

Kwansei Gakuin University
Humanities Review
Vol. 21, 2016
Nishinomiya, Japan

Beyond the Classroom: Extracurricular L2 Exposure and Beliefs in Japan

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I. Introduction

Rural Japan, a two-hour flight south of Tokyo, bookended by rice fields and a range of small, hazy mountains, where students shake off their bicycles and a little morning dew as they pour into their classrooms, provides the backdrop for my study. On this day, students will have classes in math, science, Japanese literature, history, a fine art such as chorus or calligraphy, and English. At this school English is treated like any other subject, most English teachers use Japanese as the language of instruction, and in the area few foreigners are roaming the countryside. For students, English is not necessary outside the classroom, and most will never travel abroad. Yet, this school and many others like it in Japan are home to students who excel at English. Perhaps these students are the minority in a country where “the English-speaking abilities of a large percentage of the population are inadequate” (Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], 2002), and yet, we have to ask, in the world of EFL learning – a world that seems almost hostile to English learning – , what accounts for the attachment that some learners have to English? This study seeks to explore the answer to that question as well as present empirical data collected from a survey of Japanese high school EFL students on which sources of L2 input they are exposed to outside of the English classroom, their attitudes and beliefs toward those sources of input, and, in general, how motivated they are toward learning English.

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II. Literature Review

Teachers and researchers trying to answer the question of why one language learner may acquire an L2 at a faster rate and to a better degree than another learner have studied the effects of many factors on SLA, including but not limited to age of acquisition (Ellis & Collins, 2009; Lightbrown & Spada, 1999; Ortega, 2009; Singleton, 2003), learner motivation (Clément, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005 a; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005 b; Gardner, 1985, 2001), and exposure to appropriate input (Ellis & Collins, 2009; Krashen, 1985, 2009; Lightbrown & Spada, 1999; Long, 1985, 1996; Moyer, 2009; Piske & Young-Scholten, 2009). While research in each area of SLA has often led to inconclusive and even conflicting results, most L2 learners would argue that the evidence is clear – to learn a second language, one should start learning the language when young, interact with native-speakers within the L2 culture, and be highly motivated to do so. Yet, what is the recourse for language learners who do not fit this profile, namely, most EFL learners? Is language learning for them impossible or, at the very least, will it be slow, arduous, and, in the end, lead only to minute changes in L2 fluency and proficiency? As teachers and researchers, we hope not. For the purposes of this study, questions of motivation and input will focus on research conducted in an EFL context.

Questions surrounding learner motivation are important to SLA because it is motivation that determines to what extent learners will actively involve themselves in learning a language (Clément et al., 1994; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005 a; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005 b; Gardner, 1985, 2001) and “seek out opportunities to learn the language” (Gardner, 1985, p.56). While some disagree or are unclear on the best type of motivation for facilitating language acquisition (Lightbrown & Spada, 1999; Ortega 2009), researchers have held that *integrative motivation* “has played the most central role in the development of a theory of foreign language motivation” (Ortega, 2009, p.170). Defined by Gardner in 1985, “*integrative motivation* refers to that class of reasons that suggest that the individual is learning a second language in order to learn about, interact with, or become closer to the second language community” (p.54). Gardner (1985, 2001) even claims that integrative motivation leads to success in SLA. However, this supposition may not account for all EFL learners. Indeed, what happens when EFL learners have little exposure to L2 language or culture? Referring to Dornyei’s work in 1988, Ortega (2009) suggests that, “*integrativeness* might have less explanatory power for learners in foreign language contexts . . . Without contact, they cannot form strong attitudes towards L2 speakers or harbour intense desires of integrating or being ‘like them’” (p.178). Instead, outside the L2 culture EFL learners may turn to indirect sources of the L2 culture if their moti-

vation to learn the L2 is high (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005 b). First presented by Clément et al. in 1994, *English media orientation or cultural interest orientation* (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005 a) “reflects the appreciation of cultural products associated with the particular L2 and conveyed by the media” (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005 a, p.21).

