

Making Interdisciplinary Connections in Advanced-Level Korean Language Curriculum: Designing Content-Based Project Modules

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Abstract

Korean language programs in US higher education are experiencing noticeable and continuous growth. While students' interest in Korea may initially be driven by Korean pop culture, Korean language educators need to expose these students to advanced-level language study and content. This paper addresses content-based project modules designed by interweaving the multiliteracies- and Standards-based frameworks. These modules enable students to connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic- and career-related contexts.

Keywords: content-based instruction; project modules; advanced-level language; Korean; multiliteracies-based; project-based; Standards

Introduction

To bridge the language–content division and design advanced-level curriculum “should consist of a series of complementary or linked courses that holistically incorporate content and cross-cultural reflection” (Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007, p. 5). However, achieving this mission statement’s goals can pose a challenging task for language practitioners and, particularly, less commonly taught languages (LCTL) programs, departments, and higher education institutions. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the following questions: How are Korean studies content and language curricula integrated? What are the benefits and challenges of the current practices found in advanced-level language courses, which often serve as students’ primary introduction to content and culture courses? How do educators design advanced-level language courses that compensate for the lack of Korean content courses or further integrate and strengthen Korean studies curricula?

This paper ultimately seeks a diverse way to provide language learners with opportunities to advance their language and culture learning to reach higher academic and professional proficiency, thus allowing them to thrive when undertaking the further rigors of content learning. To meet this goal, this paper

examines and shares advanced language curriculum modules that bridge language and content, thereby facilitating language learners in making meaningful connections among different disciplines or subject areas.

1. Practices in Teaching Advanced Korean

Like many LCTL programs in US higher education settings, Korean language programs have relatively few or even lacking resources for building advanced-level courses. These deficits, in many cases, are due to the low enrollment retention in upper-level courses and the absence of area studies programs that offer undergraduate minor or major degrees. Consequently, most language practices and pedagogical research are more focused on beginning- to intermediate-level teaching and learning. Nevertheless, in light of teaching and learning of advanced Korean, practitioners and programs have been steadily striving to build advanced-level language courses and curriculum as well as materials development. Those efforts are reflected in Korean pedagogical literature, and they tend to share practice-based curriculum design or learning activities rather than an empirical research design.

Teaching practices of advanced Korean seemingly involve the *what* and *how* associated with students advancing their language skills. Because few commercial textbooks at the advanced level have been available, content selection and materials development (*what*) and pedagogical approaches

(*hwa*) have drawn attention among Korean language practitioners in North America.

In light of pedagogical approaches for teaching advanced Korean, content-based instruction (CBI) is widely adopted as the course framework foundation (Cheon 2007; Choi 2015; Wang 2012). CBI is a language pedagogical approach that emphasizes learning about other subject matter using the language as a medium. Through CBI, language learners can develop their language skills as well as gain access to new concepts through meaningful content (Stoller & Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2016). Advanced Korean language courses that incorporate meaningful content in various themes have become a common practice.

Cheon (2007) shared how incorporating films can provide meaningful content for advanced language learners. Likewise, literature (poetry, short stories, and essays), news articles, and so on are popular content resources with rich cultural materials for advanced language teaching. Wang (2012) proposed a theme-based content curricular model of an advanced Korean course—*Conflict in Korean Culture and Society*—aiming to deepen advanced learners' linguistic and cultural competencies and to improve their analytical and critical thinking skills. Suggested themes in the model course include various topics from history, education, language, literature, politics and government, economy, society, family

and gender, sports, science, and technology. Furthermore, Choi (2015) illustrated a content course, *Gender and Sexuality in Korean Culture*, for advanced learners of Korean, which weighs more heavily on the content matter and fosters perspectives on critical views rather than on language development. This course model highlights using language in socio-political and historical contexts by exploring “the culture as a constitutive and ongoing entity” (Choi 2015, p.127). As clearly demonstrated in an array of literature, CBI has been widely implemented with various contents (subject matter) and materials incorporation in teaching advanced Korean.

