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## Cultural Exchange Between Korean and Japanese Students Through Videos\*

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This paper describes a video exchange project between English classes in South Korea and in Japan. Korean and Japanese students worked in groups to make short videos in English which were then exchanged. After viewing their counterparts' videos, students e-mailed feedback to each other. This project was the third video exchange project between Korean and Japanese university students since 2001. However, it was the first time to try it with three universities together. Students from the different universities tried to compete with each other. It provided a better chance for students to improve their English. Most students expressed the importance of the video exchange project in developing their English proficiency and enabling them to use English in an international context. Many students agreed that the project was an educational, enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

[cooperative work/brainstorm/video exchange project/target language, 협동작업/갑자기 떠오르는 묘안/비디어교환 작업/대상언어]

### I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is about a video exchange project between English classes at two different universities in South Korea and one university in Japan. This project was

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conducted in the first semester of 2003 in Korea and Japan. Korean and Japanese students worked in groups to make short videos in English which were then exchanged. After viewing their counterparts' videos, students e-mailed feedback to each other.

In this project, students practiced using English while learning to anticipate the linguistic needs and cultural knowledge of their partners. Successful videos had interesting topics (e.g., the Korean traditional street Insadong, making Korean pancake, Japanese traditional clothes, a Korean restaurant in Japan) and used rich visual images to supplement the verbal English information.

This is a long-term cooperative project for Korean students and Japanese students to communicate with each other through e-mail and videos. English is the medium of communication between Korean and Japanese students. Professor from Japan and I have conducted the intercultural communication projects since 2001. However this was the first video exchange project with three university students.

The purpose of this study is to provide the opportunity for students to share their cultural points of view through the exchange of video clips and e-mails. Korean and Japanese students have many things in common in studying English. They are both shy to express their ideas in English and they want to improve English to communicate with people around the world. Korean students and Japanese students interact with each other with interlanguage since they are all nonnative speakers of English. Second language learners of English tend to go through a systematic or quasisystematic developmental process as they progress to full competence in the target language. Successful interlanguage development is partially a factor of utilizing feedback from others (Brown, 1994). By exchanging several e-mails about specific topics, students communicated with each other in their interlanguage. Non-native speakers of English will come to realize that English is the most effective language of communication, while they try to exchange ideas in English. Since both Korean and Japanese students are Asian people, they share a common culture which makes them feel closer to each other. It was a very challenging experience for Korean and Japanese students to exchange videos and e-mails in English.

To make the video project possible, Professor from the Japanese university visited Korea in February 2003. We made the specific plans so that the project could work well. We selected the specific topics and arranged schedule for students. We also planned to hold a joint English camp for Korean and Japanese students during the summer vacation.

## II. USING VIDEO IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

How can we help our students to learn English better? How can we help students better to use English in an authentic situation? How can teachers provide ideal situation for students to use English without any apprehension? This is the main issue which every teacher is concerned about. There are various ways to motivate students in EFL classrooms.

In the spring semester of 2003, I tried two different things in the English classroom. First, I used commercially produced video series in the classrooms at two different Korean universities. Second, students from the two universities had to produce a video project to exchange with Japanese students. Students were also supposed to exchange e-mails with Japanese students to improve their English writing skill.

There are several advantages to using video sequences in the EFL classroom. Stempleski & Tomalin (1999) talk about the benefits of using videos. According to them, using video series make students interested when language is experienced in a lively way through television and video. The combination of moving pictures and sound can present language more comprehensively than any other teaching medium. Using a video sequence in class is a good alternative to experiencing the sequence in real life. Video also can take students into the lives and experiences of others. After watching a video, students are more ready to communicate in the target language. In the video sequence, we can learn non-verbal aspects of communication. Students also observe cultural behavior and compare culture with their home culture. As Cunningham (2002, p. 42) suggests, incorporating good video into EFL teaching material is a highly priority to ensure the success of students.

