

Suggestions for College English Camp

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Abstract

This study aims to provide suggestions for effective college English camp through investigating the participants' satisfaction and perceptions of the English camp program which were implemented for 2 years from 2010 to 2012 during the summer and winter vacations. For the study, the questionnaire surveys were conducted to find out the participants' satisfaction and the reflection papers were collected and analyzed to obtain perceptions on the camps after each English Camp. The participants for the Camp were 80 college students each, 320 in total, consisting of various majors. Each camp was programmed with basically similar environment. However, it was getting modified in some parts through reflecting students' perceptions of the English Camp. The result indicated that reflected camp programs showed higher satisfaction. Effective teaching methods and before, during, and after-the camp management were discussed.

Keywords

College English camp, reflection, anxiety, confidence

Introduction

In contemporary societies, there would be few doubts or debates about the status of English as 'lingua franca.' Intensifying global flows of people and information have influenced communities and spaces across social and political boundaries. With the progress of globalization in the economy and society, to acquire communication skills in English is required. Along with this stream, the need for spoken English proficiency in Korea has created rich opportunities for an influx of informal means of English teaching. It is within this complex environment that opportunities for more informal means of English teaching and learning are increasing. That is, students go to private English institutes, attend the English language camp or try to study abroad to learn English. It is said that residing overseas for a short or long period can supplement the lack of an opportunity to have authentic interaction with target language speakers and improve their communicative competence in

English (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). The advocates of providing English study abroad programs for learners insist that the opportunity to stay in English speaking communities facilitates not only linguistic competence but also affective stability. Studies to compare English learning at home, in Korea, and in overseas reports that staying overseas experience helps EFL learners develop the confidence and motivation in English learning through the frequent use of English for communication (Cha, 2010, Kim, 2005; Park, 2008; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). However, staying and studying abroad costs too much. Native speakers of English are welcomed throughout Korea in a variety of contexts to serve models of spoken English. One such venue is English language camps for college students, where native speakers are enlisted to serve as teachers of conversational English. Therefore, English intensive camp here in Korea which creates English-speaking atmosphere, could be a substitute for study abroad programs.

The previous studies on English Camps in Korea have mainly focused on reporting the making and running of the individual Camp programs and the effects of it (Cho, 1999; Yoo, 1999). These studies report positive results about the Camp programs providing theoretical support for the ongoing English Camps in the country. Rha (2009) investigated EFL college students' expectations of and affective involvement in a domestically-run English camp, which is a three-week boarding style camp. Lee (2011) examined the effectiveness of a domestic four-week English camp program for college students. The results showed that students in the English camp were strongly satisfied with the program, and their average scores after completing the intensive English program were 89 points higher.

This study reviews the English Camp which was held in a university, and aims to suggest the directions for effective college English camp programs by investigating the participants' satisfactions and perception of the English camp program through analyzing reflection paper. Some issues and concerns were emerged as the program processed, and those issues, problems and concerns

were reflected for the next camp.

The research questions included whether the camp contributed to the participants' substantial development of cognitive domain, whether the camp had positive impact on the students' affective areas such as interest, self-confidence, motivation, and overall satisfaction, and whether there are any factors to consider making the camp better. Research questions were 1) What are participants' satisfaction of the camp? 2) What are participants' perception of the camp? 3) Considering the satisfaction and perceptions, what makes the camp effective? What are the factors suggested by camp participants to make the camp better in the future?

1 Background

There is no consensus among researchers on how much input and exposure one needs to learn a foreign language. DeKeyser (2000) points out that the implicit acquisition process requires a massive amount of input, which can only be provided by a total immersion program. Some researchers say that the students are not exposed to the English language enough. Authentic and abundant language input and output opportunities have been agreed on as crucial elements to second language acquisition. According to several researchers, the most valuable factor in facilitating communication is the frequency of English use (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Li, 2005; Leger & Storch, 2009; Macintyre et al, 1998; Yahima, 2002).

