

ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

TEACHER'S NAME	SCHOOL	LANGUAGE	YEAR LEVEL
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Teacher Profile

I migrated to Australia when I was 5 years old. My educational experiences from primary to tertiary were all undertaken in Australia. I have been living here for just over 20 years. Although I spent most of my life in Australia, I have a strong attachment to the Korean language, values, customs and culture of my parents imparted to me while growing up.

I began my teaching career 2 years ago teaching my university majors: English and History. The Korean language was introduced into the school curriculum this year and I was approached to teach the subject. I have no formal training in languages but have been attending workshops and seminars to equip me with the necessary knowledge and skills. In summary, this is my first year teaching Korean and in conjunction with English/ESL and History.

School Context

The school is a 7-12 high school in the Northern suburbs of Sydney, New South Wales. There are currently around 795 students and the numbers are expected to grow. The school is a diverse, comprehensive, coeducational high school. This is exemplified by the variety of student population. Besides mainstream enrolments, the school is part of the NSW Selective Schools program with two selective entry classes each year, and there is a Support Unit for students with mild or moderate learning disabilities and an Intensive English Centre (IEC) which provides English teaching to overseas newcomers in preparation for their integration into mainstream classes.

Exemplified by the school's broad academic program, the students are extremely diverse in terms of academic ability, as well as culture. The school has a high percentage of NESB (Non-English Speaking Background) students that equates to approximately 63.77% comprising mostly of Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Korean, Tagalog (Philippine), Japanese and Indians (Hindi). Similarly, the school has a diverse teaching staff to match in terms of age, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds.

Languages at the School

The school offers a variety of languages for students to choose from. There are four languages taught at the school: German, French, Chinese and Korean. Spanish is programmed to be introduced next year, which will make the total to five. In spite of the high number of languages, the LOTE Department does not have a Head Teacher, and languages are not sufficiently valued as part of the curriculum by the students. There is currently one full-time language teacher, and the Chinese and Korean are represented only by part time loads.

Languages do not form part of the curriculum in year 7 and the required 100 hours is completed in

year 8 (Term 1 to 4). The students choose a language to study at the end of year 7 and have their subject electives selections for years 9/10 in term 2 of year 8. In grades 9/10 and 11/12 the study of language is optional.

In year 8, two 75 minute periods a week is allocated to the study of the chosen language. Currently in year 8 there are two French classes (selective and mainstream), one German, two Chinese (background speakers and non-background) and one Korean class (non-background).

I found the teaching of languages in year 8 from term 2 onwards challenging as their subject selection is conducted and finalised by the end of term 2. This left the non-selectors to disrupt the class and destroy the flow of the lesson.

Class Context (The students)

I have decided to conduct my research with my year 8 Korean class. There are a total of 27 students in this class and the features of the class are as follows:

- 17 boys and 10 girls
- Many of the boys display challenging behaviours
- One student has been absent regularly and is well known for the habit in the school
- 20 Mainstream and 7 Selective students
- 13 students had experiences learning another language before (e.g. Japanese. Italian, French)
- Languages spoken at home are as follows: 10 students communicate only in English, 11 communicate using two languages (one being English) and 6 students communicate in the language of their birth country (no English).
- 18 students are NESB.

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

I integrated my investigation into the *Food* unit that was completed in Term 3. I was interested in the new concept that I was introduced to in the ILTLP project and used this as the basis for my investigation. I was not trained as a language teacher, therefore, I easily adopted the traditional style of language teaching by concentrating mostly on 'descriptive' aspects such as grammar, how to say 'I like, don't like' etc. It was from attending the ILTLP sessions that I realised that learning about the culture of the target language was as much important as knowing how to say 'I like, don't like'.

I focused on designing a single task for my students in order to introduce interculturality, which I am sure my students have never been exposed to. I wanted my students to discover and gain a deep understanding of Korean food/eating culture through their own questioning and curiosity, rather than gaining the knowledge through my explicit teaching i.e. literally telling them about the culture.

