



Using Classical Literature in EFL/ESL Classrooms to Improve Student Motivation and Achieve Linguistic Proficiency

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Introduction

Literature was traditionally considered as a means of imparting culture and training aesthetic experience in students and therefore as something beyond the practical aims of language teaching and learning. Due to the complexity of literary language, teachers of language learners expressed deep reservations about the potentials of literature in enhancing communication skills. Despite these difficulties, some students who use the grammar translation method may use classical literature, while others are not as willing to embrace the use of Literature in the ESL classroom. Strenuous discussions have been held on how classical literature and ESL/EFL pedagogy can work together for the betterment of students. Literary texts are intellectually stimulating. Literature helps students to develop their linguistic skills, as well as their cultural knowledge and sensitivity towards cultural issues. Therefore, literature is helpful when teaching cultural issues to foreign language students. By learning about culture, students learn about the history, customs and traditions of a people.

One of the most valuable advantages of using literature in language teaching and learning is the personal involvement and enrichment it cultivates in readers and learners. Most of the materials and course books designed for language teaching contain materials that are concerned with grammar rules and vocabulary. Learning foisted upon learners is “analytic, piecemeal and, at the level of the personality, fairly superficial” (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5). This means the materials serve their purpose to provide a potential for learning, however it does not provide more than learning only to the learner; there is no personal satisfaction or involvement. Engaging in literary texts enables the learners to focus beyond the grammar and the syntax of the target language. The reader pursues the development of the story and is willing to share their personal responses.

There are many advantages of working with classical literature in a second language-learning classroom. These advantages vary from concise writing to simple language; they also present many possibilities for language and task-based activities. Collie and Slater (1991) list four advantages of using classical literature for EFL/ESL language learner that would be beneficial for teachers: (1) Easy to read and are less demanding for second-language learners; (2) Not complicated for students to work with on their own; (3) A variety of choices for different interests; (4) Can be used with all levels of language proficiency (beginner to advanced), and all ages.

In schools, students' interest is increasingly difficult to engage, especially when it comes to topics that are in traditional EFL/ESL textbooks. One possibility to respond to this problem is using classical literary texts. Therefore, the literature in the EFL/ESL classroom can offer a solution to this problem that ESL/EFL teacher face. Using literature allows teachers to adopt task-based learning and creativity that allows students to flourish by using authentic material. Several teachers consider using classical literature in language teaching as a compelling and worthy endeavor (Sage, 1987, p. 1).

This research discusses the inseparability of culture and language and proposes ways of implementing instructional strategies for teaching second language through culture to enhance students' linguistic proficiency by improving motivation. Gleason (1961) said that languages are not only the products of cultures but also are symbols of cultures. Language proficiency is a development and it is an output of culture and cultural traits of social cognition and custom, which are often explicitly coded in language. The use of Korean classical literature provides teachers the opportunity to use real-life situations in teaching. In addition, students must have intrinsic motivation to learn English. Motivated students who want to learn a second language approach task differently than unmotivated students, they make a conscious effort to learn the task, while unmotivated students will simply do the task to be able to obtain a grade (Engin, 2009). The use of Korean classical literature provides authentic material, cultural enrichment, and motivation that will improve language proficiency.

Motivation is defined as the extent to which one tries to achieve the language because of the desire to do so and the satisfaction derived from it (Gardner, 1985). Motivation is significant in the development of language learning success. Students' motivation toward English language learning can influence their learning results. It is important to investigate new teaching pedagogies and their effect on student motivation to determine the success or failure of the pedagogy on student motivation and English language learning success. We must remember that enthusiasm, persistence and desire are keys to L2 learning

The purpose of this research is to emphasize the use of Korean classical literature in the achievement of linguistic proficiency by improving student motivation in L2 English language learners. The significance of the multidimensional benefits of using classical literature in an ESL/EFL classroom can be the conviction that the literature can offer the learners aesthetic and socio-cultural perspective on society and moral values, and therefore as something beyond the practical aims of language teaching.

The use of literature in teaching communication skills is a valuable resource to be exploited in the classroom to benefit the students, explore the language in an interesting and challenging way, thus increasing motivation (Hişmanoğlu, 2015). Using literature can be an effective way of stimulating the second-language learners' motivation. This is a potentially important pedagogical factor, which has been ignored in ESL programs whose central aim is the achievement of linguistic proficiency (Ghasemi, 2011).

