

Languages of Asia LEARN Workshop

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Developing Critical Thinking Through Content-Based Approach: The Case of Advanced Level Korean Students



Background

- A comprehensive foreign language class can provide students with a deeper transformative learning experience.

Literature Review

- Mezirow defines the transformative learning as an “enhanced level of awareness of the context of one’s beliefs, and feelings, a critique of one’s assumptions, and an assessment of alternative perspectives (1991a, p. 161).”

Literature Review

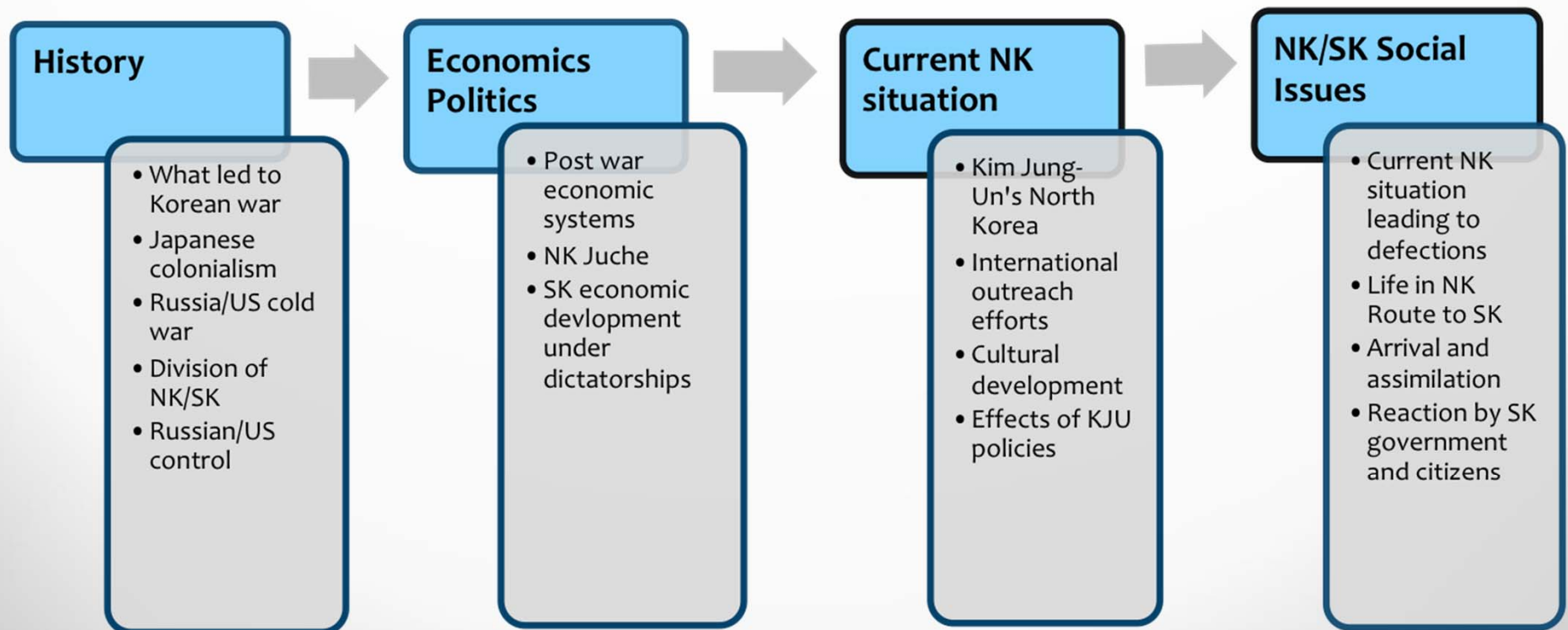
- Mezirow states that transformative learning is “learning that transforms problematic frames of reference-sets of fixed assumptions and expectations to make them more inclusive, open, reflect, and emotionally able to change (2003, p.58).”

Motivations for the Current Study

- To explore methods to determine whether students were prompted to reflect upon their practice in the course.
- If so, in what ways and to what degree transformative learning took place.

