Original Research Article

Language Learning Competency Analysis through Sociolinguistic Studies; A Case Study of Bachelors' Degree Students in Korean language from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

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Abstract

Language, like sleep, is not a substance but a process that is constantly evolving and the practicality is known to everyone, yet in its throretical form defies formulations. Sociolinguistic is not a study of facts but the study of ideas about how societal norms are intertwined with our language use. For instance, what it means to be a male or female member of a particular society may influence the terms we use to address each other. Three level of analysis are mainly considered when conceptualizing the context of language and its uses; the play of Phenomena upon the senses, the concepts we can recognize as common to certain groups or classes of these phenomena, thirdly the formal logical system with which these concepts seem to agree. Language is always subject to construction and deconstruction in respect to the environment and culture it gets exposed to. For instance, learning language, say L3 where L1 is the regional language, but is instructed using L2, may determine the outcome of how a language is understood and learnt depending on the sociolinguistic exposure of learners where L1, L2 and L3 may all differ from region to region especially in the context of India, as India is multi-lingual. Environmental exposure plays a vital role in how a certain target language is learnt. It is a fact that as an adult language learner, environmental exposure and cultural proximity play a great deal of how language is studied and also the pace with which target language is acquired/learnt.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Korean language, Language competency, data analysis, socio-cultural exposure, India.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of India, Korean Language education has had its inception in the early 70's. First, it was introduced in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi as a diploma course and upgraded to a certificate course and then to a full time degree (Hons.) programme in 1995. Further the course was upgraded to Master's degree in 1998, and in 2014 a programme in M.Phil was started. At present it offers Ph.D degree to its students as an integrated course with M.Phil. Jawaharlal Nehru University was the sole Institution that offers Korean Language course untill the early 2000s and then with the development of Economic partnership between India and South Korea improved, there are other 5 central Universities (Univerisity of Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Central University of Jharkhand, English and Foreign Language University, Manipur University) that offers Korean language course as a part-time and full time programme till date, with several other private and state institutions offering the programme. This paper will try and analyse the complexity of learning Korean language in a multi-lingual environment through sociolinguistics studies and the socio-cultural influence of learners in adapting to language learning environment in a span of 4 levels of learning competency among the bachelor (Hons.) students of Jawaharlal Nehnu University from 2013 through 2017.

Korean langauge learners have their own sociolinguistics background. For instance, in the context of Manipur state and North-east India in particular, the sociolinguistic background is identified as Tibeto-burman language which is sub-branch of mongoloid language features where it has a language and cultural structure very similar to Korean which is altaic in nature. And again in the context of Jharkhand state, which is located in the central region of India, the sociolinguistic background of learners is very different

from that of Korea. Whereas, in the context of Delhi, capital city of India located in the northern region, learners' sociolinguistic background varies as learners from across the country comes together in pursuance of career opportunities through Korean language learning. Not the least, the motivation they acquired for learning a Korean language differs from region to region as well. This research would focus primarily on the impact of learners' sociolinguistic background in the course of learning Korean language. And this research would analyse sociolinguistic factors that may assist in establishing fundamental co-relation of sociolinguistic perspective of the target language and the learners' own sociolinguistic background.

Scope and Objective

Unlike numerous other places where Korean language learning institutions are established, India is one place where learners' sociolinguistic background plays vital role in the curriculum of language learning strategy, as India is multi-lingual, and thus, the importance of studying, analyzing, observing and designing accordingly is at utmost importance. However, the methodology of research implied is limited to accumulative mean grade analysis of learners in region-wise basis only.

This paper in particular will focus on the influence of cultural proximity and environmental exposure and sociolinguistic background for language learners apart from other factors that might have contributed to efficient language learning.

This paper would look into certain condition wherein the learner's exposure to different type of environmental settings (natural and artificial) determine the outcome of the learner's language learning competency. And further, this would investigate into how deep cultural proximity assist in the process of language learning.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology of analysing language learning competency of learners sub-categorized into Procedure 1 and Procedure 2 as follows:

Procedure 1: Procedure 1 includes a questionnaire survey of students' current ideas and notions using a standardized self-administered questionnaire to determine how influenced the students are in relation to Korean food, K-pop related activities, culture, Basic knowledge and understanding of Korea and Korean Language.

