

Evaluation of Tele-link Program between SNU and UCLA

Kyu-hyun Kim

1. Introduction

This report is a description and evaluation of the first stage of the Tele-link project between Seoul National University in Seoul, Korea, and UCLA in the United States, which was inaugurated on April 25 (in US time)/26 (in Korean time), 1990. The major goal of the report is to assess the program implementation during the incipient stage of this project to provide a basis for future planning of the program.

2. Background

The Tele-link project¹ between UCLA and SNU was established to provide a means by which students and faculty at both institutions could communicate with each other using advanced interactive communications technology. This project was initially envisaged and proposed by Dr. Russell

* I thank Prof. Sang Oak Lee and Prof. Russell Campbell for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this report.

¹ Funding for the project was obtained from UCLA and SNU, as well as from the Korean Research Foundation (KRF) and Korea Telecommunication Authority (KTA). The hardware and software for the communication system was procured from the OPTEL Co. Dr. Campbell of the Department of Applied Linguistics, and Daytra Hansel, manager of the Teleconferencing & Satellite Service division of the Office of Instructional Development at UCLA, served as co-principal investigators at UCLA, and worked with Dr. Oaksook Kim, UCLA Korea Program coordinator, in the design, planning, and implementation of the project. At SNU, Dr. Sang Oak Lee of the Department of Korean Language and Literature, and Dr. Nahm-sheik Park, head of the SNU Language Research Institute, participated in the project as co-principal investigators.

Campbell, Director of the UCLA Language Resource, who pointed out the potential use of the teleconferencing technology to allow the sharing of valuable academic resources between scholars at the two institutions and their colleagues in Seoul and Los Angeles. Dr. Sang Oak Lee, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at SNU, responded to this proposal and initiated the planning and funding of the project on the Korean side.

As the proposal for the establishment of this program states, this project is intended to provide "a communication vehicle that will permit extensive opportunities for scholars at UCLA and SNU to participate in educational exchanges in a wide variety of academic areas for the benefit of large numbers of students and faculty at a level unprecedented in academic history." The essential features of this program are found in the use of an interactive communications technology whereby the participants at UCLA and SNU can communicate verbally with each other instantaneously using an audio-conferencing system, and concurrently exchange still video images in color, including pictures of the participants, texts, charts or diagrams delivered from video cameras and information stored in computers. An additional important feature of this system is the electronic tablet that participants at both ends can use to write notes and annotations, which can be transmitted to the other side and immediately responded to².

3. Methodolgy of Evaluation

This report presents descriptions of program characteristics and an evaluation of the program's effects on the basis of first-hand observations of the program and an analysis of the responses from the program participants collected by questionnaires and informal interviews. The qualitative methodology adopted for evaluating the program focuses on the effects of the non-conventional educational setting provided by the program on the participants in terms of their affective response to, perception of, and attitude towards the program (King et al., 1987; Patton, 1987).

For the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the program, the author

² While the transmission of data usually takes about 50 seconds to as long as 3 minutes depending on the state of the phone line being selected, materials written on the table are transmitted to the other almost simultaneously.

observed the entire array of tele-link classes, and took notes which served as the major source of information for this report. Some of the program participants at UCLA and SNU were interviewed, and many responded to questionnaires³.

4. Physical setting

The site for the UCLA tele-link classes was the teleconferencing facility in the Office of Instructional Development's (OID) instructional media lab, which is designed for tele-conferencing communication via satellite. The room was large enough to accommodate about 30 people. A video monitor, tablet and computer were installed on a table along with a disk-shaped speaker-phone. Seats were arranged so that the audience could be seated around the table where the equipment was placed. The audience could also be seated in chairs arranged in rows in the room: around thirty chairs were placed in the room in addition to those around the monitor. For the benefit of the audience who are seated rather far away from the video monitor in the backside of the room, the video image on the monitor could be projected on a larger screen (approximately 45" × 45").

At SNU, the tele-classes took place in a language laboratory where the audience could be seated in booths. Each seat was equipped with a microphone and a headphone, and four monitors were available, two each at the right and left sides of the room, so that students could choose to watch the closest monitor. In front of the rows of booths were located a monitor, tablet and microphones installed on the table to be used by lecturers.

While UCLA used an audio-conferencing system which made it possible to interrupt the other party, SNU used a switch system in which the user must turn the switch on and off depending on whether he/she talks or listens. It is expected, however, that SNU will purchase the same or compara-

³ A sample questionnaire is presented in the Appendix, which was prepared for the UCLA students who participated in the Korean-English tele-classes. A Korean version of this questionnaire was also prepared for SNU students who attended the same classes. Three other questionnaires were administered respectively to the SNU students who attended the linguistics tele-classes, the UCLA lecturers, and the UCLA audience who attended the Korean lecture series.

ble system as that of UCLA in the near future.

