

Teaching Korean Language to Filipino Students

Jay-Ar M. Igno*

Abstract “Korean language is really interesting but very difficult.” This expression commonly heard amongst Korean language learners triggered researchers to conduct studies on how this course can be made interesting yet simple. That curiosity lead to this endeavour and to share some teaching and learning strategies, surveys and personal interviews were conducted with teachers of the Korean language in the Philippines regarding their best practices in teaching Filipino students. Students were also surveyed and interviewed. Preliminary findings show that medium of instruction is one vital part alongside with the comparability of the sentence structures of Filipino and Korean languages. Another key point is the thorough discussion on the pronunciation rules before proceeding to grammar lessons such as the: allophonic variation on [k] and [g], [t] and [d], and [p] and [b]; and morphophonemic processes on [n] → [l], [p] → [m], and [k] → [ŋ], among others. Traditional approaches to learning and teaching a foreign language were still found effective such as memorization, repetition, and oral presentation, hence, newer technology and means are deemed necessary like computer assisted programs, online applications, and audio-visual aids. Thus, the background in linguistics for the teacher and the students is also of great help.

Keywords Second Language Learning, Foreign Language Learning, Second-Language Acquisition, Korean Language Education, Foreign Language Teaching

* University of the Philippines, Instructor, Linguistics & Korean Language, jr.lingg@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Korean language is the national language of South and North Korea and estimated to have about 48, 000, 000 speakers as their language 1 (L1) in South Korea and 24, 000, 000 in North Korea (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). It is considered as a language isolate (Lewis, et. al., 2013) and believed to belong to the Altaic language family (Ihm, et. al., 2001) just like Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungus-Manchu. But according to its morphology and genetic typology, it is classified as an agglutinating language. It is also said that Koreans belong to just one ethnolinguistic group and are speaking one common language. Though they have differences in physical characteristics, they are also believed to come from some Mongolian tribes from Central Asia who dwell in the Korean Peninsula. Since Korea speaks only one common language, Koreans undoubtedly can understand each other even they are from different provinces unlike the case of the Philippines. Korean language has dialects that only differ in regional accents and vocabulary, and among these dialects, the Cheju variety is said to be the most different (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2011).

To this date, Korean language is not just being spoken in South and North Korea instead it is widely spoken in other countries, especially its neighbours. Over the past two decades, it is notable that in some neighbouring countries, we can already witness not just native speakers of the Korean language teaching Korean as Foreign or Second Language (KFL/KSL). Most of the Chinese universities (Choi, 2010) and a number of Southeast Asian countries began to produce Non-Native Teachers (NNT) of KFL/KSL.

In the case of the Philippines, particularly, in the University of the Philippines – Diliman Campus (UP Diliman), it was only on 1990 that they started teaching Korean language. At first, it was just a part of the Department of Linguistics' Extramural Classes/Extension Program. But after the success of that first class and because of the projected number of demands that time, the Korean language class was instituted as an official university class, whether would it be as a foreign language

requirement or elective of certain courses that require such. During the first years of teaching the Korean language in the university, the teachers are either provided by Korea Foundation (KF), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), from a University in Korea (KU) with a Memorandum of Agreement with UP Diliman or an NT/NNT of KFL/KSL hired by the department as a part-time lecturer. It was only after the first decade that the department handled the Korean language classes when they had full-time faculty handling those courses together with the linguistics classes (Bae and Igno, 2012). And at the start of the third decade of teaching Korean language in UP Diliman, it was noticeable that there was also a sudden increase in the number of full-time faculty members of the Department of Linguistics who got interested in teaching the Korean language. From one faculty handling one to two sections of Korean language classes, the Department of Linguistics now has six faculty members, three of which are NT of KFL and the other three are NNT of KFL, teaching ten to twelve sections every semester for regular classes and four faculty members handling six to eight sections for the extramural classes.

Below are some of the tables that will show statistical data that show increase in the number of classes and students in the University of the Philippines – Diliman covering from 1990 to 2012 (Bae & Igno, 2012).

