

# **Korean as a Heritage Language in the U.S. University Classroom**

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## **Abstract**

As one of the less-commonly-taught foreign languages in U.S. universities, Korean-language classes are often taken by students of Korean descent. Many Korean Americans with long-term exposure to the target language in a combination of naturalistic and instructional settings have developed proficiency in their heritage language through parental and community support, such as Saturday schools (Lee, 2002). However, upon closer examination, the bilingualism that many Korean-American learners achieve is unbalanced. These heritage learners often lack grammatical accuracy and precision despite high fluency, as the moniker “kitchen Korean” implies. As a way to facilitate the accuracy aspect of the heritage learners’ language, this article suggests the benefits of corrective feedback, explicit and implicit, in the forms of metalinguistic comments, provision of an alternative correct form contingent on the learner’s ill-formed utterance, and partial or full repetitions or reformulations of the learner’s output when interacting with them in the classroom and beyond.

**Keywords:** heritage language learners, corrective feedback, learning Korean as a less-commonly-taught foreign language in the U.S.

## **Introduction**

Unlike Spanish in the U.S., which has widely been offered in bilingual education programs in elementary school and as a foreign language in high school and college, Korean is typically offered for the first time at the university level (Lee & Shin,

2008). Given the status of the Korean language as one of the less-commonly-taught languages in the U.S., the population of students who take Korean language classes at the college level can largely be divided into two groups: heritage and non-heritage learners (Byon, 2006). Korean heritage learners (KHLs) tend to be to some degree bilingual with wide individual variations in English and Korean because they have acquired the Korean language while interacting with the members of their immediate family and the wider Korean community. Their Korean proficiency often demonstrates limited literacy attributable to the lack of formal schooling about or in Korean, and partial knowledge in productive domains, such as spontaneous oral production. Non-heritage learners, on the other hand, refer to those who have initiated to learn Korean in foreign language classrooms with no prior exposure to the target language and culture. It is reported that the two learner populations tend to show distinct motivations towards the learning of Korean (Byon). Heritage learners take the language classes to maintain and reconnect to their linguistic and cultural heritage or to get an easy passing grade when fulfilling the foreign language requirement for their degree program, while non-heritage students learn the Korean language to pursue their academic interests, or to learn about the language and culture for personal reasons.

This paper aims to examine the pedagogical issues faced by students with a heritage background and motivation who learn Korean as a foreign language in the post-secondary level classroom. To this end, it will first define and discuss the characteristics of KHLs in U.S. society and in language classroom from various perspectives. From there, the developmental processes and pedagogical needs often observed among heritage language learners (HLLs) will be discussed, drawing upon their distinctive learning environment. The potential of corrective feedback that has drawn a great deal of attention in the field of second language acquisition will be suggested as an instructional technique to address the needs of adult KHLs.

## Heritage Language Learners: Differing Definitions and Views

### Differing Approaches to Heritage Language Learners

This section attempts to define the population of HLLs and to tease apart their characteristics from different perspectives. The socio-historical approach to HLLs in the U.S. and other countries is discussed, followed by a review of pedagogically-oriented approaches. Fishman (2001) categorizes HLLs into three distinctive groups on the basis of their relationships to the dominant language and culture in the U.S. The categories include indigenous languages spoken by Native American tribes, colonial languages brought by earlier European settlers (e.g., French, German, Italian or Spanish), and immigrant languages brought by more recent influxes of immigrants (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, or Korean).

As Carreira (2003) noted, however, this historical approach does not take into consideration the wide discrepancies that exist across the three categories of languages as well as within each category, let alone the characteristics of language learners among the categories. More specifically, learner profiles may differ between indigenous languages and immigrant languages. In addition, sociolinguistic variables may contribute to the differences that are often observed within any immigrant language group. For instance, the status of an immigrant language in a geographic location to which a high influx of well-educated target language speakers have recently moved is presumably different from that in a location where few target language speakers are living or where relatively poor and less educated speakers have settled down.

Hornberger and Wang (2007) also pointed out that the historical approach taken by Fishman (2001) does not pay much attention to HLLs' cultural and socio-psychological struggles. It is not uncommon for these learners to find themselves in constant conflicts between the standard and dialect forms of their

heritage language, as well as between the dominant language, English and the heritage language in the society. Hence, these learners are often faced with the pressure of (re)constructing and transforming their social identities while interacting with people from different groups in the society. While the socio-historical approach may provide a broad picture of the HLL population in the landscape of various language learning settings and populations, there is a need to expand the scope in defining HLLs beyond determining the relationships between their dominant and home languages at the macro level.

