

Roles of Filipino Language in Teaching Korean as a Foreign Language in the Graduate School

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Abstract

This study looks at the role of the Filipino language in teaching a foreign language, specifically the Korean language in graduate school. Through quantitative data analysis of documents, this paper looks at how the researcher puts a premium on the Filipino language in teaching Korean. Documents scrutinized include course syllabi for Korean 1 and Korean 2, memorandum order from the Philippine Commission on Higher Education, student outputs, and modules used in classes. Emerging themes make up the discussion section which is divided into three main parts: Filipino language as a starting point, Filipino language at the core, and Filipino language as the entirety of foreign language teaching. It is high time to revisit the approaches to advocate the use and promotion of the Filipino language (including culture) in the practice and teaching of foreign languages. It provides a great advantage once policies highlight the Filipino language as a principle, core, and the entirety of foreign language teaching in the Philippines.

Keywords: Korean as a foreign language, Filipino, critical reflections, graduate school, culture

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1. Introduction

The teaching of a foreign language is a critical component of the curriculum being an aspect that shapes global mindset, recognition of other's culture, and possession of a wide perspective regarding local and regional economic concerns, social issues, religious affairs, and cultural artifacts. According to Warner (2017), globalization's impact on the pedagogy of foreign language cannot be denied and it carries challenges not only on the learning processes but on the teaching domain as well (Serman, 2019). On the other hand, the foreign language learning experience also serves as an avenue to achieve clear-cut perspectives on a person's identity: from the personal level, local going national.

In a study by Wang (2019), it has been identified that policies on foreign language learning can be linked with the national interest, as in the case of the United States which attaches great concern on foreign language as a way of attending to national security. It has been noted that when learning a foreign language, the concept of being 'foreign' is not the sole focus, but it also champions the learner's culture, language, history, and society.

The bulk of inquiries of researchers regarding foreign language learning emphasizes classroom strategies on how students acquire the language. It is opined that various strategies and approaches to effective pedagogical principles in the context of foreign language learning center on each student's individual needs. According to Gladushina (2020), foreign language learning highlights the contextualization of globalization issues vis-à-vis its recognition of its value and role in the contemporary setting.

Critical to learning is the recognition of the numerous needs of the students. It can be gleaned that these inquiries on learning and teaching foreign languages are opportunities to strengthen best practices to better

capture the interests of the students, along with the challenges that teachers face to prepare appropriate, equitable, and innovative approaches for foreign language teaching. Viktorova and Zakhustska (2017) pushed for advocating modernization and refinement of learning models in foreign language contexts at enhancing the teaching skills as contributory to teaching standards in the international setting.

Schools and academic institutions continue to seek innovative ways in crafting the crucial approach to foreign language teaching to motivate students (Alabbasi, 2017), and this includes identifying aspects that directly impact successful learning. Lohmann et al., (2018) have affirmed the crucial role of learning institutions in responding to every challenge faced by the students. Part of the outcomes in graduate school is the attainment of higher learning concerning professional and personal goals. In these studies, a wide spectrum of experiences become attached to one's own professional experiences, thus teaching methods are frequently anchored on this strand. A study by Koc and Xiongyi (2014) revealed that graduate students possess self-regulatory strategies amid academic challenges and dilemmas. Particularly in foreign languages classes, each lesson deals with theory on grammar and vocabulary which become essential components of assessment.

From this practice springs the opportunity to anchor the entirety of students' experiences vis-à-vis the topic being discussed in class. In the context of foreign language learning, the teacher greatly contributes to the success of the process with the high hopes of achieving the course's intended learning outcomes. One fine contribution of the teacher is the determination of expected skills and attributes to be demonstrated by the students, pedagogy, assessment of student's performance, and others. The teacher's preparation on instructional and pedagogical approaches centers on the success of the teaching roles being central to effective learning.

How can the Filipino language (FL) be situated in the teaching of Korean as a foreign language (KFL)? What role does FL play in advancing the effective teaching of KFL? How does FL contribute to the attainment of intended course outcomes through its teaching? These inquiries serve as the anchor that shapes the inquiries of this research. There is a serious need to document and research on teaching foreign languages to Filipino students. The contribution and significance of this paper can be situated in this aspect since it highlights the experiences of Filipino graduate students who are learning KFL.

