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Article Title

The Pervading Influence of Neo- Confucianism on the Korean Education System

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Bio Data

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Key Words:

Confucius and Mencius, Korean education, filial piety, post IMF Confucianism, King Sejong

Abstract:

Modern Korean education is based on two competing systems, that given by the government and that given by private enterprise. The later clearly dominates the students life from elementary school through to University studies. Hitherto rote learning had characterized the Korean education system, with students rewarded for pure memory as opposed to creativity. This system is under attack from progressive educationalists, however, no matter what reforms are brought about, the fact remains that Korean education, at all levels, is underpinned by the silent yet strangling force of Confucianism. Until reformists accept this and build it into the learning cycle, rote learning will pervade all levels of learning.

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Introduction

The following considers the influences, positive and negative, that the historical Chinese educators, Confucius and Mencius are having on the South Korean Education system. For the purpose of this work, 'influence' means any apparent existing and observable fact or occurrence that maybe directly or indirectly affecting or shaping Korean educational policy.

It is difficult to span 2500 years and conclusively say the 'influence' still exists. It is suggested that given the time span, the question better raises the issue whether in fact any of the principles attributed to Confucius and Mencius can be identified as existing in any form in current educational spheres, and if so, to what degree? Secondly it must be assessed whether any influences are in the original perception or have undergone significant transformation within the same guise of Confucianism.

Thirdly, it may be asked if in fact Confucianism has survived, as Chen (1993:5) notes that it is "...challenged by great rivals with the advent of western thought and way of life, and a new social order, brought about by the industrial age." It will be argued that Neo-Confucianism, has in fact, been reshaped post 1997 IMF ¹ Korean financial crisis, and that it is ever more inherent and visible particularly in the educational sphere.

J.K. Lee (2002:45-61) arguing for the Confucianist survival notes that contemporary education policy is influenced by an intricate combination of factors, namely, Confucianism, Christianity via the ongoing medium of 18th century Missionaries, and the development of 'private education' institutes, though the author provides little supporting evidence on this second point. W.O. Lee (1996), likewise a proponent of contemporary Confucianist manifestations, concludes the Confucian influence is observable in Japan, (Korea's neighbor) in 6 educational areas, and that Asia can be

considered as a whole in terms of his conclusion. It will be argued that whilst the points can be connected to Confucianism, suggesting that Asia is a whole in terms of his opinion cannot be so.

I have opted to view the above ideas as seen in today's Korea through two competing Education systems, namely (a) the government education system as controlled centrally by the Seoul Board of Education, (though decentralization is currently occurring) and (b) the 'hogwon' or 'private academy' system which can be defined simply as any Korean registered teaching institution for the purpose of providing extra tutorials in a variety of subjects to Korean students. This style school must be clearly distinguished from private education schools as commonly understood in Australia, U.S.A. etc. The Korean Government education system is non-profit, whilst market forces control 'hogwons'.

It is also submitted, that based on Korea's history, traditional Confucian principles have been remodeled post 1997 IMF Korea. And contrary to the gloss of Asian education espoused by W. Lee (1996) it will be argued that his belief "...Asian students are not only diligent, but they also have high achievement motivation" may have less to do with Confucianism than other factors, such as, according to Ko, (2002) being "...educational zealots." W. Lee's view (1996), however, finds support from J. Lee (2002:58) who talks in terms of the "...educational enthusiasm of Korean people..." However, like J. Lee (2002:62:end note 11) he only supports his argument with economic figures that fall short of the IMF crisis by one year. Asia is a diverse land mass and comprises many countries with fundamentally different cultures. One does not say all L1 English speaking countries come within the same rubric, and so with Asia, and clearly Japanese and Chinese traditions are far removed from Korean traditions. Arguably Confucian principles have retarded as opposed to advanced development within this country, and that such education systems as the Czech Republic or Slovakia, which are influenced by Comenius and his doctrines, clearly have educational advantages. J. Lee (2002) similarly supports this hypothesis but via different rationale, though this later argument is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Confucius.

To examine the question systematically, we need to outline (a) the educational principles and (b) what were/are the Confucian social aims, and finally (c) how the former impact on and within contemporary society. Confucius advocated social harmony, building of ethical virtues and an ideal state. As a means to an end, he emphasized 'hsueh,'(learning) as the building tool.

"In the love of benevolence, without the love of learning, the defect is foolishness. In the love of wisdom, without the love of learning, the defect is vagueness. In the love of faith, without the love of learning, the defect is loss...In the love of courage without the love of learning, the defect is confusion." (Muller 2000).

The word 'learning' according to J. Lee (2002:10) was used by Confucius as an equivalent to 'education,' and 'the learning' is interrelated with virtue and education. At the heart of the Confucian principle is the ideal state, and this can only be achieved by

moral education and a social goodness. To achieve attitudinal development there is only one path, and that is through the tool of constant learning. The social aims of Confucius are similar in thought, that of building a harmonious and virtuous society. Thus his moral education principle is the backbone for his virtuous society. Only through Ethical Education can that ideal of a virtuous nation be attained. This ideal, as detailed here under , is very prevalent in contemporary Korean Education. However, not all Confucian approaches are applied with the same enthusiasm.

"Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?" (Muller 2000). Clearly here we have an ideal that has lost its relevance in developing or developed Asian economies (Beech, H. 2002). It is suggested that constant perseverance and application does not mean at the expense of the abandonment of family contact during the formative years nor the abandonment of curricula that employs extra curricula activities such as sport. This system of education, which sees students studying at six a.m. and finishing at midnight, six or seven days a week, is far from what is meant, but is the widely accepted precursor to the "exam hell" that student's need to endure to get into university (Lee, W. 2002:211). However, given the competitive nature of the Korean education system and the extreme competition to get into university, the Confucian principle, literally applied (as it is) justifies current practices. Contrary to W. Lee (1996), yet according to Ellinger and Beckham, (1997), "South Koreans view education as they view the rest of life: a process of winning and losing. They have no concept of a game played well for its own sake. The family emphasis on educational achievement is so strong that it has been dubbed "education mania.""

Confucius said, "You can teach high-level topics to those of above-average ability, but you can't teach high-level topics to those of less than average ability" (Muller 2000). Whilst W. Lee (1996) takes a contrary position with respect to Asian learners, a combination of economic and socio-educational factors combine to ensure it to be so, and further, Korea has just implemented a system of Elite Schools for the academically gifted. (The Korean Herald, 9th March 2002:3). Application of classic Confucianism, which had the effect of class distinction and thus caused social unrest, (Lee, J. 2002:59) once again appears with similar social unrest. (The Korean Times 2nd March 2002:3)

Mencius.

According to Ebrey (1993) the success attributed to Confucianism is due in part to the work of Mencius, (371-289 BC). Mencius makes mention specifically of learning a second language. His thoughts are centuries before their time, appearing in recent methodologies associated with L2 learning. Specifically he mentioned the need for a proper learning environment in L2 curricula. As the search for the theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) pervade academic research, (Ellis et al 1996) so do L2 instructors try to teach from within an acceptable environment.

However, there is a clear distinction in Government L2 programs and hogwon L2 programs that more or less attempt to build those proper learning environments. Compared to the Government schools that are over crowded and effectively inhibit or prohibit any appropriate learning environment in the L2 sphere, is a well-planned classroom that promotes the Mencius proper environment. Mencius said, "A carpenter or a carriage-maker can give someone a compass or a square, but cannot give them skills" (Muller 2000). This idea of Mencius, whilst relevant in Australian education systems,

(Munro 1997), has yet to provide meaningful direction. Clearly Mencius is referring to work experience. That component is in certain local vocational high schools. However, if one considers that Korea was an economic miracle from the 1970s to 1997, and then suffered the ignominy of the IMF crisis, it has had little time to apply the concepts of work experience to its post IMF educational system. This Korean situation is quite the opposite of recent Australian experiments in this field (Munro 1997:39).

