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CREATIVE DRAMA, AN EFFECTIVE MEDIUM IN TEACHING KOREAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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Creative Drama, an Effective Medium in Teaching Korean Language and Culture

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Abstract

Foreign language education encompasses social and cultural understanding of the target language. The traditional approach to teaching Korean places too much emphasis on the correct grammatical structure and overlooks the use of language in the real world. Although recent Korean language textbooks have made strides by incorporating situational exercises into their curriculum, these texts still consist of one-dimensional situations with prescribed dialogues and reactions. Creative drama can be a solution to these shortcomings in the language classroom. In this study, creative drama is offered as an effective tool in language education to develop oral proficiency and deepen cultural awareness.

The teaching model introduced in this paper is the result of my experiences with creative drama as a teaching method in my Basic and Intermediate Korean classes. Students implemented role-plays and skits to review their lessons, and wrote and performed a creative drama for their final project. These exercises allowed students to enhance their learning experience by engaging with the material in a new way. During the early stages of their work, students engaged in simple improvised role-plays in small groups based on that week's lesson. Next, students wrote their own scripts. By crafting storylines, developing characters, and writing stage directions, students engaged in hands-on exercises that went beyond textbook memorization. For their final project, students selected a classic Korean folktale and worked in larger groups, discussing the story, themes, and traditional Korean culture to develop a creative drama, then performed in front of the class.

My work teaching Korean language classes suggests that dramatic activities can be successfully integrated into the existing language curriculum to give students a deeper understanding of the target culture and the opportunity to practice the target language in situations that mimic the real world. The dramatic activities not only increase interest in language lessons, but also improve self-confidence and foster a sense of community. Successful language education goes beyond the mechanics of the target language; it also teaches a deeper appreciation for the culture that enriches the language. Creative drama effectively addresses both aspects of language education in an entertaining and engaging way.

Introduction

“What is your motivation for learning Korean?” I ask my students at the beginning of each academic year. Their answers vary, but they can generally be divided into two categories based on student interest and willingness to learn. The first group consists of students who have already been exposed to Korean culture through K-pop (Korean popular music), K-drama (Korean TV drama), or Korean food. Some of them have plans to go to Korea for vacation, for employment, or for education. These students have clearly defined goals for their Korean study. The second group of students is either satisfying a language requirement for graduation or, if they have prior knowledge of Korean, they are seeking an easy course.

Taking into account the various reasons and motivations for studying Korean, teaching objectives should be set to fulfill the needs of both groups by generating and promoting interest in the language while strengthening language proficiency. It is not easy for foreign language instructors to find teaching methods or materials that can address both situations equally well. This task is exacerbated by textbooks that contain one-dimensional situations with prescribed dialogues and reactions. Determining the most effective teaching method in a language classroom is one of the major concerns of foreign language educators.

Creative drama is suggested in this paper as a successful teaching tool that can transform textbook conversations into a living language that entertains and educates. Both groups of students – Basic and Intermediate Korean learners – have actively participated and enjoyed the process. The core and ultimate goal of foreign language education is to communicate with native speakers of the target language. However, many students neglect the importance of oral proficiency in foreign language acquisition because they rarely encounter its necessity outside the classroom. Even if students realize the importance and want to practice the target language, it

is difficult for them to find practical opportunities. Creative drama proposes a solution that resolves these shortcomings in the language classroom by developing real-world situations in which students enthusiastically and voluntarily participate. As Kao and O'Neill indicate, drama has been regarded as "a useful tool in engaging learners in constructing their own language growth, reflecting meaning in the fullest sense of personal and cultural relevance, matching individual levels of ability, and supporting self-initiated activity" (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

I have been incorporating dramatic methods into my Basic Korean and Intermediate Korean courses for the past three years and the methods introduced in this paper have been well-received by my students. Creative drama has played a significant role in connecting oral communication, with textbook conversations and grammar rules. Through fun and engaging activities, creative drama has helped my students deepen their awareness of Korean culture.

In this paper, to avoid confusion of terms, the definition of creative drama will be examined first, and then applied dramatic activities in classroom will be discussed. The effectiveness of creative drama in foreign language acquisition as well as suggestions for improved application will also be discussed.

What is a creative drama?