The magic of video and its multiple uses have been acclaimed in EFL/ESL classrooms (Cooper, Lavery, & Rinvulcri, 1990; Lonergan, 1984). In EFL settings, videos are an especially important component of many communicative language series because they create virtual contact with the English speaking countries. As Migliacci (2002) says, when technology fits with the goal of the lesson, both students and teachers are satisfied (pp22-24).

Using video episodes helps students to understand American culture which is very different from Korean culture. There are many issues regarding American culture to discuss with students. Video episodes are very authentic material in the EFL classroom. Authentic materials offer real language that is contextually rich and

culturally pertinent (Spelleri, pp16-18). Through video episodes, students are able to learn about Americans' way of living such as pursuing careers, relationships between young men and women, divorce and single parent problems, and relationship between parents and children and so on.

I compared students' response after they watched video episodes. Each episode was around 10 minutes and it was good for a one hour class. The theme of the video episodes was about one American woman's dream who wants to be an excellent musician. Even though she has a job, she wants to accomplish her dream by studying in college in the late 20s. The theme of video episodes motivated and challenged students in several ways.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 1. Participants

To do this project, I taught two classes in two different Korean universities. In the first group, there were 15 junior students. There were 13 students from another university in the second group. In this group, there were 10 English majors, and 3 students were engineering majors. I used the same textbook and methods and conducted the same video project to compare the students' attitude and their English proficiency.

Professor from Japanese university had two group of students and in each group there were around 20 students. They were majoring in Law at the Japanese university. Professor from that university made a web page on which all the students could read their introduction e-mail and see photos of Korean and Japanese students. Students could always visit the web page to check their group members' photos. It was a good challenge for Korean students since they were able to see their group members. There were eight groups and with several Japanese students and Korean students in each group, The name of the group and their e-mail discussion lists are as follows:

silver group (10 members): silver@list.waseda.jp

gold group (9 members): gold@list.waseda.jp

red group (9 members): red@list.waseda.jp

blue group (10 members): blue@list.waseda.jp

black group (9 members): black@list.waseda.jp  
green group (10 members): green@list.waseda.jp  
pink group (10 members): pink@list.waseda.jp  
white group (9 members): white@list.waseda.jp

In each group there were 9 or 10 students. There were more Japanese students than Korean students. Once a student e-mailed their group, everybody, including the professors, could read it. These e-mails helped teachers see how students shared their ideas and the competence of their writing skills. Students were able to see their group members' pictures on their webpage. Students occasionally visited the website to look at their group members' pictures which motivated students to communicate with their members in English.

## 2. Class procedure

In the first meeting, I explained what they were supposed to study. I showed the video movies produced by one university students and Japanese university students in 2002. Students got some idea how to make video for their big project. Then I gave them some time to discuss how to make their video. That was the group project they were supposed to do in the first semester.

In each group, there were 3 or 4 students. The students were juniors. I used various communicative activities so that students did not only sit down all three hours. I had classes in a highly modernized classroom with all the necessary technological equipment.

I used the video episode series in my classes. This video was a series of one woman's dreams. In this video series, students met various characters and different complicated situations in America. Through the video episodes, students were able to understand about relationship between men and women and other family relationship. Watching the videos was an ideal way to understand American culture in the EFL classroom. These video episodes were made only for educational purposes.

In this class, all kinds of multimedia were used to motivate students. As a warming up activity, students were supposed to share their journal entries about the episode which they watched and discussed the previous time. "Power Point" presentation was used to focus students attention. They learned basic important expressions through "Power Point." Specific situations were explained in each

episode. Then students watched a video so that they were able to understand what was happening. In the second hour, students were given some discussion topics. Pair work and group work were used to make students share their ideas in a nonthreatening atmosphere. I went around the classroom to facilitate them using English, and they had to change partners several times to repeat their answers about the topics. Students were anxious to share their opinion in each question. All the questions were challenging so that students enjoyed talking with their partners. In each class, everybody had a chance to talk with different partners. In this way, students developed a very good rapport with other classmates. Each team presented its opinion in front of classmates. In the third hour, students watched the episode again and tried to decide which role they were going to play with their partners. They were given around 10 minutes to prepare for their role play. Then students performed different scenes in front of their classmates. Students laughed and they were surprised to see their classmates' excellent performance. It was very interesting for students to role play after they watched each video episode. Students tried to do their best to portray the character they were supposed to act. Role playing helped students to have better rapport with each other. There was a lot of laughter aroused in the classroom.