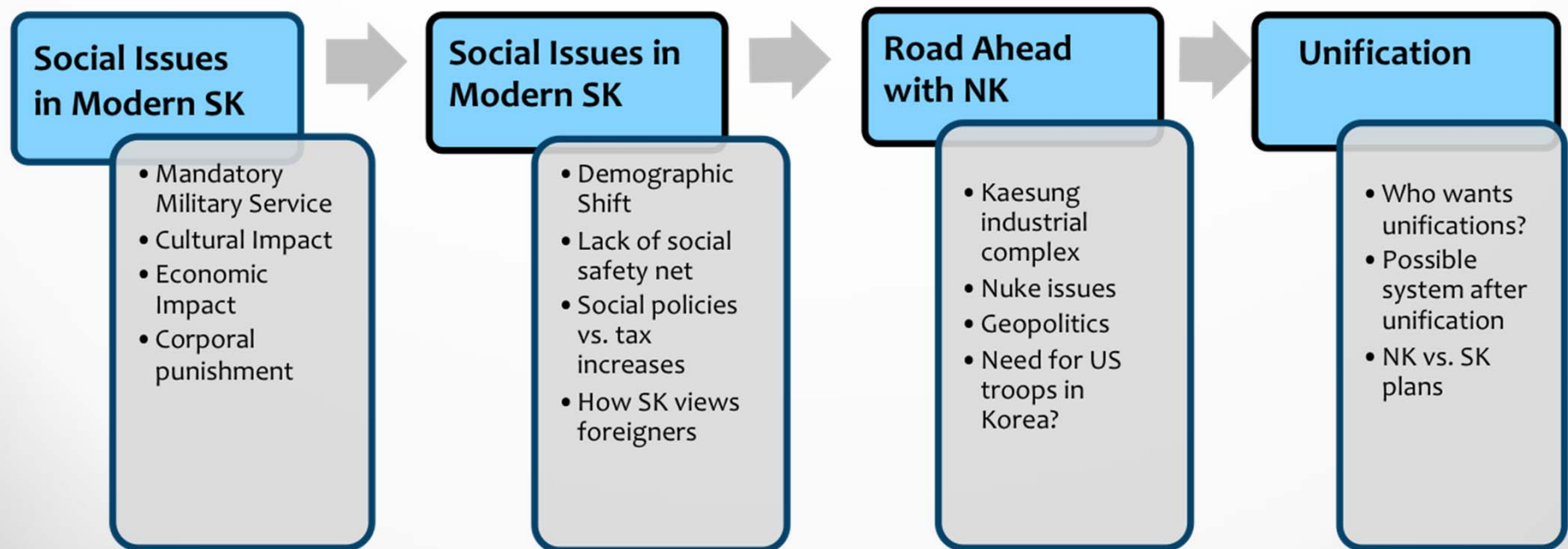
Advanced Korean Course Outline

Course Unit 1 (weeks 1 and 2)



Advanced Korean Course Outline

Course Unit 2 (weeks 3 and 4)



Sample Lesson Plan

Topic 1: History – Korean-Japanese Relations
Liancourt Rocks Dispute

Pre-Task

- Ss analyze the contextual meaning of two different texts (Lyrics vs. Blog).
- Ss use their acquired knowledge about Dokdo from the song and the blog text to form opinions.

Main Task

Ss read and listen to both the written and spoken texts on the territorial dispute.
Ss work in pairs to discuss the main ideas of each text and evaluate the author's tone, intent and analyze the linguistic features (e.g., rhetorical devices, cultural references).

Production Task

- Ss form their opinions on the discussion board.
- Debate

Debate Lesson

Japan-South Korea Territorial Dispute

Description: Students will learn the basics of debate through an informal debate during which they will present and defend their points to an opposing team.

Class Layout and grouping of students:

The students will work at their desks with a partner. The second portion of the lesson involves half of the class standing at the front of the room on two opposing sides. The final portion involves everyone at his or her desks in a discussion.



The Purpose of the Current Study

- To measure the effectiveness of CBI for advanced learners of Korean in light of TL theory.
- To explore the classroom practices that support transformative outcomes.

Methodology

- Mixed Approach (quantitative and qualitative data)
- Survey was conducted using a questionnaire (Kember et al, 2000).

The Questionnaire (Kember et al, 2000)

Table 1: Four Constructs and Definition of the Questionnaire

Four Constructs	Definition
Habitual action	Which has been learnt before and through frequent use becomes an activity that is performed automatically or with little conscious thought.
Understanding	a type of learning that makes use of existing knowledge
Reflection	A critique of assumptions about the content of process of problem solving
Critical reflection	A higher level of reflective thinking through which we can transform through meaning framework.