Attention has recently been given to the linguistic and pedagogical issues unique to HLLs, due to the growth of student enrollment in less-commonly-taught-language programs in formal educational institutions (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003). As a consequence, researchers have attempted to define HLLs and identify the needs of the learner population. Valdés (2001: 38), for instance, defines a HLL as one who “is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English.” Kondo-Brown (2003) notes that the term, “heritage language” assumes “a huge, heterogeneous population with varying historical and cultural backgrounds.” It may refer to any ancestral language, such as indigenous, colonial and immigrant languages. Therefore, heritage language may or may not be a language regularly used in the home and the community, depends on the degree of association between one’s ethnic identity and the ancestral language and is independent of one’s proficiency level in the target language.

On a related matter, HLLs differ from foreign language learners in that the former learner population learns a target language in a combination of naturalistic and instructional settings while the latter learner population usually initiates language learning in a classroom setting (Campbell & Rosenthal, 2000; Valdés, 1995). Further, it has been noted that for the vast majority of heritage language bilinguals in the U.S., acquisition of a her-

itage language in the secondary or post-secondary levels resembles the L2 learning process more than the L1 acquisition in that a range of social and cognitive factors constrain language acquisition and use (Lynch, 2003). The adult HLLs are conditioned to think and learn in school and interact with peers and siblings in the medium of their dominant language, English. Though they might have achieved high proficiency levels during early childhood, their acquisition of a heritage language stagnates or even regresses by the time they get to the secondary or post-secondary classrooms (Kim, 2003; Kondo-Brown, 2003; Lee, 2002).

Notwithstanding the heterogeneous nature of HLLs in the U.S. context, this paper adopts the definition of HLLs as those who have been exposed to another language in the home and the immediate community, e.g., through family members and an ethnic or religious community. Thus, they have either attained some degree of bilingual proficiency or have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language through family interaction. Given the aim of this article as addressing the pedagogical issues of HLLs based on the characteristics of these language learners in the classroom and beyond, the linguistically-oriented perspective is employed as an underlying frame.

### **Heritage Language Learners as L1/L2 Users**

In identifying the linguistic and pedagogical issues surrounding HLLs, quite a few researchers seem to have reached an agreement that HLLs differ from first language or second language learners (e.g., Carreira, 2003; Lynch, 2003; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003; Valdés, 1995, 2005). Unlike L1 learners, HLLs do not receive sufficient exposure to their target language and culture to meet their linguistic and identity needs. They are also different from L2 learners in that they are naturalistic initially and often have cultural knowledge prior to formal instruction.

Considering the distinct learner characteristics, Valdés (2005) made a suggestion to perceive HLLs as L1/L2 users. Cook

(2002) originally used the term, L2 user, as opposed to L2 learner, to emphasize that the minds, languages and lives of L2 users are different from those of monolinguals. Whereas the term, L2 user, tends to place an emphasis on the L2 without considering the interrelationship of the L1 and L2, the term, L1/L2 user, may capture the characteristics of HLLs. That is, HLLs are exposed to and acquire the L2 in a combination of naturalistic and instructional settings. Hence, they may at different points in their lives exhibit various degrees of L2 competence and affiliation despite language inheritance. This paper adopts Valdés' category, L1/L2 users, as a basic concept in an attempt to relate the pedagogical issues with the characteristics of this learner population. In other words, it aims to address the unique behaviors and needs of HLLs and to provide a remedy for the pedagogical issues in the classroom and beyond.

### **Korean Heritage Learners' Interlanguage**

When it comes to the performance and development characteristics peculiar to heritage language learning, it has been pointed out that while many of the second-generation immigrants in the U.S. speak two languages, few are equally proficient in both (Kondo-Brown, 2003; Wong Fillmore, 2000). While second-generation Korean Americans assimilate into American life and often excel in the formal education system, they have developed a proficiency in their home language, Korean, through parental and community support, such as Saturday schools organized by local churches (Lee, 2002; Shin, 2004). However, upon closer examination, the "bilingualism" that many Korean-American learners achieve is not perfect.