Motivation and input are closely linked (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Input, as defined by Lightbrown and Spada (2006), is “the language that the learner is exposed to in the environment” (p.201). As Gass (1997) declares, “it is an incontrovertible fact that some sort of input is essential for language learning” (p.86); however, it is the *quantity* of that input which is controversial. Because of this dispute, along with the advancement of research into incidental learning, learning which occurs naturally or without direct instruction (including work by Day and Omura (1991), d’Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999), and Koolstra and Beentjes (1999)), the issue of *total quantity* of input is hardly irrelevant.

In EFL contexts, researchers have often focused on lack of L2 exposure as a factor behind lower learning speed and achievement in SLA. Amount of exposure to L2 input is certainly an important factor in learners’ SLA success (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1985, 1996). That said, while few studies have been conducted regarding the amount of exposure language learners have to their L2 in the classroom (Duff & Polio, 1990; Ellis, 2009; MacLeod & Larsson, 2011), even less research has been conducted on the amount of exposure L2 learners have to their L2 in extracurricular environments (MacLeod & Larsson, 2011): “Few of us have a deep or detailed understanding of what providing ‘good,’ ‘rich,’ or ‘varied’ input entails, and we lack awareness regarding the amount and nature of the input to which learners are exposed outside the classroom” (Piske & Young-Scholten, 2009, p.16). This ‘lack of awareness’ is likely due to the assumption that EFL learners only receive L2 exposure in the classroom (Duff & Polio, 1990; Ortega, 2009), and has led to a lack of research in EFL settings once learners exit the classroom, where learner preference is involved. Crookes and Schmidt (2001) write, “the link between motivation and learning in informal contexts is due to the importance of opting in or out of opportunities for learning, which is greater than in formal instruction, in which attendance may be forced” (p.494). In short, choice – when learners have a choice as to what types of input they are exposed to, this exposure will be more directly related to their personal motivations. For this reason, I am especially interested in the relationship between exposure and motivation.

III. Purpose of the Current Study

There are four primary objectives for this study: (a) to provide empirical data

concerning the amount of exposure to various extra-curricular sources of written, verbal, and mixed (verbal and written) English input in high-achieving and low-achieving EFL learners in a Japanese context, (b) to examine the attitudes and beliefs of those same high-level and low-level Japanese EFL learners, (c) to determine the self-reported level of motivation those Japanese high school students have toward learning English, and (d) to determine if any relationships exist between motivation and the different types and amounts of English input that the students have exposure to outside regular classroom instruction. Just as Gardner (2001) suggested that affinity for an L2 and its culture can be the main indicative factor in predicting one's motivation for learning an L2, I hypothesize that EFL learners' desire to surround themselves with indirect L2 culture, i.e., exposure to extracurricular sources of L2 verbal and written media, may signal one's motivation to learn an L2 and lead to greater achievement in the L2.

IV. Methodology

1. Participants

A population of Japanese EFL students ($N = 151$) was selected from two academic, public high schools in a rural prefecture in southern Japan. Two classes, both second-year high school classes (Japanese equivalent to eleventh grade in the U.S. All students were 16 and 17 years old at the time the survey was administered), from each of the two schools were chosen. Of the two selected classes in each high school, one class of students represented high-level English learners, while the other was made up of low-level English learners. The determination of student level was made independent of this study through entrance and placement exams conducted by each of the high schools. While testing and placement standards do fluctuate throughout Japan, because both schools in my study are academic high schools in the same prefecture, prefecture-wide entrance exams and cut-off points are standardized.

The number of high placement ($n = 77$) and low placement students ($n = 74$) were almost even at 51 and 49 percent respectively, the age range for both levels was the same, and the number of years spent studying English averaged to be the same for both groups of students.

2. Instruments

An original survey in Japanese was developed to examine the amount of exposure high-achieving and low-achieving Japanese EFL learners have to 14 different sources of extracurricular English input in three categories: (a) verbal: native-speakers, non-native speakers, movies/TV, radio programs, music, online media; (b)

written: books, magazines, comics, newspapers, text messages/email, online social media; and (c) mixed-modal (verbal and written): movies/TV with English subtitles, music with English subtitles.

In total, the survey consists of 87 closed-response questions and 4 open-ended questions. The survey is divided into three sections: (a) exposure to sources of L2 input, (b) attitudes and beliefs toward sources of input, and (c) general motivation toward learning English.