Further analysis of the above Mencius quotation also reveals that teachers, according to Mencius, are in an identifiable class above the workers. This may not reflect current day thought however (Education Commission of The People's Republic of China, 1993). One of the Confucian principles which I argue is strongly influencing current day education is the notion of filial piety. Mencius promoted this, however the Mencian ideal was "...to bring peace to the Empire" (Beck 1988). However, the influence played a significant part on future Korean education under King Sejong.

Confucian Influence in the Chosun Dynasty.

Without doubt, the notion of filial piety has influenced Korean life in all walks. Confucius said: "If, for three years (after your father's death) you don't alter his ways of doing things, you can certainly be called 'filial'" (Muller 2002). To fulfill the ideals, children, depending if eldest son or not, have set duties to the family, which clearly depend on the child attaining what is perceived as a good education and career. This is further elaborated below (p.11) and it will be suggested a wider definition is coming into being thus markedly affecting the education system as a whole.

During the Korean Chosun Dynasty 1392-1910, the Confucian principles of filial piety and loyalty were taught. Under this dynasty, Confucianism was a state religion. However education was for the elite and excluded women (Lee, J. 2002). Prior to 1450, Korea was under Chinese influence in language and the Chinese written word was employed.

King Sejong (1418-1450) is credited with inventing (1443) a new written form of Korean, Hunminjeongeum. Chinese characters were replaced with a simplified form of 24 consonants and 8 vowel characters. The written characters reflected the tongue's position in the mouth. According to historical readings, this new alphabet meant commoners and females were no longer excluded from education as till then only the upper class of society had the resources hitherto to study Chinese characters.

Clearly it could be inferred that King Sejong was strongly influenced by the Confucianist principle that every one should be permitted to receive an education. Thus this event may be the most significant singular event in Korean history, yet little attention has been given to this point. A comparison of contemporary Korea and China shows the Korean economy and standard of life far in advance of China's, and it is argued therefore, that the Confucian education principles influence, inter alia, significantly changed the course of Korean history.

Filial Piety:

In contemporary Korea the philosophy of filial piety is enshrined in Korean Statute law and runs through daily life. However, the erosion or collapse of this is well argued. Nevertheless, as the fundamental principle is the duty of eldest son to parent, then this duty can only be fulfilled once the son achieves a good education. Whilst a subjective

standard, it is submitted the standard set by Koreans is still very high. Kim (1999) suggests that the fundamentals of filial piety have been substantially changed since the 14th century, in that now the duty not only goes from son to parents, but indeed in reverse. If this is so, it may explain wholly or partially the massive budget spending of Korean parents on their children's private (hogwon) education with the resultant following major educational thinking shift. However, classic filial piety only involves the eldest son and a parent, thus the conclusion excludes younger sons and daughters. Conversely, it may well be argued, per Kim, (1999) the Confucianist principle has expanded to encompass all children

Yet a certain conflict between the Korean government's 6th and the current 7th curricula emerged in so far as 'hogwons' were not seen as a place of meaningful study by the Korean government. Parents were seen as wasting too much money on their children's education and thus the 6th curricula was in part devised to draw students back to mainstream education away from private education. However, with the emergence of the 7th curriculum, (2000) combined with an impliedly expanded acceptance of the family filial duty, hogwon study took on a new relevance;

This, it is suggested, will become more apparent over the next few years as a combination of factors, post September 11, economic recovery, etc., come into effect. If we accept the existence and influence of two Confucian fundamentals, and as propounded by Mencius, namely the duty of filial piety, and the need for all to receive an education, we can argue that contemporary Korean society is deeply affected by these two principles resultant in a competitive education field. Secondly, given the absence of vocational training in the government sector, the private hogwon sector now fills this void furthering the ideal of Mencius.

[Korean History.](#)

No analyses of Korean Education and influencing ideas can be complete without reference to the country's history. In the late 1500s Japan (1592) invaded Korea and destroyed much of the infrastructure. Admiral Lee, commander of the Korean navy fought a great battle at that time and temporarily defeated the Japanese navy. Today he is revered in history books and statues predominate such as does the ill feelings that runs through some strata's of Korean society for all things Japanese. This reverence spills over to the uneasy inter country feelings in modern days which has turned into an argument over the teaching and study of history as seen through Japanese and Korean commentators (Kim, J. 2002). Here we have a conflict of Confucianism, namely the right for all to be educated, and the Mencian principle that morality and decency impliedly demands the facts are told objectively.

For 40 years from 1905 to 1945 Japan invaded and colonized Korea. Japanese rule was instituted, the language taught at school was Japanese, and Koreans had to take on Japanese names. The system of education, previously based on Chinese curricula, now came squarely within the Japanese education system during that time. It was forced education, (Lee, 1984). Following the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, Korea, for five years, was again free until the Korean War of 1950 began, when North Korean and Chinese troops crossed the 49th parallel, a line demarcated by Russia and the USA at the end of WW2. Following the end of the Korean War, much of the country lay in ruins as

the North invaded almost to the southern extremity of Korea forcing the seat of Government to set up in the southern port city of Pusan.

Following the United Nations intervention and subsequent cessation of War activities in 1953, South Korea has come under the influence of the United States and its policies, for the US. still has 37,000 troops stationed throughout Korea. Gibb (1998) offers this as the sole reason for Korean preference for Ge Am as their preferred L2 tongue without identifying how Koreans actually discriminate against RP or the Ge Am form, or even considering cultural/ cross cultural realities. He also dismisses the influence of Confucianism post Korean War and suggests education principles are following the same lines as the United States. In sum, his argument fails to address or identify underlying cultural/cross cultural fundamentals.

Current Korean Government Education.

Schooling is in three groups, namely Elementary, from grades 1-6, Middle school, years 7-9, and High school, years 10-12. Students can either go on to University Education once they have successfully passed the university entrance exam, or go on to a College education of 2 years. Schools are government funded, either from the Federal level or Provincial level. However, unlike Australia, private schools run by religious organizations do not occur in Korea. Within the umbrella of Government schools comes a sub-category of Government licensed foreign schools. There are but a handful in Korea at the moment and have few students to boast. They predominantly cater for the children of ex-patriots who are living and working in Korea. Korean children can attend but their English proficiency must be very high as classes are in English, and based on the U.S. schooling system.

The Korean government has entered its 7th Curriculum phase. The 1st curriculum began in 1954. School hours run from seven a.m. to varying finishing times from two p.m. to eleven p.m. for High school students. A major shift in this curriculum is the importance of etiquette and moral education, and shifting teaching principles away from teacher dominated to student centered. The fundamental goal of this curricula begins a radical departure from the previous six in that students are being guided to do their own research, either individually or in groups, as opposed to teacher centered education (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

However, it could be argued, owing to the excessively large class size, especially in L2, that the neo-Confucian ideal that everyone receives a government funded education fails forcing many into the private school system where class size is 10-20. A subject entitled "Ethics" is taught at Middle School level. It is a model of the Confucianist principle of filial piety. It teaches aspects of Li, Hsiao, Xin and Jen. It is important to note this subject has received renewed importance since 1997 and continues to grow in importance, being an examinable topic. This is taught from Elementary school on. However, it must not be considered that Confucian principles dominate, for those of Buddhism cut across the teachings.

Private Education.

Korean Education is highlighted by the split in government education and the free market private education system known as 'hogwons, alias 'academies or institutes.' According to J. Lee, (2002: 55) these schools, the first which is historically dated as of

1883, are the fundamental reason for the strong Korean education spirit, and marked the turning point in Korean Educational history, for it is said that till then, education was for the elite; these private schools paved the way for mass education. Thus at that time, the mix of traditional Confucian schools coexisted with the new private schools. The next conflict in education, the colonization by Japan, was only 20 years away. J. Lee, (2002:55-59) notes that traditional Koreans had little enthusiasm for the elitist Confucianist school, and even less enthusiasm for the Japanese system, yet had great spirit for the private schools that were set up by anti Japanese political activists of the day, this giving rise to an industry that has since grown enormously.