Three prominent issues are summarized in regard to bilingualism among HLLs including second-generation Korean-Americans (Kondo-Brown, 2003). First, there exists a wide gap between comprehension and production in the HLLs' home language competence: their production skills lag far behind their comprehension skills. Second, they are weak in age-appropriate

language and literacy skills. As the label “kitchen Korean” often used in a jocular manner implies, Korean-American learners’ speaking and writing skills fall short of native-speaking counterparts’ norms (Kim, 2003; Lee, 2002). In effect, many Korean Americans experience embarrassment in front of relatives or strangers when they visit Korea because of what they refer to as their “childish” Korean. They acknowledge that their proficiency in Korean is not good enough to pass on to the next generation. Third, HLLs are often weak in grammatical accuracy and precision in oral production, despite a high level of oral fluency accompanied by impressive pronunciation. Among the afore mentioned issues pertaining to KHLs’ language development, this article will focus on grammatical accuracy and precision. It has been reported that HLLs achieve high-level oral fluency and advanced listening comprehension attributable to their long-term exposure to the target language, while on the other hand they often lack grammatical accuracy and oral complexity (e.g., Kondo-Brown, 2003, 2005; Krashen, 2000; Lee, 2005; Lynch, 2003; Valdés, 1995, 2005).

Take the Korean past tense morpheme as an aspect of the accuracy and precision of the heritage learners’ interlanguage. Korean is a head-final agglutinating language with the basic word order of subject-object-verb. As is the case with other agglutinating languages, bare verb stems are impossible in Korean, as shown in (1). All roots must be supported by mood markers, which represent clause types, such as declarative, interrogative, imperative or propositive, as given in (2)<sup>1</sup>:

- |              |                 |           |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| (1) a. *mek- | ‘eat’           | b. *anc-  | ‘sit’           |
| (2) a. mek-e |                 | b. mek-ca |                 |
|              | eat-Declarative |           | eat-Propositive |

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<sup>1</sup> The Yale Romnization of Korean has been used in this article (Martin 1997)

With respect to the tense marking system in Korean, the only overt tense inflection is the past tense suffix ‘*-ess*’ because present tense marking is null and future tense is not marked by a fixed morpheme (Sohn, 1999). The past tense suffix has three allomorphs depending on the shape of the predicate stem: ‘*-ess*,’ ‘*-ass*’ and ‘*-ss*.’ The default past tense suffix, ‘*-ess*,’ occurs when the last vowel sound of a predicate is a ‘dark’ vowel. When the final vowel sound of a stem is a ‘bright’ vowel, however, one of the other two variations ‘*-ss*’ or ‘*-ass*’ is used. That is, ‘*-ss*,’ occurs when a stem ends in /a/ or /o/ and ‘*-ass*’ elsewhere (Sohn, 1999). The following shows the examples that demonstrate the variation patterns<sup>iii</sup>:

- (3) John-i chayk-ul ilk-ESS-ta  
 NOM book-ACC read-PAST-DEC  
 ‘John was reading (or read) a book’
- (4) John-i Mary-lul manna-SS-ta  
 NOM ACC meet-PAST-DEC  
 ‘John met Mary’
- (5) John-i pap’u-ASS-ta  
 NOM to be busy-PAST-DEC  
 ‘John was busy’

As can be seen in (3) above, the past tense suffix is realized as the default form, ‘*-ess*,’ when it follows a predicate stem whose vowel is ‘*-i*,’ which is one of the dark vowels in Korean. In (4), on the other hand, the past tense suffix is realized as ‘*-ss*’ when it is preceded by a stem that ends in the vowel /a/. In (5) above, the past tense suffix is realized as ‘*-ass*’ when a stem ends in the vowel /u/. It is highly likely that the bound morpheme in the string-internal position with the three allomorphs is difficult for L2 learners to notice and internalize. As a result, L2 learners with a heritage background might have developed incomplete or incorrect representations of the target form despite ample input over time (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972). Errors by the English-speaking learners of L2 Korean with a heritage background in-



cluded a substitution of a present tense form for a past tense context, overuse of the default past tense suffix or use of bare verb stems with no overt mood marker, as shown below:

- (6) \*Mina-nun cinan ilyoil-ey pap'-AYO.  
 TOPIC last Sunday to be busy-DEC  
 'Mina is busy last Sunday.'
- (7) \*Mina-nun cinan ilyoil-ey pap'-ESS-e.yo.  
 TOPIC last Sunday to be busy-PAST-DEC  
 'Mina was busy last Sunday.'
- (8) \*Mina-nun cinan ilyoil-ey pap'-UTA.  
 TOPIC last Sunday to be busy  
 'Mina is busy last Sunday.'

