

# Cultural Syllabus for Korean as a Foreign Language

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This article is mainly motivated by the recent tendency that the importance of the 'culture' is stressed in several articles on Korean language education. However most articles are devoted to separate diverse sectors of the culture teaching such as general purpose, policy, practical theories of teaching methods, teaching plans and the like. In order to overcome the isolated ways of researches, 'cultural syllabus(es)' shall be introduced in this article. The main purpose of this article is to define specific cultural syllabuses and to develop effective ways of teaching them.

**Key words:** Cultural Syllabus, Culture Teaching, Cultural Asides, Culture Capsule, Culture Clusters, Culture Assimilators

## **1. Introduction : The necessity of culture teaching for Korean language education**

As the importance of culture teaching is getting the wider comprehension in the field of language education, the more attention is paid to culture teaching for Korean language education. The basic purpose of language education is the development of the communication ability. In order to communicate fluently, speakers should know not only the literal meaning caught by the pronunciation and grammar but also the implicative meaning perceived by cultural background.

Comparing with the research in the fields of pedagogics of Korean, teaching method of Korean, teaching material of Korean etc., very few research is made on the Korean culture as a sector of Korean language education. The instructors fail to understand the importance of the culture teaching, focusing on technical phases such as speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Recently, some articles on Korean language education are devoted to the

importance of the 'culture'. The earlier articles on Korean culture education for foreigners are focused on setting up a general purpose and policy of culture teaching. Recently, articles deal with practical theories on the method of culture teaching or teaching plans. These articles could be classified as; firstly, the articles on general purposes and policies of culture teaching, secondly, articles on teaching plans of culture. Thirdly, articles on the items of culture teaching.

Synthetic studies on the practical ways of teaching and learning and detailed curriculums are still insufficient. Korean language instruction through culture teaching requires the determination of the specific cultural syllabuses and the development of teaching and learning method. The purpose of this article is the development of the specific cultural syllabuses for Korean culture teaching and effective ways of teaching them.

Before composing cultural syllabuses, let us overview diverse ways of defining the concept of the culture. Brooks divided the culture into two parts; C(official culture) and c(underlying culture). C means great achievements, artistic accomplishments and c means ways of life in a common cultural community. Seely regards the culture as a comprehensive concept which includes all the aspects of human life. Nostrand said that the culture includes senses of value, way of thinking, artistic style, body language. Hammerly subdivids the concept of culture into intelligence culture, behavior culture, accomplishment culture(Stern, 1996:208-210). The recent concern of Korean language teaching is paid to extracting a typical types of behavior and ways of thinking in daily life and to making foreign learner communicate fluently with help of them. In this point of view, the purpose of Korean culture education for foreigner is cultivating the communication ability against different cultural backgrounds by bringing about interest in Korean culture and enhancing the comprehension.

Syllabus is a structure, an outline of teaching contents and orders. A traditional syllabus consists of teaching contents. However, with the development of the syllabus stressing on the process, the syllabus contains not only contents, but also the way of teaching(Nunan, 2001:5). Namely, syllabus is a blueprint which shows what and how to teach. Up to now, a syllabus for foreign language is developed and divided by grammatical syllabus, functional syllabus and task-based syllabus.

According to the purpose of teaching language, Stern classified the syllabuses as four categories; the language syllabus, the communicative syllabus, the cultural syllabus and the general language education syllabus. The pur-

poses of each syllabuses are respectively fluency, influence, knowledge and transference. He suggested multidimensional curriculum<sup>1)</sup> consisted of above mentioned four syllabuses in order to reflect diverse phases of a language when designing a curriculum.

Stern said that a language and a culture should be educated simultaneously on the basis of a bilateral close relationship. He insisted that a language includes the way how the community members comprehend the outer world because a language is a communication tool among the members and the ways of language usages reflect the culture of a society(Stern, 1996:205).

The cultural syllabus designed for teaching Korean as a foreign language will be discussed at this article. Especially, the teaching and learning skills of Korean language for the cultural syllabus will be studied referring to the purpose, contents and the method of the Cultural Syllabus suggested by Stern.