5. Implementation of the program

The first stage of the academic exchanges was implemented in the areas of theoretical linguistics (10 hours), Korean Studies (6 hours), Korean-English language classes (12 hours) for a total of 28 hours. The two sides agreed, after a number of preliminary exchanges⁴, that the linguistics lectures would be held from 5 : 00 p. m. at UCLA (9 : 00 a. m. at SNU), the language classes from 4 : 30 p. m. (8 : 30 a. m. at SNU), and the lectures in Korean Studies at 4 : 40 p. m. (8 : 00 a. m. at SNU). Each class lasted two hours. The following is the timetable (in US time) according to which the program was implemented :

- a. Linguistics (UCLA to SNU) : April 24 (Dr. Stowell), May 8 (Dr. Sportiche), May 15 (Dr. Sportiche), May 30 (Dr. Sportiche), June 7 (Dr. Maddieson)
- b. Korean Studies (SNU to UCLA) : May 14 (Dr. Shim), May 21 (Dr. Im), May 23 (Dr. Hahn)
- c. Language classes (Both ways) : April 26, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 24, May 31 (Dr. Duncan and Dr. Kim)

The project was formally inaugurated in a ceremony held on April, 25 (US time). In the inauguration ceremony, SNU President Wan Kyu Cho read a congratulatory address, which was reciprocated by UCLA Vice Chancellor Elwin Svenson on behalf of UCLA Chancellor Charles Young.

⁴ Before the implementation of the program, five practice sessions were held between Daytra Hansel (UCLA) and Dr. Sang Oak Lee (SNU) through April 23 (US time) for the purpose of testing the functions of the equipment. These sessions also provided an opportunity for Dr. Campbell and Dr. Oaksook Kim at UCLA, and Dr. Sang Oak Lee at SNU to establish the timetable for the classes to be offered, and exchange information about the lecturers and audience. Daytra Hansel also arranged introductory practice sessions so that UCLA researchers and prospective instructors in the tele-classes would be familiar with the basic functions of the communication system. The equivalent sessions at SNU were also offered by Prof. Sang Oak Lee and his assistant, Ms. Kyong-a Kim.

An inauguration proclamation was signed by President Cho and Vice Chancellor Svenson ; they signed the letter using the electronic tablet.

5. 1. Theoretical Linguistics Classes

The lectures in theoretical linguistics were provided to the audience at SNU by UCLA professors Dr. Tim Stowell, Dr. Dominique Sportiche, and Dr. Ian Maddieson of the Department of Linguistics. Dr. Stowell and Dr. Sportiche gave lectures on syntax, and Dr. Maddieson on phonetics. The audience at SNU for these lectures were SNU graduate students taking syntax classes in the Department of English Language and Literature or Department of Linguistics taught by Dr. Dong Whee Yang and Dr. Chungmin Lee respectively, as well as students taking phonetics classes in the Department of Korean Language and Literature and the Department of Linguistics taught by Dr. Sang Oak Lee. While there was no audience on the UCLA side, program researchers were present during the lectures, and Daytra Hansel assisted the lecturers in using the equipment⁵. Dr. Stowell and Dr. Maddieson each gave one two-hour lecture, and Dr. Sportiche gave three two-hour lectures. After the lecture series was over, questionnaires prepared in Korean were sent to SNU to check the students' responses.

5. 1. 1. Syntax lectures

Handouts for the syntax lectures were prepared by the lecturers in advance and sent over to SNU via a fax machine to be distributed to the audience. The content of the lectures dealt with specific topics in the theoretical framework of government and binding (GB), a major field of linguistics in the United States as well as in Korea.

Each session began as both sides exchanged pictures of the lecturer and the audience. While the lectures were based on handouts, the lecturers extensively used the tablet to provide explanations in coordination with the use of the handouts; the lecturer gave his lecture while referring to the handout, and provided explanation by writing on the tablet. Extensive use

⁵ This applies to other tele-link classes as well, where the lectures or audience at UCLA could get assistance from Ms. Daytra Hansel whenever a problem arose. She provided support with program development and planning, and is responsible for systems operation and training.

of the tablet was made to draw tree diagrams and annotate them. Since diagrams are one of the major explanatory devices in formal theoretical linguistics, the major concern of the lecturers was how to make good use of the limited space of the tablet (and on the screen) for drawing them⁶. The lecturers often used the pointer as well as the cursor to highlight a certain portion of the tree diagram or other information shown on the screen. The lecturers paused two or three times during the lecture to answer questions from the audience. A question-answer session was also available at the end of each lecture, during which they exchanged questions and comments highly interactively.

Post-lecture exchanges were also made to complement the lectures. After Dr. Stowell's lecture, the SNU students sent him questions in writing. Dr. Sportiche, at the end of his first lecture, gave the students a reading assignment, and also sent a list of references to SNU via E-mail. After his second lecture, Dr. Sportiche also provided the SNU audience more references for further study. Moreover, Dr. Sportiche promised the audience that he would send to SNU his most recent paper, on which his three lectures were based.

While the syntax lectures were conducted successfully, a few minor problems were noted, which can be attributed mainly to the non-contiguous communication typical of distance education (cf. Holmberg, 1983). Above all, the lecturers had no way of observing the audience's non-verbal responses. This seemed to make it difficult for the lecturers to check whether the audience got the point or to know how much they understood, thus preventing them from adjusting the pace of lectures in accordance with the perceived degree of audience understanding.