The term 'creative drama' has been used since the Children's Theatre Association of America officially established the term in 1977 (Rosenburg, 1987). Creative drama, originally designed for young children, focuses on improvisational and non-theatrical activities to promote learning (Jendyk, 1985). While educational drama, such as children's drama, youth theater, educational theatre and collective theatre, is more formally structured and emphasizes the interpretation, rehearsal and performance of the drama, creative drama focuses on dramatic

representation itself; therefore, creative drama is more informal and improvisational. Educational drama focuses on forms, but creative drama focuses on meaning. Liu (2002) illustrates that “focus on forms is considered a traditional approach in which course design starts with the language to be taught. Focus on meaning focuses on the learner and learning process only” (p. 52). Educational drama is “product-oriented”; on the other hand, creative drama is “process-oriented” (Moody, 2002). For educational drama, the final polished stage performance is a required component. However, creative drama just borrows the form of drama; the final product on the stage is not the ultimate goal. Rather, creative drama considers the academic and mental development of students to be the most important aspect of the process. In addition, creative drama requires the understanding of situations in which non-verbal factors, such as body language and facial expressions, are crucial. It, therefore, naturally offers students the opportunity to grasp the target culture by exploring customs, behavioral manners, and etiquette.

As examined above, creative drama contains a number of positive points that can be effectively utilized as classroom activity due to its informality and simplicity. Because each class has its own unique educational environment, customization of teaching methods is essential. As each class has its own characteristics, uniform application of general pedagogical theory does not necessarily guarantee the best results. The success of the classroom activity depends on how the teacher appropriately modifies the teaching methods according to the needs of each class. Here are customized examples of creative dramatic methods applied to my Basic Korean and Intermediate Korean courses.

1. Creating a Syllabus: Course Objectives

Dramatic methods are usually implemented into the foreign language classroom to

develop oral proficiency (Dodson, 2002). However, I did not want to limit dramatic methods to oral language production, so I devised ways to improve not only the manner in which students speak, but also the way they read and write. This course objective was determined by a formal survey. On the first day of each semester, I administer a formal survey to my students to better understand their expectations. After explaining what creative drama is and how I plan to implement it, I ask students what their expectations are and what they hope to achieve from my Korean language course (See Class Survey below). On the basis of the survey results, I slightly modify the course objective by adjusting the frequency of the use of creative drama.

Q: Of the four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing – which one(s) do you want to focus on to improve your Korean this semester?	Very Little				Very Much
(1) Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Listening	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Reading	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Writing	1	2	3	4	5

The survey results from my Basic Korean and Intermediate Korean courses last year demonstrated different student needs. While over 90% of students in Basic Korean were highly interested in developing strong oral proficiency, the Intermediate Korean students wanted to improve their speaking ability without sacrificing the grammar and writing components of the textbook. The most popular reasons for taking the Intermediate Korean course were:

1. To email to Korean pop singers or to leave messages on their Korean Facebook social network

2. To web surf Korean websites for the information on K-pop or K-drama
3. To watch Korean drama without subtitles
4. To take the TOPIK Korean language proficiency tests sponsored by the Korean government

As demonstrated above, the Intermediate Korean students wanted to go beyond simple communication and were eager to apply what they learned from class to real life. Based on the student feedback, the Intermediate Korean class was equally focused on speaking, writing and grammar.

Once the course objectives were defined, the frequency of creative drama usage was adjusted as well. Holden (1981) warns of the dangers of overusing this tool: “It [creative drama] should not be used too often or to the exclusion of other aids. If this happens, it will lose its effectiveness. Fifteen minutes once a week is far more effective than a full hour at sporadic intervals” (p. 29). I implemented improvised role plays, not every week but at the end of each lesson, usually once every 2-3 weeks for a total of 4-5 times of role-plays throughout the semester. The course culminated in the final drama performance at the end of the term.

Timing and time management are essential factors in employing creative drama in language education. The example above illustrates that even five dramatic activities per semester is enough to achieve the course objectives. The primary reason for implementing drama at the end of each lesson – I should call it ‘role-play’ at this stage as it has not been developed to the level of drama yet – is to sum up the grammar and expressions learned in class in an entertaining way. Students engage in improvised role-plays based on lessons from the textbook. Another reason for implementing drama at the end of each lesson is to maximize the use of class time.