Besides achieving the learning objectives, literary texts make the learning process a fun and attractive experience. The various ways of using literature in an ESL classroom include short stories, poems, dramas and novels presented in a task-based or problem-based assignment.

Research Questions

- (1) Does the use of Korean classical literature improve students' motivation to learn English as a second language?
- (2) Does the use of Korean classical literature in provided authentic content improve linguistic proficiency?

Methodology

This section describes the quantitative research methodology employed and the justification for its use in the study and shares details about the study's participants. The primary hypothesis is that using Korean

classical literature will improve students' motivation to learn the L2. This study aims to contribute to the study of second language learning in South Korean EFL university pedagogy literature, by exploring an important intersection between teaching methodologies for a number of EFL students.

All students gave written permission to use their questionnaires and discussion answers for the study. In observance of Bronfenbrenner's model, this study included students from six university classrooms—three beginner and three intermediate students (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The study consists of South Korean students, first through fourth-year students enrolled in a university Practical English class.

Three famous Pansori-based classical novels from the late Choson Dynasty were used in the study. The first story is *Chun-hyang-jeon*, which is a love story between classes. Chun-hang was a lower class female who fell in love with Mong-ryong, the ex-governor's son. Through separation and struggles, Chun-hang and Mong Ryong found true love. The second story was *Heung-bu-jeon*, which is the story of greed between brothers. Nol-bu the older brother of Heung-bu was greedy and rich, while Heung-bu was poor and struggling. Through an act of kindness, the fortunes changed and Nol-bu went from rich to poor while Heung-bu went from poor to rich. The final story was *Shim-cheong-jeon*, which is the story of a daughter's blind love for her father. Shim-cheong was willing to sacrifice her life for her father's (Hak-kyu) ability to see

Procedure

The beginner students were notified of the task-based assignment two weeks prior to the class. The classical literature was posted on the Learning Management System (LMS) in both Korean and English while the intermediate students were given the English version, one week ahead of the task. The student sample size is presented in Table 1:

TABLE 1
Distribution of Sample Group by Gender

Gender	Number of Students	Percent
Male	51	50.4%
Female	46	45.6%
Declined to specify	4	4%
Total	101	100%

Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample by gender. Over 101 respondents took part in the survey. 51% of the respondents were males while about 46% were females. Students were divided into three groups during the class. Each group received one of the famous classical literature (Group 1, *Chun-hyang-jeon*, Group 2, *Heung-bu-jeon*, and Group 3 *Shim-cheong-jeon*). The students were then assigned the following task:

Tasked-Based Assignments	Number of Students
Write a synopsis	2 students
Create a conversation	2 or 3 students
Identify social implications	group
Share thoughts	group

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to calculate descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients and Test of Normality were used to examine the relationship between the uses of Korean classical Literature and improved student motivations and whether or not this relationship improve linguistic proficiency. This five-point Likert Scale questionnaire contained 30 individual questions that specifically measured attitudes toward the use of Korean classical literature in an EFL/ESL classroom. This report, therefore, describes results for individual items in the 30-item Likert scale questionnaire.

Validation of the Questionnaire

A Cronbach alpha coefficient was performed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. Building on the validation of the questionnaire, it was imperative to ensure the reliability, usability, and understanding of the items for EFL students (Dawson et al., 2011). The questionnaire was translated into Korean (translation performed by a professor in the Korean Language Education Dept.) to ensure a better understanding for the students and to ensure there was no confusion about the individual questions. In this study, the items on the questionnaire reported an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, thereby demonstrating acceptable internal consistency.

Questionnaire

	n	a
Avg.	26	0.88

Statistical Analysis

For the questionnaire, Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Correlation and a Test of Normality were employed to determine whether there are statistical differences between students regarding the use of classical literature based on English level and gender. These tests were used to determine if statistical differences exist between groups (Cohen, 1988).

Data Analysis and Result

The current research answers two questions: (1) Does the use of classical Korean literature improve students' motivation to learn English as a second language? (2) Does the use of classical Korean literature provide authentic contents that improve linguistic proficiency? Preliminary investigations were done before answering the questions. The results are presented in the following section.