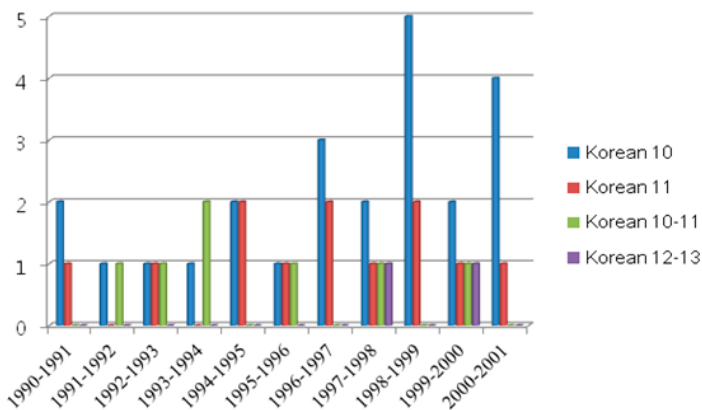


Table 1. Number of Korean language courses (1990 – 2001)

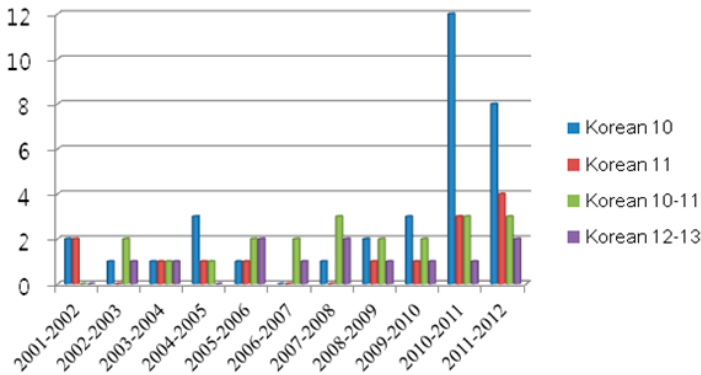


Table 2. Number of Korean language courses (2001 – 2012)

The increase in the number of classes offered maybe attributed to the hiring of full-time faculty in the Department of Linguistics who are proficient in the Korean language and are able to teach it alongside with linguistics. Another factor is continues partnership of the said department with other institutions such as the Korea Foundation, Korea International Cooperation Agency and partner universities in South Korea.

On the other hand, the significant increase in the number of students taking up Korean language either as their foreign language requirement or elective courses

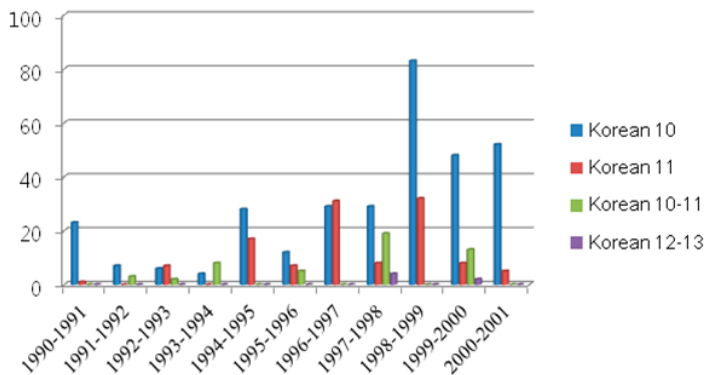


Table 3. Number of Students in Korean language courses (1990 – 2001)

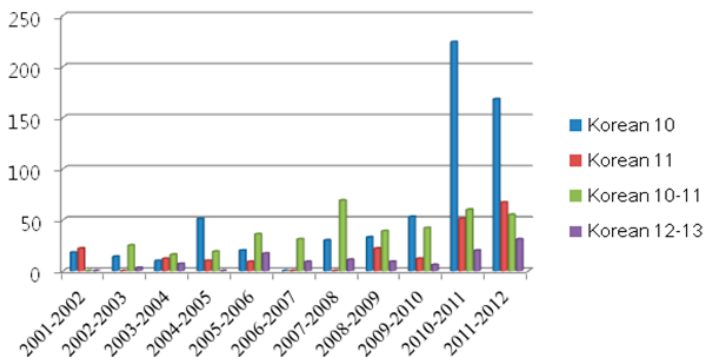


Table 4. Number of Students in Korean language courses (2001 – 2012)

can be attributed to the continues popularity of the Korean Wave, especially Korean Pop Music and Korean Drama or Telenovelas, more scholarship opportunities as an exchange student in South Korea, exposure to Korean people and material culture in the Philippines, job opportunities, among other.

