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Differences between citizenship awareness in Japan and the UK: how students argue on controversial issues

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to clarify differences between the citizenship awareness of children in Japan and the UK. Citizenship educational materials are designed according to national curriculum frameworks. However, the teachers who are responsible for teaching citizenship materials are influenced by local cultural perspectives and citizenship consciousness. Citizenship education is not universal. Each country has its own educational practices. I try to show differences regarding the nature of citizenship in Junior High School students in Japan and the UK. The methodology used involved two steps. The first step involved using cultural psychology theory to analyse the nature of citizenship. The second step required documenting the levels of citizenship awareness in Japan and UK school children, based on an analysis of responses to a questionnaire about the nature of citizenship. The results of this research show that British children put emphasis on community perspectives when forming their opinions, while Japanese children put emphasis on the perspectives of moral issues when forming their opinions. This reveals the characteristic of using judgement when forming opinions on social issues. British children seek solutions to futuristic problems from an objective viewpoint. In contrast, Japanese children look for solutions to problems of the present from a subjective viewpoint.

Keywords: Citizenship Education, Culture, Awareness, Comparative Research, Japan

1. Research methodology based on cultural background

Citizenship education is designed according to national curriculum frameworks. However, local cultural perspectives and citizenship consciousness influence the teachers who are responsible for teaching the materials. Citizenship education is not universal. Each country has its own educational practices, but study lessons are mainly based on educational policies, printed in textbooks, and consistent with the national framework. However, the role of teachers and children has been excluded from national curriculum designs, due to the different situations in various classrooms. The following figure is a map of the various perspectives pertinent to study lessons. This research is based on the perspective of 'cultural background'.

The context in which citizenship lessons are taught in the classroom is comprised of overt factors, such as the school system, legislation, other school curricula including textbooks, and invisible cultural factors (latent factors) such as the level of children's awareness of their responsibilities for becoming independent citizens, of local customs, inference bias, self-identity formation, and their sense of belonging to the group. Culturally determined invisible latent factors include children's consciousness and

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thought patterns, and the outer world and atmosphere in society, which dictate not only citizenship and other educational activities, but also all of our activities in general.
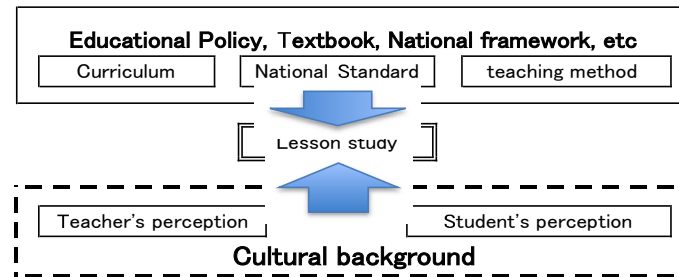

Figure 1: Research Methodology for Lesson Study

I have already observed some classes and compared Japanese and UK lesson practices (TANAKA, 2009). The characteristics typical of study lessons in Japan and the UK are as follows:

United Kingdom (England):
  The objective is the active participation of children in activities
  The content describes a simulated experience of society
  The method used involves participation in activities

Japan:
  The objective is the acquisition of critical thought
  The content describes a critical understanding of society
  The method used involves discussion and debate

In this research, I analyse the cultural backgrounds of citizenship education by clarifying different levels of citizenship awareness in Japanese and British Junior High School students. I use a three-part research question for this analysis. First, what is the nature of citizenship in Japan and the UK (mainly England)? Second, what different opinions do Japanese and British students have about the nature of citizenship? Third, based on their citizenship perspectives, how do students form opinions on controversial issues? The methodology used for this research was to compare and contrast opinions of citizenship in Japan and the UK, by investigating the answers to these questions. This research is focused on data analysis. Quantitative data used included numerical data summarizing the different levels of awareness in students in these two countries. Qualitative data about controversial issues are described in narrative form.