### 3. Writing a reflective journal

Students were asked to write a reflective journal about each class. In their reflective journal, they were supposed to reflect what they have studied in the classroom and compare Korean culture and American culture. Students had to review and think about what they had learned in each class. They e-mailed the researcher their reflective journal and printed out their journal and kept it in their portfolio. In this way, students could see how much they had learned during the semester. The students' reflective journals were quite impressive. Some students were enthusiastic to express their opinion in English. Their writing skills were fairly good. Reflective journal writing was a great opportunity to understand how students were thinking about specific issues compared with the American culture. The following is one students' reaction about one of the episodes:

"I think that the views of going to college between nations are different. In America, it is not necessary to go to college for their dream but in Korea it is. In our society, education systems and the views of parents have many problems, which is considered

to be a loser who doesn't go to school. I don't think everyone should go to college. Going to college is only one of the methods for better life or dream coming true." (Student A)

#### 4. Exchanging e-mail with Waseda University students

Students were supposed to exchange at least four e-mails with Japanese students. E-mail topics they exchanged were as follows:

- a. Self introduction, the meaning of their name
- b. Talking about Korean and Japanese holidays
- c. Talking about their favorite movies and music
- d. Talking about their future plans

Through an e-mail discussion site, all the students were able to read their classmates' e-mail and comment on them.

This is one of the Korean students' e-mail regarding her favorite movie and music.

About my favorite movies are most romantic movies, but I watch through all kinds of genres, for example, SF, comic, action and documentary films. I also like an animated film. I used to watch western movies but now I watch Korean movies. Korean movies are more developing for recent few years. They deal with so various issues that could provide us lots of enjoyment and interest. I hope that Korean movies will be better in the future. I know who Hayao Miyazaki is. I like his films and characters. In Korea, his films are introduced many times. I think his most films are for the children. During my childhood, I grew up as watching 'Anne of Green Gables.' That animated film was very beautiful and I was influenced by Anne's life a lot. That's why my English name is Ann. (Student A)

One Japanese students replied and talked about Japanese movies:

"This time, I would like to tell you about movies. I like movies but I can't stand watching horror movies. I really get frightened after watching it and sometimes I have a nightmare! So I prefer watching a comedy or a mystery.

My favourite film star is Tom Cruise. I think he is very good-looking! I enjoyed watching his "Mission Impossible", which is my favourite movie.

What kind of movies do you watch? Do you know any Japanese films? I've never seen a Korean movie before, so please let me know lots about it!" (Japanese student)

One Japanese student wrote about Japanese holiday which was one of the requirements in the e-mail project:

"This time I would like to tell you about Japanese holidays. There are many traditional holidays in Japan, but "Oshogatsu" is the most commonly celebrated holiday. "Oshogatsu" is celebrated at the beginning of a new year. We prepare the feast from 31st Dec and enjoy the food for 3 days. Drinking "Otoso" (alcohol!) in the morning is one of the enjoyable tradition. After the feast, small children get "Otoshidama"(pocket money specially given out for once in a year!) and most of the family pay homage at a temple and wish the new year to be as good as the year before. What do you do to celebrate the new year in Korea? Please tell me lots about it!"

To respond to this e-mail, a Korean student wrote this letter to explain about Korean holidays:

"I know you are curious about Korea's holidays. Our most famous holiday are the new year's day and the harvest festival-what we call, Chusok in Korean. I think that Korea New Year's Day is very similar to Japanese's holiday. But we don't go temple or shrine, instead we visit our ancestor's tomb for worship.