Methodology

- The questionnaire was used in a repeated measure design.
- Survey data were collected from 8 students.
- In-depth interviews → 6 students were participated in the interview lasting 30 mins.

Findings and Analysis (Questionnaire Data Results)

Research Questions #1: To determine whether students were being prompted to reflect upon their practice in an advanced level of Korean course.

- Evidence was present to answer → there were significant differences between the pre and post survey scores on each of the four scales.
- Student's score is computed by adding the response score for each of the four items → strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).



Findings and Analysis (Questionnaire Data Results)

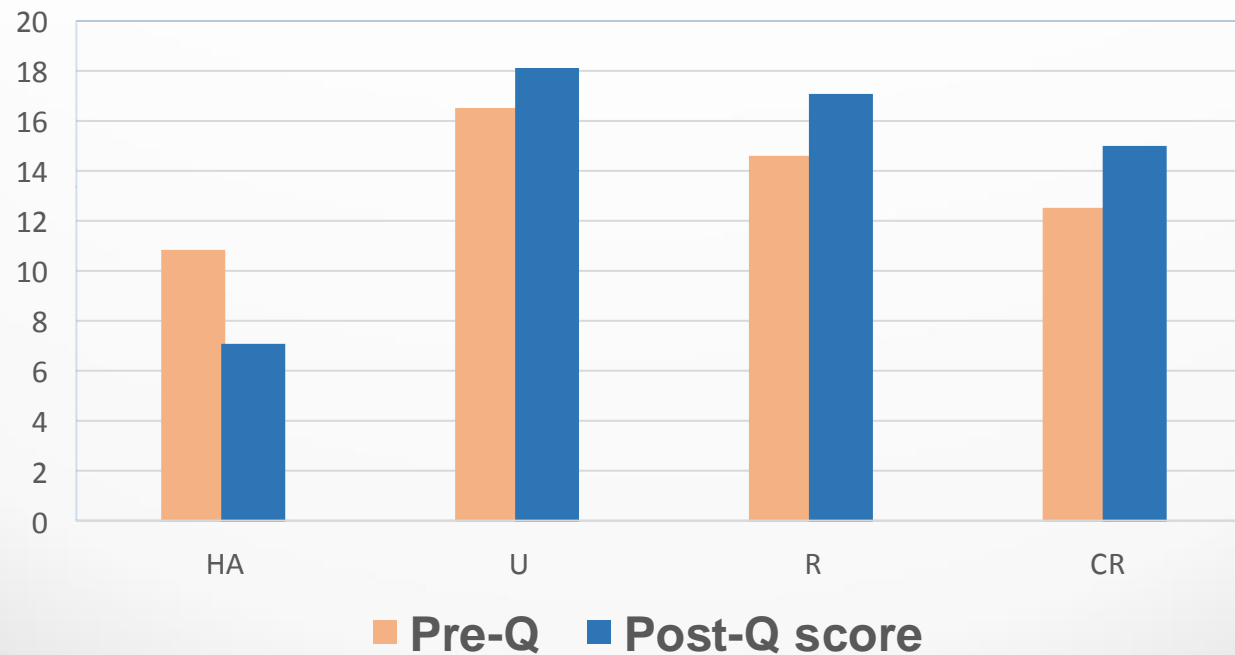
Table 2: Comparison between the Performance of Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Scores

Pre- and Post-Surveys	HA Mean (SD)	U Mean (SD)	R Mean (SD)	CR Mean (SD)
Pre-Survey	10.89 (1.69)	16.5 (1.32)	14.63 (1.11)	12.5 (1.24)
Post-Survey	7.13 (1.83)	18.13 (0.78)	17.13 (1.36)	15 (1.18)
T-statistics for mean difference (p-value)	4.23 (.001*)	-2.68 (0.14*)	-3.18 (.002*)	-3.58 (.001*)

Note: * $p < .05$, HA = habitual action; U = understanding, R = reflection, CR = critical reflection.

Findings and Analysis (Survey Data Results)

Comparison between the Performance
of Pre-Survey and Post-Survey



Findings and Analysis (Interview Data results)

Research Questions #2: How did certain types of classroom activities contribute to the transformation of advanced level Korean students' performance?