There are tens of thousands of hogwons operating in Korea. Hogwons begin at about six a.m. and run till ten p.m. The schools give the appearance of quasi schools. However, as opposed to Greece, which has an identical system, (PALSO) 2 schools are not government regulated nor self-regulated. There are two reasons behind the existence and growth of hogwons. Firstly it is perceived by Korean parents that the government schools do not provide a satisfactory level of Education, (note the similarity above to 1890 and the belief that Korean government schools utilizing Confucianism were only for the elite.) Secondly the Mencius principle of vocational education is somewhat absent from government schools yet is included in private schooling curriculum. Thirdly, in 1997 there were 133,249 students studying abroad in 69 countries, (Korea Herald October 29,1998), but since the September 11 event in the United States, it has been reported in the press that hogwon enrollments have soared whilst overseas students enrollments have fallen, (Korean Times, January 7th 2002). As noted above, if Kim's (1999) premise is true and accepted, and as President of Korea, his words are respected, then parents will, as their duty within the newly defined filial duty, place more funds into private education for their children.

The question thus arises, namely, are post IMF Korean Confucian principles equivalent to 15th century neo-Confucian principles, or a by product of the IMF crises? W. Lee, (1996) et al, do not address this as their theories pre-date the unexpected Asian economic crises. 3 Their collective belief could be viewed, as thus, "In particular, the economic growth in the late 1960s and 1970s was the result of the expansion of the higher education." (Lee, J. 2002:99) K. Lee (1986) states in his conclusion that students who fall within the parameters of the Confucianist state of education will "...if one tries and keeps trying, one will certainly get there sooner or later." He cites 6 characteristics of Asian learners who come under the Confucian tradition, and relies on the Levine and White (1986, pp. 110-111) list of characteristics pertaining to students from Japan to justify links to Confucian modern day educational characteristics. However, it is neither logical from a practical nor historical view point to equate 'Asian' learners as one. It does appear, contrary to the above theories, that modern Japanese students are far from applying the maxim, and a large percentage of that society are now known as "freeters." This group of youth has abandoned any hope of succeeding after school, and now prefer to drift from casual job to casual job (Otake 2002). Indeed, the term 'Asian learners' is of itself requiring further separate analysis to determine if there are any similarities between these diverse country's learners.

The Korean Education system is in its infancy if we consider the appropriate start date as of the end of the Japanese occupation, August 1945. However, some educational principles seen in government schools date back to Confucius and those of his followers.

Yet the applications of these principles, or those of Mencius, have been subject to 2 Japanese occupations and the imposition of Japanese cultural rules and styles, and the destruction caused by the Korean War, June 1950 to August 1953.

In the 1940s to the early 1960s, Korea was still an agricultural society. The 1960s saw a great leap forward to bring it into the 21st century. The pace of change is unparalleled in world history. By the early 1990s, Korea was deemed as one of the Asian economic giants, or tigers. ⁴ Combined with this is the fact that true democracy has existed for less than 4 decades since the fall of military style rule in the 1960s. Some argue that democracy only began in 1993 with the beginning of President Kim Young Sam's reign. However, masking the outward appearance of success was an underlying economic system in chaos, which resulted in the October 1997 IMF crises. This nationally perceived shameful moment turned the clock back on all Korean advances and has generally been 'overlooked' by commentators who espouse the economic miracle of Korea. Radical policies, laws and plans suddenly came into being from early 1998 to rectify the economic wrongs.

Along with this revision came renewed thinking about the Education system in Korea, for it was apparent the 'old' system was but a part of the fault of the countries financial demise. Thus the 7th Curricula reflects this new thinking. If we accept this premise to be true, then by comparison to its neighbors, China and Japan, or compared to the United States or Australia, the Education system is but in its renewed infancy. As part of this renewed Confucianist departure is the principle of 'thinking for one self,' which according to Hall and Ames (1987) is not a Confucianist trait.

Conclusion.

At the outset the question posed asked whether Confucianist or Mencian principles had survived the journey of time. It is submitted that a few influences of Confucius and Mencius are to be found in the Government sphere of education, which is directly under attack from the progressive private schooling system that sprang from an opposition to Confucian ideals, which perceives that ideal as elitist. However, these influences are very significant in the shaping of educational policy, and as argued, neo-Confucianism, or post IMF Confucianism/ Mencian principles are becoming more deeply entrenched in Korean government educational policy and social applications.

Noted, there are the resemblance's of Confucianist thought, as seen in the Analects where Confucius himself did not pursue lines of questioning, (Scolon 1999), and thus traditional teacher centered learning in Korea has resulted in students rarely answering questions. Conversely, in Mencius, whose fundamental was that human nature is basically good, and there in is the teacher's duty to be a role model in society and to ask and seek student's answers to questions. And if the Confucian system can be accredited with the principles of the negativity of rote learning (Bol 1989), contrary to Lee (1996) then hogwons are applying this principle in reverse.

Secondly, as was asked at the outset, the inquiry must consider whether the Confucianist influences still existing are as originally written. It is submitted, based on the preceding, that the most fundamental issue, filial piety, has undergone significant transformation from its original principle, with the consequences of education becoming a higher priority. Secondly, if we consider a teacher's status under Confucianism as deserving respect, and as listed in point (3) of Levine and White (1986, pp. 110-111), we

can find clear evidence in China that this respect has been absent, but is being addressed as an issue of marked importance. Likewise, this past Confucianist principle has been severely eroded in Korea by military styled governments that jailed teachers who joined unauthorized unions.

Conversely it is also argued that the influences of Confucius and Mencius are but a part of a system that was seen as leading to the countries 1997 economic demise, for these principles restricted the true ability of a Korean to develop him or herself for it was the application of the Confucian top down system in all walks of life that is now undergoing substantial change. Changes since 1997 may now mean that any direct influences attributable to the aforementioned are being refashioned by socioeconomic events. Consequently we see the bold attempt of the 7th curriculum to teach students to be independent and think independently, yet still observe the principles of filial piety.

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Volume 4. Issue 2
Article 2

Article Title

The Chinese Learner: A Neo Globalized Learner - or the Re-Birth or an Old Culture

Author

James Brett

What is the "Chinese learner and are there social phenomena acting upon this entity that is changing the way the Chinese government determine future educational curricula to meet China's changing needs? In this work Chinese learner is basically defined as a Chinese national living within mainland China who falls inside the broad category of 'student.' But could we say a 'Chinese learner' is also an 'Asian learner', which encompasses other "Asian" countries such as Japan or Korea, as W. Lee (1996) argues? J. Lee (2002:27) suggests in relation to Asia, "The culture of youth and children are domains of fierce contestation..." whilst Lozada (2001) emphasizes, with respect to China's youth, "The Chinese education system in particular, a system that caters to a new elite, is an essential element to process social stratification in that Chinese children themselves participate both as subject and symbolic objects for adults." The Chinese education system in particular, a system that caters to a new elite, is an essential element to process social stratification in that Chinese children themselves participate both as subject and symbolic objects for adults.

Thus may we argue, as Dobson, (2001), firstly that the Chinese learner has become the focus for renewed Chinese traditional culture versus a neo-globalized culture that is installing market socialization, and secondly that the divisions are in fact becoming clearer through the medium of English L2 classroom instruction. This view, argued below, initially raised by Dalton and Seidlehofer (1994), although in a different perspective, may be the hidden factor in the emerging distinction of the entity known as the Chinese learner.

This work will proceed by an examination of the external forces of globalization to determine if there is any credible evidence to support the view that globalization changes a countries inherent culture. Eagleton (2000) quoted in Salih (2001) argues that everything in the world is culture and impliedly in flux. This is at odds with Hellsten (1999) who argues that culture is "...a static phenomenon." The preliminary inquiry will show that globalization is altering the macro levels of Chinese culture and that the evidence will suggest that the Chinese government is aware of the negative concepts of globalization on culturalism, and have taken steps to shield the Chinese learner, to some degree, from any interference. The second part of the inquiry goes on to establish if the Chinese learner is susceptible to this macro change. However, at the heart of the debate is just what is 'culture' and does this inquiry to lead to undesirable power plays by the

inquirer?