Descriptive Analysis of Selected Variables

The overall descriptive statistics for Research Question 1 (motivation) beginners are $M = 4.00$, $SD = .873$ while the intermediate class was $M = 4.17$, $SD = .748$. The overall mean from both beginner and intermediate class were $M = 4.07$, $SD = .835$. Research Question 2 (linguistic proficiency) beginners had $M = 3.66$, $SD = .951$ while the intermediate class $M = 3.76$, $SD = .877$. The overall mean for both beginner and intermediate class is $M = 3.71$, $SD = .926$

Inferential Analysis

For the analysis, one of the expectations is that the scores of the variable should be symmetrical or assume a bell-shaped curve with the greatest frequency of scores distributed in the middle while small frequencies are distributed towards the extremes. For the current task, Kolmogorov Smirnov's test of normality was used to assess the normality assumption for the variables. This was completed under the hypothesis that Motivation, Classical Literature and Language scores are normally distributed. The results illustrated in Table 2 show that the normality assumption was found valid for all three variables with a reported p-value $>.05$. As expected, the result shows that Motivation, Classical Literature and Language scores were normally distributed not skewed to the right or left. The result indicates that the variables are distributed evenly. A Shapiro-Wilks test was run to determine if the samples have a normal distribution,

with a significance over $>.05$ showing a normal distribution while a result of $<.05$ means a significant difference between the population.

TABLE 2
Preliminary Investigation Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Motivation	0.087	101	0.059	0.939	101	0.000
Clas Lit	0.073	101	0.200	0.984	101	0.245
Language	0.069	101	0.200	0.972	101	0.032

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix between the independent variables used in the study. The relationship between the variable “Motivation to Learn English” (as measured by Motivation) and “Classical Literature” (as measured by scores of classical literature); as well as the relationship between “Linguistic Proficiency” (as measured by Language scores) and “Classical Literature” (as measured by scores of classical literature) were investigated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were found (See normality test above). There was a strong, positive correlation between the variables under investigation; For Motivation to learn English using Classical literature, the association is ($r = 0.816$, $n = 101$, $p < 0.000$) while the association between Linguistic Proficiency and Classical Literature is ($r = 0.858$, $n = 101$, $p < 0.000$). Seemingly, the results imply that increased exposure to Classical Literature increased Motivation to Learn English and apparently provides authentic contents for Linguistic Proficiency.

TABLE 3
Correlation Matrix for the Dependent Variables

		Motivation	Language	Clas Lit
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	0.816**	0.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	101	101	101
Language	Pearson Correlation	0.816**		0.858**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.00
	N	101	101	101
Clas Lit	Pearson Correlation	0.832**	0.858	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	101	101	101

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 shows the results of the regression estimates. The linear regression was used to assess the influence and predicting capacity of classical literature variable on Motivation to learn English and provision of Authentic content for Linguistic proficiency. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure there were no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

TABLE 4
Result of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Estimation

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Motivation to learn English		Linguistic Proficiency	
Constant	6.029	(4.798) ***	12.933	(5.439) ***
Clas Lit	0.292	(14.90) ***	0.616	(16.63) ***
F	122.1***		276.77***	
R	0.832		0.858	
R Square	0.692		0.737	
Adjusted R Square	0.689		0.734	

Notes: The t-statistics are in parentheses, located adjacent the estimates of the variable of interest. Significant differences $*p < .10$; Very significant signal values ($p < .05$); while highly significant values are represented by ($p < .001$); ***

Presentation of Results

Model 1- Dependent variable; Motivation to learn English

In Model 1, where the dependent Variable is the *Motivation to Learn English*, the total variance (R^2) explained by the model as a whole is about 69%, Adjusted $R^2 = 68\%$, $F(1, 99) = 222.185$, $p < .001$. The independent variable, Classical Literature variable, statistically explained variation in Motivation to Learn English. The beta value of this variable includes (beta = 0.292, $p < .001$). Following this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, as students become increasingly exposed to classical literature, their motivation to learn English increases by about 29%

Model 2- Dependent variable; Linguistic proficiency

It can be observed that in the second model where *Linguistic Proficiency* is the dependent variable, the total variance (R^2) explained by the model as a whole is about 74%, Adjusted $R^2 = 73\%$, $F(1, 99) = 276.778$, $p < .001$. The independent variable, Classical Literature variable, statistically explains variation in Linguistic Proficiency. The beta values of this variable include (beta = 0.616, $p < .001$). Following this result, again, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, the results suggest that as the use of Classical Literature increases, Linguistic Proficiency of students improves by about 61% owing to its improved authentic contents. Graphically, the relationships between these variables are represented in Figure 1 and 2.

