: (a) personal demographic variables (gender, age, etc.), (b) a criterion variable (the most recent TOEIC scores of participants), and (c) predictor variables (e.g., two intercultural sensitivity elements).

Criterion Variable

The criterion variable measuring each participant's English proficiency was his or her most recent score of TOEIC. TOEIC consists of 200 multiple-choice questions that measure listening and reading ability. The administration time is 120 minutes. The scores range from 10 (lowest) to 990 (highest).

Two Predictor Variables and Their Operationalization

Two elements were examined as predictor variables in this study. The two predictor variables were (X_1) superior ethnocentrism and (X_2) avoidance. Besides these two predictor variables, two personal demographic variables (gender and age) were included as control variables. Gender was scored as 0 for female and 1 for male. Age was scored as years.

Superior Ethnocentrism

Anthropology is credited for discovering and coining the concept of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the idea that people tend not only to judge other cultures from the view point of their own culture, but also to consider their own culture superior to other cultures (e.g., Kottak, 2000). This original idea has spread over many other disciplines, and the original idea has been modified in accordance to the difference of disciplines, ranging from general ethnocentrism (e.g., Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000) to superior ethnocentrism (e.g., Hammer & Bennet, 1998). This study borrowed some items from a recent study of intercultural communication (Yamamoto & Tanno, 2000) because that study provided the best Japanese translation of items originally written in English. Superior ethnocentrism was measured by the responses to following five statements. (1) People of my culture are more sophisticated than people of other cultures. (2) My culture is the closest to perfect among almost all other cultures. (3) The way of life of my culture should be the model for other cultures. (4) People from other cultures are not as broad-minded as people from my culture. (5) Other nations should expect answers from our culture in order to solve their problems. These five items were similar to the so-called cultural chauvinism (Garcia, 1982).

Avoidance was measured by the responses to the following four statements provided by the Japanese translation of a recent study (Yamamoto & Tanno, 2000). (1) I do not like to be around people who look like they are from other cultures. (2) I avoid people who look foreign. (3) I avoid people from other cultures who behave differently than I. (4) I do not like to socialize very much with people from different cultures.

The measures of these two construct variables were composite indices calculated by

averaging the summed responses to a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), to 4 (neither agree nor disagree), to 7 (strongly agree). These statements were randomly arranged with other dummy statements to minimize the impact of adjunct statements on the index construction.

Research Participants and Data Collection Procedures

According to ETS (Educational Testing and Services), the average TOEIC score for freshman employees of Japanese companies (n = 36,985) taking the test was 450 (ETS, 2000). Although these results suggested that it would be best to obtain samples whose mean score centers on less than 450 by using a random sampling method, it was impossible to implement a random sampling method due to the difficulty of identifying which members of the Japanese population had taken TOEIC. Hence, this study relied on a convenience sampling method using college students from two Japanese institutions.

Data collection was executed at two institutions from November 2000 and April 2001: (1) A regional college (pseudonym, RC), representing a group scoring below 450 on TOEIC, and (2) An urban university (pseudonym, UU), representing a group scoring above 450 on TOEIC. Data were collected in classrooms at RC in November 2000 and April 2001: 279 (141 males and 138 females) usable observations were obtained at RC. The mean age of the participants of RC was 18.4 (*S.D.*= 0.6). The mean score of TOEIC was 341.2 (*S.D.* = 87.5) ranging from 200 lowest to 520 highest. In the meantime, a package of questionnaire forms was mailed to UU in November 2000. Soon thereafter, data from UU were collected in classrooms by several proctors of this study in December 2000: 302 (77 males and 225 females) usable observations were obtained at UU. The mean age of the participants of UU was 20.7 (*S.D.* = 1.3). The mean score of TOEIC was 620.4 (*S.D.* = 112.8) ranging from 300 lowest to 950 highest. The age of the two sample groups ranged from 18 youngest to 26 oldest.

Construction of Indices

Because the measures of the two predictor variables were a composite index calculated by averaging the summed responses to the 7-point Likert scale statements, a variance test (F_{max} test) was executed on each of the two predictor variables. Each of them was found to meet the assumption that items to be summed into an index must have near-equal variance, enabling this study to use each of the two predictor variables for further analysis.

Once the assumption of the near-equal variance test was met, confirmatory factor analysis (a principal component factor analysis with Varimax Rotation methods) was applied to the items that were expected to underlie each of the two predictor variables. The confirmatory factor analysis showed a unidimensional factor structure. Although the two elements were positively correlated (r = .50), two clearly distinguishable factors emerged, and they were treated as two different variables. The internal consistency of each of them was assessed by

Cronbach's alpha. Each of the two predictor variables was found to have a usable level of internal consistency: α = .82 for (X_1) superior ethnocentrism and α = .81 for (X_2) avoidance.