Procedure 2: This procedure includes sub-categorization within learners on region-wise basis from similar sociolinguistic background as North-East Region (NER) and Non-NER (Non- Northeast Region), and their language learning competency is comparatively analysed through Mean, Standard calculation of grades that may assist efficiently to differentiate and distinguish factors that affects the process of language learning. This methodology of research is based on data collection of grades of learners from North-East Region (NER) and learners from Non- North East Region (Non-NER).

Methodology of Research, Procedure 1:

Table-1: Average mean grade of 2013 Batch, 1st Semester to 4th Semester (1st year and 2nd Year), Centre for Korean Studies (CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU.

Sem	Season	Year	Total No. of NER	Total No. Non-NER	Grand total	Mean Avg. grade of NER	Mean Avg. Grade of Non-NER
I	Monsoon	2013	03	28	31	5.945	5.160
II	Winter	2014	03	24	27	5.593	6.267
III	Monsoon	2014	03	23	26	6.706	6.071
IV	Winter	2015	03	23	26	6.710	5.833

Note: There are 02 (two) foreigners in the class who are not counted in the Mean Average grade calculation.
Total Mean Average grade of NER: 6.238
Total Mean Average grade of Non-NER: 5.832

Table-2: Average mean grade of 2014 Batch, 1st Semester to 4th Semester (1st year and 2nd Year), Centre for Korean Studies (CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU.

Sem	Season	Year	Total No. of NER	Total No. Non-NER	Grand Total	Mean Avg. grade of NER	Mean Avg. Grade of Non-NER
I	Monsoon	2014	02	32	34	5.930	5.556
II	Winter	2015	02	29	31	6.425	5.562
III	Monsoon	2015	02	27	29	5.095	5.711
IV	Winter	2016					

Note: There are 02 (two) foreigners in the class who are not counted in the Mean Average grade calculation.
Total Mean Average grade of NER: 5.817
Total Mean Average grade of Non-NER: 5.609

Table-3: Average mean grade of 2015 Batch, 1st Semester to 4th Semester (1st year and 2nd Year), Centre for Korean Studies (CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU.

Sem	Season	Year	Total No. of NER	Total No. Non-NER	GT	Mean Avg. grade of NER	Mean Avg. Grade of Non-NER
I	Monsoon	2015	03	30	33	5.110	4.679
II	Winter	2016	No data available	No data available			
III	Monsoon	2016	03	23	26	4.853	5.789
IV	Winter	2017	03	23	26	3.266	5.543

Note: There are 01 (one) foreigner in the class who is not counted in the Mean Average grade calculation.
Total Mean Average grade of NER: 4.409
Total Mean Average grade of Non-NER: 5.337

Table-4: Average mean grade of 2016 Batch, 1st Semester to 4th Semester (1st year and 2nd Year), Centre for Korean Studies (CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU.

Sem	Season	Year	Total No. of NER	Total No. Non-NER	GT	Mean Avg. grade of NER	Mean Avg. Grade of Non-NER
I	Monsoon	2016	03	25	28	5.330	4.890
II	Winter	2017	03	25	28	6.013	5.166
III	Monsoon	2017	03	23	26	6.640	6.516
IV	Winter	2018	No data available	No data available			

Total Mean Average grade of NER: 5.994
Total Mean Average grade of Non-NER: 5.524

Methodology of Research Procedure 2:
Survey questionaire

Apart from the Data Analysis of Mean Average, standardized self-administered questionnaire survey is conducted amongst the 1st year (2017 batch) and 2nd year (2016 batch) of the students from Centre for Korean Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Survey questionaire consists of 10(ten) objective type questions with 5(five) options each. The options are graded from 1 to 5 (where 1 is the least and 5 is the most) so as to determine the prior knowledge of

learners in relation to Korean food, K-pop related activities, culture, Basic knowledge and understanding of Korea and Korean Language.

After conducting the survey, survey paper of NER students and Non-NER students are separated into two groups and Mean Average of grades are calculated accordingly.