This study investigates the role of FL in teaching a foreign language particularly Korean. This paper highlights how the proponent of the study utilized FL in teaching KFL. A great portion of the present study deals with the national language and culture concerning teaching foreign concepts, including language. It provides affirmation that teaching foreign language is not just confined to interest and focus on a pro-foreign mindset, but it can also serve as a niche to enrich one's own identity and experiences through the lens of foreign language learning. The researcher clearly affirms that central to teaching a foreign language is the core of student's experiences and contexts.

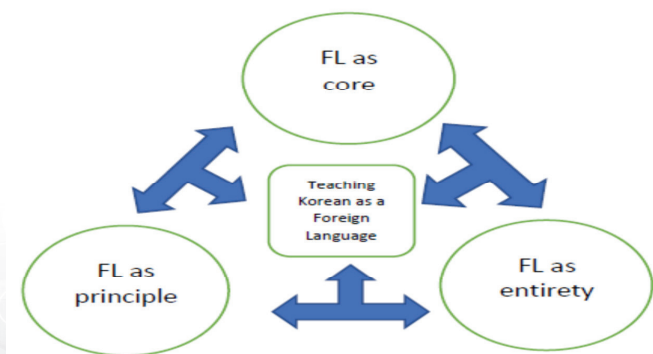


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

One essential input of this study is the experience of the researcher in teaching KFL in graduate school. According to Dawson (2018), it is important that the teacher continuously reflects on foreign language teaching performance because this gives way to identifying weaknesses and eventually leads to actualizing the modification of strategies used in teaching to improve practices. This approach is effective for teachers and students as confirmed in a study by Perez et al. (2018). While it is a given fact that there exists rich literature on foreign language teaching, the discussion on one's own language in teaching foreign language appears to be lacking. This is especially true in the context of FL.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of the present study is to describe the role of FL in the KFL teaching in the graduate school. It centers on the analysis of prepared instructional materials, teaching strategies and other related experiences of the researcher. This study particularly discusses the position of FL in the context of foreign language teaching. To fulfill the overall objectives of the study, the role of FL in teaching KFL is presented into the following:

1. FL as principle;
2. FL as core; and
3. FL as entirety.

3. Research Methods

The present study utilizes a qualitative approach to describe the experiences of the researcher in teaching KFL in the graduate school at a teacher education institution based in Manila, Philippines. Students in

graduate school are required to complete 6 units of foreign language prior to graduation. KFL is one of the languages offered for students to take.

Part of the stream of data to which the discussion is anchored includes the Korean 1 and Korean 2 course syllabi, worksheets prepared by the researcher himself, and other class materials. Instructional materials have been instrumental in the analysis to respond to the objectives of the study along with personal analysis and reflection.

As regards the validity of data used in the study, the course syllabi have been consistently reviewed and approved by faculty members at the start of the semester. The worksheets prepared for the students underwent development cycles as prescribed by the Curriculum and Instructional Materials Office of the University. These documents had gone through a series of reviews, revisions, and evaluations prior to utilization.

Through qualitative data analysis of documents, this paper looks at how the researcher puts a premium on the Filipino language in teaching Korean. Documents scrutinized also included the memorandum order from the Philippine Commission on Higher Education. Review and analysis of available data through documents have been instrumental in establishing the role of the FL as the principle, core, and entirety of the Korean language learning experience in the graduate school. In analyzing the data, courses syllabi, worksheets, and students' outputs were scrutinized to identify the roles of FL. These roles were then identified and discussed vis-à-vis currently available literature and studies. The emerging roles of FL in the context of Korean language teaching and learning were discussed accordingly.

4. Research Results

This section presents the data and analysis based on the identified objectives of the research. The result and discussion portion is divided into three main parts in relation to the role of FL in teaching KFL: FL as principle, FL as core, and FL as entirety.