The task focused specifically on the practice of teaching and learning Korean from an intercultural perspective:

- Noticing
- Comparing
- Reflecting
- Interacting

I included the above four overlapping activities in the task that I designed. Since this was the first time that I would introduce intercultural learning (and active reflection) to my students, I did not want to overwhelm them with the new concept learning by including it in every aspect of the *Food* unit of work.

The one way I thought the students would be accepting of this new type of learning was to start off with a simple single task on which this investigation will be evaluated.

I produced around 2 to 4 guided questions for each of the four principles: Noticing, Comparing, Reflecting and Interacting on Korean food culture, specifically, features of cuisines, language used in eating situations, table manners and setting.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

In this investigation I did not focus on using intercultural learning in my explicit teachings. Instead, I presented interculturality to an assignment task. I gave my students guided questions, reading materials and websites for students to gain knowledge about Korean cuisines, language used in eating situations, table manners, table settings; and encouraged them to question themselves how these represented Korean values and attitudes. After recording their interaction with Korean food culture, the students would compare this with the Australian equivalent.

This task would introduce them to the new practice of recording and reflecting on their perspectives (of other cultures). This was a modification from previous tasks that they normally completed. I hoped that this would give the opportunity for students to reflect on differing cultures and feel valued in revealing their personal opinions.

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

The assignment task was to be submitted hand written on a supplied proforma, which became the data I used to evaluate my investigation. Assignments were collected on the proposed date. After collating, I read and analysed the data to discover their development. I paid attention to their responses and attempted to discover, through their use of words and language, if they had actually embedded interculturality in language learning. I looked for unique and individual insights (responses) from the students, which I thought they would eventually have gained from interaction with language and culture. I concentrated on finding these unique insights particularly from the 'comparing' and 'reflecting' sections of their response sheet.

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

TEACHER'S PRODUCTION

Year 8 Korean Task (Reading Responding)

Topic: Food Explorations

Task:

Read all the reading materials in the back of your **Food Explorations** booklet and the list of recommended websites (look at the ingredients and pictures).

In class and in your own time, you will study the texts about:

(i) Korean foods (cuisines) (ii) table setting (iii) language used when having a meal (iv) and table manners in Korea.

1. N O T I C I N G / O B S E R V I N G

For all the texts, list at least FIVE things that you have found out about (i) food (ii) table manners (iii) the language used between people e.g. family members when having a meal (tone, formality, register, etc) (iv) and table settings in Korea.

2. COMPARING

For all texts, describe how food (dishes), table manners, language and table setting in Korea are similar to and different from Australia.

3. REFLECTING

Reflect on what you have learnt about **food, language used, table manners** and **table setting** in Korea

- i. What do you think/feel about Korean food, language, table manners, table setting in Korea?

- ii. What does it tell you about Korean **health, values** (morals, behaviours, beliefs) and **attitudes**?
- iii. In what ways has Korean food been influenced by western food, if any? How will this affect the Korean food we know?
- iv. Would you prefer Korean food or Australian food? Justify your answer with reference to the texts.

You will be given class time to complete this activity. The final copy of your answers is to be word processed and submitted by the due date.

Outcomes assessed:

- ✓ Identify and explain features of Korean food, table manners, table setting
- ✓ Identify details about Korean food as presented in the texts and compare to Australian food
- ✓ Reflect on what you have learnt

Marking Guideline	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identifies and explains features of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting with detailed reference to all the texts. ✓ Identifies details made about Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners and table setting in Korea and compares this in detail to the Australian equivalent ✓ Reflects perceptively on aspects of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting in Korea 	12 - 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identifies features of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting with some reference to the texts ✓ Identifies details made about Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners and table setting in Korea and compares this to the Australian equivalent ✓ Reflects on aspects of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting in Korea. 	8 - 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identifies features of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting with little reference to the texts. ✓ Identifies details made about Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners and table setting in Korea and compares this to the Australian equivalent ✓ Describes aspects of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting in Korea. 	4 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gives limited information about features of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting ✓ Identifies one or two details made about Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners and table setting in Korea ✓ Lists one or two aspects of Korean food, language used at eating situations, table manners, table setting with little reference to the texts. 	1 - 3

STUDENTS' PRODUCTIONS

As previously mentioned, by the time we were completing this *Food* unit of work, the subject (elective) forms for next year had already been submitted by the students. I had many disruptive students who were constantly interrupting lessons and disregarding tasks. Therefore, I chose to

select seven reliable students to evaluate my investigation.