Project-based learning (PBL) has also been incorporated into advanced Korean language curricula, although it is not as commonly utilized as CBI. For example, Oh (2012) suggested a PBL curriculum for high-advanced level learning as a key solution to the challenging pedagogical agenda such as promoting authenticity, learner autonomy, and connection to the real-world applications in advanced Korean language courses. The showcased course project is semester-long research based on individual student’s interest areas, such as politics, culture, literature, international relations, economics, religion, and education. Throughout the semester, students investigate, read, discuss, and then produce a written paper in the target language as a final project outcome. Lee-Smith (2018) discussed the impact of a community-based

mentoring project, Junior-and-Mentor (JAM), designed for advanced Korean language learners. Throughout the semester, undergraduate students and international Korean graduate student mentors at the same institution are matched on the basis of their career interests, majors, or areas of specialty and meet regularly for career advice, shadowing, training, and networking. The participating students' reflective reports clearly demonstrated that PBL, such as JAM, can provide learners with well-rounded learning opportunities in all five "C" Standard goal areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Oh (2012) and Lee-Smith's (2018) PBL findings of those case studies suggest that guidance and project tasks that are thoughtfully and systematically designed are the key principles of PBL as well as instructors' roles as facilitator and designer. Thus, PBL is a valuable contribution to helping students achieve successful learning outcomes.

The New London Group's (1996) multiliteracy approach has recently garnered more attention in literacy education and advanced language teaching. The approach has not yet been adopted widely in Korean language teaching but has potential in light of its pedagogical rationales that highlight two aspects: practicing critical views and utilizing technology and multiple modes of communication (e.g., visual, gestural, spatial, aural, oral) in today's globalized digital world. Lee-

Smith (2016) provided an insightful opportunity to rethink and extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy in language teaching, showing why and how Korean TV Public Service Announcements can serve as a valuable resource for content-based teaching of Korean language and cultural literacy. The suggested lesson modules are designed by interweaving the multiliteracies framework (i.e., situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice) and the Standards learning goal areas (the 5 Cs). Yoon and Brown (2017) demonstrated teaching Korean honorifics and deference, particularly focusing on multimodal dimensions of politeness communication (namely verbal and nonverbal communication) by adopting the multiliteracies framework. Their results suggest that the multiliteracies framework encourages learners to turn their attention to multimodal communication (i.e., nonverbal mode of communication), which is usually less prioritized compared to the traditional verbal mode of communication in classroom teaching.

Korean language programs in US higher education are experiencing noticeable and continuous growth. The Modern Language Association of America reported in 2018 that enrollment in Korean increased by nearly 14% between fall 2013 and fall 2016, while overall foreign language enrollment decreased by 9.2% in colleges and universities. Although students' interest in Korea may initially be driven by Korean

popular culture, Korean language educators should consider exposing these students to the advanced language content involved in Korean studies, such as history, literature, religion, film, sociology, politics, or economics.

In the context of this heightened interest in the Korean language, building a diverse and integrated advanced language curriculum is one of the essential gateways to building a foundation for the area studies. This timely paper addresses curriculum designs that enable language learners to connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives that help them use the language to transition smoothly from language learning to academic or career-related applications.

2. Pedagogical Framework

Language textbooks should correspond to learners' needs and reflect the language uses they will make (Cunningsworth, 1995); however, no commercial textbook will ever be a perfect fit for a language program (Richards, 2001). Therefore, language textbooks should be regarded as one of many resources that teachers can draw upon to create effective lessons; as such, teachers must adapt and modify textbooks, use authentic materials, and create their own teaching materials, learning tasks, and projects (Lee-Smith & Roh, 2016).