## **2. The Goals and Contents of Culture Teaching as a Phase of Teaching Korean**

Before defining the goals and contents of culture teaching, diverse theories for foreign languages need to be mentioned. Each goal and content of respective researchers is different in the viewpoints and criteria of classification but common in the goals enhancing the ability to read, write, listen, speak and understanding the objective culture properly, consolidating identity of their own culture through the language ability

Chastain present Intercultural communication, Intercultural understanding and Realization of the basic aspects of the student's own culture as the goals of culture teaching(Chastain, 1976:383-384). Especially the meaningful point of his theory is that students understand not only the target culture but also their mother culture during the culture class.

Seelye suggested seven goals as the purpose of culture teaching; Sense of conditioned behavior, Interaction of language and social variables, Conventional behavior in common situations, Cultural connotations of words and

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1) The multi-dimensional curriculum is regarded as a useful method of Korean language teaching. This point of view was supported by other theorists including Stern. Finney suggested 'mixed-focus curriculum', and Brown suggested 'mixed or layered syllabus'.

phrases, Evaluating statements about a culture, Researching another culture and Attitudes toward other societies(Seelye, 1984:9).

Damen presents general goals of the culture teaching as follows;

First, to enhance the cultural understanding of mother culture and target culture, Second, to understand and accept the difference in the systems of value, belief and attitude, Third, to encourage the exertions to understand new and unfamiliar cultures. Forth, to develop intercultural communication skills in regions which have cultural commonalities, Fifth, to develop insight of intercultural understanding which admits cultural diversity and the results, Sixth, to develop personal flexibility for lifelong education, evolution and to make a student understood cultural impacts as natural procedure(Damen, 1987:247).

On the basis of the above articles, we can define the goals of culture teaching for Korean language education as follows;

The goals of culture teaching for Korean language education

- To understand socio-cultural meaning implied by the typical Korean expression
- To understand Korean view of the world and worth objectively and systematically
- To get profound comprehension on Korean culture by understanding the difference between Korean and their mother cultures.

Stern classified the contents of culture teaching as six categories; places, individual persons and way of life, people and society in general, history, institution, art, music, literature and other major achievements(Stern, 1996: 219-222).

In the field of Korean language education, the systematic culture teaching for Korean language education was dealt with in the articles of Min Hyeon-sik(1996),<sup>2)</sup> Cho Hang-rok(1998, 2000), Lee Hai-young(2000)<sup>3)</sup> etc. In the articles, they suggested elements of the culture according to the language learners' abilities.

When generalizing the above mentioned articles, the contents of the culture teaching for Korean language can be classified as follows;

2) Regarding elements of Korean language as 'elements of Korean culture', Min Hyeon-Sik suggested 12 spheres of culture teaching for Korean language.

3) Lee Hae-Yeong sub-categorized the contents of culture teaching for Korean as language, ways of life, view points, geography, history, social system, accomplishing culture.

The contents of the culture teaching for Korean Language education

- Primary Level: Greeting, To make acquaintance, Communication etiquette, Families, Geography, Climate, Table manners, Daily life
- Intermediate Level: Education system, School, Social system, National holidays, Traditions, Individual and group, Literary works, Proverbs, Idioms
- Advanced Level: Cultural inheritances, Religion, Art works, View of worth, View of the world, Politics, Economics, Social problems, Dialect, Historical heroes, Historical events

### 3. Techniques of Culture Teaching for Korean as a Foreign Language<sup>4)</sup>

#### 3.1. Creating an Authentic Classroom Environment

This method is important when the students are taught in geographically and/or psychologically remote position. To create a visual and tangible presence of the target community classroom decorations and displays many kinds of posters, cartoons, maps, newspaper cuttings and exhibitions of realia, including such trivia as theatre tickets and programmes, bus and train tickets, railway and airline timetables, restaurant menus and so on.

#### 3.2. Providing Cultural Information

**Cultural Asides** are items of cultural information offered briefly by teacher when the cultural background should be described. For example, during a lesson about Seolnal, a teacher can talk about traditional foods and plays.

