Students' Motivation, Learning Experiences and Learning-Style Preferences: A Survey on Australian College Students of Korean

SEONG-CHUL SHIN
University of New South Wales

ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a survey study. The purpose of the survey is to investigate the motivational factors, learning experiences and learning-style preferences of the learners of Korean at the Sydney College (Ultimo) of TAFE NSW. The survey is also to examine views on cultural components which should be placed in the language program and the first image or impression of Korea and Korean people. To this end the survey questionnaire is divided into four sections: reasons, learning experience, learning style and first image. Compared with the general trend, the significant growth of the program at TAFE NSW is extremely interesting and worthy of investigating - whether the students are willing to become a member of Korean ethnolinguistic group or just have a desire to gain economic advantages; what social distance they perceive from Korea and Korean people. Answers to these questions have implications in organizing the language and socio-cultural content in similar language programs. Completed questionnaires were collected from 55 students at the College and have been analyzed using quantitative methods. I argue that there should be more non-award practical Korean programs for general public and business people in the community. The paper concludes that practical goals related to putting the language to some type of use should be emphasized in such language programs.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

In 1998, the Sydney College (Ultimo) of Technical and Further Education New South Wales (TAFE NSW) started a Korean language certificate course for its students and professional people with approximately 20 enrolments. Since its introduction, the Korean language program has been continuously growing and the College now offers four different certificate courses organized into six classes with 15-30 students in each class. Compared with the general trend of Korean language programs in Australian schools and universities, the significant growth of the program at TAFE NSW is extremely interesting and worthy of investigating.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivational factors, learning experiences and learning-style preferences of the learners at the College. In addition to investigating these aspects, the survey will examine views on cultural components which should be placed in the language program and the first image or impression of Korea and Korean people. To this end the study is divided into the following sections:

1. Reasons for the Study of Korean Language,
2. Learning Experience and Expectation,
3. Learning-Styles Preferences, and
4. First Image or Impression of Korea and Korean People

2. Previous Studies

Gardner and Lambert (1972) found two types of motivation for second-language learning: "integrative motivation" and "instrumental motivation". The 'integrated motivation' is defined as "a willingness to become a member of another ethno-linguistic group" (p 12). That is, those who were interested in studying the language in order to be able to identify with the target people, or because they were interested in understanding the culture and way of life of the target language group, were regarded to have integrative motivation. On the other hand, the 'instrumental motivation' indicates "a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language" (p 14). Thus, those who wanted to study the language for practical or utilitarian purposes, for example, to fulfill an educational requirement, to get a better job, or to read material in the language were instrumentally motivated.

It appears to be difficult, however, to draw a strict distinction between the two types of motivation because they are not mutually exclusive and because, as Gardner and Smythe (1975: 218-230) themselves admit, both instrumental and integrative motivation can be modified in the course of a language study. If someone is enjoying a language course, for whatever reason, this might well encourage positive attitudes to eventual payoff in terms of job prospects, social recognition and even integrating in certain special circumstances.

Motivation can also vary according to a specific learner group or a certain cultural setting. Gardner and Lambert (1972) found in the Philippines study that an instrumental motivation was more positively related to language learning in a foreign language setting. However, a study by Svans (1987) shows that European and American university students were found to have more integrative motivation in learning Norwegian than Middle Eastern, African and Asian students, who were more instrumentally motivated. Svans discussed the findings in relation with the closeness in culture, i.e. the Europeans and the Americans have more in common with the Norwegians.

Shumann (1976) suggests that motivation for learning foreign languages is oriented from social factors outside the classroom. Employing the term "social distance" (defined as cultural, technical, economical and political status) between the foreign-language learner groups, Shumann claims that the perceived status the target language has for the learner group plays an important role in developing a specific type of motivation. The effect of socio-political factors on attitudes and motivation was well reported in a longitudinal study by Dornyei and Csizer (2002), which examines how the huge sociocultural transformation that took place in Hungary in the 1990s after the collapse of Communist rule affected school children's attitudes and motivation towards five foreign languages-English, German, French, Italian and Russian-taught at schools. The study reports that during the examined period (1993 and 1999) there was a significant decline in the students' language learning commitment to all the languages except English which maintained its position as the most influential world language.

The notions of attitude and motivation have been continuously used by many researchers and are considered to be factors affecting the learning of a second language. Gardner (1985) emphasizes integrative motivation by making a distinction between integrative motivation and integrative orientation, which refers to "the more immediate goal [reason] of learning the second language" (p 11). The importance of integrative motivation is further discussed in Gardner (2001) where he shows why integrative motivation is a complex phenomenon and how it is related to success in second language acquisition. He claims that second language acquisition refers to the language

development of near-native-like level, which "requires identification with the second language community" (p 2). In other words, integrative motivation is crucial for second language learners to reach at the level of native-like proficiency.

As studies suggest, there are various factors which can influence the motivational orientation of a specific learner group but it is possible to single out or group some important motivational factors influencing student language choice, learning experience and performance. One of such efforts is Dornyei's recent study (2006), which analyses characteristics of L2 learners in order to identify their motivational profiles. The study shows that there is a very consistent relationship between motivational patterns and performance level. This is supported in M-K Kwon and S-Y Lee (2005) where adult learners of Korean were investigated.