In (6) above, the heritage learners of L2 Korean tend to use a present tense form in referring to the past tense with a past adverbial phrase. As shown in (7), while the learners attempt to use the past tense marking, they use the default past tense suffix, '-ess,' even in the environment for '-ass.' As in (8), the learners simply use the bare stem with no mood marking in referring to the past time with a past adverbial phrase. This aspect of learner behavior illustrates the difficulty of improving the accuracy and precision of learner interlanguage despite the heritage learners' long-term exposure to the target language.

As an alternative to facilitate the accuracy and precision of the learner language, the ensuing section discusses the potential of corrective feedback drawing upon an empirical study with a group of adult KHLs in a U.S. university community. It has been proposed that corrective feedback has a potential to enhance L2 learners' noticing of incoming input, specifically any mismatches (1) between their intentions and linguistic resources currently available (i.e., holes in the learner language representation) (2) and/or between their own utterances and the target language norms (i.e., gaps in the learner language representation) and eventually to improve the accuracy and precision aspect of the learner language (Gass, 1997, 2003; Long, 1996; Pica, 2002;

Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Swain, 1998). The following section will discuss the contributions of corrective feedback to the improvement of KHLs' knowledge that is difficult to acquire through comprehensible positive input alone in the learning environment.

### **The Potential of Corrective feedback in Improving Korean Heritage Learners' Accuracy**

This section will report on a study on the efficacy of corrective feedback in adult KHLs' learning of a target form, the past tense suffix, in the target language. Detailed information about the group of second-generation Korean Americans and the design and procedure of the research will be given. Pedagogical implications specifically for the learner population with a heritage background and motivation at a college level will be made.

#### *Target Learners*

Participants in this study were thirty-four English-speaking learners of Korean recruited through the Korean language program and student groups in an urban U.S. university community. A survey questionnaire conducted at the outset of the study revealed the background information of the participants as summarized in Table 1. Twenty-two male and twelve female learners, whose ages ranged from early to late twenties participated in the study. All the participants were second-generation Korean Americans who were born or moved to the United States before the age of five and had Korean-speaking parents. In addition to their exposure to the target language at home while interacting with their parents and grandparents, they had taken Korean language classes at a university for credit and studied in community-based programs in youth.

The recruited Korean-American learners were similar in terms of ethnic background, proficiency in the target language and language learning/use background. In light of Kondo-Brown's (2005) criteria for the identification of HLLs, the partic-

ipants in this study showed a relatively homogenous degree of relatedness to Korean heritage, which in turn could be interpreted as the birthplace of the participants and the native languages of their parents. The participants were born in the U.S. or Korea, and had Korean-speaking immigrant parents.

### *Research Design and Procedure*

The study reported in this article employed the design of pretest-posttest, with two experimental groups and one control group. The participants were first asked to sign consent forms and complete a background questionnaire. Then, a pretest composed of grammaticality judgment and picture description tests was administered individually to measure their proficiency as baseline data. Each session lasted approximately fifteen minutes for each participant, after which the participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. One week after the pretest session, each participant met the researcher (a native speaker of Korean) for a treatment – posttest session, which lasted approximately thirty minutes.

During the treatment session, the experimental groups received from the researcher immediate feedback manipulated with respect to its explicitness each time they produced a deviant past tense form during the completion of communication tasks. The control group, on the other hand, received no feedback on the target form during dyadic interaction. Communication tasks, Story Sequencing and Spot the Difference, were used as a contextual device to generate interaction between interlocutors (the researcher and a participant). For the Story Sequencing task, each interlocutor was given four pictures with a sequential order. The two interlocutors worked together to identify the original order of the pictures, and the participants were further instructed to build a story about what might have happened to the characters in the pictures on the previous day. For the Spot the Difference task, the participants were presented with five pairs of similar pictures in which the same characters engaged in different activities. They were asked to describe the actions of the characters in

the pictures that had happened on the previous day and to find the differences between the two pictures.