4.1 FL as Principle

It cannot be denied that in the context of foreign language teaching to students with no prior experience and exposure to the language, one's own native language is being used as a mechanism as an initial approach. The explanation and teaching are done through a language both known by the teacher and students. In the context of Filipino students, FL serves as the most crucial element that keeps the teaching and learning process rolling.

FL serves as the principle in learning KFL because it is assumed that students carry limited knowledge and idea regarding the language being learned. It brings special exception when a particular student possesses advanced knowledge and skills related to the Korean language brought about by interests in popular culture or *Hallyu* (drama, songs, movies, and others). FL is maximized to explain writing rules and reading conventions in KFL, and as a vehicle in deepening the discussion of basic words that should be learned by the students.

In teaching the very basics of writing and reading in the context of KFL, FL is employed to advance effective communication to convey classroom lessons. It is assumed that using FL has its own advantages and merits as a rich stream in the conduct of teaching KFL. It helps in enhancing student competency in learning KFL.

FL effects balance on the teaching of KFL in accordance with the nature and condition of class, along with the students' skills and knowledge, which in the context of this paper, are graduate students who barely possess ideas and prior knowledge about KFL. In the process of teaching KFL using FL, the teacher becomes the balancing agent in case the students encounter difficulties in understanding concepts and grasping ideas presented in class, particularly vocabulary words and grammar rules. More importantly, it is assured that in teaching KFL, the language under study is being utilized in whatever appropriate way possible.

Using FL in the KFL context presents merits, especially in the initial part of the class to respond to student needs who possess very minimal vocabulary words and phrases. It creates opportunities for students to be significant parts of the discussion, so they can join the discussion. As part of the researcher's reflection, it has been affirmed that using FL aids in connecting students' own experience along with their ideas and thoughts which eventually become part of self-expression. In one research, it has been noted that there exists a positive student response to code-switching strategies which enhances students' understanding of the lesson. (Samani & Narafshan, 2016).

As part of the goal of integrating FL as a principle in teaching KFL, the researcher has developed a task sheet as instructional material. The material is written in FL. The role of FL as a support and facilitator of learning is emphasized. The teacher's overall role is for the students to be able to recognize the Korean alphabet, read, and write basic words. The focus is still clear, and the material adheres to the course's intended learning outcomes. The researcher puts these ideas with great consideration: FL facilitates towards successful teaching of KFL. FL as a principle is situated on strategies that enhance skills in a foreign language.

In the context of the present study where students learning KFL belong to the graduate level, employing FL is found to be effective in clearly and effectively relaying what needs to be discussed in class. Celik and Aydin (2018) noted that using one's own native language helps in class management, explaining and reiterating meaning, and encouraging students to join the discussion. Moreover, reading, speaking, thinking, and the possession of ideas pertaining to the target language can be relayed through the learners' native language.

FL acts as the principle in the context of KFL because it serves as an invitation for students that even if they possess limited or zero knowledge about the language under study, FL will be at the starting point. FL also provides the teacher of the foreign language to advance systematic approaches in relation to pedagogy and assessment. FL is at the initial steps towards improving student motivation and determination to join the discussion, communicate, and eventually learn the target language.

4.2 FL as Core

In the second part of the discussion, this paper presents the role of FL as the core when it comes to teaching KFL. It is important to note that teaching a foreign language does not only fulfill interest in other country's language and culture, but it contributes to deepening how one values his or her native language and elevates the discourse of FL through intellectual discourse, as a vehicle for knowledge acquisition.

It is critical to recognize the potential of FL as the cradle and niche towards understanding other people's cultures. Through this, the intellectualization of FL is given premium in relation to various fields of study and discipline. Moreover, positioning FL at the core of foreign language teaching gives the needed push in highlighting the critical role of language

and culture as agents that enable understanding and tolerance towards diversity.

According to Ancho (2019), as one is given the opportunity to learn about other country's language and culture in the foreign language classes, students go through the analysis of their own identity which eventually becomes an element to look at Filipino language and culture in a different light: more valued and highly appreciated. In the context of foreign language teaching, the creation of a wider perspective takes place regarding comparison and reflection on being a Filipino through the FL. In addition, more than the pro-Filipino mindset, the foreign language class weaves the potential of interaction and unity of different cultures and ideas, being more prone to tolerance, especially in the ASEAN integration landscape. The perspective is not boxed on one's own country, but it encompasses a larger and great viewpoint and consideration towards the "other".