2. Importance of the Study

This study aims to provide research products in the field of Korean language teaching in order to facilitate discussions on the current situation of particular institutions handling Korean language education. With the data gathered from personal experiences as a student and as a teacher, observations and interviews with other classes and teachers, this research shares the best practices in teaching Korean language to Filipino students. This also aims to share learning strategies of students with reference to their background, practices and exposure to different media. Lastly, this study intends to identify the trajectories of what have been done in this field, its development and sustainable futures.

3. Methodology

Most of the data used in this study are from personal experiences in learning and teaching Korean language, as well as students' and fellow teachers' responses in interviews conducted both in written form and informal conversations. Survey questionnaires were also distributed to selected students from Elementary Korean classes, both in the regular and extramural classes of the linguistics department.

4. Data and Findings

1) Emphasis on Pronunciation Rules

As a learner of the Korean language himself, the researcher experienced different ways of teaching the Korean alphabet as well as learning the complexities of Korean phonetics and phonology. It was observable that the background in linguistics played an important role in understanding these complexities more. On the first classroom experience of learning Hangeul, the Korean characters were just assigned to be memorized. A chart with one character per roman letter, except for [k] and [g], [t] and [d], and [p] and [b] were given and asked to be memorized without explanation of the rules as when the Hangeul /ㄱ/ shall be pronounced as [k] or [g], /ㄷ/ as [t] or [d], and /ㅍ/ as [p] or [b]. Other pronunciation rules were also not explained as to when a certain sound changes its pronunciation when followed by another sound. The class was just reminded that they just have to repeat the teacher's pronunciation and they will probably learn to pronounce well after a lot of practice. It is also the same experience for some of the learners whom studied under those teachers who have no background in Korean language teaching to foreigners, neither the background in linguistics. But when the researcher studied again in Korea, wherein the teachers were with background and training in teaching KSL/KFL, during the first part of the beginner's course, some pronunciation rules are discussed and are actu-

ally included in the textbooks.

All of the teachers surveyed responded that more time on studying the pronunciation rules is very important and almost all said that they usually do teach Hangeul and pronunciation rules about two to three weeks that is approximately nine to twelve class hours. However, one teacher said:

“I teach Hangeul for four meetings (2 weeks). I don't think there's an end to teaching the correct pronunciation, so it takes one whole semester to teach the pronunciation.”

The researcher also agrees with the above statement of one teacher, since in class, the teacher actually continues to observe and guide students with the correct pronunciation until the end of each semester, especially until during the oral examination.

Here is also to share another experience of the researcher that are also said to be experienced by the other teachers who had the chance to study in South Korea. One irregularity in the pronunciation rules of the Korean consonant is between the pronunciation of some voiced and voiceless sound such as [k] and [g], [t] and [d], and [p] and [b]. The researcher and the teachers interviewed, as well as some students, experienced being confused with the proper pronunciation of the word 김밥 [kimbap] ‘Korean sushi roll’ which is a compound word composed of 김 [kim] ‘dried seaweeds’ and 밥 [pap] ‘rice’. If we go to Korean restaurants either in South Korea or abroad, we can see different Romanized spelling for that word such as:

- gimbap	- gimbob	- kimbap - kimbob
- gimbab	- gimpap	- kimbop - kimpap
- gimbop	- gimpop	- kimbop - kimpop

With the abovementioned Roman spelling for the word 김밥 [kimbap], many of the Korean language learners encountered confusion with regards to the proper pronunciation of the word. Other examples of irregular Romanization of Korean words that can lead to mispronunciation of the language learners which are also not

being explained by some of the previous Korean language teachers are the following:

– 김포	Gimpo	Kimpo
– 부산	Busan	Pusan
– 한국	Hankuk	Hanguk
	Hankook	Hanguk

As for the words 김포 and 부산, the researcher prefers to use the Roman version Kimpo and Pusan respectively, since they are pronounced that way. The same with the word 한국 which also has a lot of different Roman spellings that can also be found in official documents and websites. In the official Korean Government and the Korea Tourism Organization websites, you can find Hanguk but in other sites such as the official website of the Korea University of Foreign Studies, it is written as Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Also, the researcher experienced going to that university and encountered a weird experience since he saw different spellings of the word 한국 from the signages outside up to the vicinity of the campus such as Hanguk, Hanguk, Hankuk and Hankook respectively.

Other issues on pronunciation rules are on the sound changes of some sounds depending on their position in the word such as the following:

– 청량리 [청양니]	Cheongryangri	Cheongnyangni
– 왕십리 [왕심니]	Wangshibri	Wangshimni
– 입니다 [임니다]	ibnida	imnida
– 신라 [실라]	Shinra	Shilla
– 설날 [설랄]	Seolnal	Seollal

The above sound changes can be explained using some morphophonological processes in linguistics such as nasalization for Cheongnyangni, Wangshimni and imnida and lateralization for Shilla and Seollal, respectively.

2) Some Learning and Teaching Strategies

Most students still uses traditional approaches to learning such as memoriza-

tion through repetition, use of flash cards, and name tags for memorizing nouns. Exposure to Korean songs, drama and movies are also said to be very helpful in the facilitation of what have learned in class as well as for vocabulary build-up and enriching real-life expressions. Students also are taking advantage of newer technologies such as online video classes, television shows, computer-assisted programs and online applications, and other audio-visual aids.

Most of the teachers said that they use powerpoint materials for lectures, as well as for game presentations and other class activities. Other teachers said they also use teacher-made handouts, flash/magnetic cards and game cards to facilitate different activities. At times, they also use songs and videos for listening exercises and cultural exposure.

One also said that she asks students to pair up with their classmate or sometimes make a group of three to form a short skit in class using the grammar patterns learned in class. They also use the dialogues in the books as a pattern for their conversation by just changing some of the vocabulary and context. She also said that they do the listening exercises in class and then asks students to read aloud in class the script so she can check the pronunciation. Below is what one teacher said.

“I make students talk in pairs, making them practice the expressions we learn in class. I also group them into 2 or 3 persons, and then ask them to prepare a skit to show in front of their classmates... We do listening practice and then I make them read the text aloud, correcting those who have mispronounced some of the Korean words written in their book.”

Another teacher said that she most of the time advises her students to have a goal to memorize at least twenty new vocabularies every day and to practice saying those words even outside of the classroom. She also advises them to write the vocabularies in reminder or sticky notes.

The other teacher advises her students to memorize vocabulary in groups or categories, for example, memorize vegetables' names together with other vegetables, as

well as with fruits and school supplies.

Another said that she always tells her students to read their books aloud and always emphasize that one of the best ways to remember certain words is to keep on reading it aloud and try to use it in a sentence.

3) Background in Linguistics

Being equipped with knowledge in linguistic analysis and its application into many languages of the world, it is notable that the data from the Korean language are one of those that made much impact to the researcher. It is because of the fact that a lot of grammatical rules, phonological and morphological in particular, can be explained well with linguistic concepts and using linguistic jargons.

However, even most of the teachers in the University of the Philippines have background in Linguistics they choose not to use more of the linguistics jargons in class. Instead, they use their background in linguistics to explain some pronunciation rules and sound changes using layman's terms. One teacher said:

“I don't want my students to feel like they are studying in a linguistics class so I just teach the sound patterns in the third and fourth meeting and then remind them again about it whenever we learn new vocabularies.”

