Breaking the Functionalist Mold in Korea: Designing Curricula for Critical Language Awareness and World Englishes

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Agenda

- A brief note on my positionality
- Understanding the Korean and institutional contexts
- Theories & principles shaping the curriculum design
- What does this kind of curriculum look like?
- Challenges to adopting critical language awareness and World Englishes approaches to curricular design in Korea
Positionality

- White, English L1, US citizen
- Cis-gendered female, heterosexual, able-bodied
- Veteran EAL teacher with no formal teacher preparation program prior to teaching
- Am I trying to “save” Korean students of English?
- Who/what am I colonizing?
- Critical & pragmatic
The State of ELT Curricula in Korea

• Kyoyukyeol & the social status of English (Koo, 2008)

• EFL vs. ELF vs. Konglish as WE (Chang, 2009; Chin, 2002; Jeong, 2004; Kang, 2004; Kim, 1998; Park, 2009; Shim, 1999; Song, 2011)

• Functional-notional approaches (Yuasa, 2010) & CLT (Yoon, 2004): normative

• Curricular materials heavily dependent on Anglophone hierarchical preference with US at the center; little emphasis on authentic materials (Kang-Young, 2009; Vinall & Shin, 2018; Yuasa, 2010)

“Through the medium of English, learners are both tourists, viewing their own culture from the perspective of the ‘other,’ while they are being prepared to be ‘tour guides,’ learning how to explain this perspective to the ‘other’ in the other’s language, English” (Vinall & Shin, 2018, p. 1)
Institutional Context

- Foreign studies university in Seoul
- Demonstrated English proficiency required to graduate
- Large foreign student population
- Korean students with overseas experience & multiple opportunities to speak multiple varieties of English in Korea
- Instructors have advanced degrees and/or extensive teaching experience
- 20 week IEP emphasizing immersion
- Intermediate/advanced levels
• Konglish as a World English that challenges Korea’s classification as part of the expanding circle
  • “English” defined by teacher & student idiolects
• Critical language awareness
  • Fairclough (1992): developing critical consciousness through textual/discourse analysis
  • Pennycook (2001): language is political & self-reflexivity is crucial
• Negotiation & student-driven course content
• Use of multiple locally-developed media

How can language be used to maintain, reinforce, and perpetuate existing power relations? How can language be used to resist, redefine and possibly reverse these relations? (Alim, 2010, p. 214)
## What does it mean to be Korean in the 21st century?

### Unit One: What makes a successful conversation? Language Skills and Ideologies

**Unit Length:** 4 Weeks

**Objectives:**
- Feel more comfortable initiating and closing conversations
- Use appropriate topics and pragmatic skills when holding short conversations
- Recognize, discuss, and apply differences between Korean and English basic conversation
- Understand and use strategies for promoting fluency
- Identify their own English language uses and needs

### 1.1 “Hi! What's your name? How much money do you make?” Taboo Topics when Meeting New People

**Objectives:**
- Recognize (in)appropriate topics when meeting someone & apply this knowledge to different contexts
- Discuss the differences in topic taboos between Korean and English
- Introduce themselves and others in a variety of contexts
- Close a conversation using verbal and visual cues
- Listen actively using pragmatic tools
- Analyze and understand their own language use, needs, and wants
- Understand what a language journal is and how to use one

**Language Task(s):** Making Introductions; Ending a Conversation

**Vocabulary:** Classroom English

**Language Function(s):**
- Active Listening; Making Polite Requests
- Question Formation; Embedded Questions; Open vs. Closed-ended Questions

**Grammar:**
- This introductory unit is a great opportunity to assess students’ language proficiency. Using the cooperative activities as formative assessments will help in determining the level of difficulty of language tasks, functions, skills, vocabulary, and grammar presented later in the course.

**Formative Assessment Ideas:**
- **Now is the time to have students complete informal “English use” surveys that detail their real language use needs.** See the sample provided in Survey Sample A
- Students should also be given checklists of potential topics, tasks, and functions they may need or want to cover in the course. See the samples provided in Survey Samples B-C

### Troubleshooting

- Notions of “appropriate”
- Problematic “Korean” & “English”
- Localize the language
- Language as text
- Students as linguistic & discourse analysts
## 1.2 “Did you eat lunch?” The Art of Small Talk

### Objectives

Students will be able to:
- Understand what small talk is and the role it plays in their own lives
- Recognize the different registers of small talk
- Compare and contrast Korean and English small talk
- Formulate a small talk statement
- Initiate a small talk conversation within various informal and formal contexts
- Use rejoinders and follow-up questions to progress a conversation

### Language Task(s)

Making Small Talk

### Vocabulary Focus

**Sociolinguistic Terms:** language hierarchies, prescriptive & descriptive, speech community, agency & identity, communicative repertoires

### Language Function(s)

**Grammar**

- Rejoinders; Follow-up Questions
- Tag Questions

### Formative Assessment Ideas

- Language Journal: Students collect real-world samples of small talk and recreate them in written dialogues
- Student-designed role plays and performance
- Student Groups create infomercials on how to make small talk in Korean versus English

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**Contextualized language**

**Language analyses**

**Student produced content**

**Explicit teaching of sociolinguistic concepts**

**Conversational maintenance & power differences**
### 1.3 “Ca...na...da...” The Handiness of **Hangul**

(Translation: Hangul is the Korean language and alphabet; ca, na, and da are the first syllables when learning Hangul)