The practical aspects of a foreign language class push the students to reflect upon the connection of their own culture and others (Liu, 2014.) Under the directions of the teacher, a foreign language class becomes meaningful because it is not only limited to discussion on vocabulary, sentences, and grammar but rather it also talks about the culture, society, and history. The class serves as a prime contributor in affirming that the core of successful foreign language learning is the analysis and reflection regarding one's native language and culture.

By positioning FL at the core of foreign language teaching, particularly in KFL, it conveys to the students the perspective of living outside the country, especially the mindset of being sensitive about the culture of others. It serves as a link between what has been learned inside the classroom and the students' experiences to deepen understanding and

appreciation of oneself. Through this, understanding springs based on how tolerance and sensitivity are contextualized according to experience.

4.3 FL as Entirety

One of the primary goals of the graduate college of the institution under study is the creation of alternative mechanisms to respond to the needs of the country. The goal is in line with the context of the ecology of practice and research in teacher education research. To heed this call, KFL class mainstreams FL in advancing the country's culture and language. A greater part of the advocacy is to position FL as the entirety of the KFL class, in relation to the challenges of the intellectualization of the country's national language. KFL class elevates the discourse on FL as a vehicle that facilitates language creation, acquisition, and research. FL is the entirety of KFL class.

To be particular with the instructional material used in class, the researcher recognizes that available resources regarding KFL are mostly written in the English language. This serves as one of the major challenges that align to the appropriateness of these materials to the context of Filipino students, thus the proponent of the study deemed it necessary to develop and prepare learning materials written in the FL.

In contextualizing the lessons presented in the course, each objective was analyzed to provide assurance that the role of FL is given emphasis as it contributes to the attainment of course intended learning outcomes: write, read, speak, and listen to elementary level competencies of the Korean language. The development of the instructional materials relies heavily on the inputs which focus on culture as it aptly responds to the needs of the students.

5. Conclusion

FL plays a critical role in the context of teaching and learning KFL. In the teaching of KFL, the advancement of the contribution of FL can be situated in various aspects by positioning it as the principle, core, and entirety. This paper is central to the experiences of the researcher who has been teaching KFL in graduate school for more than four years since 2018. The researcher carries the assumption that the context of the KFL class could be an opportunity to be developed as a niche towards the intellectualization of FL: as streams and facilitators of knowledge and understanding of the culture of others.

FL as a principle presents a discourse that highlights the benefits to foreign language learners: mainly banking on their native language to maximize learning opportunities and/or foreign language familiarity / mastery. These are especially evident in learning vocabulary, phrases, and cultural discussion. In the local setting, there exists limited available literature regarding foreign language teaching in the Philippines, especially the inquiry that links it to FL. Teaching KFL is an invitation to conduct research and embark on inquiries and discourse together with teachers and students. These are opportunities to launch advocacies to value culture (native or foreign).

FL as a core encapsulates the process of intensifying foreign language learning process with emphasis on FL valuation. Situating FL at the core of the learning progress prompts its intellectualization, thereby contributing to knowledge production, generation, and dissemination. The discussion and analysis presented in this paper serve as inputs to deepen and improve practices towards the design and implementation of KFL curriculum.

FL as entirety responds to the intended and unintended learning outcomes of the foreign language learning process. It supports the call to strengthen ways to advance the use of FL (including Filipino culture) in the practice of teaching foreign languages. FL as entirety affirms FL as the facilitator of foreign language teaching. It would be a great advantage if policies would explicitly assign FL as principle, core, and entirety of foreign language endeavor since it serves as a mechanism to further enrich Filipino language, culture, and civilization.

The support given to those who develop foreign language instructional materials written in the FL could also be seen as a great contribution. Through seminar, workshop, and other activities, teachers are being capacitated to write, use, and value the pro-FL materials used in class.

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