*NOTE: Students' mistakes in spelling and grammar have not been corrected.
Extracts from seven student's final products are reproduced.*

NOTICING AND OBSERVING

Most of the students were competent at identifying Korean food and eating culture. The students have been exposed to these types of questions before and were all very skilled at discovering the answers for the straight-forward questions in this section.

Student #1

Food

- Every dish included rice
- Kimchi is served with every meal!
- Beef is a commonly used meat
- Soy sauce is another frequent ingredient
- Food from vendors is very cheap

The language used between people

- It is very polite and respectful
- It varies according to who you are eating with
- When someone says _ in a sentence, it is rude to not accept

Table manners

- They are a lot more formal than Australian table manners
- It is polite to slurp soup
- The rice or soup bowl should stay on the table whilst eating
- The eldest person gets the best to eat
- You should try to keep pace with everyone else who is eating

Table setting

- It is a lot more complicated than Australian table settings
- Hot foods are placed on the right and cold are placed on the left
- Table setting originally varied according to the wealth of the family dining
- Food is usually served in several dishes but there is also a one-bowl meal
- There are three different table settings; 5-dish table, 9-dish table and the 12 dish table (a royal table)

Student #2

(i) Flavour is strengthened by fermenting the food...steamed rice is the central element of every meal.

(ii) Offering food to ancestors is a symbolic custom. Don't leave. Koreans literally share their food. Eat at same pace. Sharing food brings good luck. No noise. Seaweed is eaten on birthdays symbolically

(iii) They always say what they are going to eat. It is formal language.

(iv) Rice bowl on left and soup bowl on right, spoon is on right side of bowl, chopsticks are behind spoon.

COMPARING

Student #1

Unlike Koreans, Australia has food from many cultures depending on where they come from. The average Aussie family would eat and vary from different food types (e.g. spaghetti one day, sushi the next). A really Aussie family would probably eat steak while others stick to traditional foods. In fact, even fast food and dining with McDonalds is widely accepted as much as eating in a French gourmet restaurant.

Student #2

Korean	Australian
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food: Most side dishes are too extreme in their individual tastes, and must be eaten with rice to balance out taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All dishes can be eaten alone

Student #3

Table manners are similar; we both don't leave, tap things, reach across table or chew food with mouth open etc... Although Korea does have stricter manners as they must do things like not leave any food speck on their spoon or eating at the same pace.

Student #4

Korea and Australia are very similar, in the way that both are very multi-cultural foodwise. Korea has food from Asian and western countries, whereas Australia has foods from all over the world. Most other things are completely different. Korean table manners include making slurping noises to show appreciation, whereas slurping in Australia is considered quite rude and disgusting. Other table manners are quite strict and a little fussy. In Australia if eating with just your family, few rules apply except for in my house "elbows off the table," "no TV." "Knife and fork please!" Well that's just my family. Table setting out is also different. In Korea, each dish has a set place on the table, whereas in Australia, each person receives a plate already full of every side dish and main course. Salad or dressing might be on the table to add later. When eating take-away, such as pizza, some people just eat it out of the box!!

REFLECTING

Student #1

I think the Koreans have much respect for the older elderly peers, for example before they eat, the children of the family will let the grown ups start eating before they start. I think it shows that the adults gain more respect than the children.

The food is what separates us from the Koreans. They have a massive range of foods that keeps them in the comfort zone of their cultures. Aussies are very different, we are more of a multicultural country we have many different ranges of food all over the globe.