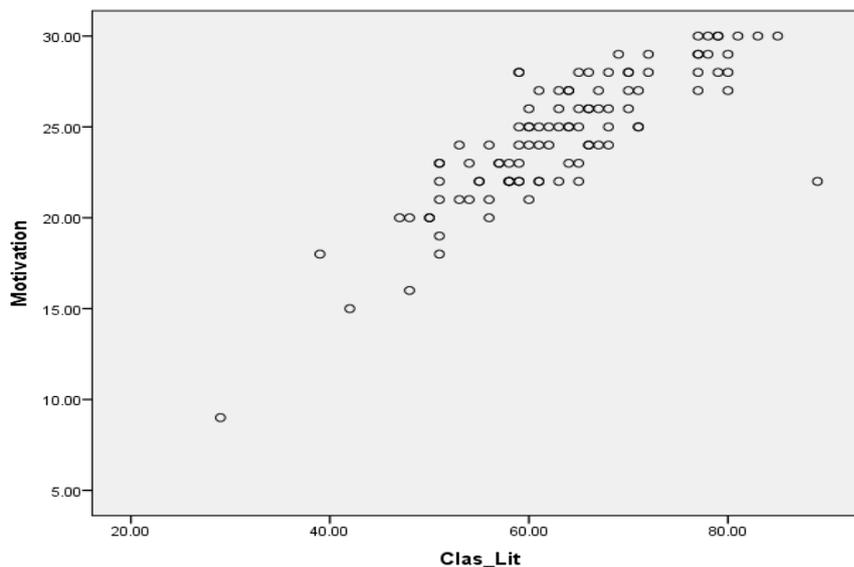


Figure 1. Relationship between motivation vs. classical literature.

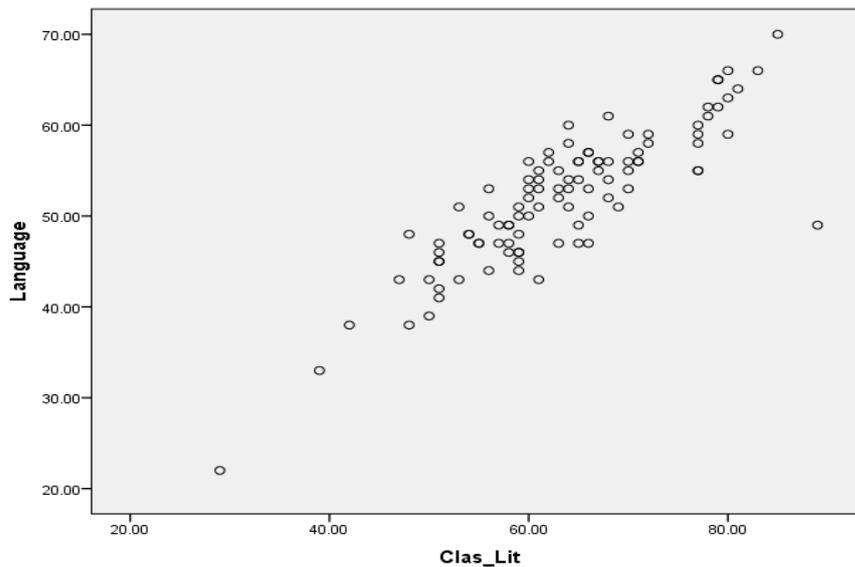


Figure 2. Relationship between linguistic vs. classical literature.