Section 1 of the survey deals with exposure. Because of past research running into difficulties when trying to measure exposure to input (MacLeod and Larsson, 2011; Moyer, 2009), I decided not to question the students directly on the amount of exposure, e.g., hours a day, hours a week. I instead included three items concerning the level of exposure to each source of input relative to other sources. For each source of input, three prompts allowing 5-point Likert scale responses were used to achieve this end, 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often.

1. How often are you exposed to native speakers?
2. I am often exposed to native speakers of English speaking English.
3. Average amount of exposure to native speakers each week

In 2009, Moyer called for more research in the area of how attitudes and beliefs of students may affect their willingness to expose themselves to L2 culture as well as their L2 acquisition. Section 2 attempts to do that by using prompts regarding (a) enjoyability, (b) belief in each source's effectiveness in improving the students' English ability, and (c) their attitude toward each source of input as a motivating factor to learn English. A 5-point Likert scale was used, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. The prompts for the source of input, *music*, is as follows:

1. I enjoy listening to English music.
2. I think listening to English music can improve my English.
3. Listening to English music makes me want to learn English.

Participants were also asked to respond to prompts regarding their general motivation to learn English. Students were asked to respond to the prompt, *I want to learn English*. They responded using a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

V. Quantitative Results

By finding the mean exposure across the three prompts concerned with exposure, a better estimate of the relative exposure the participants have to each source of input was gained. Table 1 shows data concerning the participants' self-reported

mean exposure to extracurricular English input. Music had the highest levels of exposure at 2.93 followed by Online Media with a mean exposure of 2.54. Data are also given across both high- and low-placement students. When comparing the mean exposure of both groups, there is no significant difference and, in fact, the low-placement group actually shows higher exposure to English input from native speakers, movies/TV, music, and online media. Internal consistency is high across all subtests as well as all questions having to do with amount of exposure ($\alpha = .91$). Internal consistency/reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1 Mean Self-Reported Exposure of Japanese High School Students to Extracurricular English Input

Source of Input	Total ($N = 151$)		High ($n = 77$)		Low ($n = 74$)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Music	2.93	1.10	2.85	1.04	3.00	1.14
Online Media	2.54	1.10	2.50	1.13	2.58	1.07
Music (with lyrics)	2.36	1.10	2.34	1.09	2.39	1.09
Movies/TV (with subtitles)	2.19	1.08	2.12	1.05	2.25	1.11
Non-native speakers	2.12	1.44	2.19	1.36	2.05	1.51
Online Social Media	1.78	1.02	1.72	0.97	1.85	1.05
Movies/TV	1.70	0.89	1.67	0.87	1.73	0.92
Native-speakers	1.61	0.89	1.52	0.72	1.70	1.02
Email/text messages	1.47	0.81	1.46	0.81	1.48	0.81
Books	1.45	0.72	1.44	0.73	1.45	0.70
Newspapers/Periodicals	1.35	0.66	1.43	0.75	1.28	0.54
Magazines	1.29	0.62	1.29	0.57	1.30	0.66
Radio	1.28	0.62	1.31	0.66	1.24	0.57
Comics	1.23	0.53	1.23	0.51	1.22	0.55

In looking at the attitudes and beliefs of the Japanese EFL students toward the different sources of L2 input, a distinction must be made between the three factors surveyed,

- (a) enjoyability
- (b) belief in each source's effectiveness in improving the students' English ability
- (c) their attitude toward each source of input as a motivating factor to learn English

These results can be seen in Tables 2, 3, and 4. While Table 2 shows that little difference exists between levels of academic placement, it can also be seen that students, in general, find exposure to music, online media, music with lyrics, movies/TV with subtitles, and native speakers (in that order) the most enjoyable. Table 3 shows again little difference between the high- and low-placement levels and also

that students regard their exposure to native speakers, music, movies/TV, music, and books (in that order) as the most effective in learning English.