In the explicit group, the source of the learner's deviant form was mentioned with metalinguistic comments, and an alternative form or solution to the deviant form was provided explicitly in one of the following ways<sup>iv</sup>:

### (9) Examples of explicit feedback

#### a. Locating the deviant form with metalinguistic terminology

*Ecey iley tayhayse malhal ttayneun "hayyo" rako haci maseyo. "hayss-eyo" rako haseyo.*

Yesterday-happening-about-to say-when "hayyo" to say-not-IMP.  
To say-"ss"-DEC-IMP

'Don't use present tense, "hayyo" when talking about what happened yesterday. Say "hay-ss-eyo."'

#### b. Evaluative judgments on the learner's production of a nontarget-like form

*Ecey iley tayhayse malhal ttayneun "apa" twiey "ess" eul sseumyen theulryeyo. "apa-ss-eyo" rako haseyo.*

Yesterday-happening-about-to say-when "to be ill"-after-"ess"-ACC-to say-to be wrong-DEC. To be ill-"ss"-DEC-imp

'It's not correct to use 'ess' after 'apa- (to be ill)' when talking about what happened yesterday.'

#### c. Contrast between the learner's nontarget-like form and target form

*Ecey iley tayhayse malhal ttayneun 'apa' twiey 'ess' eul sseumyen an toiyo. "ass" eul sseyahayyo.*

Yesterday-happening-about-to say-when "to be ill"-after-"ess"-ACC-to say-to be wrong-IMP. "ass"-ACC-to say-have to

'When talking about what happened yesterday, don't use 'ess' after 'apa.' Use 'ass' instead.'

The provision of implicit feedback contained partial or full repetition or reformulation of the learner’s ill-formed utterance, avoiding a direct reference to or emphasis on the source of the nontarget-like utterance in one of the following ways:

(10) Examples of implicit feedback

|   |
|---|
| a. Reformulation of the learner’s ill-formed utterance  |
| <i>Ecey isarameun cass-eyo?</i><br>Yesterday-this-person-to sleep-PAST-interrogative<br>‘Yesterday, this person slept?’   |
| b. Partial repetition of the learner’s ill-formed utterance   |
| <i>Mwo rakwuyo? Isarameun “cayo” rako hayss-eyo?</i><br>What-is it? This-person-to sleep-to say-interrogative<br>‘What did just you say? Did you say “sleeps”?’ |
| c. Full repetition of the learner’s ill-formed utterance  |
| <i>Ecey isarameun cayo” rako hayss-eyo?</i><br>Yesterday-this-person-to sleep-to say-interrogative<br>‘Did you say “this person sleeps yesterday”?’             |

To assess the effects of the treatment, two kinds of assessment were employed: the grammaticality judgment and picture description tests. The grammaticality judgment test, carrying both correct and incorrect sentences, was implemented in an untimed manner. Among the fifteen sentences on each test, ten items dealt with the obligatory use of past tense and five distracters carried correct present tense (Salaberry & Lopez-Ortega, 1998). Out of the ten sentences targeting past tense verbal mor-

phology, four sentences were correct and six were incorrect (Ayoun, 2001, 2004). To distinguish distracter items from incorrect past tense items, each sentence carried time adverbials that correspond to the target forms. The order of sentences was randomized with the constraint that sentences containing the identical verb were not allowed within the same test. While completing the test, the learners were instructed to judge the grammaticality of the fifteen sentences on the test and to correct ungrammatical ones if they marked them incorrect. All sentences were constructed to be of similar levels of difficulty by using words that would likely to be known to the participants, as determined by an examination of textbooks for college-level Korean. The highest possible score for the grammaticality judgment test was ten points: one point for each sentence carrying the target form. The learners' responses to distracters were excluded. If a learner marked a correct sentence "yes," then s/he obtained a point. In responding to incorrect sentences, if a learner marked an incorrect sentence "no," with a correct alternative form, s/he was given one point. Unless the alternative form was correct, no point was credited. If a learner marked a correct sentence "no," providing an incorrect form, s/he obtained no point.