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to emphasize the use of Korean classical literature in the achievement of linguistic proficiency by improving student motivation in L2 language learners. The results yielded by the data analysis showed that the suggested activities and the benefits of literature received positive perceptions from the majority of the students. The overall aim of teaching literature is to make possible a harmonious and interesting integration of literature teaching and language learning. The research confirms the fact that literature helps to enhance not only the learner's motivation but also their language development. Moreover, literature is also a great tool to build up the learner's cultural enrichment process and increase their love for literature where the language is spoken.

The results show that classical literature provides authentic material in respect of historical and social values, and the students believed that classical literature is valuable for improving student intrinsic motivation. Classical Korean literature is a valuable resource for second language learning. For several students, literature can be a contributing factor in motivating them to learn in English. In other words, literature is used to “put students in touch with some of the more subtle and varied creative uses of language” (Shazu, 2014, p. 30).

Teachers have a key role in teaching English through literature. First, they should determine the goals and objectives of the language lesson in relation to the students' needs, levels and expectations. Second, they should select the appropriate second language teaching pedagogy and task-based learning activities. Then, they should select the classical literature relevant to the goals and the objectives of teaching activity.

Ostensibly, many second language learners in South Korea find it difficult to obtain native language proficiency because they are in the process of acquiring linguistic input of the target language, and they are far less familiar or confident with the structural elements and rules of the new language. These account for a variety of language proficiency levels, preventing many language learners from expressing their communicative intentions. This is a result of their lack of linguistic repertoire. If students can expect difficulty in language proficiency, or when students are faced with a difficult situation, they often find substitute ways of getting their message across. These substitute ways such as avoidance of language use, changing the messages, using approximation, using alternative words, using their native language or using gestures. These practices are referred to as learners' communication strategies.

Using classical literature in an EFL/ESL classroom provides the opportunity to use a wide range of classroom activities that are employed in order to improve the language skills of the students, especially reading and speaking; i.e., the students can improve their discourse ability and increase their range of active vocabulary that increases global citizenship and provides a competitive advantage. As Obediat (1997, p. 32) states, classical literature helps students acquire language proficiency, the ability to express their ideas in English, learn the linguistic system, use idiomatic expressions and speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, which improves language proficiency in English, as well as improves cognitive, creative, critical, and analytical learning. Custodio and Sutton (1998, p. 20) explain that classical literature can open new possibilities, allowing students to explore, interpret, and connect with the English language.

In conclusion, Korean classical literature provides students with an exceptional source of authentic material over traditional textbooks. If students can gain access to literature containing authentic material, they can develop language proficiency, then they can effectively develop higher level English language skills (Elliot 1990). Specifically, for students with higher verbal/linguistic intelligence, using task-based learning and classical literature, language teachers in a foreign language class can create a highly motivating, amusing and lively lesson. Literature is not only a tool for the written language and improving the language proficiency of the students in the target language. Classical literature also shows students new ways to improve global citizenship and improve their twenty-first century communications skills by constructing meaning from the text. Literature has a strong place in the ESL/EFL curriculum and language teaching. In this light, literature is regarded as beneficial in providing authentic material to improve the language proficiency of students. Rather than draw a conclusion about the students' intellectual abilities based on structural and grammatical problems, a teacher should accept and confront their students' challenges and help learners attain greater language proficiency and improve their motivation

There exists an ever-growing recognition that the integration of Classical Korean literature and literary texts into language classrooms would provide EFL/ESL learners with opportunities to develop all aspects of their English language proficiency. One of the most powerful aspect of Classical Korean literature practice is that once it has been established, teachers will not have the trouble of encouraging students to talk or respond in the class, since the student will have improved motivation to discuss the particular literary piece. The recommendations given in this paper for the integration of literature into language classroom can serve as guidelines that teachers may follow based upon their particular classroom needs to enhance the motivation and development of learners' communicative skills in the L2.

Another major finding from the study is that learning classical literature enhances motivation. A review of the previous literature has shown an associated motivation with better performance in classroom assignments. Literature has a vital role in teaching language learners of English. Literary works such as poems, short stories, novels and plays are full of feelings and emotions, imagination and creativity, which can increase motivation. Teachers should select the most appropriate approach or combination of approaches, design activities and tasks and use literature to enhance language learning and teaching by analyzing the idiosyncratic features of the classroom, educational system and culture.

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