Role-plays are relatively simple tasks for both students and teachers, but performing a complete drama requires a great deal of time, energy, and coordination. In my class, to maximize the effectiveness of drama, two to three students would role-play during the term, while five to six students would organize and perform in the end-of-semester drama. By minimizing the participants in each group, the class was able to maintain a brisk pace without falling behind schedule, and every student had a chance to actively participate.

2. Three Stages of Creative Drama

The method of creative drama I implemented consisted of three stages of progression: 1) improvised role-plays, 2) script-based role-plays, and 3) more lengthy creative drama. In Stage One, for the first two textbook lessons, students engaged in simple dramatic role-plays to familiarize themselves with the process of creative drama. For Stage Two, students were first given the task of writing their own short scripts, and then performed role-plays. Challenged with crafting storylines and developing characters, students were able to utilize their reading and writing skills beyond their typical interaction with the textbook. There was never a need to memorize lines because students already had ideas of what to say from their earlier writing activity. The storylines followed textbook topics, but improvisation was encouraged. Stage Three involved students in the entire dramatic process. After selecting a classic Korean folktale, students worked in groups to share ideas and craft plays based on the plot. The plays were then performed in front of the class at the end of the semester.

2-1. First Stage: Improvised Role-plays

The improvised role-play is the first stage to familiarize students with the process of

creative drama in the language classroom. The textbook used in my class consists of three different situational conversations per lesson under one big/umbrella topic. After teaching the lesson, I ask students to form groups of 2-3 students of their own choosing and act out textbook conversations. This stage is very similar to what Donoghue describes. Donoghue (1989) divides the development of dramatization in creative drama into two stages: the interpretation stage and the improvisation stage (p. 17). In the interpretation stage, students dramatize familiar stories or situations. This stage helps familiarize students with the story enough to prepare them for the improvisation stage. However, Donoghue defines the interpretation stage as nothing but a mimicry of the conversations learned in class, requiring little or no creativity. His assertion can hardly be categorized as “creative drama,” since the interpretation stage follows the traditional ways of memorizing given dialogues. Thus, I suggest here that even at the first stage, situational improvisation is necessary, not merely echoing textbook conversations. Although it can be challenging for Basic Korean learners to improvise dialogues due to their limited vocabulary and expressions, students can still creatively improvise situations based on what they learned in class without changing sentence structures. I, in fact, give this task to my Basic Korean students and they carry out this improvisational interpretation extremely well.

For the Intermediate Korean students, Donoghue’s interpretation stage was not challenging enough. They found it more beneficial to jump into the improvisation stage from the beginning. At this stage of improvisation, the students modified and recreated existing textbook situations (1989). I suggested to students that they use sentence patterns learned in class, regardless of their proficiency level. Once they started acting, they had their own control over making up the situation. At first students were intimidated in front of their peers; they spoke softly without making eye contact. But as they became more comfortable with their roles, they

became more engaged. Students took advantage of opportunities to improvise, and as time went on, they became more confident in speaking Korean in front of each other. At this stage, it did not really matter whether what they expressed was correct.

One of the teaching materials I experimented with for improvised role-play was background pictures. Using Power Point, I provided background images on the big screen for each vignette and changed images at appropriate intervals. I first asked students to perform facing the screen, so that students could get hints from the pictures to think about what to say next. The next time students tried the same role-play, they did not look at the images, and the pictures functioned literally as “background.” The pictures also increased realism in the role-plays. The pictures of buildings and streets were provided to help students with asking directions, and a street market picture with background sound went with the lesson on visiting a Korean street market. Students were able to point to buildings they wanted to visit or to the items they wanted to buy at the market. The background pictures also provided a virtual setting for each scene and this helped students inject more reality into the conversation. In the Basic Korean course, I initially used words or phrases in the title of each slide as hints. Students would peek at the pictures and word hints, but soon they focused on their conversation. I later omitted the leading words and would only show pictures to help generate spontaneous responses and creativity.

2-2. Second Stage: Script-Based Improvised Role-plays

In the second stage, students were assigned to write their own short script. They were encouraged to be as creative as possible while using the grammar rules and sentence patterns learned in class. They crafted storylines and characters as they chose. While in the first stage of

interpretation, students improvised situations without any modification of the conversation's main ideas. Yet, in this second stage of the script-based role-play, students more actively modified the overall scenario using their creative ideas. The most important part of this stage was writing the script. In fact, the role-play performed after the script writing process became much more natural. Students felt more comfortable and confident as well because they were already familiar with the contents of the role-play topic through their discussion and writing. Discussion time offered students some ideas about what to say or to expect from others in the given scenario. The writing process concretized those ideas and gave students confidence in handling the situation. This second stage was categorized as improvised role-play because students had to dramatize the given situation, spontaneously improvising even after writing a script which they could not refer to during a performance.