Watkins and Biggs (1998) note the negative aspects of uncritically applying western concepts and methods to a non western setting, "When Confucian heritage culture people are viewed through the lenses of familiar western polarities, such as memorizing versus meaningful learning, the focus becomes blurred and even distorted." This view, supported by Hoffman (1999) indicates the unwisdom of 'categorizing the Chinese learner' yet may be the most viable option if cultural constraints are rigidly enforced.

Does the concept of globalization now mean that the multicultural differences are narrower for example, or does the concept of globalization mean that a Chinese learner, per se, is a unique entity colored by traditions and culture that are only Chinese in origin and these differences are becoming more dynamic as a result of globalization? If globalization and cultural conquest go hand in hand as suggested by Fukuyama (2001) then is the Chinese learner entity becoming one with the non-Asian learner for this would impliedly suggest the Chinese learner is losing that identity. This supports W. Lee's (1996) view. Contrary is the view that developing nations are not a homogenous group, (Tsang, 2002) thus negating wholly or partly at least this view. But as argued Oonk (2000), that the 'Chinese learners', with the embodiment of Chinese cultural traits, through deterritorialization, now exist in countries far removed politically and culturally from their home land thus defying change even via in-situ osmosis, a priori, that mainland Chinese nationals will likewise be impervious to alien cultural influences? Given China's march towards educational privatization (Mok, 2000) and coupled with China's very low comparative GDP expenditure on education, (Beech, 2002: 51) then arguably these newly privatized schools with their superior form of education (Tsang, 2002) will, according to the human capital theory, (Schulz 1971; Becker, 1975) quoted in Tsang, (2002) further exacerbate the uniqueness of the Chinese learner which seems impliedly understood in the State Education Commission of the People's Republic of China 1996 document wherein the document says at II., "... that educational development may better respond to the needs of social and economic development in China." This conforms to the human capital theory.

Or finally, if we view 'culture' as the primary basis of this inquiry, is the concept of Chinese learner one that is susceptible to Chinese oscillations of the cultural pendulum that present us with different answers at different points of time? This work will establish that the concept of a Chinese learner is a valid concept, does not necessarily invoke the self other concept, and that forced globalization tends to strengthen their identity clearly and separately them from other Asian learners, let alone other nations. The interests served will be argued to be mostly political.

The Chinese Learner

'Chinese learner' assumes a meaning to encompass a Chinese national student and not the contrary meaning, that is, some other foreigner learning about Chinese. The Chinese learner, and thus the Chinese Education system, including formal, non-formal and informal education, (Penguin Macquarie Dictionary, 1989) is taking on a stronger cultural meaning within the framework of China's marketization of education. Globalization is the catalyst for the Chinese culture to identify themselves clearly from other nations, with their renewed market socialization project, especially in the

educational sphere, (Mok, 2000:114) protecting and enhancing Chinese culture, and thereby, the Chinese learner. Skutnabb-Kangas, (1995) quoted in Hellsten, (1999) argues further that there is a "... renaissance of nationalistic and ethnic sentiments and imperialism..." developing around the world. If this is so, the Chinese learner likewise strengthens his identity.

Globalization:

It is necessary to have a framework for working definitions of the terms 'globalization.' Globalization is presented as meaning the world is a much easier place to transmit ideas and data at a moment's notice, and that boundaries, and borders, are more porous and transparent to outside policy making influences. It has been noted by Oonk (2000) and Appadurai (1996) quoted in Oonk (2000) that the concept of globalization is in fact five hundred years old. However, he goes on to suggest that it is only the last two decades in which this concept has developed long distance nationalism.

In his work Amin (2001) argues that true democracy is necessary for a cultural identity, yet notes that military dictatorships (as recently seen in Korea) can only give rise to essential successful economic expansion, thereby limiting or denying culture. Thus cultural identity is not equivalent to advanced industrial status. Yet the Asian IMF (1) crisis of 1997 suggests his theory is very wrong, for it was a direct result of the policies of those military dictatorships that led to the Korean bankruptcy. He does however conclude with the question whether cultural identities can survive globalization. It was not until the 1990s, that South Korea intentionally embarked upon a planned course of globalization. Hoffman, D (1999) suggests this embarkation was because the government believed Korea was in need of upgrading the cultural attitudes of the South Korean populace which were deemed insufficiently international and in need of remediation in order for Korean national cultural development to progress, (1999:9).

This view overlooks issues on curricula changes in education, rivalry between Japan and Korea, and a known looming financial crisis, and was not, as Hoffman (1999) argues, a planned exercise to develop culture within or outside education. Upgrading cultural attitudes was a byproduct of urgent economic reform, not a means in itself. Did the Korean people lose their cultural identity or was their identity strengthened? J. Lee (2002:135-138) suggests that the Korean cultural identity, embodied in Confucianism, remains as before. This may provide a useful guide precedent for the uniqueness or otherwise of the Chinese learner.

The decision to start English education in Elementary schools, in Korea, contrary to Hoffman's (1999) belief, was based on the view that Japan had been running a successful English education program called JET, (Japanese English Teacher) (2) and Korea felt the need to copy their program, as since Japanese Korean Colonial rule ended in 1945, Korea has attempted to not fall in the shadow of Japan but to be superior. Ahn, S., Park, M., & Ono, S., (1996). Similarly, China, following its ascension to WTO status, has embarked upon a large scale English in Elementary schools project, (Beijing Review, 2001) but the distinction with Hoffman's (1999) Korean culturalization project is clear.

Fukuyama, F. (2001) lecturing on whether any aspects of globalization lead to greater homogenization reports, "...homogenization and an affirmation of distinctive cultural identities will occur simultaneously" especially at the macro level of large economic and political institutions which he believes are becoming culturally

homogenous. This requires globalization to occur. Conversely, it is argued that the era of globalization is over, (The Economist, 2001), however the evidence at large does not seem to support this view. A more moderate position is offered by Olds, K. Dicken, P. Kelly, P. Kong, L. and Yeung, H. (2001) that globalization is being 'resisted at various scales throughout the Pacific." Whether it is part of the Oonk (2000) belief, or the opposite notion of macro culturalization applying, they both conform to the belief of Olds, K. (2001) et al.

But if we accept Fukuyama's (2001) view of some form of cultural homogenization occurring, then this begs the question whether the political institutions that run government education programs will be susceptible to this homogenization thus detracting via a top down approach from the concept of a Chinese learner. The answer, it is submitted, is seen in The Ninth Five Year Plan For Educational Development and the Long Range Development Program Towards the Year 2000. Clearly, as enumerated in Sub Paragraph 11, Basic Guiding Principles for Developing Education in the Next 15 Years, we can see the overriding concern is that the education needs respond to the "...needs of social and economic development in China." Whilst the prima facie evidence suggests concerns for saving and promoting cultural roots, the opening to the Outline for Reform and Development of Education in China (1993) provides further suggestions, viz, "In accordance with the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics". The emphasis, it is suggested falls on the last two words. Whilst Chinese characteristics is arguably encompasses a wide notion, it likewise must assume the absence of globalization characteristics.

Faced with the dilemma of globalization and loss of culture, the document urges that Chinese learners leave the country to receive international study and learning, but then they explicitly and repeatedly demand that the government's duty is to "...encourage them to return on completion of their study and to participate in the socialist modernization drive in many ways." It is suggested strongly that the recent implementation of English in Elementary schools (Beijing Review, 2001) with an ethics based component, as in Korea, is the Chinese Ministry's response to an accepted degree of globalized intrusion yet shielded by an increased level of cultural identity training starting from the elementary years.

L2 learning is not without its own fears for the L2 country. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1996, 7) suggest that by the learning of a foreign or second language, the learner may build up a 'negativism' towards to the second language, and impliedly, its culture and note it "...may be objectionable to oblige learners to conform to an alien code of conduct. ...students may prefer to keep their own accent deliberately, in order to retain their self-respect ..." To this extent, it is suggested that learners must be asked what they want, (Porter and Garvin, 1989,15) But as Dalton and Seidlhofer (1996, 7) note though, learners do not usually know what they want. But their attitudes should be taken into account. Hence it appears from the Chinese Ninth Five Year Plan For Educational Development and the Long Range development Program Toward the Year 2010 that the Chinese Education Ministry with its introduction of English as an L2 into Elementary schools, is taking Porter and Garvin's (1981) caveat under serious advisement as seen in their market privatization. It may be, as suggested at the outset, if Dalton and Seidlehofer's (1996) hypothesis is correct, then the teaching of English as and L2 in China may, if we take their view one step further, be a plausible back door method of

reinforcing China's cultural ethics using English education as the medium. Not only does the Chinese learner learn an international language, but they also build up a resistance to its culture and reinforce their own.