The lack of a channel through which they could visually monitor other party might have resulted in a situation where the students did not understand a certain point but had to follow the lecture passively. In this respect, the question-answer periods that were offered during the lecture were very

⁶ This was revealed in the practice session where Dr. Stowell and Dr. Sportiche spent most of the time on practising the drawing of tree diagrams on the tablet. In his practice session, Dr. Sportiche once asked whether he could scroll the screen because it would be useful for drawing an extended tree diagrams on one screen, with tree diagrams being drawn in the diagonal direction. As the scrolling function is not provided by the current equipment, the instructors were concerned with squeezing a tree diagram within the limited space of the screen of the monitor.

useful for clarifying points that the students did not understand. Moreover, they provided a chance for the lecturer and the audience to interact with each other, and to achieve some degree of intersubjectivity between them. It was observed that the lecturers became more animated during and after the question-answer session; this could be attributed to the lecturers having a sense that they are not isolated and separated from the audience.

In relation to this problem of the lack of intersubjectivity between the lecturer and the audience, a technical problem was noted in terms of the lecturers' coordinated use of handouts and tablet. As noted above, the lecturers mainly used handouts as the major text, and the tablet/screen as a device through which the content of the handouts was elaborated and supplemented by way of drawing tree diagrams. In so doing, it was noted on a few occasions that the lecturers cleared the screen, or proceeded to provide new information on the screen, without providing a cue to the audience. As a result, it may have been the case that, as the audience was reading the handout and listening to the lecture, they did not notice that a change took place on the screen. It may be desirable, in this regard, that the instructor give an explicit cue before clearing the screen, or before shifting between the tablet or the handout, by saying something like "Now let's look at the screen (or the handout)." or "Now I will clear the screen." It was also noted that the lecturers sometimes provided an extended explanation without using the tablet or referring specifically to the handout. As the audience had to rely only on the audio line in such a situation, their level of understanding might have decreased.

After the lecture series on syntax by Dr. Stowell and Dr. Sportiche were over, I talked briefly to Dr. Dong-Whee Yang and Dr. Chungmin Lee at SNU to get their reactions to the syntax lectures. Their response to the program was very positive. Dr. Yang said that the lectures were very useful to him and his graduate students at SNU. He noted that he could make further use of the lecture series by incorporating the contents of the lectures into the syllabus in his graduate syntax course. Dr. Lee noted that the lectures were highly relevant to his students' study of current linguistic theories, and his students, regardless of their specializations, had a valuable opportunity of being exposed to the spirit of current GB theory. Both professors said that they expect to participate in lecture series of a similar kind in the future.

The examination of the SNU students' response to the questionnaire shows that they in general had a highly positive attitude toward the program. The 18 students who responded to the questionnaire all said that they found the lectures useful to them and would recommend the tele-class to other students. Many noted that the lectures were useful for them because they could gain in-depth knowledge on specific areas of the most recent GB theory offered by famous figures in the field of GB theory. It was noteworthy, in this respect, that many of the students also pointed out the affective value of the lectures; they noted that they were highly motivated and stimulated by the lectures in their study of linguistics by being able to feel firsthand that the field of linguistics is being studied and developed world-wide. In response to questions about the difficulty level of the lectures, two students said that they did not have any trouble understanding the lectures, and four students said that they had a lot of difficulty mostly because they did not have sufficient theoretical background. The remaining twelve students responded that they had some difficulty because of the lack of sufficient theoretical background and preparation for the lectures, and/or because of the language barrier. Given that the lack of preparation for the lectures was noted as the primary reason for difficulty the students had in following the lectures, early preparation and transmission of relevant materials including references of handouts would be helpful in allowing time for the students to preview the content of the lecture⁷. Moreover, selecting a topic that is less theoretically specialized would be appealing to students who need more basic training in formal linguistics. Overall, however, it was readily noticeable that all the respondents were very enthusiastic about the lectures.

5. 1. 2. Phonetics lecture

The phonetics lecture was given by Dr. Maddieson at UCLA on June 6 (US time) for two hours. On the SNU side, Dr. Sang Oak Lee was present with the students, and interacted with Dr. Maddieson. While Dr. Maddieson had prepared a handout before the lecture, which was sent over to SNU two days before, the handout was not available at SNU at the time of the

⁷ For instance, the handouts for the syntax tele-classes were usually prepared and transmitted to SNU one day before the day of lecture.

lecture⁸. The lecturer and the SNU audience, however, could share phonetics textbooks, where they refer to specific examples and figures⁹. The SNU side videotaped the lecture for reviewing purposes.

Dr. Maddieson used the tablet most of the time to provide explanations of the point and manner of articulation for various exotic sounds found in some African languages; he at some points drew diagrams of the human speech tract on the screen, and, by using different colors, highlighted the area that was relevant to the sound being explained. He also used the tablet extensively for providing sets of examples of words that contain the sounds concerned.