Language textbooks can be a useful reference resource for teaching and learning, but they have limitations in providing learners with sufficient, authentic language contexts and applications. For example, textbooks tend to be very non-interactive, monomodal, impersonal, and inflexible in terms of reflecting students' interests and fostering authentic language applications. Paper-based textbooks are especially limited in reflecting the current emphasis on real-world language use and digital communication in the 21st century. With these insights in mind, content materials that are highly relevant and authentic can be integrated into a language curriculum. To respond appropriately to this shift, language learners must feel deeply connected to how they use the language and what material they learn in this post-textbook era. Therefore, language teaching practice, content, and curricula must be aligned as well.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

CBI and Languages Across Curriculum (LxC) approaches view language as a medium for learning content as a rich language-learning resource. "Content and student perceptions of content should not be merely regarded as vehicles for the delivery of linguistic training, but rather that they must be the center of the collegiate foreign language curriculum" (Urlaub, 2015, p. 1). CBI (Brinton et al., 1989) allows language learners to focus on content learned through the language, which is the

medium. LxC provides students with the opportunity to meaningfully apply their existing language skills in other disciplines and content courses (Klee, 2009). LxC allows students not only to improve their language skills but also to broaden and deepen their understanding of the subject matter, which is their course content. These approaches encourage students to learn a language by allowing them to use it meaningfully through various modes of communication. A considerable range of stimulating content can be incorporated into language classes so that learners are engaged in appropriate and creative language use. Learners, especially in high-intermediate to advanced language proficiency, have the opportunity to learn the language and content naturally.

CBI provides learners with contextualized learning (Wesche, 1993); develops a wider range of discourse skills (Byrnes, 2000; Pessoa et al., 2007); advances language proficiency (Wesche, 2012); and encourages academic growth (Stoller, 2004) and critical thinking skills (Marashi & Mirghafari, 2019). That is, learners can make connections with the language and the content that they learn. Thus, language is a meaningful tool for accessing content and is used in a purposeful context rather than as an isolated entity.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

PBL can be summarized by the multiple characteristics that are beneficial to language learners. PBL is learner-oriented and

encourages collaboration with others in the community (Lee-Smith, 2018). Learners make their own choices that determine project outcomes, and those outcomes can involve and be shared with others. The learning focus is not on the final product but on the process and learning that occurs while working on the project (Tavares & Potter, 2018). Above all, PBL promotes learners to engage in real-world experiences or problems. They are challenged yet motivated through the project because PBL makes language learning more relatable to everyday life (Sidman, et al., 2001) and “forges more extended and deeper engagements with the world beyond the classroom, elicit[s] critical reflection, and promote[s] collaboration” (Van Deusen-Scholl & Charitos, 2020, p. 87). Furthermore, through a language curriculum that provides a PBL environment, learners can improve their linguistic competence (Lee-Smith, 2017) and find opportunities to learn from materials beyond their language proficiency.

Language teaching in the 21st century must go beyond the current focus on the communicative approach and pursue the goal of preparing language learners to become more effective and capable language users. One way to achieve this goal is to develop a repository of various PBL materials and make them available on the digital platform; for example, a project repository in an open educational resource platform would be very useful, especially for collaboratively building

resources of LCTL teaching and learning materials, which have been insufficient in general.

Standards- and Multiliteracies-Based Learning Tasks

Multiliteracies (multiple literacies) is a pedagogical approach founded by The New London Group (1996). The approach aims at making language instruction more inclusive of cultural, linguistic, communicative, and technological diversity. It is closely associated with multimodality: ↓multiple modes of meaning-making (e.g., technologies, communication channels, and mediums, which differ from traditional pedagogy that tends to focus on monomodal teaching and learning).