Chusok is on the 15th of August by the lunar. During the Chusok families wear the traditional clothes which is called Hanbok in Korean, and head on the road to visit their families ancestral sites, which are most people's hometown they've been grown. After families come together, they are preparing special dishes for their ancestors by using new harvest such as new rice, new fruit...etc, and then they have Memorial Service on that day morning and then they visit the sites which are buried their ancestors. After that each families have a good time. I like the Chusok most.

Besides the New Year's Day and Chusok, there are many holidays in Korea, but I couldn't explain all of them in here. On May, we have Parent's day, Teacher's day, and the celebration day of one's coming of age(being adult): therefore, we call May home's month."

One Japanese students also wrote about his favorite movies:

"I read Ann's mail about holidays in Korea. It was very interesting. I knew there are some holidays same as Japan, and different from Japan. Above all, "Teacher's day" weighed on my mind. Japan doesn't have such holidays, so I couldn't imagine what it is like. Are teachers celebrated? Then I write about movies. I also like Hayao Miyazaki's movies. His movies give me warmhearted feelings. I see the same movies again and again. I saw some Korean movies last year. For example, "JSA", "족보" (like family tree) and "서편제". They told me Korean cultures and what Japan did to Korea.

Next I told you about music. I listen to classical music these days. Because I'm in



an orchestra circle and playing the violin. But it doesn't mean I like classical music only. I like any kinds of music. I am just forced to do. I've heard some Korean traditional music "판소리". Understanding it were hard for me but it was interesting. Now I want to listen to North Korean music. Have you ever heard them?"

#### IV. ANALYSIS

It is important for Korean students to learn how to communicate in various situations with other Asian students. Teachers need to provide an environment where students use English as much as possible in the classroom. And they also have to be prepared to speak outside the classroom. Teachers should try to provide a comfortable atmosphere so that students will learn English naturally. It was a wonderful experience to teach highly motivated students. It was a three hour class each week. Most students were eager to improve their English and to communicate with Japanese students.

Students are willing to share their ideals and opinions in nonthreatening atmosphere. Japanese students were very diligent sending their e-mails to Korean students. There were no examinations but students were required to attend all classes and do their homework. In the classroom they learned a lot of things by interacting with their classmates through cooperative work.

Role play made students feel comfortable. Sometimes they became very creative and they liked to act. Students became more creative while they were working with their classmates. As Rosenthal (2002) says, it was a beautiful sight for a teacher and students cooperating and working busily together in small groups. Everybody talked and tried to learn. It is especially important in language classes where students need as much input and output as possible (p. 4).

During the mid-term examination period, we watched the students' video project and each group put some comments in their journals. They were given more time for discussion with peers.

##### 1. Video project

The 21st century is the age of technology. Duncan(1987) talks about the convenience of using a video camera to make a class group project, "Today there are lightweight, easy to operate portable cameras and tripods which make taping

fairly simple. Like audio tape, the video tape allow us the luxury of reviewing our actions and speech, making possible detailed study needed for improvement or development of observations skills. We can bring the outside world into the classroom by video taping. Students can video tape their performance and improve their performance of particular skills." (p. 51)

Students in each group gathered together to have brainstorming session to produce their video movies. It required a lot of cooperative work. I emphasized the importance of using English in the group meeting. I allowed some time for discussion before the end of class. Students spent time to chose topics and discuss the details after the regular classes. Since this was their project, students had to spend more time outside of regular class hours. Kagan mentioned (2002) that there are a great deal of advantages in cooperative work. There was good peer support because students encouraged and supported each other in language use. Motivation was enhanced since the structures were engaging interaction sequences and students needed to understand each other. Students adjusted their speech to the level of their group members because they were working together. Whenever they could not express their ideas in English, they used Korean.