**Culture Capsule** is an isolated item of information on the target culture. The substance is to be presented by the teacher with the help of a prepared script and various supplementary resources. The presentation could be followed by discussion or role-play. For example, let Japanese student present the difference between Korean and Japanese wedding cultures after watching a video material on Korean wedding cultures. Japanese students shall tell that Japanese wedding ceremony takes longer than Korean(3 hours), that only close family members are invited excluding neighbors, that now a days in

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4) In order to suggest cultural syllabus for Korean 'Techniques of culture teaching' written by Stern will be applied to teaching Korean.

Japan wedding ceremony in a church is getting popular eventhough neither bride nor bridegroom is christian and that there is not such expression as 'to eat noodles' in Japanese.

**Culture Clusters** are an elaboration of culture capsules. Culture Clusters are combinations of conceptually related culture capsules or they are a major set of activities broken up into its constituent parts. Two or more capsules which belong together can form a cluster. For example, students talk about and compare the differences of diverse Korean and Japanese cultural aspects such as wedding culture, table manner and telephone call etiquette.

### 3.3. Cultural Problem Solving

**Culture Assimilators** may raise problems to foreign language learners. A student is provided with four plausible explanations, in a multiple-choice format, of which only one is considered correct. The feedback tells to the students why one explanation is right and the others are wrong in the cultural context.

### 3.4. Behavioural and Affective aspects

**Audio Motor Unit** is an application of Total Physical Response to a culturally significant series of actions. It also involves carrying out actions in ways which are accepted as correct and in keeping with local customs. For example, students learn Korean proprieties by following teacher's demonstration of Korean formal bow of respect.

**Mini Drama**, like the culture assimilator, was developed by social scientist for cross-cultural education and was then applied to foreign language instruction. Mini- Drama are designed not only to present a problem situation but also to involve students emotionally by identifying them with one or another character in the episode.

**Role Play & Simulation** have been used to make points about culturally appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Since they involve the student in improvising actions and verbal exchanges between the simulated characters, they require a high level of language command and are, therefore, suitable for advanced learners.

### 3.5. Cognitive Approaches

While the majority of the techniques we have described so far can be re-

garded as experiential rather than academic or systematic in nature, it is important to remember that there are students in certain situations who may wish to cope with an academic study of the target culture and society through readings, lectures, discussions, and debates.

### 3.6. The Role of Literature and the Humanities

Historically literature was the main avenue to the target culture but during the course of this century, as a result of the growing interest in a social and scientific approach to culture, the role of literature has declined and has been almost entirely crowded out. With a knowledge of literature no less than the cinema or theatre a teacher could select writings, as well as films or plays, which help in understanding specific aspects of the target culture.

### 3.7. Real – life Exposure to the Target Culture

**Pen-pal & Tape-pal** : The exchange of letters is one of the simplest techniques by which a foreign language learner can gain a sense of reality.

**Visits to the language class by native speakers** : In a foreign language situation it is often possible to arrange visits of native speakers to the class and thereby strengthen the students' understanding of the thoughts and feelings of members of the target speech community. The native speaker provides of authenticity.

**Visits to other countries and regions** : Such visits may be undertaken for various reasons but one is to give learners first-hand experience of the second language culture and society. It enable guests and hosts to learn a great deal about all aspects of culture from the dual perspective of the foreigner and native speaker.

### 3.8. Making Use of Cultural Community Resources

When a second language is learnt in the target-language milieu, the everyday environment constitutes a vast resource which is readily available for culture teaching.

#### 4. Cultural Syllabus Design

1. Title : Arirang
2. Subject : To learn Korean traditional folk song and to talk about their appreciations comparing with the folk songs of mother country.
3. Level : Intermediate
4. Purpose of the class
  - 1) To get acquainted with the Arirang
  - 2) To practice hearing
  - 3) To discuss and express appreciations
  - 4) To talk about similarities and differences with the folk songs of mother country.
5. Activities
  - 1) To talk about experiences related Arirang and to invoke students' interest by asking questions such as 'Where did you hear Arirang?' 'When do you think Arirang is usually sung?', 'How do you feel like Arirang after listening it?'.
  - 2) To read the text or play the audio tape. To make students describe briefly what they heard.
 