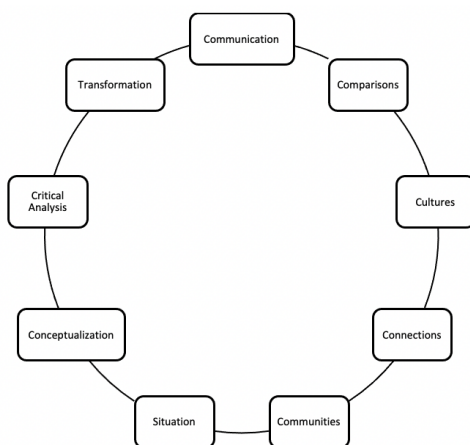
The multiliteracies approach emphasizes the significance of situating language use within socially complex multimodal contexts that are commonly found in the 21st century (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Warner & Dupuy, 2018). Cope and Kalantzis (2000) have suggested using the multiliteracies model for effective multiliteracies pedagogical practice, which consists of four components: (a) situated practice, in which students develop their knowledge through relating and connecting to their prior knowledge with others; (b) overt instruction, which teaches students to conceptualize the situations they experience for a better and deeper understanding; (c) critical framing, in which students critically analyze and relate meanings to their sociocultural context and purposes to practice and develop

critical thinking skills; and (d) transformed practice, in which students apply their learning to meaningful and authentic real-world tasks and problem-solving. This pedagogical paradigm also closely aligns with the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (NSCB, 2015), which guides language learners toward developing the skills required to communicate adequately with cultural competence, encouraging their participation in the multilingual communities of today's globalizing world.

Language courses implementing the Standards approach can provide learners with opportunities to develop well-rounded five "C" standard goal areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. They can be summarized as the following: (a) Communication, where learners communicate effectively to function in various situations; (b) Cultures, where learners interact appropriately with cultural competence and understanding; (c) Connections, where learners use the language to function in academic- and career-related situations; (d) Comparisons, where learners develop insight into the nature of language and the concept of culture through comparisons of the studied language and cultures and their own; and (e) Communities, where learners participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world (NSCB, 2015).

Figure 1 illustrates the nine learning goals as the pedagogical foundation that this paper suggests designing and incorporating content-based project modules for advanced language learners. These goals were derived from the Standards and the multiliteracies approaches.

Figure 1. Multiliteracies and the Standards Framework



3. Designing a Content-Based (CB) Project Module

Designing a course with content-enriched projects to bridge content and language is an essential process in higher education. CB projects enable close collaboration between content- and language-focused colleagues, involve graduate students as near-future educators, and innovate hybrid content-language opportunities.

Language courses, particularly at the advanced level, are generally textbook-driven and separated from the content track. Language–content integration can bridge the gap between language courses and content courses. Maxim (2014) stressed that language and content need to be integrated across the curriculum at all levels, and CB projects promote such integration and adopt an essential role in helping language learners smoothly transition from language learning to content learning.

As shown in Figure 2, CB projects can be designed in two different formats: content-focused language, which weighs content learning through language as a medium more heavily; and language-focused content, which weighs language learning using the content as the primary learning materials more heavily.