The following are the Korean students' video project from one university. Each group tried to introduce unique Korean culture to the Japanese students. Students had brainstormed topics to include in their video.

#### 1) Korean students' video project

##### 1st Group: How to make Korean pancakes (10 minutes)

Three students were in this group. They showed how to make Korean traditional pancakes. They showed the recipe and cooked the pancakes. While they were cooking, they continuously used English. They wrote the recipe on the board in English to help Japanese students' understand about Korean pancakes.

##### 2nd group: Trip to Insadong (25 minutes)

Students made a special trip to Insadong which is a Korean traditional street in Seoul. Many foreigners like to visit this street because there are many interesting things about Korea. Students introduced Korean food, galleries and other things. They interviewed a gallery owner in Korean and they translated into English.

##### 3rd group: Trip to Zoo (15 minutes)

They explained how Korean people like to enjoy the beautiful weather at the zoo during the spring. It was Buddha's birthday which is a national holiday in Korea. They tried to interview other people in English but nobody responded in English.

4th group: Donghak Temple (20 minutes)

They visited Donghak Temple in Yousung which is the famous tourist spot in Korea. They also showed beautiful cherry blossoms in April. Students had an interview but they asked one of their classmates to be an interviewee. They pretended themselves native speakers in a very natural setting and their conversation was outstanding.

2) Japanese students' video project

Professor from Japanese university sent her students' video project on June 4. The Korean students had a chance to watch the Japanese students' video project. There were eight groups and all of them had very interesting topics. The Japanese students tried to share their culture and language with the Korean students. They put their great effort to make a better video product. It was a challenging opportunity for Korean students to see Japanese students' work.

- (1) Suwa Shrine (about 9 1/2 minutes), 5 members
- (2) Traditional Japanese Clothes (about 3 1/2 minutes), 6 members
- (3) A Korean Restaurant in Japan (about 12 1/2 minutes), 7 members
- (4) Transportation around Waseda (about 5 minutes), 6 members
- (5) Cup noodles (about 5 minutes), 5 members
- (6) A Samurai Drama (about 4 minutes), 4 members
- (7) Janken story (about 3 minutes), 5 members
- (8) Ramen (about 10 minutes), 6 members

According to Gersten & Thusty (1998, pp11-17), one central motivating factor in video exchange projects is the students' desire to communicate with real people or a genuine audience in real places. Additionally, students are eager to explore and share knowledge or feelings with video exchange partners. Above all, the material is culturally embedded in the students' social identity and daily lives. The integral role of culture in language learning has been stressed in EFL situation such as in Korea and Japan.

Today relatively few people are surrounded by neighbors who are not cultural replicas of themselves. However, in the future, we can expect to spend most of our lives in the company of neighbors who will speak in a different tongue, seek different values, move at a different pace (Barnlund, 1994, pp26-46). That is why it is very important to try intercultural communication and to become closer since the world is changing very fast.

## 2. Findings

Compared to the Korean students' projects, the Japanese students' projects were more professional. Japanese students planned in detail and they made scripts with all their group members. They knew how to edit and use some computer graphics. With more advanced editing skills, their projects looked better than the Korean students' video project. However, Korean students also did their best to make interesting episodes. Since Korean students studied video series as their texts, it helped them to produce their projects,

The following is one Japanese student's comment on the Korean students' video project.

"Thank you for the video! I'm interested in that. I think all of videos are very good, but I like the video about cooking especially. I'm impressed that Korean dishes are very different from Japanese ones. We both drink tea, but I'm surprised that the Koreans drink fruit tea because the Japanese usually drink green, Chinese or English tea. I would like to drink fruit tea. Are you interested in Japanese foods? I think one of our group sent you the video about Ramen noodle. In Japan, there are many Ramen restaurants in any areas. If you go to Japan, you should go and eat in Ramen restaurant!"

These are the questionnaires given to the students regarding the video exchange project. Students replied to these questionnaires:

(1) What did you learn from this video exchange project?