Conversion of Likert Scale

Although the questionnaire form used a 7-point Likert scale to measure the responses of the participants, this study converted the responses indicated on the 7-point scale to a particular range in an attempt to depict the degree of agreement or disagreement in a numerically clear manner: -3 for strongly disagree, -2 for moderately disagree, -1 for slightly disagree, 0 for neither disagree nor agree, +1 for slightly agree, +2 for moderately agree, and +3 for strongly agree. This conversion allowed the study to show plus (+) as agreement and minus ($-$) as disagreement. The means of all the indices (predictor variables) measured shown in Table 1 and 2 were based on this conversion.

Results of Data Analysis

The following two tables present the results of data analyses that were tested at the .05 level of significance, providing answers to each of the two specific research questions.

Table 1 : *Correlation Analysis among Variables* (n = 581)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. TOEIC score	484.0	171.3	---				
2. Gender	---	---	$-.25^{**}$	---			
3. Age	19.56	1.53	$.75^{**}$	$-.09^{*}$	---		
4. Superior ethnocentrism	-1.35	.99	$-.21^{**}$	$.13^{**}$	$-.13^{**}$	---	
5. Avoidance	-1.49	1.13	$-.33^{**}$	$.20^{**}$	$-.23^{**}$	$.50^{**}$	---

$^{*}p<.01$, $^{**}p<.001$

Table 1 presents the answers to the first specific research question, "To what extent does each of the two intercultural sensitivity elements affect TOEIC scores of Japanese students?" The author's hypothesis is that each of the two elements negatively affects Japanese TOEIC scores. Pearson's correlation analysis was executed on the data. Although the mean scores of superior ethnocentrism (-1.35) and avoidance (-1.49) showed that the majority of the participants did not agree with the items measuring superior ethnocentrism and avoidance,

the result of the correlation analysis confirmed the hypothesis: both superior ethnocentrism and avoidance were negatively associated with the TOEIC scores of the participants. To the extent that superior ethnocentrism became stronger, the TOEIC scores of the participants decreased ($r = -.21$, $p<.001$). In other words, the more ethnocentric the participants became, the less proficient they became in English as measured by TOEIC scores. In a similar vein, to the extent that avoidance became stronger, the TOEIC scores of the participants decreased ($r = -.33$, $p<.001$). That is, the more likely the participants were to avoid foreigners, the less proficient they became in English as measured by TOEIC scores.

Besides these findings, Table 1 shows the effects of the two personal demographic variables (gender and age); (1) The negative correlation coefficient ($r = -.25$, $p<.001$) between TOEIC scores and gender indicated that the TOEIC scores were higher in the female participants (scored as 0) than the male participants (scored as 1); and (2) The older students achieved higher TOEIC scores ($r = .75$, $p<.001$). The effects of these two personal demographic variables are pronounced in the analysis of the second specific research question, which is shortly discussed.

Table 2 : *Regression Analysis to Test the Effect of the Predictor Variables on TOEIC Scores* (n = 581)

Predictor variables	TOEIC score (Dependent variable) Parameter estimate (Standard error estimate)
Intercept	-1060.8^*
	(58.1)
X_1: Gender	-51.8^*
	(12.6)
X_2: Age	78.0^*
	(2.99)
X_3: Superior	-7.1
ethnocentrism	(5.18)
X_4: Avoidance	-16.7^*
	(4.7)
F-value	226.3^*
R^2	.61
Adjusted R^2	.61

$p < .001$

Table 2 presents the answers to the second specific research question, "Which of the two intercultural sensitivity elements more negatively affects TOEIC scores of Japanese students?" The author's hypothesis based on many previous studies is that superior ethnocentrism more negatively affects TOEIC scores of the Japanese than avoidance does. To test this hypothesis, the TOEIC scores were regressed on the four variables (i.e., two control variables and two predictor variables). Of the four variables, three were found to be statistically significant. The result of this test did not support the author's hypothesis. When avoidance was entered in a multiple regression analysis in addition to the two personal demographic variables and superior ethnocentrism, the result indicated that ethnocentrism accounted for very little of the variance in the TOEIC scores. Contrary to the prediction, avoidance exerted a more negative effect (-16.7, $p<.001$) on the TOEIC scores of the participants than did superior ethnocentrism (-7.1, not significant). The effect of superior ethnocentrism was nullified in a statistical sense by the effect of other three variables (age, gender, and avoidance). Second, the gender difference was found to be statistically significant (51.8, $p < .001$). This pronounced difference resulted from the actual difference of the TOEIC scores between the two genders: the mean score of the TOEIC of the male participants = 428.9 and the mean score of the TOEIC of the female participants = 512.9. The female participants' TOEIC scores far exceeded those of the male participants when the data were collected. This effect of gender difference could, in part, be explained by the different degrees of avoidance: Avoidance was higher in the male participants than in the female participants by .47. Third, the best predictor of the variance was age, which accounted most for the variance of TOEIC scores (78.0, $p < .001$): The older students achieved higher TOEIC scores. This makes sense. This effect could, in part, be also explained by the negative correlation between age and two predictor variables. Superior ethnocentrism decreased as age increased ($r = -.13$, $p<.001$). Similarly, avoidance decreased as age increased ($r = -.23$, $p<.001$). In addition, the low score group was younger than the high score group by 2.3 years. These outcomes regarding the effects of gender and age differences were expected to emerge to some degree from the outset, but the outcomes exceeded the author's expectation as far as the participants were concerned.