Figure 2. Language-Content Transformation

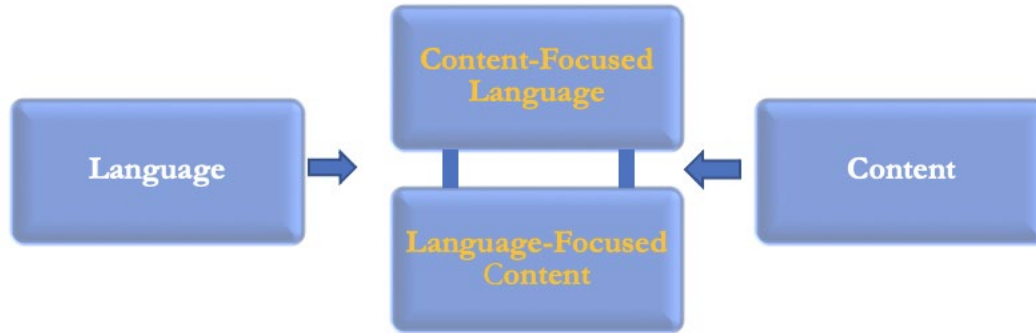


Figure 3 shows the practical models of language–content integration. The content course in the target-language model means that faculty, including, but not limited to, postdoctoral associates, visiting faculty, and graduate students in doctoral programs, teach the content course in the target language. For example, a languages and literatures department can implement this model and create a literature course as its language programs’ advanced-level course. The language section of a content course model proposes the collaboration between content and language faculty. Content faculty teaches the target language’s content course in English, and language faculty teaches the language section. The learning focus in a language section can be on formal and academic speaking and writing skills. Both content-focused and language-focused models are language courses, but the weight of focus is different. Thus, a language-focused content model is more suitable for intermediate to advanced-low proficiency-level courses, whereas a content-focused language model is more suitable for advanced-level proficiency. Following this format, both lower proficiency-level language curriculum and advanced-level language curriculum can integrate the interdisciplinary content.

Figure 3. Language-Content Integration Models



In terms of the course content selection, the themes in Table 1 have been incorporated in our advanced Korean language courses in the program for content-enriched curricular transformation. These content themes were also carefully selected, taking the students' common interests and needs into account.

Table 1. Content-Based Project Themes

Literature and Translation	Folktales: Values, Thoughts, and Concepts	Films and Critique	Critical Views: Language as Social Practice/Justice
History: Through Major Historical Events (Modern)	Interculturality and Reflection	Ethnicity, Heritage, and Identity: Narratives/Autobiography/Oral History	Media
Heritage: Identity, Culture, and Language	Korean Culture and Society through K-Pop and Music	Independent Research Study	Religion and Culture
Psychology and the Good Life/The Science of Wellbeing	Socioeconomic: Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives	Community-Based Learning	Guest Speaker Series (Lecture/TED talk)

4. Sample Content-Based Project Module

The Blue House Public Petitions

This chapter presents a sample project module as a CBI for advanced Korean learners. The module was designed based on the pedagogical framework and integrated the Standards and the multiliteracies approaches discussed in the previous chapter. The project module contains the multiliteracies goals (i.e., experiencing, understanding, analyzing, and applying) and selected Standards goals (i.e., Communication, Comparisons, Cultures, Connections, and Communities). Each stage is embedded with the key tasks and suggested, but not limited to, resources and materials.

In this project, students learn by using the language as social practice: i.e., critically reviewing and gaining insights into current ongoing societal issues by participating in South Korea's Blue House (equivalent to the US White House) public petitions. Students choose petitions in various dimensions that reflect Korean society's current issues and critically examine, discuss, and debate topics presented in those petitions. The project goal is twofold: First, students experience the ways of analyzing texts in diverse situations and for different intentions or goals. Second, they practice thinking critically about and responding to texts developed in divergent circumstances.

The participating students (N=9) were members of an advanced Korean language course in a private university on the US's East Coast during the fall of 2020. Due to COVID-19, the course was converted to a remote class via Zoom. The 50-minute classes met on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 14 weeks, using a remote synchronous instructional mode via the Zoom platform. There were nine students enrolled in this course. Three out of nine were foreign language learners; six of the nine were Korean heritage learners. The students' speaking and writing ranged from advanced-low to advanced - mid level proficiency. The course included several projects designed for content on various themes such as literature appreciation and translation, film critique, sociocultural literacy, and language for critical views and social practice. The project—Blue House Public Petitions—was one of the learning themes and provided content for this course. This project's duration was a four-week synchronous class meeting time (twelve contact hours) plus some asynchronous preparation work, mostly for individual writing and recording. Assessments in this project were based on completing the assignments and constituted 15% of the final grade. However, attending the class was required for progress-based assignments that involved producing multiple drafts and revisions with comprehensive feedback from the course instructor, course teaching assistant, and peers (classmates).