Table 2 Enjoyability Factor: Attitudes and Beliefs of Japanese High School Students toward Extracurricular English Input

Source of Input	Total (<i>N</i> = 151)		High (<i>n</i> = 77)		Low (<i>n</i> = 74)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Music	3.93	1.13	3.91	1.12	3.96	1.13
Music (with lyrics)	3.60	1.24	3.56	1.33	3.65	1.13
Movies/TV (with subtitles)	3.37	1.39	3.39	1.35	3.35	1.44
Native-speakers	3.07	1.35	3.03	1.24	3.11	1.45
Non-native Speakers	2.84	1.17	2.75	1.15	2.93	1.19
Movies/TV	2.66	1.19	2.68	1.11	2.64	1.26
Books	2.50	1.28	2.51	1.23	2.50	1.32
Online Social Media	2.19	1.17	2.19	1.12	2.19	1.22
Online Media	2.06	1.31	1.99	1.27	2.14	1.34
Newspapers	2.04	1.19	2.14	1.22	1.93	1.14
Email/text messages	2.03	1.21	1.99	1.20	2.07	1.21
Magazines/Periodicals	2.02	1.12	2.03	1.06	2.01	1.19
Comics	1.97	1.07	1.94	0.97	2.01	1.17
Radio	1.82	1.04	1.86	1.08	1.78	1.00

Table 3 Effectiveness Factor: Attitudes and Beliefs of Japanese High School Students toward Extracurricular English Input

Source of Input	Total (<i>N</i> = 151)		High (<i>n</i> = 77)		Low (<i>n</i> = 74)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Native-speakers	4.21	0.90	4.21	0.84	4.22	0.96
Music (with lyrics)	3.65	1.20	3.63	1.15	3.68	1.25
Movies/TV	3.64	1.13	3.60	1.00	3.69	1.25
Music	3.62	1.10	3.49	1.04	3.74	1.15
Books	3.62	1.22	3.66	1.05	3.58	1.37
Movies/TV (with subtitles)	3.60	1.18	3.60	1.08	3.59	1.27
Newspapers	3.52	1.33	3.49	1.23	3.54	1.43
Radio	3.39	1.27	3.40	1.23	3.38	1.30
Magazines/Periodicals	3.28	1.36	3.39	1.20	3.18	1.50
Non-native Speakers	3.19	1.23	3.35	1.09	3.01	1.33
Online Media	3.03	1.22	2.92	1.18	3.15	1.25
Comics	2.97	1.29	3.08	1.17	2.86	1.39
Email/text messages	2.92	1.34	3.09	1.24	2.74	1.42
Online Social Media	2.89	1.42	2.92	1.39	2.85	1.44

Table 4 Motivation Factor: Attitudes and Beliefs of Japanese High School Students toward Extracurricular English Input

Source of Input	Total (<i>N</i> = 151)		High (<i>n</i> = 77)		Low (<i>n</i> = 74)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Native-speakers	3.87	1.07	3.88	0.92	3.85	1.22
Music	3.75	1.16	3.67	1.19	3.82	1.13
Music (with lyrics)	3.57	1.29	3.45	1.23	3.69	1.33
Movies/TV	3.44	1.25	3.43	1.11	3.45	1.39
Movies/TV (with subtitles)	3.42	1.30	3.39	1.24	3.46	1.36
Books	3.19	1.34	3.22	1.27	3.16	1.41
Newspapers	3.07	1.42	2.99	1.32	3.16	1.51
Online Media	2.98	1.23	2.82	1.19	3.15	1.24
Non-native Speakers	2.97	1.20	3.10	1.08	2.82	1.30
Magazines/Periodicals	2.93	1.39	2.95	1.24	2.92	1.54
Radio	2.81	1.31	2.86	1.27	2.76	1.34
Email/text messages	2.74	1.38	2.77	1.35	2.70	1.42
Online Social Media	2.71	1.40	2.73	1.35	2.69	1.44
Comics	2.68	1.34	2.73	1.23	2.64	1.44

Of interest, these results show that while students find exposure to English input more effective than enjoyable, what they actually find most effective is not necessarily what they have the most exposure to. Table 4 looks at the effect that each source of input has on the students' motivation to learn English. Again, there is very little difference seen across the high- and low-level populations, and participants feel that they are most motivated to learn English when they are exposure to native-speakers, music, music with lyrics, and movies/TV.

The data on the self-reported general motivation levels of the participants to learn English showed surprisingly that low-level students, with a mean score of 4.23, report having slightly higher motivation than high-level students, at 4.16. This result is contrary to the findings of previous research on the matter, which has always shown a strong correlation between motivation and student achievement (Gardner, 1985, 2001; Lightbrown & Spada, 2006; Ortega, 2009). In total, students showed a high level of motivation to learn English at 4.19.