2.   Differences in citizenship awareness between Japan and the UK

2.1 *The questionnaire and enforcement situation*

I begin by describing differences in citizenship awareness between Japan and the UK, based on data analyses. I administered the following questionnaire in two schools. The first is school A, in Shiga prefecture, Japan. There are 350 students in this school, which includes three grades. The ethnicity of students in this school is 1%, since almost all students are originally from Japan. I collected data for 121 students. This school is situated 40 km from the city centre. The second is school M, in the city of Leicester, the UK. There are 1050 students in this school, which includes six grades. Ethnicity in this school is 99%. This means that almost all students come from other countries. The principle teacher told me that the students come from 49 countries. I collected data from 46 students in this school. I administered the questionnaire to grade 7 students, who were 11–12 years old. There are almost equal numbers of boys and girls in these schools. Both schools offer citizenship as a subject.

The questionnaire that I used as my survey instrument follows.

Citizenship Awareness Questionnaire

A party of parents and children take walks in the park almost every day. In addition, town events are performed at weekends…. To help the town grow, a big shopping centre is planned near the park. There are few other places where people can shop. Exhibition space will be built into the shopping centre, where town events can be performed every day. However, it will be necessary to convert the park into a parking lot and a bus terminal. A big parking lot and access to bus transit will be needed to accommodate the shoppers.

1. What do you think of this plan?
Please choose the answer closest to your views:
A: I object; B: I agree; C: Other

2.Please give the reason for your choice.

3. What matters most to you when you make decisions in your daily life?
a) local participation, b) community awareness, c) the morality of Confucianism, d) global perspectives, e) contribution to society

4. You find yourself hesitating about making a decision in the course of your daily life. For example, do you support the course choice, the election of the captain of the student council, school regulations? In addition, you may be at a loss as to whether you should separate garbage, or whether you give up your seat to a senior citizen on the bus. What standard do you use to make your decision? Please choose three values, which are closest to your opinion.
a) democratic values, b) the opinions of nearby people, c) social profit, d) moral sense, e) social norms, f) others.

2.2 Citizenship opinions based on the quantitative investigation

All answers of this questionnaire are as follows.

Table 1: All answers of questionnaire (A JHS, JAPAN)

#	agree or object: Q1	reasons: Q2	requirements: Q3					awarenss: Q4					
			local participation	community awareness	morality of confucianism	global perspectice	contribution to society	democratic values	opinions of nearby people	social profit	moral sense	social norms	other
1	other	Poor the child who came to play when smash a park; is neither serious matter.		※	※	※			O	O	O		
2	other	Though I am necessary, I half think the expense to be good.							O	O	O		
3	other	I think that all two of them are necessary for the person of the town.		※	※		※		O	O	O		
4	object	Because a party of parent and child and many people grieve when a park disappears..		※	※	※				O	O		O
5	other	I want both.	※		※	※		O		O		O	
6	object	Parent and child cannot take a walk		※		※	※		O		O		O
7	agree	Shopping is fun	※	※	※				O	O	O		
8	agree			※	※	※		O	O			O	
9	agree	There are few people playing in a park.Because if it is a shopping center, a young person, the old person are usable.	※			※	※	O		O	O		
10	agree	The future of the child of thinking if appear, there should be a park.			O					O		O	O
11	agree	Because there is not a place doing shopping, and time suffers when I perform it in the distance and perform several and starts a toxic substance a lot if I use the car.		O				O		O		O	
12	object	The park got close to does not have a reason to get rid of.	O						O		O	O	
13	object	Because everybody can play happily.	O						O		O	O	
14	object	I think that I do not play outside if I lose the amusement place of the child.	O					O		O		O	
15	object	There is necessary nothing so far because I lived without a shopping center.Does parenthood become awkward?				O				O		O	O
16	object	Because the places where the child plays decrease.		O								O	
17	other	Both are necessary.			O			O		O		O	
18	agree	I often do shopping than I play in a park			O			O	O			O	
19	object	Though everybody plays happily with much effort, I hate it to smash it.			O				O	O		O	
20	other	f the person who came to the park to play does shopping by a shopping center, money comes a lot			O				O	O		O	
21	other	I make both and should not break it			O				O		O	O	
22	agree	It is convenient when near on.			O				O		O	O	
23	agree	Because it is necessary convenience.			O				O		O	O	
24	other	The shopping center is necessary for activation, but the park is necessary so that a child plays.			O				O		O	O	
25	object	I think that I do not need to make a shopping center because a child is troubled.			O			O	O			O	
26	agree	Because the place doing shopping thinks that after all it is necessary.			O				O	O	O		
27	other	I think about the feeling of a side making a shopping center and think about the feeling of the town and talk, and, as for the words, it cannot be said if I decide it, and the trouble does not get up.			O			O		O		O	
28	agree	If there is not a shopping center, I do not understand the popular thing recently and think that I can enjoy the one.			O				O	O	O		
29	other	I think that it is not good to lose a park			O				O	O	O		
30	object	I think that it is not necessary to make a shopping center breaking the place that parent and child enjoy.			O					O	O	O	
31	agree	When a shopping center is done, the products increase and think that I am good because the forthcoming people increase.			O			O		O	O		
32	agree	Because there is not a big shopping center in near the people, you should make a big shopping center.			O			O		O		O	