Though the students performed their first role-play without a script, students began writing their script from the second role-play on. I intentionally implemented writing work for the second role-play for several reasons. First, I wanted students to feel the difference in their role-play before (without) and after (with) a script, so they would realize the effectiveness of the script-based improvised role-play. I also expected them to understand the importance of preparation for the conversation topic. Second, I planned to combine grammar points with the writing task through dramatic methods, in order to practice and improve writing skills. Third, I wanted students to improve their self-confidence through both unscripted and scripted role-plays, step by step.

Students' script writing demonstrated how creative drama could not only develop oral proficiency, but also incorporate holistic language education. It was easy to overlook the grammar rules and sentence patterns in creative drama, if speaking was too much emphasized.

However, the process of script writing could make up for this oversight. The script writing culminated in dramatizing a classic Korean folk tale, *Hungboo and Nolboo*, in the Intermediate Korean course.

After selecting the folk tale, I asked students to research information about the folk tale through website. Students found various links about storylines, characters, and some background information. They also found *Hungboo and Nolboo* animation websites which were very helpful for them to understand the overall setting, mood, and even the clothing of the characters. Then students worked in groups and had discussion time about their web research. They shared the story, themes, and Korean traditional culture and beliefs found in the folk tale.

Students enjoyed working on their script without difficulties, as they already had developed their own script writing skills, acquired from previous role-plays. Expressions learned in class for the script were emphasized in the script writing, but students had freedom to create the storyline and develop characters. I did not intervene in the students' collaboration unless they first asked questions. *Hungboo and Nolboo* will be discussed in further detail in Section 2-3.

Creative Drama Based on the Korean Traditional Folktale

Different from the improvised role-play which was difficult to apply to the Basic Korean course, the script-based improvised role-play was successfully used both in the Basic and Intermediate Korean classes. It is true that performing the improvised role-play as beginners poses many problems because of students' limited vocabularies and expressions. However, I believe those students in fact at this stage are in need of interactive practice and tasks. If those language beginners do repetitive study exclusively and individually, it is easy for them to lose their interest. In my Basic Korean class, students felt pressured at first about performing a role-play in front of the whole class, but they successfully produced a creative, interesting piece

through the process of the script writing. Here are the six steps my Basic Korean students followed:

1. Form a group
2. Choose a topic through discussion
3. Write a script in English first
4. Rewrite the script in Korean using grammar expressions from class
5. Read and practice the script individually
6. Perform the role-play as a group

The script-based improvised role-play the Basic Korean students performed was successful in that students reviewed what they learned from class in a creative and entertaining manner. Students reported that they felt more “close to their group members” or “a sense of community” while preparing for the role-play. This was an added benefit of the use of creative drama and it indeed played a large role in raising students’ interest in the lessons. For the Intermediate Korean course, I combined steps 3 and 4, in order to save time and to stimulate students’ more active participation. Students freely expressed their opinions in English and wrote a script together adding Korean translation in parenthesis. If one student could not think of the word or sentences in Korean, other students helped, so it did not take long to write a one-page role-play script.

Over the course of the semester, the comfort level of students performing role plays increased steadily. In the beginning of the semester, regardless of the language proficiency level, new students sometimes found the role-play awkward and embarrassing. However, as the

number of the role-plays increased, all students improved their performance in general. Their voices became louder and their eyes made more contact with the audience. Their hand and body gestures occurred naturally and frequently. The Intermediate Korean course students were more socially bonded to each other because they already had experienced many group creative dramas from the previous Basic Korean class. This familiarity boosted teamwork and produced a friendly atmosphere while working together.

To sum up the script-based role-play, first, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the given conversational scenario. Second, students have a group discussion over the conversation topic, leading to their writing of a script. Third, students improvise role-plays on the same topic, but with variations. The important points here which must not be overlooked are the discussion and script reading rehearsal. The group discussions enable students to gain a full understanding of the context of the conversational situation. This allows them to develop the cognitive ability to deal with other similar situations. This ability manifests when students creatively modify the original situational conversation.