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<tr>
<th><strong>Objectives</strong></th>
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</table>
| Students will be able to:  
Talk about the creation and history of the Korean language and alphabet  
Describe similarities and differences between Korean and English grammar and pronunciation  
Explain Konglish meanings and uses  
Increase and use their meta-linguistic awareness in Korean and English  
Understand and use sociolinguistic terms to discuss language and honorific  
Politely correct an interlocutor when presented with incorrect information  | Language Journal  
Informal discourse or text analysis of a small talk dialogue in both Korean and English  
Informal group presentations on 1 similarity and 1 difference between Korean and English  | Based on student needs and student-driven content and conversation  |  |
| **Language Function(s)** | **Grammar** |  | Correcting Someone  
Comparatives  |

**Metalinguistic awareness**  
**Metalanguage**  
**Honorifics & power**  
**Valuing of Korean language in English classroom**  
**Student-driven introduction of Konglish**
### 1.4 Workshop: Strategies for Stimulating Fluency

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<td>Students will be able to:</td>
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<td>- Understand and apply strategies for improving fluency</td>
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<td>- Increase their meta-linguistic awareness of fluency as a construct</td>
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<td>- Start exploring ways to build autonomy</td>
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<td>Students record themselves retelling a picture story, transcribe the recording, then analyze it for the strategies and skills targeted during the workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pairs record themselves having a short discussion or small talk conversation, transcribe the recording, and analyze it</td>
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<td>Pairs or small groups analyze a video or recording of a conversation in English. Then, they analyze a video or recording in Korean to make a list of their observations. They create their own fluency strategies for Korean and compare these to English.</td>
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<td>Have students research fluency skills for the Korean language, and make a verbal or written report on the similarities and/or differences.</td>
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<td>Hesitations, Language Fillers</td>
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<td>Lexical Fillers</td>
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**Formative Assessment Ideas**

- **Linguistic analyses for metalx awareness**
- **Greater nuance in types of languaging strategies**
- **Points Ss toward continuous reflexivity**
- **Ss as producers of knowledge**
- **Focus on language-in-use**
Unit Two  
Cultural Exploration: Digging Deep

Unit Length  
4 Weeks

Students will be able to:
- Describe their personal cultural experiences in greater detail and in comparison to Korean ideals and norms
- Explain the importance cultural artifacts and language is changed by these artifacts
- Discuss how and why Korean culture has spread so quickly, and how language represents Korean cultural identity
- Situate themselves within the larger Korean and Global contexts

2.1 Korea & Me

Objective:
Language Task(s)
Vocabulary Focus
Formative Assessment Ideas

Language Function(s)
Grammar

Language Journal

Review: Fluency Strategies

2.2 Korea & Country

Objective:
Language Task(s)
Vocabulary Focus
Formative Assessment Ideas

Language Function(s)
Grammar

Language Journal

Review: Fluency Strategies

2.3 Korea & the World

Objective:
Language Task(s)
Vocabulary Focus
Formative Assessment Ideas

Language Function(s)
Grammar

Language Journal

Review: Fluency Strategies
Unit Three

“Education Fever” Gets Hotter in Korea

4 Weeks

Students will be able to:
- Relate their personal education experiences to the bigger picture of education in Korea
- Share their opinions on what they would like to change about education in Korea
- Explain and discuss the role of English education in society
- Talk about the drive behind studying abroad
- Compare and contrast Korean education with other systems in the world

3.1 Korea & Me

Objectives
Language Task(s)
Vocabulary Focus
Formative Assessment Ideas
Language Journal

Language Function(s)
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3.3 Korea & the World

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Language Function(s)
Grammar

Review: Fluency Strategies
## Unit Four

**Is Korea the Cinderella of the OECD? Booming Business and the Expanding Economy**

### Unit Length
4 Weeks

**Objectives**
- Discuss what they like and dislike about Korean business cultural practices
- Compare and contrast Korean business culture with those in other parts of the world
- Describe small, medium, and large companies in Korea
- Explain how language changes in different business contexts
- Confidently and successfully navigate an English Interview

### 4.1 Korea & Me

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Review: Fluency Strategies
## Unit Five

**Unit Length**: 4 Weeks

**Objectives**
- Discuss how the Korean government impacts all levels of society
- Explain how the government has changed over time
- Express the different political roles Korea has taken on in the international community
- Describe different aspects of the Korean government (e.g. organization, conservative/liberal, etc.)

### 5.1 Korea & Me

**Objectives**
- Language Task(s)
- Vocabulary Focus
- Formative Assessment Ideas

**Language Function(s)**
- Grammar

**Language Journal**

### 5.2 Korea & Country

**Objectives**
- Language Task(s)
- Vocabulary Focus
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**Language Function(s)**
- Grammar

**Language Journal**

**Review Suggestions: Fluency Strategies**

### 5.3 Korea & the World

**Objectives**
- Language Task(s)
- Vocabulary Focus
- Formative Assessment Ideas

**Language Function(s)**
- Grammar

**Language Journal**
Challenges to CLA/WE Curricular Adoption

• Skilled teacher-scholar & risk taker
• Teacher’s competence with multiple language varieties
• Tensions with institutional discourses & hidden curriculum
• Student expectations
• Feasible in all contexts?
• Time consuming

“Like desire, language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries. It speaks itself against our will, in words and thoughts that intrude, even violate the most private spaces of mind and body” (bell hooks, 1994, p. 167)
Thank you!

References