The theoretical explanation provided by Dr. Maddieson was accompanied by the two African informants' demonstration of the actual pronunciation of various exotic sounds like the 'click' or 'labialized velar'. As the informants demonstrated actual sounds of words shown on the screen, Dr. Maddieson used the pointer to refer to the word being pronounced. The demonstration of the pronunciation of sounds was also done by activating recorded sounds in the computer that Dr. Maddieson brought with him. The purpose of the demonstration by the informants and the recorded sounds was to provide the audience with a chance to hear exotic sounds and to distinguish them, which were in many cases arranged in minimal pairs composed of words where a substitution of a sound with the other results in change in meaning of the word¹⁰.

Overall, it was noted that, compared with the syntax lectures, the interaction between Dr. Maddieson and Dr. Lee seemed to be conducted in a more informal fashion. Dr. Lee often made timely and necessary comments by annotating the writing of Dr. Maddieson, to which Dr. Maddieson

⁸ This was caused by the use of a wrong fax number. It was later decided that we send the handout to SNU after the lecture so that it can be of use when the audience at SNU reviews the recorded lecture through videotape.

⁹ The textbooks are "The Sounds of the World's languages", which was co-authored by Dr. Ladefoged and Dr. Maddieson at UCLA, and "A Course in Phonetics", written by Prof. Ladefoged.

¹⁰ The difficulty that the audience at SNU had in distinguishing the sounds may have increased due to the non-availability of the handout on the part of the audience at SNU, because many of the sounds demonstrated were included in the handout.

responded verbally or by annotations¹¹.

After the lecture, Dr. Lee commented that the audience at SNU had a very valuable opportunity of hearing exotic sounds live, which is not available to the students at SNU. He also noted that the phonetics lecture, like the one given by Dr. Maddieson, is the most suitable for the tele-communication system in that the system enables transmission of actual pronunciation of various informants for analysis at both ends without any transportation cost. He said that he expects to have similar lectures in phonetics next year. Dr. Maddieson responded that he could have provided more information and more demonstration of sounds if time had allowed, and acknowledged the usefulness and potential of the tele-communication technology for making interactive practice in phonetics possible. He suggested, in this respect, that he could have the students at SNU individually practice pronouncing exotic sounds following the model pronunciation.

As for the response from SNU students, I gathered four questionnaires from SNU, where they noted that the lecture was useful because they could hear native sounds live, and interact with the author of the book they had. While the respondents all said that they would recommend tele-classes of the similar kind to other students, they pointed out that they had trouble understanding English and, most of all, had difficulty following the lecture without any handout.

5.2. Lectures in Korean Studies

Three two hour-long lectures in Korean studies were provided by professors at SNU to the audience at UCLA respectively in the area of Korean Philosophy & Religion, Korean Art History & Archaeology, and Korean Music. The lectures on Korean Philosophy & Religion, and Korean Music, which were given respectively by Dr. Jae-ryong Shim and Dr. Man-young Hahn, were conducted in English, and the lecture on Korean Art History & Archaeology by Dr. Hyo-jai Im was conducted in Korean. The audience at UCLA for the three Korean lectures were mostly visiting scholars from Korea and scholars involved in Korean studies at UCLA, while there also

¹¹ However, there was no question from the students at SNU, probably because of the lack of handouts to base their questions on.

were a small number of UCLA students who were taking a Korea-related class, or who had participated in the SNU-UCLA language program in the past¹². The number of UCLA audience members ranged from seven to twenty¹³.

Each of the lectures started as both sides exchanged pictures of the lecturer and the audience. The lectures were conducted while pictures relevant to the content of the lectures were transmitted and shown on the screen of the video monitor, which were projected on the wider screen. The lecturers paused about three to four times during sessions to answer questions from the audience. While there was no handout in the first lecture, handouts were available to the members of the audience in the second and the third lectures, prepared respectively in Korean and English.

The first lecture focused on four religions that have been influential throughout Korean history : Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. While the lecture presented to the UCLA audience a well-prepared introduction to the history of Korean religion and philosophy, it was observed that, while SNU sent a series of pictures during the lecture, there was often no connection between a picture that was shown at a specific moment and what the lecturer was talking about at the same moment. This lack of link between what was shown in the pictures and what was being talked about in the lecture, as well as the non-availability of a handout, resulted in a situation where the audience did not know where to direct its attention¹⁴. After the lecture, SNU presented a slide show in which the pic-

¹² The SNU-UCLA language program in Korea was conducted by Dr. Sang Oak Lee from 1987 to 1989. About twenty students from UCLA had participated in 10 weeks' program at SNU each year.

¹³ The audience were pre-selected and invited to the lecture series. As it turned out, few UCLA students participated in the lecture series. In each lecture, there was a moderator at UCLA ; Mr. Jong Myung Kim, Ph. D candidate in Korean Buddhism in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at UCLA served as a moderator in the first lecture, and Dr. Ku-Bok Chung, a visiting professor from Korea, and Dr. Roger Kendall of Department of Music at UCLA, respectively served as the moderator in the second and third lectures.

¹⁴ The difficulty the audience had in orienting themselves seemed to have increased because the lecturer read a written script. As a result, it was difficult for the audience to understand the orally presented written English because it was often hard to focus its attention to a specific point in the face of one-sided flow of information presented in monotone.

tures that had been shown during the lecture were presented again for more explanation. The slide show provided a chance for both sides to interact more lively; both sides exchanged questions and comments regarding the pictures.