Further, the above document suggests a strengthening of education with an emphasis on the "...Party's basic line, patriotism, community spirit and socialist ideology." (see point 4 Implementing Educational Policies and Improving the Quality of Instruction. Sub point 28) However, contrary to this enhanced cultural learning which is arguably to block the perceived negative effects of globalization, Fukuyama (2001) argues that quite the opposite result has occurred thanks to globalization at the macro level, whereas at the micro level it is the modern mass media that has presented a clearer picture to 'Asia' as to what American culture is, and Asia does not find this an attractive model. Thus although homogenization of culture at the macro economic and political level seems to have occurred, globalization had an exact opposite effect on the deeper cultural traits. However, Fukuyama's (2001) definition of just what deeper cultural traits are is vague. He does though, equate globalism as a euphemism, for 'Americanization.' Amin (1996) argues that this concept needs to be controlled "by developing an alternative humanistic project of globalization consistent with a social perspective." Given that the evidence indicates that external social phenomenon directly (media) and indirectly (globalization) impact on the Chinese learner, in both positive and negative ways, an analysis of how these impacts affect, if at all, the Chinese learner is required.

Culturalism.

Varying definitions exist as to what culture may be. As communication is the link between Chinese learners and English-speaking persons then cross-cultural communication is the medium for cultural confusion. Jayasuriya (1990) says culture is not a fixed entity but a mixture of past present and indeed future concoctions. Hellsten (1999) notes more restrictively that culture is a static phenomenon yet whilst agreeing with the self-other argument propounded by Hoffman, D. (1999) she contradicts this static phenomenon scenario by stating culture is visible in "...practice and every day actions..." which clearly must include the concept of Globalism that is not in a static state. Yet she does reinforce the view of Lozada (2001) supra. In Hellsten's (1999) view, education planning implementation and production rely on theories of culture. Bourdieu and Passeron (1994:8) quoted in Hellsten, (1999) impliedly argue that language is a sub unit of culture but that it is "the most active and elusive part of cultural knowledge which each individual owes to his background." Eagleton (2000) quoted in Salih (2001) opposes the notion of post modernists who say that everything is culture. What is left is a fierce debate as to what the notion of culture means and entails.

If we return to the notion of the term 'Chinese learner' and what value there is in conferring such a title, it appears in the negative that we are succumbing to the self-other view espoused by Hoffman (1999). However we are then left with an inquiry in what ways to rename the term, such that the self-other scenario does not appear. Yet to rename the term raises a secondary argument as to why we non-Chinese should even attempt to change the term, for that is the basis of the argument. Given her strong arguments, it is suggested that we do not have an acceptable alternative to avoid the distinctions. What is clear is that the Chinese learner is subject to extensive sociopolitical influences from within China, on the one hand to reinforce the Chinese-ness of the learner, whilst on the

other hand present the Chinese learner as an entity that can break free of the Chinese-ness to promote Chinese social and economic development.

China is in the process of installing a socialist market economy (The Ninth Five Year Plan) however they aware that the critical issue facing them is that, the overall educational level of the population is relatively low... and progress made in the reform of educational structure is not yet well adapted to the needs of the socialist market economy and is far from being adequate to meet the needs of the 21st century. Conversely to the negative opinion, we can say the Chinese learner' is one who falls within the four corners of the Chinese Ninth Five year Plan and its implementation. As to whose interests are being served by the concept of a 'Chinese learner' we can argue the sociopolitical interest of China are being served well, but from an outsider's view, the term presets a conflict of ideas and emotions that are not readily comprehensible.

Are better ways of thinking about cross-cultural education as discussed above? The question may be moot if we consider three views; firstly that of Oonk (2000) who notes the Chinese-ness of ex-patriot Chinese who live far removed from their homeland, and combined with the political interference espoused in the Ninth Five Year Plan to educate the Chinese abroad, then coax him or her home to put into practice what he has learned. Combine this with the theory of Kramsch (1991), (quoted in Crozet and Liddicoat, 1999) who says there is no evidence that living in a foreign country introduces that countries culture to the foreigner, then we can argue that if the Chinese learner is not specifically taught another culture, then he or she will not absorb that other culture, but merely notice it.

Conflicting with this is the argument that Globalism is installing cultural traits on macro level societal components, with the implication that these traits filter down somehow, thus indirectly confirming that an Education policy is specifically teaching that foreign culture, and changing or modifying that culture within which that learner operates, but yet within the parameters of the developing Chinese market socialization. The final conflict appears in the Dalton and Seidlhofer (1996) view that L2 education instills a negativeness towards the L2 culture. Cross cultural education needs to, on the one hand, avoid the self other notions whilst promoting the value of each culture (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1999) and then introduce it at the education micro level such that any conflict with the top down theory of Fukuyama (2001) is accommodated.

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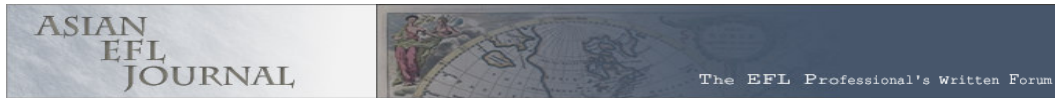
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Volume 4. Issue 2
Article 3

Article Title

Korea. A cross cultural communication analyzed.

Author

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Introduction:

This work will analyze cross-cultural communications between Korean native speakers and myself, and will review the literature to date. I have chosen Koreans as the report emanates from Pusan, Korea, an international port city of some 4 million Koreans. Pusan Korean is spoken, and said by all, to be a 'vulgar' dialect of Korean. Pronunciation of verb endings features a strong 'imnida/'imnika/imniga' sound at the end of the sentence (the verb takes final position s-o-v with stress on the final syllable), whereas the Seoul dialect ends with a soft verb 'yeao' sound. Arguelles. A and Kim. J (1999:2) note that the Seoul Korean is the most "...prestigious with undisputed hegemony..." and is the standard for good Korean. English, however, is not yet an official L2 despite its gaining popularity, and few adults speak English, for communicative English is only a recent entry to the school curriculum.

Thus the conclusion will point to substantial problems arising from cross cultural communication breakdown, triggered by cross-cultural differences that cannot be easily reconciled. It will also be submitted that Beal's (1992) conclusions are distinguishable from the Korean scenario and hence his analyses may not be applicable to Asian/Australian/ cross-cultural situations. However, in so far as his conclusion supports the Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) thrust, namely, "...that in every language...there is a gap between what is literally being said and what is meant" (Beal, 1992, 51), it will be submitted that that has a broader application in a Korean Australian communication than the Australian-French scenario.

This work will proceed, after an analysis of what is a cross cultural communication with an overview of the Korean culture and the dictates of modern living as are rooted in Confucianism. Unless one has a clear and intricate understanding of the Korean hierarchical system, then right from the beginning handshake and welcome or greeting words between an Australian and a Korean, there may be confusion, misinterpretations of feeling, and possible 'loss of face' by the Korean from this beginning encounter.

Korea, often described as a mono-cultural society, does not have significant multi-lingual communities as in Australia, thus a Korean's encounter with a non-Korean

speaker may be the first time for him/her. Quasi diglossia is also a part of the language because of the Confucian respect structure; however, this is not a factor in cross cultural communication breakdown. Cheon (2002) notes that Koreans are taught in their L2 classes to resolve communication breakdowns by reverting to their L1, thus arguably exacerbating a cross cultural communicative breakdown that the Korean may encounter.