Student #2

Overall, I have learnt that the Korean culture, although stricter at times is more polite, neat and civilised culture. I believe Korean table manners to be very polite, although I believe some to be pretty pointless, such as keeping pace when dining with elderly. If this is of importance to Koreans, then I understand that they probably have a moral practice to fulfil. The Korean food is very different and I like how there are several dishes in meals, because it varies the diet. Korean food, manners, language and setting out is very clean, and everything has to be perfect. This suggests that Koreans have high hygiene when it comes to food. Traditional Korean food has changes from influence from western countries, by there being a wider range of food. Therefore, if Korea never communicated with western countries, then there would be a smaller choice of food.

Personally, I prefer Australian food over Korean food, because since I am Australian -English born, I'm not used to chilli. To me, many Korean dishes are too spicy, but if I had chilli tastebuds, I would probably prefer Korean food.

Student #3

Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health: Tells us that the Koreans knew more about what the average human needs nutritionally• Values: Natural is best• Attitudes: Korean cuisines is preferred to other cuisines, but this is changing• A basic Korean meal, in my opinion, is a balanced, nutritious meal, which would do a better job of fulfilling dietary requirements than most of the food that modern Australians today eat. This is shown by the variety of healthy dishes in a Korean meal. For example, a 5-jeop Bansang (five-dish table setting) contains fish, pork, rice and various vegetable and herbs.
Table Manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values: are heavily based on Confucian values i.e. respect for elders. The reason for this is the fact that many Korean table manners concern the elderly, and, more prominently, respect for the elderly.

Student #4

I believe that Korean's meals are a lot more ritual and respected and that it is a daily thing that is a strong aspect of their culture. I think that they try to obtain ancient values and morals by doing things such as offering Gods food and treating elders with dear respect.

EVALUATION / REFLECTION

I was quite pleased with the results of students' work and their learning. I feel there was intercultural learning taking place in the classroom shown by some of the students' responses. I was frustrated and disappointed that some of my students did not feel the need to take the task seriously and fully participate. This led me to question my methods.

Was my task uninteresting? Was the topic boring? Did they just not care because they weren't continuing with Korean next year? Perhaps they were not confident to make judgements (reflection) and found it easier to give up. If the task was simply uninteresting, how could I modify the task to make it more engaging and valuable?

There were quite a lot of readings, judgements and writing that students were required to do in this assignment (reading & responding) which would have been somewhat tedious for kinetic learners. I included some visual texts but with some spare time in months to come, I will need to find a variety of resources such as food related dramas, TV programs etc to engage the learners more as well as find and/or create materials with some target language.

Some of the students, mostly boys, found the activity of reflecting extremely challenging as previously discussed. Reflecting entails students to synthesise all the materials they have absorbed and then generate personal opinions to make authentic comments about what they have learnt. This is not an easy process especially for young students to conquer. The practice of reflecting will need to be given more attention in class as I believe the process allows us to consider and develop our perspectives.

Although this investigation may not have been valuable to many of my students, I could conclude from a few of the students' responses that this task did ultimately allow them feel closer to the culture of the target language. The directed questions encouraged them to really understand aspects of the Korean culture, which was made easier by way of comparing, and contrasting with the culture they were familiar with (e.g. English-Australian). Some of the distinguishable differences and similarities paved the way for individual students to question why differences may exist. What are the influences and reasons for the differences? Curiosity and the act of questioning contributed to their overall understanding. It also provided students' opportunity or a reason to think about their cultures which

they probably would not have thought to do in their lifetime.

The ILTLP project and this investigation has allowed me to observe the possible success and advantages of moving away from 'descriptive learning' to 'concept learning' which was a valuable learning experience for me. I learnt that there are other meaningful learning and not just grammar to take into consideration when teaching foreign languages. I will now use this as a basis to integrate the activities of Noticing/Observing, Comparing, Reflecting and Interacting more in my teaching, both explicit and implicit. I will endeavour to force my students to break away from the popular assumption about language study as only grammar and to consider different aspects of foreign language learning that they may not have previously considered.

Interculturality is complicated and I admit I am still not completely familiar with it. However, from my investigation I am quite confident that incorporating this new concept of learning in my teaching will be beneficial in increasing language retainment and student interest, as well as provide positive experiences and importantly instil appreciation of other cultures.