Week 1 was designated for the Situated Practice phase. Students experienced and explored the new information (i.e., current or ongoing societal issues and phenomena) and utilized their existing knowledge and available resources in order to relate them to the situation. Students talked about current issues in our society and elaborated on the situations from the personal level to the community level (local, societal, and global). Furthermore, they explored various ways of addressing the issues with the broader public and how to make requests and meaningful changes to advocate for causes that benefit our society. Afterward, the US and South Korea's public petition sites were introduced to the class. These sites enabled the students to experience the topics for which people in each society currently address and petition. The class discussed and selected the most significant and urgent issues to collaboratively share and highlight with the public and to add their voices.

Week 2 focused on the Conceptualization phase, in which students gained a deeper understanding of the information or situation. This phase consisted of a variety of in-depth linguistic training on reading comprehension, vocabulary and expressions, speaking, genre-based discourse styles, rhetorical strategies, appropriate registers, and so on. Additionally, students investigated and learned about the concepts and backgrounds of the topics—public health and

safety, policy, pandemic, hosting a public event, LGBT advocacy—addressed in the petition the class chose. The petition asked for permission to host a public event (an LGBT advocacy festival) during the fall of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic’s peak in South Korea. During that time, South Korea had issues with public events, such as a COVID-19 outbreak resulting from a religious cult’s mass gathering. Further considerations included public health guidelines; Korea’s response to COVID-19; and the Bill of Rights amendments (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, right to petition the government) in Korea. By working on this phase, students researched and shared the background contexts to better understand the petition’s content.

During Week 3, the Critical Framing phase, students analyzed the issues in multiple dimensions (e.g., pros and cons, agreement or disagreement, rationales) and conveyed their opinions and critical views through discussion and debates. As a follow-up activity, each student wrote a public and official response to the petition from the position of the Blue House spokesperson and shared their responses with their classmates for further discussion. In order to produce the final draft, students were provided with instructor feedback, reinforcing the appropriate registers, accuracy, tones, and styles as public

and official written messages from the government, which they explored in the previous weeks.

In Week 4, the Transformed Practice phase, students applied their learning to real-world purposes; the students used the language as social practice to persuade public opinions, share critical views, and write a formal letter of request and/or editorial. Students had choices on which mode to transfer their messages and thoughts (i.e., multiple modes of meaning-making in the multiliteracies approach). For example, as final project applications, students produced a public service announcement video, audio podcast, social media memes, a written editorial, or spoken-word poetry.

Students who produced public service announcement videos portrayed various public issues and their messages: e.g., mental health and social stigmas, COVID-19 and racial discrimination against Asian and Asian Americans, and college students and sleep deprivation. An audio podcast, *Raise Your Voice*, included students' critical thinking on student income contribution (financial burden), calling for a universal pass grading policy. Some students created social media postings of memes—images with short narratives—depicting the new normal resulting from COVID-19. A written editorial on a closed-circuit television installation on campus and a spoken-word performance video on personal well-being and self-care,

A Letter to Myself, were also produced to share the students' messages with community members.

Table 2 describes an overview of the project module, the Blue House Petitions. This project module can be incorporated into any advanced language class, of course, with appropriate adjustments or modifications that can be the most suitable for individual course curriculum and the students.

Table 2. Summary of Project Module—The Blue House Petitions

Theme		Critical Views: Language Use for Social Practice, Social Justice		
Language		Argumentation Persuasion Debate Discussion	Content	Societal Issues: Social justice, Social practice, The public petitions submitted in Korea's Blue House petition
Phase	Multiliteracies goal	Standards goal	Task	Material/Resource

Week1	Situated Practice	Communication (Interpretive, Interpersonal); Comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarizing with public petitions and current issues on campus and in society in students' own culture and country - Exploring sample public petitions on current critical issues in the target culture society/country 	Public petition sites in the US (e.g., We the People, the White House Petition site) and in Korea (e.g., The Blue House Petition site)
Week2	Conceptualization	Connections; Communication	- Exploring various ways of practicing	The Blue House Petition site; Digital media (Social Media;