Survey questionaire report is as under:

Table-5: Survey Report of 1st Year, B.A. (2017 batch), Centre for Korean Studies(CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU. (2017 batch)

Total No. of NER students participating in the survey	Total No. of Non-NER students participating in the survey	Survey Question No.	Mean Average of NER	Mean Average of Non-NER
05	28	1	3.40	2.46
05	28	2	2.82	1.92
05	28	3	2.00	1.14
05	28	4	3.80	2.82
05	28	5	3.80	2.10
05	28	6	3.60	2.10
05	28	7	2.80	2.39
05	28	8	3.00	2.21
05	28	9	3.00	3.46
05	28	10	4.20	2.53

1. Total number of students participating in the survey: 33
2. Overall Mean Average grades for NER: 3.342
3. Overall Mean Average grades for Non-NER: 2.313

Table-6: Survey Report of 2nd Year, B.A. (2016 batch), Centre for Korean Studies(CKS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SSLL&CS), JNU. (2017 batch)

Total No. of NER students participating in the survey	Total No. of Non-NER students participating in the survey	Survey Question No.	Mean Average of NER	Mean Average of Non-NER
04	20	1	3.75	2.09
04	20	2	2.50	1.85
04	20	3	2.25	1.07
04	20	4	4.50	2.07
04	20	5	2.50	1.95
04	20	6	4.50	1.08
04	20	7	3.25	2.08
04	20	8	2.75	1.08
04	20	9	4.50	3.05
04	20	10	5.00	2.06

1. Total number of students participating in the survey: 33
2. Overall Mean Average grades for NER: 3.325
3. Overall Mean Average grades for Non-NER: 1.838

CONCLUSION

Analysis through conducting a survey questionnaire in Procedure 1 shows that the sociolinguistics background of learners from Northeast region has the nearest sociolinguistics attributes to Korea when compared to other regions of India. Taking this into consideration, analysis based on two regional divisions is carried out in Procedure 2, which is North East Region (NER) and Non-North East Region (Non-NER).

Table 5 of Procedure 2 shows mean average grades of NER exceeds that of non-NER with a margin of 1.029 and in Table 6 mean average grades of non-NER exceeds that of non-NER with a margin of 1.487.

The above results showed that evidence of proximity in socio-cultural background and similarity in language structure plays vital role in the process of language learning. Even under the influence of mixed socio-cultural background of learners in any given level, proximity in sociolinguistics has proven to be important key factor for competency in language learning as well as its uses on a daily basis.

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APPENDIX-1

Sample questionaire survey

The objective of this survey is to determine whether a students' prior exposure to the norms and culture of the target language helps in learning target language faster and better.

Name_____

Course_____

Date_____

*All questions are objective type.

Note:

a. This survey paper would be used solely for research purpose only.

b. No information whatsoever would be disclosed to anyone without the permission of the concerned student.

c. Tick-mark against the number within bracket to register your answer.

d. If you find any question offensive of improper, you may report or withdraw your participation from the survey, and inform the survey conductor.

1. Did you know anything about Korean food and culture prior to your admission in the university?

(1) Yes (2) Very much (3) A little bit (4) Neutral (5) No

2. Have you tasted any Korean food prior to your admission in the university?

(1) Yes (2) Very much (3)A little bit (4) Don't know (5) No

3. Have you ever participated in any kind of Korean related activities prior to your admission in the university?

(1) Yes (2) Very much (3) A little bit (4) Don't know (5) No

4. I started to know about Korea when I was in…

(1) Elementary School

(2) High School

(3) Higher Secondary School

(4) University (Under Graduate)

(5) I don't remember

5. How much K-POP song did you listen to prior to your admission in the university?

(1) 0   (2) 1-5   (3) 5-10   (4) 10-15(5) 15 above

6. How much K-drama have you watched prior to your admission to the university?

(1) 0   (2) 1-5   (3) 5-10   (4) 10-15(5) 15 above

7. According to your opinion, after watching K-drama or K-Movie, how similar is your culture to Korean culture?

(1) Yes, Similar (may be 50% or above)

(2) Very much similar (may be 70% or above)

(3) A few (may 40% or less)

(4) I don't know

(5) No similarities at all (may be 10% or less)

8. Have you ever tried learning Korean on your own prior to your admission to the university?

(1) Yes

(2) Very much

(3) A little bit

(4) Don't know

(5) Never thought of it

9. What motivates you to take up Korean language as your major subject?

(1) Culture

(2) Career opportunities

(3) To explore more about Korea

(4) Got Korean language out of the 3 options available (not my first preference)

(5) Was not motivated but, proceeded anyway.

10. How much influence can you see of Korean in regard to your hometown?
(Example: Korean language learning institute, influence of dress and way of life, influence of styles and behavior, Korean restaurant etc)

(1) Yes, there are influences I can see around
(2) Yes, very much influenced
(3) Yes, but almost negligible
(4) None
(5) Did not notice. With refer to all the above theoretical research