Discussion and Suggestions

Although no comprehensive pictures emerged from this study to answer the general research question, the correlation and regression analyses partially provided some answers.

As far as the negative effect of superior ethnocentrism on the English proficiency is concerned, this study found some support for the previous studies that argued that ethnocentrism exerted a negative effect on English proficiency (e.g., Eoyang, 1989; Gardner & Lambert, 1959 & 1972). This finding is consistent with the recent study of

Matsubara et al. (2001) and provides support for the claims made by many researchers regarding the adverse relationship between the Japanese ethnocentric stance to foreigners and foreign language proficiency (Hayes, 1979; Miller, 1982; Reishauer, 1981). The finding also provides support for the studies of multicultural and intercultural education that have contended that ethnocentrism is one of the major sources undermining the academic accomplishments and intellectual growth of learners (e.g., Banks, 1981 & 1993; Condon, 1986; Martin, 1985; Pahnos & Butt, 1992; Schopmeyer & Fisher, 1993; Unks, 1983; Zevin, 1993).

As far as the effect of avoidance on English proficiency is concerned, this study found that this element exerted more profound adverse effects on the TOEIC scores than superior ethnocentrism did. This means that when Japanese students strive for higher TOEIC scores, the xenophobic stance to avoid foreigners is more harmful to English proficiency than the snobbish stance of feeling superior to other cultures. Because TOEIC is designed to test English proficiency of international communication, this finding makes sense. This finding may be more significant than the finding of the first specific research question, since the xenophobic stance may be more intrinsic than superior ethnocentrism.

An unexpected but surprising finding is the effects of gender and age differences. Age best predicted the variance of TOEIC scores. However, the effect of gender on TOEIC scores does not mean that the female participants performed better than the male participants since this study was not designed to test which gender performed better during a certain period. It would be rather reasonable to assume that the difference of the TOIEC scores between the two genders had been already generated before the participants responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, the findings of this study do not necessarily counter the findings of previous studies (e.g., Ehrman, 1994; Green & Oxford, 1995). Future studies may have to address this gender issue.

Hence, it would be wise to suggest the following points. For future studies, intercultural sensitivity elements deserve serious attention. The effect of superior ethnocentrism on English proficiency should be tested for a wide variety of samples, as should the effect of avoidance. In addition to the two elements, any culprits undermining English proficiency should be examined since language researchers of Japanese higher education are expected to provide the way of improving the English proficiency of the Japanese business world which is facing difficult international management. As for English programs created for the Japanese to enhance TOEIC scores at the collegiate level, language instructors teaching English to Japanese students should make their students aware that their English proficiency may be undermined by superior ethnocentrism to other cultures and a xenophobic stance to foreigners. This awareness should be particularly aimed at male students in general. A possible solution to reduce the negative effects of these two elements is to emphasize the

significance of becoming open-minded and positive to foreigners and foreign cultures.

Two shortcomings of this study should be noted. The first is the selection of participants. This study chose two sample groups located in two different cities. The possibility that other sample groups in other areas might generate different results always exists. Further study using a variety of sample groups is needed to confirm this study's findings. The second shortcoming is the paucity of predictor variables examined. More predictor variables should be explored and tested, as was done in the study of Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000). Particularly Japanese culture-specific variables and intercultural sensitivity variables should be tested. Future studies should address these two shortcomings. Ideally, additional research utilizing a broader selection of participants and more varieties of predictor variables is necessary to better explore the general research question, which is now a task of Japanese institutions of higher education.

References

Banks, J. A. (1981). *Multicultural education: Theory and practice.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Banks, J. A. (1993). The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education. *Educational Researcher, 22,* 4-14.