- A linear step-wise multiple regression analysis was applied.
- The gains for each participant were obtained by subtracting the average post-Survey score from the average pre-Survey score.

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data results)

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis of the Classroom Activities Predicting TL Gain

Gain Predictors	R2 value	F value	Significance	Percentages
Debate	.710	.246	.006*	20%
Analysis of the articles from different perspectives	.628	.065	.001*	14%
Journaling on a Discussion Board	.533	0.167	.004*	12%

Note: * $p < .10$

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data results)

❖ Debate

“Involve with deep thinking/critical thinking. I get a better sense of understanding how to use the words and vocabularies, and expressions. Good opportunity to applying the gained knowledge into the context.”

“Good opportunity to try to understand the perspective of the other sides. Without knowing that, it was hard to debate even if you are not much into the other perspective.”

“I listened to other’s opinion than mine. Most of topics were about Korea related but the students are not. So they can express as a third person point of view.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data results)

❖ Viewing and analyzing articles from different perspectives

“You were compelled to understand the other side of opinion to fully assert your opinion. Realized that how much I had been less careful about suppressing my stereotypical thinking.”

“I believe reading articles from different perspectives changed my views the most because it forced me to see both sides of the story.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data results)

❖ Journaling on Discussion Board

“Writing my own opinion on the blog after reading the articles with dealing with the same issue but with two different interpretations, such as politically liberal or conservative sides of articles. My perspective on a given issue was not completely changed, but I was able to, at least, be aware of the bias that I used to have. Realized the importance of understanding the other perspectives.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data Results)

❖ Transformational Learning

“This course allowed me to understand deeply about the Korean history. For example, I can better understand the general intent what the president, *Park Jung Hee*, had during the period of *Yusin* (Restoration) regime. Despite the criticism on Park’s harsh authoritarian system, I had empathy on his aspirations of making the country economically strong and militarily secure.”

“The topic of the North Korean defectors resonates with me. I feel deeply connected to Korean people after this course. I had this aha moment of trying to think myself as being more Korean rather than as foreigner. I try to look at things through their eyes. I am not happy with being opportunistic of other cultures.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data Results)

❖ Transformational Learning

“When studying about the poverty of the elderly people in Korea, previously I thought of the issue as being limited to the personal level. But after this lesson, I realized that it’s actually connected to all levels; the entire atmosphere and culture of Korean society related to socio-economic issues. For example, the root cause of the aging issue is attributed to the various factors, such as Korean parents’ obsession with the investment of their children and the sky-rocketing housing price, etc. So I thought that maturity of societal structure and civic awareness may offer a new opportunity for solving the global issue of poverty in the senior citizen community.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data Results)

❖ Transformational Learning

“I can’t say that their opinions changed my thought, but it opens how I look at the things. It’s hard to say one is correct from other, the more variety opinions, the better way to dissolve issue.”

“I would say that this course has helped heighten my tolerance to anonymity in Korean, which I think has overall helped my ability to understand more often.”

“We learned a lot about historical and social issues within Korean society that I had never heard about or that had never really struck my interest up until now, so that was great.”

Findings and Analysis (Interview Data Results)

❖ Transformational Learning

Participants reported that perspective transformation occurred in two key areas:

- Participants experienced a transformation of increased reflection on their pre-existing ideas and beliefs about Korean society.
- Participants reported an increased awareness of Korean history and culture, coming to perceive Koreans as individuals rather than as a group.

Conclusion

- The results suggest that transformation occurred when they were engaged in: 1) Debate, 2) Analyzing readings and listening to texts, 3) Journaling on a discussion board.
- The study has implications that students are capable of critical reflection with proper motivations
- CBI can be effectively leveraged in developing students' critical reflections on their education.

Limitation and Implications for Future Research

- N size is small, so there will be limits to the generalizability of the results.
- Transformative outcomes may vary depending on the classroom instructional atmosphere.
- Current findings might shed light on how transformation occurred and the classroom activities that have led up to those experiences.

References

Kember, D., Leung, D., Jones, A., & Loke, A. Y. (2000). Development of a questionnaire to measure the level of reflective thinking. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25(4), 380-395.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*. 1(1), 58-63.



Questions?
Comments?