With an overall internal reliability of .97 (measured using Cronbach's Alpha) across the three subtests, enjoyability, effectiveness, and motivation, I ran a principal components analysis (PCA) on those three subtests along with the subtests on exposure and general motivation. Through examining the initial Eigen values and the scree plot, I decided to extract five components. Cumulatively, the extracted five components account for 58.9% of the variance. Data from the PCA show that the survey items concerned with a source of input's effectiveness in learning English and their perception of that input as motivation to learn English load most heavily on Component 1 (Table 5). This may be interpreted as the more effective students

Table 5 Interpretation of Components and Irregularities

Comp.	Interpretation of Components (patterns)	Irregularities
1	Effectiveness & Input as Motivator Component	(excluding Online Media input)
2	Exposure & Enjoyableness & General Motivation* Component	(excluding Native-speaker, Music, Online Media input)
3	Native-speaker & Movies/TV** & Music Input Component	(input from Books loaded once)
4	Music [†] & Email/Text & Social Media Input Component	
5	Music [†] & Online Media Input Component	(input from Non-native Speakers and Movies/TV with subtitles loaded once each)

*General Motivation refers to the participants' self-reported motivation to learn English

**Movies/TV in English with and without English subtitles

†Music in English with and without the accompanying lyrics

perceive a source of input to be in learning English, the more they see those sources of English as motivators to learn English. Further, the survey items concerned with the students' exposure to sources of English input, how enjoyable the students found each source of input, and their self-reported motivation to learn English all fall most heavily under Component 2 (Table 5), with few exceptions to that pattern. This is interesting in that while students report that certain sources of input motivate them to learn English and that they find certain sources of input effective in learning English, their actual exposure is more closely related to how enjoyable they find each source of input and their general motivation to learn English. A summary of the patterns and irregularities found in the PCA loadings can be seen in Table 5.

Regarding the fourth study objective, i.e., to determine if any relationships exist between motivation and the different types and amounts of English input that the students have exposed themselves to outside regular classroom instruction, I ran several correlations. Correlations were calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Table 6 shows how exposure to L2 input correlates with achievement level and motivation. While there is almost no correlation between achievement level and exposure, it is interesting to note that, for most sources of input, there is a slight negative correlation. This means that the low-level students not only have higher exposure to L2 input outside of the classroom, but the correlation also implies that the lower one's achievement level, the higher one's exposure.

Table 7 shows how exposure to L2 input correlates with the attitudes and beliefs held by the participants toward each source of input. The correlation for each factor was calculated separately. The first striking feature is that of the three factors, enjoyability has the highest correlation to exposure. These data show that Japanese high school students in an EFL context are more exposed to those sources of input

Table 6 How Mean Exposure to Various Sources of L2 Input Correlates with Japanese EFL Students' Achievement Level and General Motivation to Learn L2**

Source of L2 Input	Variables Correlated with Mean Exposure	
	Achievement Level	General Motivation to learn L2
Native-speakers	-.12	.13
Non-native speakers	.07	.09
Movies/TV	-.04	.19*
Radio	.07	.29**
Music	-.08	.42**
Online Media	-.04	.22**
Books	-.01	.27**
Magazines	-.02	.25**
Comics	.01	.13
Newspapers	.13	.24**
Email/text messages	-.02	.25**
Online Social Media	-.07	.29**
Movies/TV (with Eng. subtitles)	-.06	.39**
Music (with lyrics)	-.04	.38**

Note. Correlations were calculated using Pearson's correlation model.