No.	type	text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
64	agree	Because a place doing shopping is more important.	O					O	O			O	
65	other	Because though you should make a shopping center because there is not so a place doing shopping, it is required to somebody that a person comes to the park.	O					O	O		O		
66	object	think that there is not well that I pay it in the parking lot	O					O		O		O	
67	agree	Because purchases are done		O				O	O			O	
68	object	Because the place where playing people play decreases now if I turn into the parking lot.		O				O		O		O	
69	other	I changed a place if you used it as a parking lot and should have made the three-dimensional parking lot.		O				O	O			O	
70	other	I hear how a person living in the town thinks and think that I should do it in the street.		O				O	O		O		
71	object	Because I think that there does not need to be it according to in what was all right without the shopping center, and the place that is idle if a park disappears disappears so far.			O			O	O	O			
72	agree	Because there are few places doing shopping.			O			O		O	O		
73	agree	Because I thought that the one that I made was convenient near if there was not a shopping center.			O			O	O		O		
74	agree	I think that I should make a shopping center so far because there are few places doing shopping.Though parties of parent and child of the park may decrease, I think that a party of parent and child comes again at a shopping center.			O			O		O		O	
75	object	Because the place where a child plays disappears.Because I buy it and the shopping center idly, I think that I am all right even if there becomes few it.			O			O	O			O	
76	agree	Because there are few places to do shopping			O			O	O				O
77	agree	Because there is not so a place doing shopping.Because, in the park, only a small child hardly plays.					O	O		O		O	
78	object	Because a party of parent and child takes a walk almost every day.					O	O		O		O	
79	agree	Because it leads to the activation of the town.Possibly because, in here, it may be decreased in population.					O	O		O		O	
80	agree	Because as the times change, it is necessary to modernize a thing and the town.				O		O		O		O	
81	agree					O		O	O			O	
82	object	Because a small child cannot play				O		O	O			O	
83	agree	Because it is convenient.				O		O			O	O	
84	object	Because the place where children play disappears, I am troubled.					O	O		O		O	
85	object	Should leave the green of the park.				O				O	O	O	
86	object	Because everybody can take a walk happily in the big park, and there are the events, too.					O		O		O	O	
87	other	Because the shopping center was necessary, but thought that I hated that I lost the park where everybody was active happily for the activation of the town.					O			O		O	O
88	other	I want the shopping center, but should not change the idle park of the child either.	O								O		
89	object	Because, leaving nature, everybody plays happily.					O			O	O	O	
90	agree	Because there is not so a shopping center here.					O		O	O		O	
91	agree	Because it seems to be convenient for various things.					O	O		O		O	
92	other	A reason of "A:The people who want to play there whom I want to assume shopping gather.A reason of B:The thing of the earth thinks about nature carefully, too; and for a small child ".		O						O	O	O	
93	other	Should make a shopping center in other places without smashing a park.		O						O	O	O	
94	object	Should leave a park understanding that I can still play happily than you take out public hazard.		O						O	O	O	