In the second lecture on Korean Art History & Archaeology, the lecture progressed as the lecturer referred to the handout and provided explanation with reference to the pictures being transmitted. Attention was also paid to synchronization of the lecture with the transmission of the pictures; whenever a situation arose where the lecturer's verbal presentation was given before the relevant picture was completely transmitted to UCLA, the lecturer was reminded by Dr. Sang Oak Lee, who was assisting him at SNU, that he should pause.

Unfortunately, the lecture had to be interrupted frequently due to unexpected technical problems. The transmission of pictures was stuck several times, and the participants experienced the disconnection of the audio line and the modem line, which had to be reconnected many times during the lecture. The frequent interruptions of the lecture seemed to frustrate and annoy the audience. Due to these technical problems, the lecture had to stop about 20 minutes earlier than scheduled.

While the lecture suffered from technical problems, we could see that the second lecture improved on the first one in terms of the way it was managed in the audience-designed manner, particularly in terms of a better coordination between the content of the lecture and the pictures shown on the screen. On the other hand, this lecture reminded us that we could suffer from unexpected technical problems. It was noted, in this respect, that the technical problems in transmitting pictures could have been prevented if the pictures had been transmitted in advance and stored in the computer before the lecture. This problem pointed to the importance of preparation in reducing the degree to which the transmission of data depends on luck, i.e., the possibility of getting a bad phone line which slows down or hampers the transmission.

As for the third lecture on Korean Music, while it still was based on the handout and the pictures transmitted on the screen, the lecturer used a tape recorder whereby he provided the audience with a chance to actually hear each type of traditional Korean music being referred to. The audience thus could listen to various kinds of traditional Korean music while seeing

the pictures showing various formats in which different kinds of music were played such as the number and placement of the players, and the kind of musical instruments being used. Prof. Sang Oak Lee, who assisted the lecturer, frequently used the pointing function and made annotations on the screen to refer to a relevant part of the picture as in explaining each musical instrument shown on the pictures. The zooming and panning functions were also utilized to highlight a certain area of the pictures¹⁵.

While the lectures in Korean studies went well in general, the problems associated with the audio system at SNU, which discouraged interruption from the audience, were noted as a factor that hinders a more smooth interaction. For instance, when the audience at UCLA noticed that a picture being explained by the lecture was not yet shown on the screen due to some technical problems, or have some questions to ask, there was no way of telling the lecturer of the problem by interrupting the lecture, because the lecturer could not hear the audience once his audio system was switched to the speaking mode. There were also some instances when the lecturer lost the first part of the question because of the time lag that results from the transition from the speaking to the receiving mode at SNU¹⁶. Frequent occurrences of such a communication breakdown greatly undermined the effectiveness of the lecture, with the audience being left helpless and unmotivated. Such situations pointed to a need to provide more opportunities for the audience members to ask questions and interact with the lecturer, and/or to replace the current audio system at SNU with another that is functionally comparable with the one being used at UCLA.

5.3. Korean-English Language Class

In the language instruction component of the tele-link program, Dr.

¹⁵ It was noted, however, that throughout the lecture series there was room for the use of more diverse exploitation of the tele-conferencing functions, particularly with reference to the need for more explanation of the special terminology or Korean proper nouns. It seems to be the case that, as the lecturers made much use of pictures transmitted on the screen, the alternative use of the tablet for writing purposes might have been constrained.

¹⁶ In this respect, an efficient use of the audio-conferencing system could be made when the conversant paused a little bit before taking his/her turn in order to be sure that the other party finished talking.

Seong-Kon Kim's advanced English composition class at SNU and Dr. John Duncan's advanced Korean language class (Korean 100C) at UCLA were linked with each other. The Korean-English tele-class provided a setting where the students in the two institutions can interact with each other in a way that both parties can benefit from communicating in their target languages. The students at UCLA who attended the tele-class were Korean-American students except for one Caucasian student. The UCLA Korean-American students were highly proficient in spoken Korean, as most of them had attended school in Korea from elementary school to high school¹⁷. While most of the students at SNU had basic conversational skills in English, their overall proficiency level in spoken English was not as high as the UCLA students' proficiency in spoken Korean.

The Korean-English tele-link classes, which were assigned six two-hour sessions, progressed as the students both sides discussed pre-arranged topics both in Korean and English. Before the language classes were implemented, Dr. Duncan and Dr. Seong-Kon Kim decided in advance on topics to be discussed in their classes; they each proposed 6 topics of mutual interest, thus coming up with 12 topics in total. The students on both ends used Korean during the first half of the class, and shifted to the use of English in the last half of each class. The switch of language corresponded to a change of topic, with 2 topics being covered in each session. Many of the topics were related to Korean newspaper articles that the students at UCLA read in Dr. Duncan's regular classes. The following is a list of the topics that were dealt with in the Korean-English tele-class :

- 1st class (April 26) : Problems of Young People (Korean)
Cultural differences between Korea and America
(English)
- 2nd class (May 3) : The Korean Communities in America (Korean)
Feminist Movement (English)
- 3rd class (May 10) : Withdrawal of U. S. Troops from Korea (Korean)
Prospects for Korea Reunification (English)

¹⁷ Most of the UCLA students who attended the language tele-class said that they use Korean 100% at home when they talk to their parents. They were taking the advanced Korean language class to improve their reading proficiency.