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 How Mean Exposure to Various Sources of L2 Input Correlates with Japanese EFL Students' Attitudes and Beliefs toward that Input

Source of Input	Variables correlated with Mean Exposure		
	Enjoyability Factor	Effectiveness Factor	Motivational Factor
Native-speakers	.45**	.21**	.24**
Non-native speakers	.28**	-.09	-.07
Movies/TV	.78**	.33**	.42**
Radio	.56**	.11	.29**
Music	.87**	.57**	.63**
Online Media	.83**	.59	.63**
Books	.58**	.36**	.44**
Magazines	.66**	.24**	.39*
Comics	.58**	.30**	.40*
Newspapers	.61**	.25*	.35*
Email/text messages	.71**	.33**	.35*
Online Social Media	.75**	.51**	.52**
Movies/TV (with subtitles)	.86**	.47**	.54**
Music (with lyrics)	.86**	.54**	.59**

Note. Correlations were calculated using Pearson's correlation model.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

that they find enjoyable rather than to those that they feel to be more effective in learning English. Another point of interest in Table 7 concerns the negative correlations of non-native speakers as a source of English L2 input. While the lowest cor-

relation is between exposure to non-native speakers and enjoyability (.28), it appears that the greater the exposure to non-native speakers of English EFL students have, the less effective and motivational they feel that exposure to non-native speakers is in learning English (-.089 and -.067 respectively).

VI. Open-Ended Survey Results

Regarding enjoyability, students overwhelmingly answered that they enjoyed their exposure to English music the most out of the other sources of input. This outcome validates the results from the survey. In answering why the students liked listening to or reading certain sources of input, a strong majority tended to answer that it was, in order of occurrence, “fun,” “cool,” “charming,” “interesting,” and “makes me feel happy.” Other responses included, “It doesn’t feel like studying,” “I can forget that English is a school subject,” and “It is easier to learn when I am interested.” Interestingly, almost one-fifth of the students responded that they like sources of English input because they are popular within their own culture or among their peers. For example, one student wrote, “When I hear my friends sing English songs, I think it’s cool and I want to know the meaning of the lyrics.”

Regarding effectiveness, students were asked to respond to which sources of English they thought could most improve their English. Again validating the results from the Likert-scale portion of the survey, the students answered native-speakers, movies/TV, and music. In responding to why the students believed that certain sources of input were effective, an overwhelming majority of the students said that “colloquial English” rather than “big words” and “formal grammar” is more effective for learning English, specifically conversation skills, pronunciation, and “real English.” One student said, “listening textbooks have formal styles, so I think listening to native-speakers actually speaking is better.” Perhaps the most telling, another student put it this way, “If you are using English as a tool for entrance exams, natural English is not necessary, and if you want to travel, colloquial English is more important than big words. I think it depends how you want to use English.” Pointing to a desire for authentic sources of English and acknowledging that textbooks and entrance exams do not provide or require knowledge of such authentic English, it may not be surprising that students turn to extracurricular sources of L2 input. (Note: All student responses were translated from Japanese to English and then back translated for validity.)

VII. Discussion

This study shows that outside the classroom (a) Japanese EFL students have

the most exposure to English in the form of music, online media, movies/TV, and non-native speakers; (b) they find exposure to English music the most enjoyable, while they find exposure to native-speakers the most effective and the most motivational in learning English; (c) exposure is most highly correlated with enjoyability; and (d) no discernible differences in exposure or motivation were found between the achievement levels of the participants. In general, the participants in this study seem motivated to learn English because of the nature of the sources of input themselves as well as forces within their own L2 peer community. These findings correspond directly with the hypothesis that L2 learners orient toward English because of a cultural interest model of motivation where sources of media are seen as motivating artifacts (Clément et al., 1994) that connect learners with a global English media culture. In contrast, the findings of this study argue against both Gardner's concept that learners better acquire a language in order to integrate with the L2 community as well as his assertion that integrative motivation is correlated with the achievement level of the learner.

Another issue concerns the overall low level of exposure to extracurricular input. Offering a possible explanation, one participant in the survey wrote, "I only have time to be exposed to English in class." Post-survey, the teachers responsible for distributing the survey were asked, "What are the biggest challenges facing your students being exposed to English outside of school?" One answered in English,

Japanese tend to study for the entrance exams. They seek for "short cut," only interested in the most important parts frequently asked on the test. Perhaps lower level students don't feel as much pressure and have more time outside of school to enjoy own interests. But, lack of time is the biggest problem. Few students interested in many things, curious, use English outside of classes, but most high school students have no spare time to spend on these things.

In short, students may be too busy in their school life to be exposed to such input. Interestingly, it was mentioned that lower level students might have more free time for extracurricular activities. This statement supports my finding in Table 6 that low-achievement students have slightly higher exposure to extracurricular L2 input than high-achieving students.