The reading practice must vividly resemble a comprehensive live situation. Students are expected not to simply read the script lines, but to read with great care, and pay attention to details such as mood, intonation, hand gestures, facial expressions, and so on. The instructor needs to demonstrate some of the gestures and expressions if necessary. For example, when Korean people greet each other, traditionally, women neither initiate hand shaking nor hugging. Women traditionally tried not to have any physical contact with other adults, especially males. Before elders, women knelt down to bow if they were indoors or simply bowed if outdoors. Even men, when shaking hands with elderly people, used both hands – one hand for shaking, and the other one for placement under the elbow or across the abdomen while bowing – showing respect

to their elders.

In addition to non-verbal hand and body gestures, the usage of verbal honorific forms in the Korean language is very important and needs to be clearly explained. Honorific forms are subdivided depending on the ages of speakers and listeners. To appropriately use honorific forms in everyday conversation, one must fully understand the social and cultural context. I helped students with cultural contexts and subtexts, but other than that, I tried not to interfere in their group work. Instead, I provided a list of questions that they could work on together as a team. Until improvised role-plays, students did not need to pay attention too much to facial expressions or tone of voice when performing the role-play because the topics and situations they dealt with were about everyday conversation which required no other explanation. But later, for the creative drama, *Hungboo and Nolboo*, students would think, “How would I behave with my brother Hungboo if I were the angry brother, Nolboo?” or, “How should I change my voice tone when I get hit all of a sudden by Nolboo’s wife?” The answers to such questions were discussed in groups later when students worked on their end-of-semester creative drama project.

In addition to discussion and reading practice, the number of students in a group is one of the key factors that the instructor must carefully consider in planning for creative drama. From my experience, a small group of 2-3 students is a good number in the beginning of the role-play, and 5-6 students is the maximum number even for the bigger group required for the end-of-semester creative drama project. Barnes (1966) indicates that “collaboration in pairs and then in larger groups will be required; and finally as the groups become confidently involved in their joint tasks, they will take control of their own activities while the teacher watches” (p. 27). The reason why the group should maintain the minimum number of students in creative drama is for students’ active participation. If the number of participants increases, the portion of each

student's dialogues decreases. Also, to reduce the gap between student roles – leading roles and supporting roles – each student's speaking portion should be balanced with others from when the script is organized and written. It is not very difficult to make a balance among group members. After writing a draft, students who speak less than others can add or make-up some lines.

To sum up the benefits of the role-play as a classroom activity, it 1) diminishes social stiffness among students, 2) raises interest in lessons, and 3) improves self-confidence in communicating on the spot with others.

2-3. Creative Drama Based on the Korean Traditional Folktale

For the final project, the students selected *Hungboo and Nolboo* as a representative classic Korean folktale. From the two folktales, I briefly introduced: *The Good Girl Shim Chung* and *Hungboo and Nolboo*. The students conducted a quick online search and had a discussion before making their final selection. As Wagner (2002) illustrates in her article “Understanding Drama-Based Education,” creative drama offers the opportunity to learn the target culture and society.

Drama activities such as improvisation, tableau, or writing in role open spaces for intercultural conversations that can transport students beyond the mechanics of conventional language learning into an empowering world of political and communal recognitions that invite new spaces of intercultural dialogue and understanding. (p. 21)

Wagner points out that the chosen scenarios for drama-based foreign language learning often promote the dominant culture, and consciously or unconsciously reinforce the cultural behaviors

and expectations of the target language (p. 20); therefore, students easily and naturally experience the target culture through dramatic activity. The folktale *Hungboo and Nolboo* is an appropriate story for non-native Korean speakers for three reasons:

- 1) Linguistically, the dialogues between Nolboo (older brother) and Hungboo (younger brother) clearly show the difference between the plain form and the honorific form of Korean language.
- 2) Socially, the authority of the older brother can be explained in terms of Korean hierarchical social structure.
- 3) Culturally, the importance of family bonding and the meaning of the first son in the family can be examined as well.