		(Interpretive, Interpersonal)	language as social practice and voice of critical views - Reviewing and selecting a critical petition in small groups or pairs and preparing for presentation and debates	News media; Podcasts and Blogs)
Week3	Critical Framing	Communities; Cultures; Communication (Interpersonal, Presentational)	- Participating in debates and open discussions in support or opposition with a constructive opinion on selected petitions	Debate and discussion

			- Writing a formal response to the petition from the position of the Blue House spokesperson	
Week4	Transformed Application	Presentational Communication; Communities	- Producing and sharing a public service announcement, audio podcast, written editorial, social media memes, or spoken-word performance video to influence the	Multimodal podcasting and publishing platform

			public on critical social issues (either in a small group or individually) -Producing and sharing a collaborative digital podcast channel, <i>Your Voice Matters</i> , by contributing constructive and critical opinions on various social or national issues	
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After completing the project, the class had a short session of reflective conversation as a synchronous activity via Zoom. The students were also asked to submit a brief written reflection as an asynchronous activity. This self-reflection was not guided by specific questions, but it was prompted with a broad, open-ended question, “Reflect freely on your thinking, learning, and work on this project.”

The following is a sample of a student’s reflection on this project:

<Excerpt> Student’s reflection on the project: The Blue House Public Petitions

For me, the 청와대 청원 토론 (The Blue House Petition Discussion) was my first experience with debating and discussing social issues in the Korean language. I really enjoyed the debate because speaking eloquently was one of the parts of my Korean that I wanted to improve on. Since my political knowledge of the Korean government was very limited, this part of the curriculum was a great opportunity for me to learn more about social issues in Korea and how the Korean government was responding to these problems. One of the most memorable discussions we had was regarding a person who had traveled around the country and spread the coronavirus, and whether this person should be punished severely for her careless actions. The 청와대 청원 토론 was easily one of my favorite parts of the course curriculum, as I was able to hear from the insights of my fellow classmates and my professor while she moderated the discussion. My professor and my fellow classmates challenged my belief system frequently

and encouraged me to justify the statements that I made. Also, I learned that it may be easy to formulate opinions through English, but the true challenge in this project was to turn our thoughts into cogent arguments in Korean. Personally, because I was so interested in this discussion part of Korean class, I found myself doing outside research to learn even more and expand my range of vocabulary. The only thing I would suggest about this in the Korean curriculum is to spend even more time on it! Because I really enjoyed the topics that we talked about in class, I personally thought the discussion was shortened by some of the other parts of the Korean language that we were learning about (i.e. writing and reading), but that may be difficult to manage.

As mentioned in the student's reflection, this project can enhance students' language skills in vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, it stimulates their intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and cogent arguments in specific content, such as current social issues and political knowledge of the Korean government.

The Comparisons standard aims to develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing the language and culture—the target content studied and learners' own language and culture. Through reading, translating, and analyzing literary texts, learners deepen their linguistic knowledge and language awareness, as the student reflected, “because I was so interested in this discussion part of Korean class, I found myself doing outside research to learn even more and expand my range of vocabulary.” Furthermore, the project tasks facilitate understanding of the culture and have a powerful impact on learners.

Kern (2000) defined literacy as “a complex concept of familiarity with language and its use in context” and stated that it requires “a broader discourse competence that involves the ability to interpret and critically evaluate a wide variety of written and spoken texts” (p. 2). In this context, while working on the multiliteracies goals along with a series of content-enriched learning tasks, students were able to develop multiliteracies competence.

The integration of the Communities standard in the project also presents advantages for language learners, as shown in the student's excerpt (e.g., participating in discussion and debates on the ongoing societal issues posted on the Blue House Public Petitions site). This participation suggests that language instructors can expand and refine their existing course curriculum and benefit from providing students with the opportunities to experience the Standards goal areas. Thus, creating a collaborative repository of projects like this that can be shared among LCTL language faculty in higher education settings would prove worthwhile in expanding advanced-level teaching and learning resources.