- 4th class (May 17) : The Student Movement in Korea (Korean)
Campus Life (English)
- 5th class (May 24) : Regional Feelings in Korea (Korean)
Racism in America (English)
- 6th class (May 31) : Environmental Pollution (Korean)
Difficulties in Housing in Seoul and Los Angeles
(English)

While actual classes started at 4 : 30 p. m. at UCLA (8 : 30 a. m. at SNU), the students at UCLA were gathered 30 minutes earlier, and briefly previewed the topic to be discussed in the class. A brief post-class session was also held where Dr. Duncan reviewed some of the vocabulary that the students had difficulty in using or understanding during the class. Each class started as both sides exchanged group pictures of the students and the teachers. At UCLA, the students were seated around the microphone so that they could freely talk to their counterparts at SNU. At SNU, the students were seated in booths in a language lab where they could interact with the UCLA students through a headphone and a microphone. The number of the students who attended the tele-class at UCLA ranged from 4 to 9¹⁸, and at SNU, about 8 to 12 students attended the class.

In each tele-class, the students at UCLA were grouped in pairs. While the students in each group were assigned in advance questions to ask, questions were often extemporaneously asked as discussion progressed. As the students took turns in asking and answering questions or making comments, video images of the students participating in the discussion were sent to the other side. Both sides also intermittently exchanged materials such newspaper articles, charts, or pictures relevant to the topic being discussed.

During the first hour of each session, discussion started as the UCLA students first asked questions in Korean, while in the second hour of each session the SNU student initiated the discussion by asking questions in English. Dr. Duncan and Dr. Kim served as a moderator in distributing turns to the

¹⁸ The students were allowed to leave early or come later to the class. This flexibility of requirement for attendance was due to the conflict between the class time and individual students' schedule, since the classes started around 4 : 30 p. m. and continued usually after 6 : 30 p. m. Dr. Duncan noted that there were students in his class who were eager to join the class but could not because of time conflict.

students, and also came to the aid of the students by providing supplementary explanation, clarifying terms that the students did not understand, or providing vocabulary when the students were at a loss. Dr. Sang Oak Lee, who attended the whole classes to give both linguistic and technical help, often provided explanation of the materials that were transmitted from SNU.

Overall, the students at UCLA and SNU were engaged in highly interactive communication ; even though turns were distributed to the students in a prearranged order, the interaction became more natural as the class progressed, with the students taking turns more freely. As the students got more familiar with the communication format and the tele-conferencing system, they became more relaxed and interactive. In this respect, the Korean-English tele-class provided an authentic communicative context in which focus was given to exchanging information, through interaction; the participants at both ends were mainly concerned with how the students at the other end thought about various issues stemming from the discussion of the topics. Most of the selected topics included various current issues that were of interest to both groups, such as politically or socially sensitive matters, or matters that are commonly faced by college students in the two countries. The discussion of the topics therefore highly motivated the students to exchange different perspectives and empathize with each other. In this respect, it was noted inclusion of more informal topics should have made the interaction more lively and natural¹⁹.

In terms of communication format and turn distribution, it was observed that, while more or less the same amount of talk was produced in Korean by both parties, the UCLA students dominated in the English section of the class, often producing extended talk in response to a short English question from SNU²⁰. This was mainly attributed to the unequal proficiency level in English and Korean between the UCLA and SNU students that I noted

¹⁹ It was observed that the students got more active when they were talking about matters related to their personal interest than when the topic was rather abstract and heavy.

²⁰ This problem of unequal distribution of talk in the English section could also be due to the format of the class in which the SNU students were supposed to initiate discussion by asking questions in English, which were often short questions that seemed to have been prepared in advance.

above. The imbalance in the English proficiency level, however, was not perceived as a negative factor hampering the students' involvement in interaction, but as natural outcomes that derive from the authentic, uncontrolled context of interactive communication. In a sense, while it may have been the case that SNU students had fewer opportunities to use English, they certainly could get more aural input of English, which presumably was helpful to them in their orientation to learning English. We can also propose, in this respect, ways of providing the SNU student with more chances of using English, such as having them describe some pictures shared by the both parties, a task which can be reciprocated by the UCLA students.

As a whole, the observations of the Korean-English tele-link class indicate strongly that it was a rewarding experience to those who participated in the classes. Throughout the whole series of classes, the participants were highly motivated, and were enthusiastic about the fact that they were communicating live with their peers who were situated in different place and different time zone. The communicative channel is expected to be enhanced further as the students were supposed to exchange letters with each other as a post-program activity.