The Korean folktale was implemented into the Intermediate Korean course only, rather than into the Basic Korean course, because the modification of the folktale required quite a number of expressions. The textbook lessons dealt with one main topic such as “At the airport,” or “At a clothing store,” so it was not very difficult for the Basic Korean course students to try role-plays. But the story of *Hungboo and Nolboo* was different because it was composed of several sub-stories, which demanded more diverse vocabularies and sentence structures. I followed three steps for the *Hungboo and Nolboo* project.

First, students watched the *Hungboo and Nolboo* animation DVD (Kang, 2007) to understand the overall story. I used a Korean version of a 15-minute animated short film without English subtitles. Then I asked students to share what they understood with classmates in chronological order. They related the story, in a “relay-race” fashion, by saying one or two

sentences each. With the help of a visual aid, students understood the main ideas of the story: the greedy older brother Nolboo eventually lost all his fortune and got punished after mimicking what his good younger brother Hungboo did to the baby swallow in a negative way. However, students still needed to catch the smaller details of the storyline. Second, students watched the DVD again with English subtitles, and had a discussion about the whole storyline, theme and characters. This time they were able to more actively talk about the details of each scene. The DVD played an essential role in both understanding Korean culture and writing the script.

I utilized the animation DVD in two ways: with subtitles and without subtitles. While showing the DVD without sound and subtitles, I frequently paused the video and asked students to speculate on the possible conversations which would fit well into the scene. The students successfully made-up the appropriate conversations, and sometimes went a step further and creatively crafted. The animation DVD played an important role not only in understanding of the story, but also in stimulating creativity for possible conversational lines. The key point of creative drama is to develop students' creativity as well as spontaneous speaking ability, and the DVD helped to accomplish those objectives. Although the DVD was animation and not a real representation of life, the video offered students who were unfamiliar with Korean culture an opportunity to experience Korean traditional houses, music, clothing and body gestures.

Conclusion

When incorporating drama into the foreign language class, the instructor may face dual difficulties. Because of the time required to complete a drama and the specialized knowledge instructors need, drama is rarely used as a teaching aid, even in the English classroom. Furthermore, from the students' standpoint, drama can be burdensome because it is performed in

a foreign language with which they are not yet comfortable. The “creative drama” introduced in this paper can resolve these issues. Class activities and survey results indicate that creative drama has proven to be an effective teaching tool in foreign language classrooms both to develop oral proficiency and deepen the cultural awareness of the target language.

Creative drama is different from educational drama in its goal and format. Creative drama is process-oriented and does not require a formal final stage performance; therefore, creative drama has a great deal of flexibility in its implementation. Educational drama’s complicated procedures and processes, requiring technical or professional knowledge, can be omitted or modified according to each class’ needs. Once the basic dramatic elements are set up, instructors have the freedom to adapt creative drama to their classroom in a manner with which they feel comfortable. Instructors can begin with relatively straightforward tasks such as verbally crafting a storyline on a topic, or performing a simple role-play on the lesson learned in class. Then, more elaborate tasks can be added and expanded. The time requirements can be adjusted depending on the length and complexity of the story or the manner in which it is modified. Time should not be an issue if the story is not lengthy and students can craft it in a simple way. Creative drama can also be employed in an informal and comfortable manner, without the pressure of a formal drama performance. With creative drama, instructors can use practical methods to improve language proficiency and raise their students’ interest in the target culture.

Survey results from my classes have indicated how helpful creative drama was to Korean language learners. Below are the survey questionnaires I used in my Basic and Intermediate Korean classes. The first two questions of both surveys are identical, yet the third question on writing has been customized to incorporate lesson topics.

Basic Korean Class Survey Before/After Creative Drama

Categories	Questions	Evaluation
Confidence & Oral Proficiency	How confident are you in initiating or partaking in a conversation with a native Korean speaker?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5
Interest & Creative Drama	Do you think creative drama is an effective way of learning the Korean language?	Ineffective Effective 1 2 3 4 5
Writing	How well do you think you can write in Korean about the topics listed below?	Not at all Very well 1 5
	1. Greetings	1 2 3 4 5
	2. The university campus	1 2 3 4 5
	3. Korean language class	1 2 3 4 5
	4. At school	1 2 3 4 5
	5. My weekend	1 2 3 4 5