Table 2: All answers of questionnaire (M JHS, UK)

	agree or object: Q1	reasons: Q2	requirements: Q3					awarenss: Q4					
			local partici pation	commu nity awaren ess	moralit y of confuci anism	global perspe ctice	contrib ution to society	democ ratic values	opinio ns of nearb y people	social profit	moral sense	social norms	other
1	object	I object because they should not change the local community and people need enough space.		O					O	O	O		
2	object	I think the park should not change because of the local community.	O					O	O		O		
3	object	This place is where people go to a cultural event.	O							O	O	O	
4	object	I disagree because it is not gairon the children because here is only a bit of the park to play on.		O					O		O	O	
5	both	Because you do not urban place to play but on the other hand there will be a shopping center go people can get jobs.				O			O	O	O		
6	object	Becase it will convinve I persuade more people to come to the park and the cover of the park will run more money.		O					O	O	O		
7	object	Because the children might not have a park near by. I think the park should stay.	O						O	O	O		
8	object	Because the children will be really sad because that were they spend there most of the time at the weekends and if you demolish it they will be really sad.		O					O	O	O		
9	object	Lots of people use the park. Its an important place for the town. If the park goes there won't be a place for children to play any more.	O					O		O	O		
10	agree	It is will boost the accodomy and more people can have jobs. On the other hand, I disagree because you would not find big park normally.					O	O		O	O		
11	object	Because if part of the park is a bustation then there is a space for kids and its dangerous.		O				O		O	O		
12	object	I disagree because with that much space you should not waste it especially if you use it to play and come for an improtant cultural events.		O					O	O	O		
13	object	This is a bad idea to put the bus station in the park because the park is where children and there parents come to paly and if you take away that they want have anywhere to play. They can make a shopping center somewhere else.	O						O		O	O	
14	both	Because people would love big shoppping center. I object because there is not that much big park.		O				O			O	O	
15	object	Because people come and go they love the park, nature will be killed for a car park why do they like to do that.	O						O		O	O	
16	agree	I choose this because it will make the city unite again. And people will know each other.		O				O		O	O		
17	object	Because they can build it some where else because the park is the only area where we can play ball games around here.		O				O		O		O	
18	object	Because who would want to have a shopping area when they already have it and who would want a car park. It is not the council who decided.		O				O		O	O		
19	object	Because half of the park will go and the park will be cramped because there is not enough space.			O			O			O	O	
20	object	Because is going to be bring without the park and most of the kids want feel happy and they will miss the park.		O				O		O	O		
21	object	Children need to play there go they can have fun... And if there is nabore they could get killed which is not good and the nature gives us oxygen to live.	O						O		O	O	
22	agree	Because there not a lot of shopping places in town. We need more car park.			O			O					

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Figures 2 and 3 use the ratings of 'agree' or 'disagree' with a plan to replace a green space park with a car park. It shows the differences in how students think about this plan.
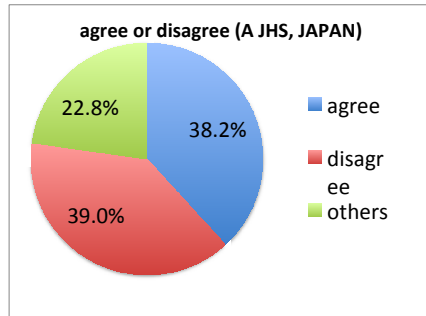

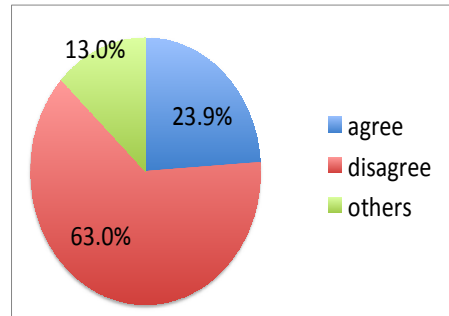Figure 2: Agree or Disagree (A JHS, UK)

Figure 3: Agree or Disagree (M JHS, UK)

Figures 4 and 5 show survey results from 121 students for citizenship awareness and citizenship requirements at Junior High School A, Japan. The students who chose 'morality of Confucianism' as their highest priority were in the majority at 51.1%. This was followed by 'community awareness', at 15.1%. With regard to judgment criteria, 'social norms' is cited as the most important criterion at 24.6%, followed by 'social profit' at 19.6%, and the 'moral sense' at 19.0%.