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Next the work will consider what has become known as 'Konglish.' Konglish can be described as Korean English speaking with Korean syntax. This is unique in so far as it provides and adds new words to the English language, and may express complex Korean words, meanings or interactions in but a single English word, the meaning of which may not be readily apparent to a native English speaking person.

Finally an analysis of Korean body language will be presented along with Koreans understanding of non-Korean body language. Then using the Saville-Troike (1989) framework a series of cross-cultural communications between myself and groups of Koreans will be presented and analyzed.

It is expected that the results will show a general absence of awareness of cross-cultural complexities on both Australian and Korean sides, but the Beal (1992:50) conclusion that "... it can take years for a speaker of a second language to work out what is actually going wrong in his/her encounters with native speakers," whilst a correct analysis especially in a Korean/Australian context, is wrongly condemning the victim (the cross cultural participants) and ignoring the cause, namely deficient L2 language programs that lack cross cultural specificity.

Cross Cultural Communication:

Communication, for these purposes is limited to oral communications. Beal (1992:24) suggests a cross-cultural communication is a dual part study of two systems meeting. His 'system' is two persons from different countries (as opposed to Thomas, 1984) generating "...content, sequencing and conversational style..." and secondly, includes their misunderstandings and "...uncomfortable moments" (1992:25). The first seems a subjective criterion, yet the latter seems objective, thus surely adding a degree of uncertainty to the analysis. Fairclough, 1989, (quoted in Wardhaugh, 1998:304) suggests an element of power between the two system communicators is often present which may lead to cross cultural communicative misunderstandings, which, it seems, must therefore include that which is found in a Confucian hierarchical structure.

Thus Beal's (1992) definition needs a pre-analysis of any 'power basis' before a subjective/objective approach can be applied to the misunderstanding. Kramsch (2001:81) adds an element of expected '...culture shock' that attaches to a cross cultural communication, yet without any explanation as to what this actually is and does in a cross cultural communication. Possibly this conforms to Beal's (1992) uncomfortable moments.

Saville-Troike (1989:110) raise caveats on ethnographers working in other

cultures, and it is submitted those caveats extend to a cross-cultural communication. Conversely to the above opinions of workable cross cultural communications is the opinion of Neustpuny (1988) who suggests that cross-cultural communications (Japanese Australian) can never work until the communicators have learnt about the society and culture of the other speaker. Clearly he is wrong based on the evidence at large, for that would suggest all cross cultural communications fail. That is too wide an assumption. Nishida, Hammer and Wiseman (1998:499) studying Japanese-American cross cultural communication, prefer the term, 'types and degrees of difficulties' that can occur, thus limiting the Neustpuny (1988) argument.

Korean traditions within the confines of Confucianism.

No analyses of a communicative event in Korea can be complete without a brief expose of the fundamental influence on the Korean system, namely the principles of neo-Confucianism as seen in the 21st century. Confucius advocated social harmony, building of ethical virtues and an ideal state. Combined with this is the Confucian notion of filial piety that has greatly influenced Korean life in all walks, and this manifests itself in the communicative system. Diglossia, using the Fishman (1980:3) definition, (quoted in Wardhaugh, 1998) requires schooling to correctly use the high form that features in terms of junior senior and family communications.

Thus Confucianism strongly influences the learner's characteristics and dictates the Korean teachers' teaching style. This translates into rigid rules of communication, which are likewise taught as a compulsory subject. W. Lee (1996) concludes the Confucian influence and ethos manifests itself in Japan, (Korea's neighbor) in 6 educationally definable areas, and arguing therefore, Asia, as a whole, being Confucianist oriented has inflexible rules of inter or cross cultural communication that stem from basic schooling education. So, a cross-cultural communication between Confucianist based language societies and a non-Confucianist tradition language culture (Australia) is one when the non-Confucianist culture speaker cannot but help breach cultural traditions and norms. Cook (2001:152) notes the "...insults to the Confucian ethos..." by western teachers in China, which advances W. Lee's (1996) proposition.

The word 'learning' according to J. Lee (2002:10), was used by Confucius as an equivalent to 'education,' and 'the learning' is interrelated with virtue and education. Only through ethical education can the ideal of a virtuous nation exist. This is very prevalent in contemporary Korean education, with language its prime medium. Of course not all Koreans follow the principles of Confucianism; indeed the sometimes competing principles of Buddhism are equally strong. Nevertheless, the dictates of a society strongly influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism produce certain rules of engagement in communicating. Depending upon one's age, certain honorific endings in speech are mandatory. The rule is that the junior must use honorific speech to a person his senior. This also translates into the 'degree of bow' upon meeting. The Korean family has been traditionally ruled by the Confucian philosophy that emphasizes patriarchal authority and hierarchical relationships. Koo (1992) suggests this relationship is diminishing, however, Kim (2000), suggests in fact a strengthening through realignment of the traditional rules of filial piety, a view supported by Oh, Y. (2002) who sees a contemporary "...Confucian bound Korean society...".

Whichever view is correct, Koreans still adhere to formal modes and rules of communication that would be unfamiliar to an Australian.

However, the teaching of the English language throughout Korea does not utilize the principles of Inter Cultural Language teaching, (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1997). Thus a meeting of cross cultural communicators, say Australian and Korean, is going to face, on the one hand, the Korean Confucian rules, combined with the 'evasiveness' (Beal: 1992: 39) of the Australian speaker via the medium of English. This leads, as will be examined, to misunderstandings, and a possible belief by both speakers that each other is rude. This can often mean the Korean 'loses face', which is a tragic result. Loss of face to an Australian (Beal, 1990:26) must be clearly distinguished from loss of face (*chaemyoun*) by a Korean. The Korean term has far greater meaning than the western words and meaning, and includes a sensitivity to the other view. "Chaemyoun and honor are more important than life and death," (Yang, S. 2002).

According to Kramersch (2001:46), communication, whether cross cultural or otherwise, has, as its ultimate aim, the need to "...protect one's own and other participant's face at all times". With respect to the learned author, it is submitted that this is not so in a cross cultural communication between Korean or Japanese and Australians for it does not take into account the arguments of Yang, (2002). And according to J. Lee, (2002:130), "...understanding the Confucian concept of feelings or emotions may provide westerners with a refreshing and original philosophy regarding the nature of human beings and the meaning of Confucian values."

In addition to the '*chaemyoun*', is the '*Chong*', a Korean sentiment that attaches to all communications and interactions, (Suh, 1996). Thus, if we return to misunderstandings and uncomfortable moments, (Thomas, 1984) it is suggested that they both fall within the *Chaemyoun*, which the Australian cannot fully comprehend, as opposed to the '*Chong*', which it is suggested is more in line with the Beal (1992:43) view, "To be nice seems to be an important Australian cultural value..."

Passmore (1985) quoted in McMeniman and Evans (1997:4), discusses "sympathetic imagination" wherein he describes one of the critical skills of language learning as being the understanding and feelings of what the other speaker is thinking, and why they are acting as they are; this almost being akin to the '*Chong*.' However, as noted by McMeniman and Evans (1997:7), this aspect of language learning is scarce in Australia, and almost non-existent in Korean language learning. UNESCO (Korea UNESCO Cultural Exchange Services, 2002) run a cultural awareness program on a limited basis that attempts to introduce culture to school students, however, it does not facilitate cross cultural communications to any significant degree.

Konglish:

The term Konglish (Korean-English) is commonly used by Koreans to indicate the word they have spoken is what they believe to be a Korean invention using English word(s) to describe something, and that that word is not in common English usage. Konglish is part of their every day speech usage. Konglish has different forms, and applying the definition of Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish (1993), certain Konglish words are not code switching, but in fact 'borrowing' for "...the foreign words come to be used as regular vocabulary items", (1993:260), and are listed in the Korean dictionary.

Some English words are now parts of everyday Korean speak, but there has been scarce academic attention paid to this important subject. As such, Koreans believe, wrongly, that Konglish is bad English and insitu western educators with little understanding of the subject agree it is bad English. Kent (2000) shows clear lack of understanding pertaining to this subject yet authoritatively commenting upon it. It has been estimated that there are approximately 700 words in common usage in Konglish.