And for the teachers from the other universities and institutions who have no background in linguistics, but aware that there are really linguistic phenomena that can be further explained using principles in linguistics, they admit and see the need for them to at least enrol in basic linguistic courses or to at least attend workshops and seminars related to linguistics and language teaching.

4) Native Language Preference

Another factor that considerably matters in the language learning of the students

is the use of Filipino as a point of reference with regards to translation and interpretation of certain vocabulary and expressions. As well as it is also of great help in the facilitation of grammar explanation which are advantageous to the NNT of KSL/KFL as compared to NTs who are somewhat challenged with the use of English and some Filipino expressions they have learned. Most students prefer to use Filipino as the medium of instruction since some vocabulary and expressions are also more translatable to Filipino than English. Though some students also want to hear more of the usage of the Korean language in class hours even they don't get everything that the teacher is saying. For them, it is also very helpful to have the exposure of hearing the language more often in class since they don't have another venue where they can interact with people using the language.

Some examples given are the words for the Korean word 아쉽다 [aʃwipta] that means 'to regret something' which is more translatable to the Filipino word *sayang* [sajan]. Another is the word 출근 [tʃulgin] and 퇴근 시간 [thœgin ʃigan] that means 'time going and leaving to/from work' which in Filipino can be translated to just simply saying *pasukan* and *uwian* time. Also, most of the conjunctions

5. Conclusion

Findings show that broad and longer discussions on the pronunciation rules before proceeding to grammar lessons such as the allophonic variation of [k] and [g] for /ㄱ/, [t] and [d] for /ㄷ/, [p] and [b] for /ㅍ/, [tʃ] and [dʒ] for /ㅈ/ and some morphophonemic processes on /n/ => [ŋ], /p/ => [m], and /k/ => [ŋ], among others are really of great importance. Traditional approaches to learning and teaching a foreign language are still found effective such as memorization through repetition, use of flash cards and the likes, as well as oral presentations and skits are effective ways of motivating students to learn. Consequently, newer technology and means are deemed essential like computer assisted programs, online applications, and audio-visual aids. Moreover, the background in linguistics for the teacher and

the students is also of great help especially on certain topics in pronunciation and grammar. And lastly, the medium of instruction is another vital factor alongside with the comparability of the sentence structures of Filipino and Korean languages.

2015.9.25 접수, 2015.12.17 수정, 2015.12.24 게재확정

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필리핀 학생을 대상으로 하는 한국어 교수법

제이알 마뉴엘 이그노*

요약 “한국어는 정말 재미있지만 너무 어렵습니다.” 한국어를 배우는 학생들 사이에서 흔히 듣게 되는 이 표현 때문에, 한국어 교육 과정을 흥미로우면서 단순하게 구성하는 방법에 대한 연구가 시작되었다. 이에 본 연구는 한국어 교육 및 학습 전략을 공유하기 위해 필리핀의 한국어 교수, 학생을 대상으로 필리핀 학생 대상 한국어 교육의 모범 사례에 관한 설문조사와 개인 인터뷰가 진행되고 이를 분석하였다. 조사 결과에 따르면, 필리핀어와 한국어의 문장 구조 간 공통점과 함께 지도 수단이 중요한 역할을 담당하는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 한국어 문법 수업으로 넘어가기 전 발음 규칙을 충분히 다뤄주는 것이 필요하다. 예를 들어 [k]와 [g], [t]와 [d], [p]와 [b]의 이음 변인, [n]→[l], [p]→[m], [k]→[ŋ]의 형태 음운 과정을 짚고 넘어가야 한다. 암기, 반복, 구두 발표 등 전통적인 외국어 교육 및 학습 방식이 여전히 효과적인 것으로 밝혀졌으므로 이에 기반한 첨단 기술과 도구, 즉 컴퓨터 보조 프로그램, 온라인 응용 프로그램, 시청각 수단이 필요하다. 이러한 측면에서, 교수와 학생의 언어학에 대한 기초 지식은 큰 도움이 된다.

주요어 제2언어 학습, 외국어 학습, 제2언어 습득, 국어 교육과, 외국어 교수법

* 필리핀 국제대, 한국어학, jr.lingg@gmail.com