The analysis of the UCLA students' response to the questionnaire reflects their positive affective reaction to the program. They all said that they enjoyed the classes, and would recommend the classes to other students studying Korean at UCLA. Informal interviews with some of the UCLA students who attended the classes also revealed that they were highly enthusiastic about the class. They said that the class was especially useful to them because they had first-hand opportunity of knowing what is going on in Korea and how the Korean students at SNU think about various current issues. Dr. Duncan commented that the classes provided a very useful opportunity on the part of the students to complement and strengthen what they were studying in the advanced Korean language class²¹, and that preparation for the tele-class was very helpful to the students in improving their reading proficiency. Negative response from the students mostly converged on the technical aspect of the system; many students noted that it would have been better if the images shown on the screen had been live instead of

²¹ In the regular classes of the advanced Korean language course, the students read and discussed Korean newspaper articles.

still frame, though they were aware of the high cost of using live images. In response to a question asking if they have any suggestion as to ways to modify the program, one student commented that students who are not fluent in Korean would also benefit from being exposed to conversation/discussion in Korean. Another student responded that he wants to interact the students at the other side at a more personal and individual level, and suggested that more opportunities to develop personal acquaintance would be useful before the regular discussion.

On the SNU side, Dr. Kim and Dr. Lee noted at the end of the program that they and their students greatly enjoyed the classes and definitely expected to continue to participate in the tele-link program. Regarding the SNU students' reaction, eleven students who answered the questionnaire all responded positively, noting that they would recommend the class to other students. Six students said that the classes were most useful in practicing oral English, and five students said that they benefited most from the classes in learning about American culture. In response to the question asking about suggestions for a possible modification and improvement of the tele-class, there were comments about a need for more preparation for the class (5 comments), need to improve the communication format and turn distribution (3 comments), desirability of selecting more personal, informal topics (2 comments), need for a better technology regarding the possible use of live images (2 comments), need for a longer class and a smaller class (1 comment) and need to improve the physical setting so that more interaction could be achieved (1 comment).

6. Post-program evaluation: participant response

In this section, I will present the responses from the program participants at UCLA, with special reference to their affective reaction to the program as well as their views as to how to modify or improve the program. The participant response was gathered through interviews and questionnaires which were administered in a luncheon meeting held after the program was completed. The luncheon meeting was held to evaluate the program retroactively with a view to brainstorming ways to employ the technology better and to modify the program in order to make the program more beneficial to

the participants. Among participants in the meeting were some of the audience members who attended the lectures in Korean studies as well as Dr. Duncan, Dr. Maddieson, Dr. Oaksook Kim, Dr. Campbell and Ms. Daytra Hansel. I present below various points made by the program participants in the evaluation meeting, and their responses to the questionnaires and personal interviews.

Dr. Maddieson, who offered a two-hour phonetics lecture, expressed concern that a one shot lecture might be less effective than a series of lectures provided by one instructor because with greater use of the tele-communication system the instructor would get more comfortable with it, and could establish more rapport with the audience. He also pointed out the potential of the communication system in terms of providing a more individualized interaction between the instructor and the audience. He also suggested a possibility of setting up fieldwork for SNU students with international students at UCLA, particularly with Korean students.

Regarding the Korean-English tele-link class, Dr. Duncan said that in the future he would think about the possibility of bringing in students who are less proficient in Korean than those who attended the class. He expected that the students in Korean 100A course who will attend the tele-class in the next fall quarter would be less proficient in Korean than the students in 100C course who attended the tele-class this spring. He also said that he would think of ways to enhance the personal acquaintance process before the regular discussion begins in the class. Dr. Duncan also mentioned that his students would also benefit from a lecture from SNU in the area of Korean culture and history.

The participants also provided many useful comments and suggestions regarding the Korean lecture series. While these will be incorporated into recommendations that I will propose in the next section for consideration in future implementation of the program, I would like to discuss two important points made by the audience, which I believe are particularly relevant to the planning and implementation of the program in general.

First, many members of the audience noted that the three lectures in Korean studies, each of which was a one-time lecture, were rudimentary in their content, and were too comprehensive in terms of topics to be suitable for the university setting. It was suggested, in this respect, that a series of lectures on more specific, focused topic be offered so that in-depth knowl-

edge about the topic can be acquired.

Second, many participants agreed on the significance of pre-identifying the audience population in the planning stage of the program, and gathering background information about their interest in and the level of knowledge of the topic to be dealt with in the lecture. In this respect, they shared the view that it is important for the program researchers and participants on both sides to communicate with each other well before the program is implemented.

As these comments suggest, the decision on the nature of the topics to be dealt with in lectures and the identification of specified audience are of an utmost importance in the planning stage of the program. This would be so because interest in the content of lectures is likely to lead to a high degree of motivation on the part of the audience in whatever settings. In this regard, it can be noted that, on the positive side, the successful implementation of the linguistics and language tele-link classes may be attributed in part to the fact the audience was strongly committed to the subject being dealt with in the classes; the audience for the linguistics lectures were graduate students majoring in linguistics who are committed to the field, and those who participated in the language classes were students who had strong motivation to learn the target language and to know about the target culture. On the negative side, on the other hand, we can see that many of the students who attended the syntax lectures commented that the topics covered by the lectures were too specific in their theoretical orientations, hence too difficult to understand, while those who attended Korean lecture series pointed out that the topics were too general. These points suggest the importance of selecting topics that are most likely to be appropriate to the audience level and interest.