In a study of second language learning contexts, Batstone (2002) reported that there have been essentially two contexts with which learners have been confronted: communicative and learning contexts. Communicative contexts require that the learner use the L2 as a tool of sorts for exchanging information and for participating in important social and interpersonal functions. In this context, learners engage in interactional situations more for the purpose of social networking. How communicative competence can best be fostered in Korean context might be English language camps.

Learning contexts, however, push learners to engage with input and output so as to be able to attend to language forms and take risks toward the goal of improving their linguistic competence. Thus, in this context, learners are oriented toward pedagogical purposes. The intensive English camp guided by the English teachers can create learning contexts as well as communicative.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were selected by voluntary

participation. The number of participants per camp was 80 (Table 1). Their majors differed individually from leisure design to physical therapy with a mixture of males and females. The level of English proficiency of the participants ranged through self-reported from beginner to mid in speaking. They had various English proficiency levels, from 300 to 600 TOEIC. They were asked to take courses consisting of 3-hour intensive English instruction in the morning and 5 voluntary fieldworks to experience in the afternoon. The instruction was delivered using a textbook focusing on communicative competence in English. One supervising professor accompanied the students and the classroom setting was homogeneous. Participants' English proficiency levels were divided by placement test, classmates' demographic variables were the same. They ranged in age from 20-27. All students in this study are from E University which is located near Seoul of Korea.

Table 1 Participants

Item		Frequency(%)				Total
		Camp I	Camp II	Camp III	Camp IV	
S E x	Male	24 (30)	20 (25)	24 (30)	20 (25)	88 (27.5)
	Female	56 (70)	60 (75)	56 (70)	60 (75)	232 (72.5)
	Total	80	80	80	80	320
G R A D E	1 st grade	18 (22.5)	43 (53.75)	28 (35)	21 (26.25)	110 (34.38)
	2 nd Grade	39 (48.75)	19 (23.75)	21 (26.25)	34 (42.5)	113 (35.31)
	3 rd Grade	20 (25)	17 (21.25)	23 (28.75)	19 (23.75)	79 (24.69)
	4 th Grade	3 (3.7)	1 (1.25)	3 (3.75)	6 (7.5)	13 (4.06)
Self Report ed level of English	High	2 (2.5)	2 (2.5)	3 (3.75)	0(0)	7 (2.18)
	Mid	25(31.25)	20 (25)	25 (31.25)	23 (28.75)	93 (30.63)
	Low	53 (66.25)	58 (72.5)	52 (65)	57 (71.25)	220 (68.75)

2.2 Setting

This intensive English program was designed to increase the opportunities for college students to participate in the communicative setting, to enhance their English proficiency and to gain an understanding of cultures and customs of English speaking countries while meeting with native teachers in the camp. It ran for three consecutive weeks. Eighty students participated for three weeks per camp, staying in a dormitory after the program. The average class size was 12-13. Participants were

grouped by their English proficiency in classes. Speaking in English is encouraged during all of these activities. Students and teachers all worked together for the closing ceremony on the final day of the camp.

The daily camp schedule ran from 9 am to 8 pm. The specific schedule of the Camp was like followings (Table 2).

Table 2: Schedule of Camp Program

Time	Monday-Friday
9:00-10:20	Conversation
10:30-11:50	Language Arts or Interview Skills
12:00-12:50	Lunch
13:00-13:50	Listening with Dictation
14:00-14:50	Topic discussion or Creative Writing
15:00-15:50	Survival English
16:00-16:50	Presentation
16:50-18:00	Dinner
18:00-18:50	Volcano Vocabulary or Idioms
19:00-19:50	Talent Quest or Volcano Vocabulary

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The participants took 3-week course of the camp, during the summer or winter vacation in 2010, 2011. Before the camp, they had to take a simple placement test which was designed to place them into a proper level of class. They took a Versant Phone test for listening and speaking before and after the camp. The placement test was used as a pre-test. On the last day of the camp they took the same test as a post-test to see the improvement over the period of the camp. A questionnaire was given to those students who attended the last day's classes. They were asked to respond to a questionnaire that was made up of 23 questions in terms of their recognition of self-confidence, motivation, overall satisfaction, and suggestions of the study. The participants checked the place on the scale that best reflected their feelings about the item and chose an option from Likert-type scale. The statistical software package, EXCEL, was employed to analyze the data collected from the respondents of the survey. Frequency was computed to summarize the students' responses to the each item. They are also required to write open-ended reflection papers on the whole English camp.