Konglish may have its roots in one of three sources. Black English spoken by Afro-American soldiers during the Korean War (1950-1953) is believed to have introduced many Black English words communicatively misunderstood at the time, but have since lived on in a Koreanised form. Characteristics of BE (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish, 1993:238), can be seen in Konglish.

Secondly the Korean language often has one word that would take the English a phrase to describe. Thus they invent, devise, or transpose the closest single dictionary word meaning possible. Finally, some Korean words may be a combination of the two languages, 'air-con, remote-con, side mirror'. Does this become code switching? Kramsch (2001:125) suggests that to be defined code switching the speaker must be bi-lingual. This narrows the view of Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish, (1993). Defining 'bi-lingual' thus becomes crucial in determining if a Korean is code switching or borrowing. Ellis (1996:696), suggests code switching is a branch of intra-speaker variation, and provides a definition that would exclude Konglish in all forms from code switching, for his code switching requires more than the juxtaposition of a single word and requires "...speaker changes from one variety of language to another variety or language in accordance with situational or purely personal factors." Romaine's view (2000:56), tends to support this latter view. Nishimura (1997) cited in McGloin, (1998:546) suggesting two forms of code switching, namely 'real' and 'symbolic' still seems to exclude Konglish.

Whatever view, it is clear more academic research is needed into the various forms of Konglish and its origins and usage to make a definitive statement. Nevertheless, an analysis of contemporary Korean may suggest that code switching does not occur in the 'older generation' wherein single occurrences of an English word are juxtaposed into standard Korean, however, code switching may be coming part of everyday Korean speaking in the younger generation. That issue requires greater research however.

Konglish words can cause misunderstanding and confusion, but the majority may be no more confusing than some British English is to American English. The words below highlight the misunderstanding and confusion that Konglish can give rise to in a cross-cultural communication.

(a) consent (long first syllable) - is what an Australian would call an electric power point. Clearly here we have an incorrect dictionary transposition. The link between 'consent ~ to agree' and electric plug is apparent.

(b) skinship - is what the Koreans call hugging, patting or any bodily touching, such as in family relationships.

(c) handle - is what the Koreans call the car steering wheel.

(d) hotchkiss - is what the Koreans call a stapler. It is the name of the inventor and manufacturer in England who exported his staplers to Japan in 1890. Following the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910-1945 it can be seen the word became a loan word from Japanese English, (Pellowe, 1998).

- (e) eye shopping - is a derivation from the English phrase 'window shopping'.
- (f) fighting - is used by a Korean giving encouragement to a football team for example; 'come on team' = fighting.

The list is much longer and can be confusing when viewed/heard for the first time, but it does confirm that cross cultural communications in English with a Korean, apart from the dimension of cultural conflict, also have a secondary element of lexical confusion.

Korean Body Language.

Even with my five years of Korean living experience, I find that it is difficult to assess Korean body language in cross cultural communicating. Whilst little research seems to pertain to Korean body language, there is valuable information on Japanese body language, which has applications in Korea. Argyle (1975:52) notes the Japanese have an implied rule that causes negative emotions not to be displayed, and that their smile may in fact be "...used as a mask", (1975:52). Like Japan, a smile in Korea may be used to mask embarrassment or unwillingness to give a negative answer.

This in part is because the Korean does not know where to place the non-Korean on the highly structured Confucian scale of respect. Similarly, a response to a question by a foreigner that would be perceived by the foreigner as a straight out lie, is in fact an important part of the Korean response in not losing face, or more correctly, saving face. The Korean believes his answer has resolved the communication for the moment at least, whereas his non-answer would have made him/her look foolish, which to a Korean is a very serious matter and may prevent any further communication from in fact taking place.

Despite Kramsch's (2001:46) terminology of protecting the other's face, this ideal simply cannot work in an Australian Korean cross cultural encounter, for one cannot protect what one cannot see.

Kudoh and Matsumoto (1985:1443) note that Japanese non-verbal clues concerning status are very discernable to the Japanese as opposed to emotions of like-dislike that are not noticeable. These clues are not apparent to westerners. Similarly, in Korea, non verbal clues as to one's status in Korean society are easily noticeable to a Korean via a set of factors including, but certainly not limited to, age, name, family, position, things that an initial cross cultural communication would fail to elicit.

Touching may also cause foreigner confusion. Korean dialogue, like Japanese, includes a lot of touching, and same sex touching. This is a sign of respect and trust between the two speakers, though a westerner can easily mistake touch for sexual innuendo. An excellent expose of the complexities of Japanese/American cross cultural communications and body language is seen in the *Rising Sun* (motion picture 2001; S. Connery) wherein the similarities to Korean cross cultural difficulties also appear. Protocols and rules of oral engagement clearly show the misunderstandings and confusion inherent in such communications.

Unlike the Japanese, according to Argyle, (1975:60), where touching is not done in public, Korea is quite the opposite. If a Korean touches his interlocutor (same sex) during speech, such as holding his hand, or placing a hand on the other's leg, it is in the eyes of the Korean speaker and Korean listener that he/she trusts that communicative partner and feels he/she can open his/her heart and soul to the listener. Touch is the sign

this has occurred. However, the westerner will/may feel a degree of shock or even horror and wonder why the Korean is touching him/her.

Although an extensive evaluation of Korean body language is beyond the scope of this work, it is important to note that same or similar types of body language are not necessarily pan-cultural, and that cross cultural body posture meaning is still an area in need of more research, (Kudoh and Matsumoto, 1985). However, the caveats are clear. Any cross cultural communication with a Korean has a potential to lead to the 'loss of face' syndrome described herein. A non-Korean will fail to read the Korean body language, unless, as noted by Saville Troike, (1989:110) "...extensive background study of the community..." has first been carried out. It is submitted that the word 'extensive' means 'very extensive.'

Western body language:

The other side of the coin is how the Korean's perceive western body language and its complexities, (Argyle, 1975). However research is mostly one sided, namely body language that a westerner exudes, yet language is a two-way stream and so is body language. Each member in a dyadic cross-cultural communication needs to recognize his opposite's signals. Korean hand movements are generally suppressed, and whereas Japanese fear overt western arm movements, (Rising sun, 2001, motion picture) Koreans find them descriptive and clue giving. Korean eye contact (gaze) depends upon a set of complex factors associated with the Confucianist hierarchal structure. Generally, overt cues are difficult to interpret when observing a Korean in a communication dyad.

Analyzing cross cultural communications:

A: A meeting between writer and a principal of a Korean Elementary school.

B. A talk between writer and three Korean transplant surgeons.

C. A conversation between writer and Korean co-teacher.A.

Setting:

The writer is visiting a Korean elementary school. It is a large school of about 1,800 students. The purpose of the visit is to meet the Korean English teachers and discuss English teaching methods. However it is customary to meet the school principal before the teacher sessions begin. I am aware this is likely to occur so I am prepared and I am wearing a dark suit and tie. The Korean English teacher conducts me to the principal's office. It is my expectation that she (the Korean English teacher) will not speak again until the meeting is over. The office is spacious with a large comfortable sofa close to the principal's desk, many flowers, and photos of past principals adorning the walls, and large Korean flag.

As I enter the room the elderly male principal, wearing suit and tie, stands, and with hand motion (palm down, fingers curling up in the traditional Korean 'come here' body language, beckons me in. I am expecting brief words from him but much formality.

1. Principal. Welcome to my school (in Korean)

2. AB. Thank you (in Korean)

Right hands meet for the 'very soft hand shake' and we both bow about 20 degrees.

3. AB. My name is Paul. I am happy to meet you (in English)

4. Hand embrace now stops.
5. Principal. Sit down (in English)
6. Both sit down; the third person also sits down after receiving the cue (body language) from the principal.
7. AB. Thank you
8. Principal. My name is E. E Chul An
9. AB. I am very happy to be in your school Mr Lee
10. Principal. My card
11. Principal hands his business card to me
(15.0)
12. AB. this is your school number
13. Principal. Yes this is it
14. Where are you from
15. AB. Hoju (Korean word for Australia)
16. Principal. Ahh very beautiful Sydney Opera House
17. AB. Yes have you been there
18. Principal. No (1) where is your family
19. AB. I am single my mother and father are in Sydney
20. Principal. ohh (Korean words to 3rd person) coffee green tea
21. AB. No thank you I must get to the teacher class and begin the meeting
22. All three people stand. Principal again shakes hand, bows, and follows me to the door.
23. AB. It was very nice meeting you
24. Principal. Come and see me any time
25. Me. Thank you I will

Analysis.