Regarding the lectures in Korean studies, then, we can note that, while there certainly is a need to narrow down the scope of topics, we also should not spare effort in having the students and scholars informed of the availability of the opportunity to learn about Korean studies, particularly because Korean studies are only beginning to gain attention in America. The issues of the topic selection and the identification of the audience level and interest regarding the future Korean lecture series could be better dealt with on the basis of our publicity effort to secure and increase the audience population who will be interested in Korean studies.

7. Conclusion: Recommendations

The observations of the tele-classes and analyses of the participant responses strongly suggest that the program was successfully implemented. The lectures and classes offered through this program provided the scholars and students at UCLA and SNU with valuable opportunities to communicate with and learn from each other. The program participants showed great interest and enthusiasm, as well as a highly positive affective attitude toward the project. While high expectations held by the program participants sometimes seemed to result in disappointment, we learned a great deal throughout the implementation of the program about ways to further improve the program. In this sense, the problems that were noted provides a constructive basis on which to increase the effectiveness of the program. It is my firm belief, as well as of the program participants in general, that with our continued effort this project will mark a landmark in promoting and enhancing the communication channel between the two countries which will bring about the massive benefits coming from academic and professional exchanges at an unprecedented rate. As a part of an endeavor to possibly modify and improve the program, I present below, on the basis of the preceding report, a list of recommendations that might be considered in further development of the tele-link program:

1. Instructors should be concerned with holding the audience's attention by providing cues regarding a specific point of reference which can serve as focal points shared by both parties, by synchronizing verbal presentations with visual presentations.
2. Establishing and maintaining interactional contact between the participants would be one of the most important way to avoid the pitfalls of audience isolation during transmission. To this end, it would be desirable for the lecturer to pause frequently to check response from the audience in order to enhance two-way communication channels.
3. For the purpose of enhancing interactional, two-way communication channels, we should plan and design communication formats and physical arrangements of studios to provide a more audience-designed, and a more individual-oriented environment.
4. Handouts, and other materials should be sent to the audience well

ahead of the lecture so that ample time is allowed for the audience to preview the content of prospective lectures, as well as to avoid any mistake or misunderstanding that might result from a hasty, last minute handling of the transmission of the materials.

5. The on-and-off switch audio system at SNU should be replaced with an audio-conferencing system that allows smoother interaction.

6. In language classes, care should be given to controlling and improving communication formats so that the students can talk more in their target languages.

7. In language classes, it would be desirable to provide more opportunities for participants to become acquainted with each other in order to further motivate the students in natural interactions. Selection of more informal topics could also be considered to this end.

8. It is important to pre-identify the availability of interested, qualified audience groups, according to the topic to be dealt with in prospective lectures.

9. Rather than a single, one shot lecture, a series of lectures dealing with a specific, focused topic will be more effective in terms of inculcating in-depth knowledge of the topic as well as of establishing rapport with the audience.

10. Instructors should get familiar with the functions of the equipment, and become comfortable using them. It would be desirable, in this respect, to exploit the functions that have been underused such as the keyboard functions, as well as think of ways to combine efficiently two or more functions like the alternative use of the tablet functions and the transmission of video images.

11. We should be prepared to deal with and compensate for inconvenience coming from the different time zones in Korea and the United States.

12. More extensive publicity efforts should be made to have the UCLA scholars and students informed about tele-lectures in Korean studies. Administrative level support for incorporating the Korean tele-classes into regular courses at UCLA would also be important for further increasing the audience interest in Korean studies at UCLA.

References

- Holmberg, B. (1983) 'Guided didactic conversation in distance education',
In D. Sewart, D. Keegan, and B. Holmberg (eds.), *Distance Education : International Perspective* (pp. 114-122). N. Y. : Croom Helm.
- King J. A., L. L. Morris, and C. T. Fitz-Gibbon. (1987) *How to Assess Program Implementation*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1987) *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage.

ABSTRACT

Evaluation of Tele-link Program between SNU and UCLA

Kyu-hyun Kim

This paper is a description and evaluation of the Tele-link program between Seoul National University and University of California, Los Angeles, which was implemented through April 25 to June 8(Korean time) as the first stage of a three year project. The major goal of this paper is to gauge the program's effects on the program, which can be used for modifying the program to better cater to the needs of the prospective program participants. A qualitative, ethnomethodological evaluation method is used to this end, using first-hand observation of the program as well as the administration of questionnaires and interviews as the major tool of data collection. Based on the analysis of available data, a number of recommendations are offered for consideration for future implementation.

University of California, Los Angeles
Department of TESL/Applied Linguistics
3300 Rolfe Hall
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1531
U. S. A.

Appendix : Sample Questionnaire
Questionnaire for the Korean-English Tele-link class at UCLA

Your response to the following questions will be very important in the evaluation of the Korean-English tele-link program. I would greatly appreciate your taking time to answer the following questions.

1. How many classes did you attend? _____

2. Would you recommend that the class be offered to future students at UCLA?

3. How has this class helped you in your study of Korean? Please rank the following items (i. e., 1 : Most helpful, 5 : Least helpful).
 - Vocabulary _____
 - Grammar _____
 - Culture _____
 - Fluency _____
 - Writing _____
 - Other _____ (Explain)

4. How would you modify the program to take it more helpful to your study of Korean?