Bennet, M. J. (1993). Toward ethnocentrism: A development model of intercultural sensitivity. In R.M. Paige (ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp.21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Burk, J. L. (1976). The effect of ethnocentrism upon intercultural communication: Functional and dysfunctional. In F. L. Casmir (Ed.), *The international and intercultural annual* (vol. III). Annendale, VA: Speech Communication Association.

Cadd, M. (1994). An attempt to reduce ethnocentrism in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annal, 27,* 143-160.

Condon, J. C. (1986). The ethnocentric classroom. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning, 26,* 11-20.

Ehrman, M. E. (1996). *Understanding second language learning difficulties.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

ETS (Educational Testing Service). (2000). *1999 data & analysis.* Princeton, N. J.: The Chauncey Group International Ltd., p.3.

Eoyang, E. (1989). Taking the "foreign" out of foreign language training. *ADFL Bulletein, 20,* 5-10.

Fatehi, K. (1996). *International management. A cross-cultural and functional approach.* Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice-Hall International, Inc.

Garcia, R. I. (1982). *Teaching in a pluralistic society: Concepts, models, and strategies.* New York: Harper & Row.

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second-language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology, 13,* 266-272.

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Green, J. M. & Oxford, R. (1995). A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. *TESOL Quarterly, 29,* 261-297.

Hammer, M. R. & Bennett, M. J. (1998). *The intercultural development inventory: Manual.* Portland, OR: The Intercultural Communication Institute.

Hayes, C. W. (1979). Language contact in Japan. In W. F. Mackey & J. Orenstein (Eds.), *Sociolinguistic studies in language contact, methods and cases* (pp.106-113). New York: Mouton Publishers.

Hinenoya, K. & Gatbonton, E. (2000). Ethnocentrism, cultural traits, beliefs, and English proficiency: A Japanese sample. *Modern Language Journal, 84,* 225-240.

Koester, J., Wiseman, R.L., & Sanders, J.A. (1993). Multiple perspectives of intercultural communication competence. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 3-15). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kottak, C. P. (2000). *Anthropology: The exploration of human diversity.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Martin, D. C. (1985). Ethnocentrism revisited: Another look at a persistent problem. *Social Education, 9,* 604-609.

Matsubara, K., Nishimata, T., & Tanno, D. (2001). Significance of integrative motivation affecting TOEIC scores: A case study of Aomori Public College. *Journal of Aomori Public College, 6,* 40-47.

Matsumoto, K. (1994). English instruction problems in Japanese schools and higher education. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 5,* 209-214.

Miller, R. A. (1982). *Japan's modern myth: The language and beyond.* New York: Weatherhill.

Ota, Y. (1994). The "decline" of English language competence in modern Japan. *Journal of Asia Pacific Communication, 5, 201-207.*

Pahnos, M. & Butt, K. (1992). Ethnocentrism—A universal pride in one's ethnic background: Its impact on teaching and learning. *Education, 113,* 118-20.

Reishauer, E. O. (1981). *The Japanese.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schopmeyer, K. D. & Fisher, B. L. (1993). Insiders and outsiders: Exploring ethnocentrism and cultural relativity in sociology courses. *Teaching Sociology, 21,* 148-153.

Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. M. (1988). *Asking questions.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Unks, G. (1983). The perils of a single-language policy. *Educational Leadership, 4,* 18-22.

Wiseman R. L., Hammer M. R., & Nishida, H. (1989). Predictors of intercultural competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 13,* 349-370.

Yamamoto, S. & Tanno, D. (2000). A preliminary data collection using the Japanese version of intercultural development inventory. Unpublished research funded by the Aomori Foundation for Science and Technology.

Zevin, J. (1993). World studies in secondary schools and the undermining of ethnocentrism. *The Social Studies,* March/April, 82 - 86.

Abstract

This study examined the degree to which two elements measuring the stance toward outgroup members exert negative effects on TOEIC scores of Japanese students learning English at the collegiate level in Japan. The two elements are (1) superior ethnocentrism and (2) avoidance (person's stance to avoid foreigners), which are part of the intercultural sensitivity elements. A self-administered anonymous questionnaire form was used to collect data (n = 581) at two Japanese institutions from Fall 2000 to Spring 2001. Statistical analysis of the data indicated the following two aspects. First, both superior ethnocentrism and avoidance were negatively associated with the TOEIC scores of the participants. Second, avoidance exerted a stronger negative effect on the TOEIC scores than superior ethnocentrism did when the effects of two demographic variables (age and gender) were controlled. These findings suggest that English programs created for Japanese students at the collegiate level should be designed to make their students aware of the negative effects of these two elements and, therefore, to instruct them to become open-minded to foreigners and foreign cultures.