"Video exchange and e-mail exchange made me to realize the world becomes closer. I was able to understand about Japanese students and they seemed to be very serious dealing with communication." (Student A)

(2) Were you afraid of anything? Was there anything you did not enjoy?

"In the beginning, I was not comfortable in making video project in English since

I was not able to speak English fluently. However, after I worked with my group members, I got the confidence communicating in English. I really enjoyed watching Japanese students' video movies. They put a lot of their effort. I felt ashamed of our team's effort compared to Japanese students' work. Probably, we could make better in the future." (Student B).

(3) What did you enjoy about this project?

"Making special trip to the famous place was very interesting. We really enjoyed working together with our group members. Everybody participated equally and it helped us to appreciate each other's work. Even though we spent some money, it was one of the unforgettable memories in our campus life." (Student C)

(4) Did you learn anything in particular from the project? Would you do it again?

"The beauty of cooperative work was the best thing we have learned in our project. We did not have many opportunities to work with classmates. We planned and worked together. We really enjoyed working together. We would like to make other video in English. Making video all in English made us confident using English." (Student D)

## V. LIMITATIONS

Korean students had a lower level of English compared with Japanese students. Some Korean students had problems in writing scripts but they did their best to express themselves in front of the video camera. There are some limitations which could be changed. Since I did not have much knowledge in technology, I could not help students to have better editing and filming. Korean students lacked in technical expertises compared to Japanese students.

As Gersten & Tlusty (1998) suggested, there was no careful analysis of student-generated video content, video takes, retakes and the final production together with field notes of responsibility. That is the reason why the other members had a difficult time completing their project. It would be more ideal if the team members share their responsibility and realized the importance of cooperative work. For the lower level students, there should be more specific guidelines by the

instructor.

Through video projects, students can learn how to present their ideas more clearly and they can reflect on their speaking styles. As Gersten & Tlusty (1998) mentioned, video exchange projects are an optimal way to validate students' knowledge, culture, and personal voices in the EFL classroom.

The ultimate goal of this project was to have an English camp for Korean and Japanese students in Korea. However, it was very difficult to organize this joint camp because of some difficult feasibility problems. To have an English camp, more detailed planning was necessary. In the future, students will be able to visit each other to have better friendships.

It would be a more interesting and worthwhile project if we included one more schools from the western parts of the world such as Germany or Spain where English is a foreign language.

We need to be able to understand English spoken by nonnative speakers or other countries because we cannot always talk with native speakers of English.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The use of authentic videos is a useful and fun way to give students something exciting and a little less academic than their regular classes. "By exposing students to rich language of the text, we can expand their language awareness, their overall knowledge of how words and grammar can be used." (Lazer, 1999, pp.vi-viii). Using videos motivated students to learn English more since each episode situation was challenging for the Korean students. Video episode provided excitement and students anticipated the next episode.

When teachers provide a nonthreatening classroom atmosphere, students enjoy using English to communicate with other foreign friends. They also get confidence that they can communicate in English.

Through the video exchange project, Korean and Japanese students were able to communicate personal and cultural information using English as an international language and video as the medium of exchange. Students could enhance their cross cultural awareness and global understanding. This provided an opportunity to share their cultural knowledge and awareness in our global society. Korean and Japanese students were able to have deeper understanding about each other's country.

This project was the third video exchange project between Korean and Japanese university students. However, it was the first time to try it with three universities together. Students from the different universities tried to compete with each other. It provided a better chance for students to improve their English. Most students expressed the importance of the video exchange project in developing their English proficiency and enabling them to use English in an international context. Many students agreed that the project was an educational, enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

It will be a more exciting project if we include other university students from western countries. The students will have more things to learn from different culture. Exchanging cultural points of view through video clips and e-mails help students to understand people around the world. The students have more chances to use English by sharing their experiences.

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**예시언어(Examples in): English**  
**적용가능 언어(Applicable Languages): English**  
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