To tap into the KHLs' knowledge in the context of spontaneous production, an elicitation task was adapted from Bybee and Slobin (1982). During the administration of the picture description test, each learner was presented with ten pictures one by one of someone performing an action. While showing a picture to the participant, the researcher provided instructions, as follows: "This person is making soup right now. She did the same thing yesterday. What did this person do yesterday?" In response to the researcher's instruction, the participant was encouraged to describe a situation in the picture with a past tense form. For example, "She made soup yesterday." The highest possible score for the picture description was ten points: one point for each picture. If a learner managed to produce a correct past form for the elicited lexical item in each picture, s/he gained

one point regardless of the length or content of the utterances in response.

*The Contributions of Corrective Feedback in the Learning of Korean as a Heritage Language in the U.S.*

The descriptive statistics, including group means and standard deviations for the pretest-posttest, are presented in Table 2. An alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical tests.

To examine the role of corrective feedback, the group means of the experimental and control groups on the pretest and posttest were compared. The results of one-way ANOVAs on the scores of the pretest showed no statistically significant differences among the experimental and control groups for the grammaticality judgment test,  $F(2, 31) = .76, p > .05$ , and the picture description test,  $F(2, 31) = .16, p > .05$ . This suggests that there were no significant differences among the experimental and control groups in the learner knowledge of the target form prior to the treatment. It was therefore assumed that any differences in the KHLs' performance on the post-treatment measures could be attributed to the contribution of corrective feedback during the treatment session.

The group means of each group on the posttest were compared. The one-way ANOVAs on the posttest scores revealed statistically significant differences among the groups, as shown in Tables 3 and 4. The analyses confirmed the positive effects of corrective feedback on the learners' performance on the grammaticality judgment test,  $F(2, 31) = 17.45, p = .00$  and on the picture description test,  $F(2, 31) = 11.87, p = .00$ .

*To determine which groups were significantly different from each other, multiple comparisons were performed using Fisher's least significant differences (LSD). As summarized in Table 5, results of between-group comparisons for the grammaticality judgment posttest revealed statistically significant differences between each of the experimental groups vs. the control,  $p = .00$ . The difference between the*

*explicit and implicit feedback group, however, was not statistically significant,  $p = .27$ . Results of the picture description posttest yielded statistically significant differences between each of the experimental groups vs. the control,  $p = .00$ , but the difference between the explicit and implicit feedback group was not statistically significant,  $p = .76$ . Taken together, the experimental groups both outperformed the control group in the posttest measures. This suggests that the learners provided with corrective feedback gained better knowledge of the target form than those in the control group, which supports the advantage of corrective feedback.*

### ***The Relative Effectiveness of Explicit and Implicit Feedback in the Learning of Korean as a Heritage Language***

As reported earlier, the provision of corrective feedback proved to be beneficial in facilitating the KHLs' knowledge of the target form. The next step is to investigate what aspects of corrective feedback made a difference in improving the learner knowledge. To address the relative effectiveness of explicit vs. implicit feedback, the KHL learners' performance on the post-treatment assessment was compared between the explicit and implicit groups by conducting independent t-tests on the posttest scores. The analyses indicated no statistically significant differences between the explicit vs. implicit group in the L2 learner performance on the posttest,  $t(21) = -1.07$ ,  $p = .29$  for the grammaticality judgment test, and  $t(21) = .59$ ,  $p = .56$  for the picture description test.

The absence of a statistically significant difference between the explicit vs. implicit feedback suggests that implicit feedback was as effective as explicit feedback. This is inconsistent with the previous studies (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Kubota, 1994; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998) on the relative benefits of explicit feedback over implicit counterparts, based on the assumption that the more inferencing the learner must make, the less likely s/he is to identify the corrective intention and content of feedback. In contrast to the previous research, the current re-



sults indicate that there was little significant difference between the explicit and implicit feedback in promoting the KHLs' knowledge of the target form.

Given the nature of the discourse context, the provision of explicit feedback might have been perceived by the KHLs as extremely irrelevant to the ongoing conversation, and might even have interrupted the natural flow of the conversation. In effect, previous research (Doughty, 2001) pointed out the possibility of breaking the flow of conversation via explicit types of feedback, arguing for the potential of implicit feedback types. It was likely that the provision of explicit feedback distracted the KHLs' attention to and processing of the form, meaning, and their relationship. The following demonstrates the provision of explicit feedback interrupting the flow of interaction:

(11) Provision of explicit feedback

Learner: *Sandy-ka achim-ey cenbwa-lul pat-ESS-eyo.*

Sandy-NOM morning-in to call-ACC to receive-PAST-DEC.