Arirang is a typical Korean folk song comprehending typical Korean emotion - grudge and spirit. There are diverse Arirangs in various provinces. Traditional Arirangs are 'Jungseon Arirang', 'Milyang Arirang' and 'Jindo Arirang'. Arirangs are filled with the people, daily lives, feelings and the regions where the Arirangs are sung.
  - 3) To study vocabularies of Arirang.  
*minyo(folk song)*, *han(grudge)*, *eol(spirit)*, *minjung(people)*,  
*jibang(province)*, *eol(spirit)*, *jiyeo(region)*, *gamjeong(feeling)*,  
*ilsangeok(daily)*
  - 4) To study grammar in Arirang.
  - 5) To read the text of Arirang appreciating echoic words repeating words.
  - 6) To talk about scenes evoked from listening Arirang.
  - 7) To introduce folk songs of diverse countries.
  - 8) Two partners converse on the following subjects.
    - ① When do Koreans sing the Arirang together?
    - ② What is the meaning of 'arirang' and 'arari'?
    - ③ How is Arirang sung in general?
    - ④ Which Arirang is most famous?



## 9) To talk with classmates.

- ① To talk about his/her own feeling and thinking considering the theme of Arirang.
- ② To convert the Arirang text to contemporary text and sing it.
- ③ To write a text of introduction.
- ④ What is the most famous song or folk song in your country? Talk with classmates and write it down on note books.

<An report written by Japanese student about the conversation about Korean folk song and Japanese folk song>

There were songs of peasants when they were working together in a farm village.

\* Example: Kokiriko-節(bushi) : Ministry of education designate it as basic course of middle school in 1964.

こきりこの竹は23cmの長さである。それより長いと袖に引っかかってじゃまになる。

踊りたければ踊りなさい。泣く子はよこしなさい。さらさらは、窓のところにあるので、それをもって踊りなさい。

向かいの山を荷縄でしばって担ごうとすれば荷縄が切れて担ぐことができない。

向こうの山でなくヒヨドリは、ないては上がったたり下がったりして、朝草を刈る人々の目を覺ましてくれる。

月夜に歌う大道芸人のこきりこ節は、竹の音とともに夜空に澄みわたる。

The song is talking about farming and sung for good harvest. It comes with dance. Japanese songs have delightful texts like this song. In the mean time, 'Arirang' was sung in difficult and sad time including colonial period. The song is one of the ways how Koreans purify their peculiar emotion 'Han'.

Kokiriko-節(bushi) is descended in a specific province of Japan and there are other songs in difference Japanese provinces. In the contrary, there are a lot of songs named by 'Arirang' everywhere in Korean peninsular including North Korea.

During the Worldcup soccer game, Koreans seemed to sing 'Arirang' in order to unify their minds. Folk songs are used in different ways in different time.

Comparing folk song in above points of views, it is concluded that studying 'Arirang's from various provinces are very helpful to learn Korean culture.

## 5. Conclusion

When the basic purpose of a foreign language education is regarded as a development of the communication ability, classes on the culture are necessary. To compose cultural syllabus to teach and learn Korean as a foreign language, this article suggests the goals and contents of Korean culture classes, ways of teaching and learning as follows;

### The goals of culture teaching for Korean language education

- To understand socio-cultural meaning implied by the typical Korean expression
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- Advanced Level: Cultural inheritances, Religion, Art works, View of worth, View of the world, Politics, Economics, Social problems, Dialect, Historical heroes, Historical events

As the technique of teaching and learning Korean culture for the language education are discussed Creating and authentic classroom environment, Providing cultural information, Cultural problem solving, Behavioral and affective aspects, Cognitive approaches, The role of literature and the humanities, Real-life exposure to the target culture, Making use of cultural community resources and the like. Reflecting above points, an example of cultural syllabus of Korean language is presented in this article.

Recently, more attention is paid to the culture teaching in Korean language education. However the studies of syllabus, teaching techniques as an actual practice of Korean culture teaching is insufficient. In this article, the researcher tried to define cultural syllabus and to present diverse teaching and learning techniques. The analysis of the learner's needs of culture education and the guideline of developing textbook are remaining tasks to be studied.

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