

HIGHLIGHTING CULTURAL AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS IN THE L2 CLASSROOM: THE CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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Regional Competence

- A region's language, culture, and socio-political climate are interrelated & mutually informing.
- **Regional Competence** : culture specific aspects of any given culture (including language ability)
(Watson, 2010)

Pair Work (3 mts.)

- Turn to a colleague and answer these questions:

Q1. What kind of experience, if any, do you have teaching regional & cultural dynamics in the L2 classroom?

Q2. What were the challenges?

Group Sharing



Why cultural & regional dynamics in L2 classroom?

- Any text is sociological event
(Halliday, 1978)
- Learning only linguistic features in L2 classroom often results failure in cross-cultural communication

Housewarming party in Korea

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-Hostess:
“The food
doesn't taste
good, but
please help
yourself”.

-Guest: ???



Different cultural
frame in L2

Modesty or Humbleness is a
key in Korean communicative
acts, whereas Westerners feel
that one's achievements should
be promoted, often publicly.

(Sohn, 1986)

Ss' native frame of
cultural reference

Contrastive Approach

Contrasting & comparing L2 learner's own culture and language with those of another target region

→ Establishing new frame of cultural reference in terms of insider's view of target region/culture

Is he happy or not?



Collectivism (→ Confucianism)

- deep awareness of interrelatedness
- strong group consciousness
- groups are more important than individuals
- act as a single unit



Lexical level: 효도 (filial duty), 눈치 (reading other's mind): **relationship with others**

-Individualism has negative connotation in Korea

Syntactic level:

1. Koreans put the family name first
2. Korean pronouns (I, you) are often omitted whenever they are understood in context
3. Strong 'we-feeling': our country, our wife?

Classroom Activities



Using drama clips – discussion

1. How would you act in the same situation?
2. Guess what the person would do in the situation.
3. What aspects of Korean culture are reflected in the video clip?



For the tremendous success of our company,

drinking 3-1.wmv

0:00

0:32



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drinking 3-2.wmv

0:00

0:08



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Using drama clips – discussion

Q. What aspects of Korean culture are reflected in the video clip?

- **Collectivism**
- **Humbleness**
- **Hierarchism**
- **Distinction between husband & wife**

Confucianism

Using news clips – discussion



1. Why can this be news in Korea?

New trend

2. Can it be news in US? If so or not what are the reasons?

3. What aspects of Korean culture are reflected in the video clip?

Collectivism

Socio-cultural aspects of language use

<sample pedagogical activities>

- materials dealing with same topic but derived from each of different dialects (e.g. two Koreas)

NK-China: From North Korea

NK-China: From South Korea

Sample Pedagogical Activities



1. Find variant stylistics of the two Koreas' languages (standard/non-standard)
2. Compare linguistic features between standard/non-standard
3. Discuss why and how these features were produced and what possible ideological ends they might serve

Teaching vocabulary

Teach vocabulary based on sociolinguistic features

- Sociocultural Divergence

(e.g.) *epei* (어버이) :

(SK) parents

(NK) parents/ a person who is the supreme model of behavior and ideology

→ (The leader: Kim)

Students' Feedback

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Selected one of the best lessons :
Learning about the socio-cultural background of the language is essential to understanding the target language and producing “correct” language in situations.

Note/ References



*Drama video clips were translated and edited by Park, Mee-Jeong

*[EBS] Docufrime, *East and West*, modified by the presenter

•Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Arnold

•Sohn, H-M. (1986). *Intercultural communication in cognitive values: Americans and Koreans*. In H.-M. Sohn, *Linguistic Expeditions*, 438-471. Seoul:Hanshin

•Watson, J. (2010). *Language and culture training: Separate paths?* *Military Review*, March-April, 93-97.

Mahalo (Thank you) and