'Sandy received a phone call this morning.'

→ Researcher: *Pat-ESS-eyo-ka anira pat-ASS-eyo-rako hayya-ketcyo.*

to receive-PAST-DEC-NOM not receive-PAST-DEC-quote have to

'You have to say, 'pat-ass-eyo,' not 'pat-ess-eyo.'

Learner: *pat-ASS-eyo? What did I say?*

to receive-PAST-DEC.

'I received.'

Researcher: *You said pat-ESS-eyo. But it should be pat-ASS-eyo.*

to receive-PAST (incorrect)-DEC to receive-PAST (correct)-DEC

Learner: *I always say something like that. pat-ASS-eyo? pat-ESS-eyo.*

In (11) above, the researcher showed the contrast between

the learner's ill-formed utterance, *-ess* and the target form, *-ass*. The learner was not given any signal to be engaged in the process through which she could draw on what she had already known to notice the gap between her hypothesis and the target form. Instead, the researcher merely provided the alternative corrective form to the learner's utterance in an explicit manner that appeared to interrupt the discourse and to disperse the KHLs' focus on the meaning and its encoding. The explicit provision of the alternative target form in the context of dyadic interaction might have waived the necessity of the learner's retrieval of the target form. Taking into account the controlled experimental context in which the researcher-learner dyad took place, it comes as no surprise that the provision of explicit feedback hindered the flow of the interaction.

The transparent nature of the target form, the Korean past tense, may also have been at play. The provision of corrective feedback was all aimed at the past tense form in the dyadic interaction context. The cognitively mature learners with prior, latent knowledge of the target form through their long-term exposure to the target language might have been able to perceive and integrate the intent and content of corrective feedback without the explicit intervention. Given Carroll and Swain's (1993) claim that the beneficial role of explicit instruction in conjunction with metalinguistic feedback is highlighted especially when learners have to acquire complicated rules, the advantage of the explicit feedback relative to the implicit feedback might have been suppressed by the simplicity and transparency of the target form in this study. Taken together, the finding that there was no significant difference explicit and implicit feedback in promoting the KHLs' accuracy might have been associated with both the discourse context and the linguistic nature of the target form.

Thus far, the absence of a statistically significant difference between the explicit vs. implicit feedback in promoting the KHLs' knowledge of the target form has been discussed. The implicit provision of corrective feedback turned out to be as ef-

fective as explicit feedback because the implicit provision embedded corrective feedback in the context of dyadic interaction without interrupting the follow of interaction. Further, there was little contrast in the explicit and implicit feedback in terms of the necessity for the learners to retrieve the target form as opposed to having it provided to them. The transparency of the target form and the dyadic discourse context might have helped the learners to notice and retrieve the intent and content of corrective feedback utterances and fix their problematic areas. The heritage learners' latent knowledge of the target form through their long-term exposure to the target language might have contributed to the efficacy of implicit feedback.

### Conclusion

In this article, the population of HLLs have been defined and discussed from the socio-historical and linguistically-oriented pedagogical perspectives. Taking into account the limitations of the socio-historical perspective, this article has employed the linguistic-pedagogical perspective as an underlying frame. Despite their long-term exposure to the target language in a combination of naturalistic and instructional settings through parental and community support, the bilingualism that many Korean American learners achieve is often unbalanced. Although their English is essentially native, there exists a wide gap in their Korean language competence: their production skills lag far behind their comprehension skills. As the moniker "kitchen Korean" implies, Korean-American learners' skills fall short of native-speaking counterparts' norms. Further, these heritage learners are often weak in grammatical accuracy and precision in oral production.

As a way to facilitate the accuracy aspect of the KHLs' interlanguage, this article suggests the benefits of corrective feedback, explicit and implicit, in the forms of metalinguistic comments, provision of an alternative correct form contingent on the learner's ill-formed utterance, and partial or full repetitions or reformulations of the learner's output while interacting with

them in the classroom and beyond. This supports for the potential of corrective feedback as a part of a language instructor's repertoire in classroom discourse to draw the heritage learners' attention to the target language form and to promote their accuracy and precision.