Figure 4: Citizenship Requirements (A Junior High School, JP)

Figure 5: Citizenship Awareness (A Junior High School, JP)

Figures 6 and 7 show the perspectives of 46 students surveyed at Junior High School M, in the UK, on citizenship and the values that influenced their opinions on citizenship. The students who chose 'community awareness' as their highest priority were in the majority, at 45.7%. This was followed by 'local participation', at 32.6%. With regard to judgment criteria, 'moral sense' is cited as the most important criterion at 28.3%, followed by the 'opinions of nearby people' at 26.3%, and 'social profit' at 19%.
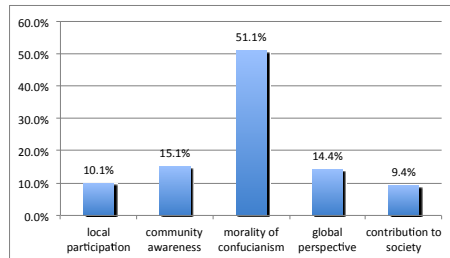
Figure 6: Citizenship Requirements (M Junior High School, UK)

Figure 7: Citizenship Awareness (M Junior High School, UK)
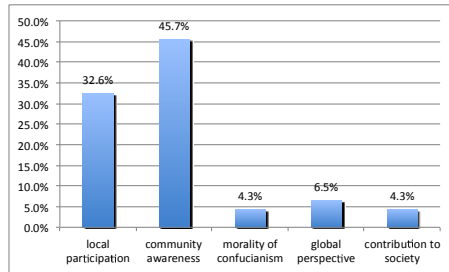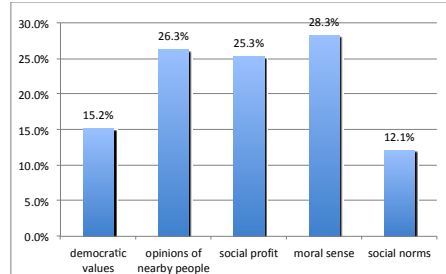
These results show the different priorities of students in Japan and the UK regarding what is important. On the one hand, students in school A regard the 'morality of Confucianism' as the most important factor in citizenship awareness. On the other hand, the students in school M regard 'community awareness' as most important. These priorities represent large differences between the schools. The results illustrate the fact that the children from the two countries conduct social judgments very differently.

Table 3 provides a cross tabulation of questions 3 and 4 (Q3 and Q4) in school A.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation between requirements and awareness (A junior high school, JP)

		citizenship requirements				
		local participation	community awareness	morality of confucianism	global perspective	contribution to society
c i t i z e n s h i p a w a r e n e s s	democratic value	5	8	27	7	6
	opinions of nearby people	4	7	40	8	1
	social profit	4	9	38	8	7
	moral sense	6	6	36	6	4
	social norms	6	10	47	11	9
	others	0	1	4	2	0

Most students in Japan school A chose the 'morality of Confucianism', in response to the question of what matters most when they make decisions in daily life, Q 3, and 'social norms' in answer to the question of what standards they used to make judgments, Q 4. Table 4 provides the same cross tabulation for school M.

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Table 4: Cross Tabulation between requirements and awareness (M Junior High School, UK)

		citizenship requirements				
		local participation	community awareness	morality of confucianism	global perspective	contribution to society
awareness citizenship	democratic value	6	7	1	0	1
	opinions of nearby people	11	11	1	2	0
	social profit	9	9	0	2	1
	moral sense	11	12	1	2	1
	social norms	6	8	1	0	0
	others	0	2	0	1	0

Most UK students chose 'moral sense' in response to Q 3 regarding what matters most when they make decisions in daily life, and 'Community Awareness' in answer to the question of what standards they used to make judgements.

These tables plainly show the attitudes of Japanese and British children toward citizenship. In Japan, many children place a high value on a moral sense, and the morality of Confucianism. In contrast, in the UK many children place a high value on community awareness. Few UK children selected the morality of Confucianism as their response, whereas that is the value chosen by the majority of Japanese children. However, the point is that children chose a moral sense in a uniform ratio as a criterion of awareness, and, in addition, the British children added community consciousness. British children make their judgements of social life on this basis.

3. Student's opinions on social issues: How students form their opinions on controversial issues

I then analysed Q2 of the survey. Q2 is the question that was intended to clarify the reasons why children chose citizenship for their answer. Children gave various answers about their reasons for answering Q1, regardless of whether they answered YES or NO. Two perspectives were able to supplement their answers, if they had discussed the results of the earlier analysis. The first perspective is both an objective viewpoint, and a subjective viewpoint about the answer. For example, students in British school M gave the following answers.