3 Result

3.1 Satisfaction

To survey the participants' satisfaction with the camp, a questionnaire was used at the end of the camp. The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions which could be divided into 3 categories: satisfactions with camp program and instructors, improvement degree of their English proficiency and management of the program. Five-point Likert

According to their questionnaires, Number 1 item of the questionnaire was "Was the summer English Camp interesting to you?", and this was to measure the students' interest in the camp. Among the 5 scales, 1 means "It was extremely interesting", 2 means "It was very interesting", 3 means "It was interesting", 4 means "It was little interesting", and 5 means "It was no interesting at all." Seventy five participants (94%) thought the camp was interesting. It's worth mentioning that 45% of them considered the camp to be extremely interesting. It should be easy to guess that they participated in the camp eagerly and happily. Number 5 item was "How much have you improved regarding English speaking?" Eighty eight percent of the participants responded that they improved in their speaking ability. Number 23 was "Do you wish to join the camp again?" Seventy two participants (90%) replied that they wish to join again. The total point were 4.37 out of 5-point Likert scale.

3.2 Students' Reflection Paper

According to their reflection paper, they suggested like followings: the pre- and after the camp program were needed for the improvement of English for a long term; the opportunities for different level group to be mixed will be a good strategies for getting accustomed to the Camp; the book for the students should be selected right for each different levels. The instructor's friendliness and attention to the participants were core factors for lowering their anxiety and provoking communication. Correction of their English by instructors was considered one of the best good teaching methods.

4 Conclusion and Suggestions

This study was designed to review the English Camp sponsored by one of universities in Korea to suggest improvement in the program to help develop participants' affective variables, which facilitate the communicative competence.

This study concludes that English camp can be one effective way of teaching English. Students' reflection papers showed that they were curious about learning. Most salient factor in becoming a successful English language learner is deeply related to the continuance of learning rather than one exotic experience, so careful design of programs is necessary. Pre- and after-the camp programs are needed.

The result of their questionnaire suggested that they acquired positive affective factors. The results of the study indicated that the students were strongly satisfied with the program, and the program was adequately effective in lowering students' affective self-defense system. Furthermore,

the program seems to be very effective in saving money and time for studying English in the Korean setting. The primary goal of English language camp was the learning and practicing of spoken English. Participants in this study indicated that the camp was effective in its primary objective of developing communicative competence. The students perceived that experience at English language camp helped them improve their English skills. One of the most influential factors relating to the improvement of students' English abilities was the manifold opportunities to practice spoken English with teachers through classes, activities, and personal interactions. The data analysis suggests that the positive effects on language proficiency and motivation may spring from a synergistic interaction of two elements: (1) the interactive nature of the teaching learning activities and (2) the opportunity to use spoken English for authentic purposes. The numerous formal and informal opportunities for teachers and student to converse using English in meaningful contexts were valued by participants. The students exhibited changes in their level of self confidence and enthusiasm for using and learning the language. The students indicated that the camp's varied interactive learning activities such as games, sports, presentation, and conversations with teachers in English were helpful in facilitating improvement in their English abilities. Thus, a beneficial aspect of the language camp is that it complements in a limited but distinctly different way the formalized school experience by affording teachers and students the opportunity to focus almost exclusively on interactive use of English.

This study was limited because there was only one university, so the findings from this study might be restricted to propose a general explanation to English camp program. Since this study is an initial investigation into what are the perceived effects of the university students about English language camps in Korea, it should be replicated with addition of quantitative measures to determine the amount of improvement in spoken English proficiency as well as to examine other aspects of the camp phenomenon not measured in this study. The ultimate goal should be to apply insights from studying this special environment to teacher education and to further enhancing current language situations.

5. References

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