Critical views and language use for social practice can be such a broad concept that language instructors may have difficulty selecting the authentic materials or content they would like to focus on and the level of depth for a language course curriculum. The project's goal was to introduce several issues that carry significant social impacts and are commonly shared and discussed in the target society. Those societal issues presented as public petitions are not included in most language textbooks, and this project stimulated the students' intellectual curiosity and motivation to get out of their comfort zone in order to further investigate and learn (e.g., vocabulary, concepts)—the heart of the Connections standard goals.

Furthermore, this project allowed students to practice their critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills on real-world issues by researching and reviewing various viewpoints, rather than learning from a teacher or relying exclusively on biased views from textbook reading materials. Thus, a project like this can cultivate language learners' sociocultural literacy and broaden their horizons as they expand their content knowledge and critical skills. In this respect, learning by doing what the target culture's community members actually do (e.g., public debates or petitions) is not only a crucial element of humanistic inquiry but also essential for fostering global literacy and inclusive perspectives.

Developing various communication skills—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—both in written and oral modes is important but insufficient for learners in higher education. This type of content-enriched language project can provide our students with the opportunities to investigate and acquire meaningful and relevant content toward their personal interests while advancing their language skills in academic contexts.

Interdisciplinary content integration in language learning, as the MLA report (2007) suggested, aligns “with other departments and [is] expressed through interdisciplinary courses” (p. 3). This integration can induce students' attention to higher-order thinking skills such as observing, analyzing,

evaluating, or hypothesizing. It can also provide students with the target language's appropriate uses and conventions in academic writing.

Therefore, designing CB projects that are authentic, engaging, yet intellectually stimulating and relevant to learners in higher education is a way to integrate the Standards goals and to foster creative and critical language applications—the multiliteracies goals. By actively and regularly participating in reflective discussions and debates, students learn how to effectively articulate their thoughts and practice problem-solving skills in the target language. Thus, CB projects can guide students' learning to become more applicable and connected to their future studies or careers. Overall, incorporating the CB project, *The Blue House Petitions*, into the course curriculum for advanced learners was rewarding and worthwhile.

5. Closing Thoughts

This article addressed the importance and potential of CB projects, which have yet to be widely embraced in Korean language and LCTL curricula. It featured a CB project module design—the *Blue House Public Petitions*—as an example for undergraduate language students in advanced-level classes. The paper discussed ways of devising curricula that integrate both academic content and language learning to establish and promote the content within current interdisciplinary academic

trends. In addition, it presented multiliteracies and standards-based project designs that enable language learners to engage with other disciplines and acquire information, as well as gain diverse perspectives for using their language skills for a smooth transition into an academic-related context.

Fostering interdisciplinary connections, particularly in an LCTL language curriculum in higher education, is challenging. This timely paper has suggested developing content-based advanced language project modules to meet such a challenge. Incorporating content-based language projects is a way to unify and create curricular connections and cohesion, which is difficult to create without more content courses. The sample project module demonstrated in this paper will benefit the following three major aspects: (a) Korean and other LCTL language faculty (e.g., guidance to design content-based learning experiences); (b) learners (e.g., having opportunities to engage with Korean culture, speakers, and various discipline areas in meaningful and tangible ways); (c) advanced-level curriculum (e.g., integrating language and interdisciplinary content). This timely curriculum design will enable language learners to connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives to use the language to function in academic and career-related contexts.

Furthermore, this paper's project module themes can provide LCTL educators and content-area-study scholars with

the opportunity to share and discuss means for devising a coherent curriculum that can promote both content and language learning. However, there is still room for improvement. More quantitative data from applications of the project in diverse learning settings (e.g., heritage/second language learners, more students, more courses, private/public institutions) would strengthen the findings of this paper; thus, this paper would become a call for action among Korean and other LCTL practitioners to collaborate in further research.

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