> I object because they should not change the local community and people need enough space. (1)
> Children will be really sad because…. (8)
> Because is going to be bring without the park and most of the kids want feel happy and they will miss the park.(20)

This subjective viewpoint is concerned for others. The number of answers based on objective decision-making was 35, in addition to the above answers. The percentage of objective answers was 76.1%. On the other hand, in the Japanese school A, the following answers were given for this question.

> If there is not a shopping-centre, I do not understand the popular thing recently and think that I can enjoy the one. (28)
> I think that it is not good to lose a park (29)
> Because I want there are many places to be able to go for shopping and to come. (40)

From this viewpoint, the subject is the self. The number of answers based on subjective decisions was 58, in addition to the above answers. The percentage of subjective answers was 50.4%. Almost half of the students' opinions were based on subjective decision-making.

The next point of perspective is the term about 'for the future', and 'the present importance'. For example, in the British school M, the following answers were provided.

> I choose this because it will make the city unite again. And people will know each other. (16)
> Because is going to be bring without the park and most of the kids want feel happy and they will miss the park. (20)

These answers consider their futures. On the other hand, the following answers were provided in the Japanese school A.

> Because there is not so a place doing shopping. Because, in the park, only a small child hardly plays. (77)
> If there are few shopping-centres, I now have to go a long distance to shop. (96)

These factors influence their current problems or issues. It means that British students' opinions are based on the perspective of 'for the future', and Japanese students' opinions are based on the perspective of 'the present importance'.

The following figure depicts the characteristics of UK and Japanese students' opinions of social issues. Of course, this figure is a hypothesis. However, I can read a trend in Figure 7, when I analyse the results of the narrative descriptions in response to Q2.
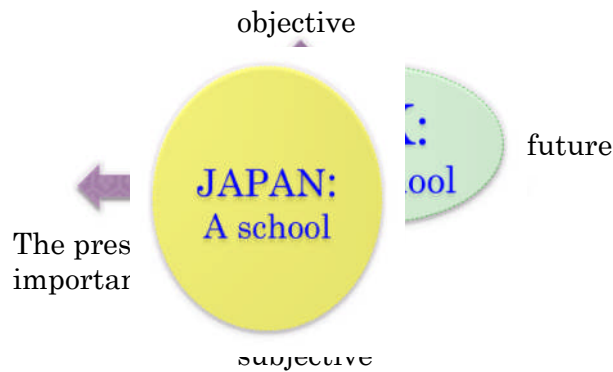
Figure 8: The different opinions of UK and Japanese children on social issues

4.   Conclusion

The aim of this research was to clarify differences between the citizenship awareness of children in Japan and the UK. Thus, I can make the following points at the conclusion of this research. The trend regarding the nature of citizenship is as follows. Most students in school A in Japan had a tendency to choose 'social norms' such as awareness and the 'morality of Confucianism' as a requirement. Most students in school M in the UK had a tendency to choose the 'moral sense', as awareness and 'Community Awareness' as a requirement. The trend for opinions regarding social issues is as follows. Students make claims objectively, based on their perspectives 'for the future' in the UK. In Japan, students make claims subjectively, based on the perspectives of 'present importance'.

The final aim of this research was to understand a theory and a method of citizenship education peculiar to a country. Schools and the society in which they are based have different cultures, as Tanaka (2009) has already mentioned. Therefore, integrating universal citizenship education with different citizenship educational practices across the country is difficult. Teachers always teach children who are near at hand, and it is necessary for an educational practice to be based on their inherent type of citizenship. The teacher lets you know the levels of children's citizenship awareness. The children analyse and criticize their own perspectives on citizenship, and they update them as part of their citizenship education. The objective of this paper was to elucidate the child's citizenship based on the citizenship education. The conclusion clarified in this paper did not show the inclinations of children in the UK and Japan. It did, however, show the inclinations of the children in two schools. Therefore, this research recommends that a further investigation is needed to update citizenship particular to a school. However, based on this analysis, it may be said that I was able to show the attitudes of children in the two countries toward citizenship.

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