VIII. Further Research

This study invites further research into how learners orient themselves to natural L2 input in an EFL environment. Even if EFL learners are flooded with L2 exposure, are they attentive to that exposure? Long (1985) states that "failure to learn [a language] is due either to insufficient exposure or to failure to notice the items in

question, even if exposure occurred and the learner was attending” (p.427). So, with minimal exposure and the absence of explicit learning, can learners still acquire a language through input alone? While it has been argued that there is no such thing as subliminal language learning (Long, 1996), some researchers accept that implicit learning is not impossible (Schmidt, 1990). In fact, while Schmidt does admit that noticing must be present for learning, learning can still occur incidentally, without knowledge of the rules or principles involved.

Other researchers have also shown evidence for incidental learning in EFL contexts. Day and Omura (1991), in looking specifically at EFL reading in a Japanese context, showed that incidental, foreign-language vocabulary learning occurred after sustained silent reading for entertainment. d’Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) and Koolstra and Beentjes (1999) showed that foreign television programs with English subtitles or vice versa provide rich content for SLA, that incidental vocabulary acquisition through extracurricular TV watching is possible, and that motivation for language learning is increased. Razel (2001) showed that for small amounts of viewing, achievement in vocabulary acquisition increased. While research in this area shows potential, more research into natural exposure to L2 input in EFL environments and its effects on incidental learning outside the classroom is needed.

Lastly, with the onset of English education in Japanese elementary schools, a discussion of ways to increase an EFL learner’s exposure to their target language at all ages is pertinent. Because my study shows that the amount of exposure to L2 input is minimal among rural Japanese high school students, either exposure should therefore be increased for students at this age or, as studies in age effect have shown in EFL contexts (Ellis & Collins, 2009; Lightbrown & Spada, 1999; Ortega, 2009), learners should start earlier if having more time to be exposed to more input is the goal.

IX. Pedagogical Implications

Beyond incidental learning and with the advent of new pedagogies that encourage students to rely on extracurricular materials and resources, e.g., extensive reading and listening, questions of the amount of exposure students have to sources of L2 input in EFL environments become tantamount. In contexts where natural exposure to sources of L2 input seems non-existent, especially in the case of written input, teachers will be pressed to provide greater resources in the classroom to supplement the learner’s environment. With the proper guidance from teachers and schools, and as the ease of access grows, students will continue to seek out more sources of L2 input outside their classrooms – if not for their own benefit, then to simply connect with the global English community. Ultimately, perhaps it is not

enough that sources of L2 input only exist in EFL contexts. It is possible students in Japan and other countries, where exposure to target languages seems minimal, need direction in finding that input, i.e., where to find it, how to find it, which sources are the most effective for learning, while acknowledging the correlation between exposure and enjoyability. With that said, EFL programs should include more content from both authentic and popular sources of media in and outside of instruction.

X. Conclusion

In the age of Facebook, Line, and Twitter, where memberships to online music, movie, and television show providers such as iTunes, Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube are now the international standard, access to media and foreign-language input is no longer an issue for most of today's new language learners, and the motivations for learning languages and wanting to be integrated into the world media culture are evolving daily. Removed from L1 communities and culture, L2 learners are becoming more and more interested in the popular culture of English and the language itself (MacLeod & Larsson, 2011). Likewise, future and current teachers are intrigued by the potential influence and motivational power of these new sources of English and their connection to the growing world culture surrounding their students. English language teachers suddenly find themselves in a unique position to create interest, motivation, and enthusiasm while educating their students to become globalized "citizens of the world" (Lamb, 2004). As Lamb (2004) put it, "The world itself has changed greatly since Gardner first introduced the notion of integrative motivation" (p.4). While it is true that the world is getting smaller through the spread of technology, the truth also exists that we no longer have to leave our homes to access it.

Finally, mirrored in the English education policies of Japan where English is perceived as "the common international language," claiming that, "it is essential that our children acquire communication skill in English . . . in order for living in the 21st century" (MEXT, 2002), it is no wonder that English language learners no longer question the importance of English learning and want to connect, however indirectly, to this newly envisioned world.

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