Intermediate Korean Class Survey Before/After Creative Drama

Categories	Questions	Evaluation
Confidence & Oral Proficiency	How confident are you in initiating or partaking in a conversation with a native Korean speaker?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5
Interest & Creative Drama	Do you think creative drama is an effective way of learning the Korean language?	Ineffective Effective 1 2 3 4 5
Writing	How well do you think you can write in Korean about the topics listed below?	Not at all Very well 1 5
	1. On the telephone	1 2 3 4 5
	2. At a Korean restaurant	1 2 3 4 5
	3. At a professor's office	1 2 3 4 5
	4. School vacations and holidays	1 2 3 4 5
	5. Korean folktale, <i>Hungboo and Nolboo</i>	1 2 3 4 5

These survey results indicate that creative drama methods were indeed beneficial in three aspects. As a teaching tool, creative drama 1) improved students' oral proficiency and confidence, 2) strengthened students' writing skills by using grammar points learned in class, and 3) raised awareness and interest in Korean culture.

First, students improved their oral proficiency through role-plays and creative dramas. Although some students were intimidated in front of their peers, they soon began speaking louder and more articulately as they gained self-confidence. Thirteen out of fifteen students (86%) in the Basic Korean class, and five out of six out of 6 students (83%) in the Intermediate Korean class marked 4/5 or 5/5, indicating that creative drama was beneficial in improving their self-confidence and oral proficiency in Korean.

Second, through the script writing for role-plays and creative dramas, students had a chance to review and apply the grammar rules and expressions they learned to real world communication while creatively crafting the storyline. It was meaningful to students that they utilized what they knew, beyond their typical interaction with the textbook. In the survey, more than 80% of students – 80% of Basic Korean course students and 83% of Intermediate Korean students – expressed that they became more confident writing on the topics covered in class after creative drama.

Third, through the final creative drama of *Hungboo and Nolboo*, students had opportunities to delve into Korean tradition, linguistically, socially and culturally. Since students participated in the entire dramatic process from inception to performance, in this final drama, they practiced their speaking, reading and writing skills. To a survey question, “Do you think creative drama is an effective way to learn Korean language and culture?” over 90% of students in the Intermediate Korean class responded positively. Creative drama has played a critical role

in promoting Korean language and culture through fun and engaging activities.

Last year, as an extension of the learning process of the *Hungboo and Nolboo* lesson unit, our class took a trip to The Korean Costume Museum in New York city. The class field trip was designed to help students understand the Korean traditional costume, Hanbok, through authentic materials. After learning the history of Hanbok, students tried on the different types of Hanbok. With amusement, students discovered that they should wear the bottom pants or skirts first in the order of dressing. Students also learned the differences between the high-quality silk Hanbok that the greedy older brother Nolboo wore, and the plain rough-quality white cotton Hanbok that ordinary poor people like Hungboo wore. The museum visit was an additional experiment to boost students' interest in the lesson as well as awareness of Korean culture.

For more active application of creative drama in a foreign language classroom, I would like to make two suggestions. First, better video materials for the creative drama lesson need to be developed. Video materials are essential for non-native speakers of the target language who are unfamiliar with the target culture. Such materials should consist of 1) the authentic representation of the target culture, 2) the articulate speech of characters, and 3) the accurate translation of the target language in subtitles. My research of existing videos of Korean folktales revealed there were only a few DVDs and even their image-quality was not satisfactory. If high-quality educational video materials for creative drama are provided in the future, this would not only save a great deal of instructors' class preparation time, but also help instructors to easily apply the methods to their class activity. My second suggestion is that Korean language textbooks should include supplemental materials for instructors to incorporate creative drama. There is a need for guide books for the use of creative drama in the Korean language classroom. Such textbooks could include suggested folktales and sample scripts according to the proficiency

level. These curriculum guide books would be beneficial to those instructors who are newly applying creative drama.

Despite the shortage and shortcomings of existing teaching materials, my work with the Basic and Intermediate Korean classes suggests that dramatic activities can successfully integrate with the existing language curriculum. Creative drama deepens understanding of the target culture and allows students opportunities to practice the target language in situations that mimic the real world. The process of script writing successfully connects the speaking-centered dramatic method to the grammar rules as well as reading and writing practice. Dramatic activities not only increase interest in the lessons, but they also have the added benefit of improving self-confidence and fostering a sense of community. Successful language education does not merely aim to teach the mechanics of the target language, but goes beyond mechanics to a fuller understanding of the culture that enriches that language. Creative drama effectively addresses both aspects of language education in a fun and engaging way.

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