A successful cross cultural communication with a high degree of success. Misunderstandings and confusion did not enter this event. My speed of speech was deliberately slowed to about one word per second to facilitate his understanding. Line 18 may have caused an Australian to give the wrong answer during a first time communication. In this situation, the principal was not concerned 'where' my family was, but in fact was I married. Whereas some Koreans will pry this information from a westerner (for it is important in the Confucian hierarchy) this Korean used neutral words that I recognized. Note in Line 20 the principal speaks to the Korean English teacher. I understand his words: he wonders why I am not married. However, his knowledge of western culture prevents him from asking me directly, which is often a common Korean trait in establishing hierarchical structures.

Noteworthy features of this event are the traditional Korean handshake, being very weak and limp, (the firm Australian hand shake would shock the Korean into thinking the foreigner was rude) and the ritual with the business card, wherein it is my duty in Korean tradition to examine it carefully and ask some question, irrespective of whether I need the answer or not. This is being polite and respectful. As expected the junior teacher did not speak throughout the meeting merely bowing upon departure.

B. Setting.

In a major public hospital. I am with three kidney transplant surgeons who like practicing English. The 'president', owner of the hospital, (senior doctor) and two 'junior'

surgeons are seated at a rectangular table in the president's office. The president is about 50, the juniors are about 45. It is a bi-weekly informal meeting that follows traditional Confucian speech constraints whereby the president dictates when the junior's speak.

AB. What did you do on the weekend

President. I played

AB. Oh where did you play?

President. In the temple I played in the temple

3.0

AB. Of course and after praying.

Analysis.

Koreans have great difficulty pronouncing and distinguishing the letters 'l' and 'r', (note the recent research in Japan on l/r pronunciation difficulties, ((Yamada and Tohkura, 1992))). In this situation the senior doctor wished to tell me that he had been praying in the temple on the weekend. However, his inability to pronounce the letter 'r' meant he produced an 'l' sound, thus the sentence meaning radically changed from the intended meaning. Again this is a situation of rapid understanding that one doesn't play in a temple, that Koreans have trouble pronouncing 'r', thus the intended meaning was probably that he 'prayed' in the temple. Here we have two competing principles for a native English teacher.

Firstly the principle that an immediate correction of his pronunciation error is called for, (Enright, 1991, 391), and secondly, that to correct a 'senior' in front of the 'junior's' may mean losing face to the senior Korean. Thus, after a small time interval, I continued with what was most probably the next correct question in the conversation. The likelihood of a Korean playing in a temple being remote meant that it was safe for me to gamble on my next utterance. A later reference to the pronunciation of 'l' and 'r' sounds was made such that it was accepted by all participants as a valued point of good English speaking and with no reference to any past mistake. However, the situation, had it not been for my experience, may have led to loss of face for the Korean, and embarrassment or confusion to an Australian if the word 'play' had been followed up on, namely; "Why do you play in a temple?"

C. Setting

In a classroom with middle aged male Korean English teacher. The purpose of this was to demonstrate a team-teaching situation to a class of about 50 male Middle school students.

AB. What page shall we begin on Mr. Kim

4.0

Kim Oh really

5.0

AB.. I see ok let's practice a role-play for the students

Kim ok

Analysis.

Communication breakdown is the feature of this interaction. Clearly Mr. Kim did not understand my simple question. His English ability (known to me before hand) was

low despite his being an English teacher. Note the period of time between his answer and my response. His answer confused me for it was not appropriate. However, the situation required careful tact; asking the question again would have caused Mr. Kim to lose face in front of his class. Thus in the long interval I had to plan a sentence that would seem to the student's that I was satisfied with their teacher's answer and was ready to proceed. Thus my response had to indicate his answer was correct and my next words would follow naturally. A difficult situation encompassing various aspects of cross cultural communication breakdown, confusion, misunderstanding and face saving.

A more appropriate question and non verbal action at the outset from me would have been holding the text book, open it anywhere, show him the book, and ask my question whilst looking at the book, thus giving him extra overt clues as to the meaning of my speech. This situation involved Mr. Kim's lack of English understanding and my lack of demonstrative body language to assist Mr. Kim receive extra cues from my oral question. The end result was, for Mr. Kim, good, for he appeared before his students as a master of English communication, however, from my aspect, it was confusion and a hope to avoid a potentially bad situation in front of so many witnesses. In terms of Nishida, Hammer and Wiseman (1998) the cross cultural communication had on Mr. Kim's side, a good degree of success, yet on my side, a limited degree of cross cultural communicative satisfaction.

Conclusion:

The question calls for a review of a cross cultural communication. It was initially hypothesized based on existing literature and the writer's experience that the task would be subject to multiple conflicting influences. The easygoing nature of an Australian (Beal: 1992) versus the highly structured and formalized Korean Confucian hierarchical system.

My preliminary cross cultural communication between the writer and a group of Koreans was abandoned for the results would not have been authentic, and misleading on any follow up analysis, for the hierarchical rules of speaking and structured silence would have produced inconclusive data. As long as one Korean is perceived as the senior then all others will defer to him/her out of respect. Once that senior has spoken, he/she will often direct who is to answer. Juniors tend to remain steadfastly silent despite an apparent desire to actively contribute out of turn to the dialogue. Thus overlapping samples of speech would not have been a feature. Note however, that in some situations of cross cultural communication, Cheng (2000) suggests that the observer paradox, as reported by Cukor-Avila (2000), is negated after a period of time has been spent between observer and participant. In her cross-cultural communication, she, a Chinese national, interviewed male Koreans.

However, the distinction to an Australian interviewing/ communicating with Koreans is substantially different as the element of Confucian rules is lacking on one side. Thus, as noted by Cukor-Avila (2000:254), unless certain criteria are carefully examined pre interview, then "...we can never know to what extent these data represent the typical linguistic behavior of informants".

Nevertheless, the results supported the initial belief that a cross cultural communication could contain possible elements of confusion and misunderstanding. The uncomfortable moments, Beal (1992:25) were not observed in two of the three

communications as the communications were spontaneous and set in an atmosphere where I had previously been placed by my Korean counterparts on their hierarchical table, thus eliminating a source of their initial confusion they would normally encounter with a first time meeting with an Australian.

However, the results of a Korean/Australian/Asian cross cultural communication will depend upon a set of complex factors, not limited to but centered upon;

A. the age of the foreign interviewer (communicator) and nationality
his perceived status in the Confucian system
length of time within the community
his/her physical appearance
his/her dress code
his/her educational qualifications
male or female

B. age and sex of interviewee (communicator)
university background
family roots
job/position in society

C. group cross cultural communications will be subject to 'A' and 'B' plus the rules of status, i.e. who is senior. It was mentioned at the outset that communication breakdown or difficulties should not be blamed on the communicators, but the educational programs that fail to disclose the true nature of cross cultural communications. Despite the suggestions of McMeniman and Evans (1997), Crozet and Liddicoat (1997) et al, that cross-cultural approaches become an embedded component of language pedagogy, the evidence at large in Korea suggests this does not occur in any meaningful manner. In Korean L2 programs, this aspect receives lip service in government textbooks, however, until teachers are taught this aspect of education (Chisholm, 1994, quoted in McMeniman and Evans, 1997:3), it is arguable that even text references are not appropriate.

Cross cultural communications will succeed, but as Nishida, Hammer and Wiseman (1998) note, the analysis must be seen in terms of degrees of success. However, this in itself is only part of the guide, for whilst the Australian may have observed or perceived the communication as a success, to a certain degree, the Korean mask (smile) and answer may have hidden from view a very serious infraction of cultural norms that may or may not ever become apparent.

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