The findings on the efficacy of corrective feedback reported in this article could serve as a foundation for guidelines for practitioners and program administrators who work closely with language learners, especially those with a heritage background and motivation. Previous studies (e.g., Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003; Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001) have reported that one of the challenges foreign language instructors face, especially at the post-secondary level, is accommodating the mixed abilities and diverse needs of language learners in the classroom. An instructor's use of feedback in response to a learner's ill-formed utterance as a part of classroom discourse might help mitigate the challenge of accommodating the variations in learner abilities and needs peculiar to the context of heritage language learning. The results of this study, therefore, could provide a basis for recommendations for language instructors with respect to instructional techniques and communication strategies in teacher-learner interaction in the classroom, especially for language learners with a heritage background and motivation.

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations in the gloss are as follows: NOM: nominative marker; ACC: accusative marker; DEC: declarative sentence ending; PAST: past tense marker; IMP: imperative.

<sup>111</sup> A variety of declarative sentence ending markers are used in Korean, depending on the social relationship between interlocutors: deferential *-supnita*; polite informal *-a/eyo*; plain style *-(nun)ta*; and intimate style *-a/e*. During the researcher-learner interaction in this study, the polite information marker *-a/eyo* was employed by the interlocutors.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations in the gloss are as follows: NOM: nominative marker; ACC: accusative marker; DEC: declarative sentence ending; PAST: past tense marker; IMP: imperative.

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*Table 1*

Background Information of Participants (n = 34)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Birthplace  | U.S.A.: n= 30 (88%) Korea: n= 4 (12%)<br>Before 1 year old: n=2 (6%)<br>3-4 years old: n= 1 (3%)<br>7 years old: n= 1 (3%)  |
| Their parents' language use   | Korean as their first language: n=34 (100%)   |
| Languages spoken at home (list them in order of a more frequent language) | English > Korean: n=20 (59%)<br>Korean > English: n= 13 (35%)<br>English only: n= 1 (3%) Korean only: n= 1 (3%)   |
| Language the participants were first exposed to                           | Korean: n= 13 (38%)<br>English: n= 16 (47%)<br>Korean and English simultaneously: n= 5 (15%)  |
| Their dominant language   | English: n= 34 (100%)   |
| Formal instruction in Korean*   | Korean-as-a-foreign-language courses at a U.S. higher education institution: n= 30<br>Community-based Saturday school in the elementary/secondary level: n= 21<br>Short-term summer programs in Korean: n= 3 (8%)<br>Never: n= 1 (3%) |

\*The total sum for this question is more than forty-five because some of the participants had experience of taking Korean classes in different programs over time

Table 2

*Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Experimental and Control groups*

| Group                        | Statistic | Pretest |      | Posttest |      |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|------|----------|------|
|                              |           | GJT     | PD   | GJT      | PD   |
| Explicit<br>feedback<br>N=11 | Mean      | 3.63    | 6.09 | 6.54     | 9.72 |
|                              | SD        | 1.12    | 1.64 | 1.43     | 0.47 |
| Implicit<br>feedback<br>N=12 | Mean      | 3.66    | 6.33 | 7.16     | 9.58 |
|                              | SD        | 1.15    | 1.37 | 1.33     | 0.66 |
| Control<br>N=11              | Mean      | 3.81    | 6.45 | 4.00     | 7.63 |
|                              | SD        | 1.25    | 1.50 | 1.26     | 1.80 |

Table 3

*Results of ANOVA for the grammaticality judgment posttest*

| Source of variation | SS    | df | MS    | F       | p   |
|---------------------|-------|----|-------|---------|-----|
| Between groups      | 63.49 | 2  | 31.74 | 17.45** | .00 |
| Within groups       | 56.39 | 31 | 1.82  |         |     |

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 4

Results of ANOVA for the picture description posttest

| Source of variation | SS    | df | MS    | F      | p   |
|---------------------|-------|----|-------|--------|-----|
| Between groups      | 30.35 | 2  | 15.18 | 8.78** | .00 |
| Within groups       | 39.64 | 31 | 1.28  |        |     |

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 5

*Fisher's LSD Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons among the Experimental and Control*

*Groups on the Posttest: the Grammaticality Judgment Test and Picture Description Test*

| Grammaticality judgment test | p   | Picture description test | p   |
|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Explicit = implicit          | .27 | Explicit = implicit      | .76 |
| Explicit > control           | .00 | Explicit > control       | .00 |
| Implicit > control           | .00 | Implicit > control       | .00 |