The motivational factors or profiles do not always control the content of language programs but it is important to provide objectives and learning experiences more suitable to the needs and interests of learners. The learner factors are closely related to curriculum planning and language teaching approaches. Nunan (1988), for example, proposed an integrated approach where all aspects of teaching and learning are interrelated, and the needs, interests and abilities are negotiated. This, in turn, brings our attention to the notion of learning style, which refers to "any individual's preferred ways of going about learning" (Nunan 1991: 168). It is widely accepted that such personality variables as ethnicity, age, educational experience, etc. will have an effect on one's preferred learning style. Willing (1988: 150-1) investigates biographical variables such as ethnicity, age, education level, length of residence and proficiency among adult learners of English as a second language, and the most surprising finding was that biographical variables have no significant correlations with the learning preferences of the learners.

3. Research Questions and Method

Based on the studies that have been reviewed above, the current study explores and attempts to answer the following questions: What particular reasons or motivations does the group in the survey have in relation to learning Korean? Does the group have a willingness to become a member of a/the Korean ethno-linguistic group or just wish to gain social or economic advantages? Does this group have the flexibility or desire to learn about Korean culture? What aspects of learning activities are most or least enjoyable in the Korean classes? What preferred ways of learning does this group have? What social distance or cultural closeness does this group perceive in relation to Korea and Korean people? Answers to all these questions will have implications in three areas: promoting the type of Korean language program, organizing the language and socio-cultural content in the program, and the practicality of the curriculum process.

The data was gathered by using the method of questionnaire. This way I was able to collect data quickly and economically. The survey questionnaire were distributed by the College instructors to the students who have been studying 1 to 1 and 1/2 years, asking them to complete the questionnaire during their rest time on campus. Completed questionnaires were collected from 81 subjects / students at the College and have been analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection and interpretation from questionnaires will always involve a certain degree of inaccuracy. Although the major questions used were of a "forced" nature (i.e. respondents were given a limited choice of answers), this was tempered by, where necessary, an open-ended option in which the respondents could offer an alternative.

II. THE RESULTS

1. Subjects

1.1 Gender and Age Group

Of the 81 respondents in the study, 54 (66.7%) were female and 27 (33.3%) were male. They were mostly in their 20s (60.5%), and people who were 40 or over (14.8%), in their 30s (13.6%) and under 20 (11.1%) were relatively small.

Table 1: Gender and Age Group

Gender	No (%)	Age Group	No (%)
Female	54 (66.7)	under 20	9 (11.1)
Male	27 (33.3)	20-29	49 (60.5)
TOTAL	81	30-39	11 (13.6)
		40 or over	12 (14.8)
		TOTAL	81

1.2 Ethnic Background

The respondents come from various ethnic backgrounds. Students with Chinese background formed the largest portion (30%), followed by Anglo-Saxon or Scottish Australians (12.3%), Vietnamese (9.9%) and Indonesians (8.6%). Other ethnic backgrounds include Chinese-Malaysian (4.9%), Chinese-Indonesian (3.7%), Filipino (2.5%), Indian (2.5%), Japanese (2.5%) and Thai (2.5%).

Table 2: Ethnic Background

Ethnic Background	No (%)
Chinese	30 (37.0)
Anglo-Saxon Australian	10 (12.3)
Vietnamese	8 (9.9)
Indonesian	7 (8.6)
Chinese-Malaysian	4 (4.9)
Chinese-Indonesian	3 (3.7)
Filipino	2 (2.5)
Indian	2 (2.5)
Japanese	2 (2.5)
Thai	2 (2.5)
Others[1]	11 (13.6)
TOTAL	81

1.3 Length of Study: the Korean Language

Most respondents (61.7%) have studied Korean less than 1 year and just less than a third (27.2%) of the respondents have studied the language for about 1 year. Students who have studied Korean for 2 or more years were very small.

---

[1] Other backgrounds include German, Lebanese, Korean, Taiwanese-Japanese and Uzbekistan-Korean.

Table 3: Length of Study: Korean

Length of Study	No (%)
Less than 1 year	50 (61.7)
About 1 year	22 (27.2)
About 2 years	6 (7.4)
More than 2 years	3 (3.7)
TOTAL	81

2. Why Study Korean?

There may be various reasons for learning foreign languages and the main reasons are summarized often in three categories: cultural, educational and practical purposes. To find out what relevance is ascribed to various reasons often designated for the learning of Korean, thirteen statements were put to the students, with an open-ended option to give an alternative. The respondents were asked to give the three most relevant reasons.[2] The results are shown in the table below.

Table 4: Reasons for the study of Korean

Reasons	No (%) out of 81 per item
1) To understand TV drama and films in Korean.	47 (58.0)
2) To hold conversations with Korean people.	39 (48.1)
3) Found the Korean language interesting.	34 (42.0)
4) Have a personal relationship with Koreans.	26 (32.1)
5) To be able to get around Korea.	24 (29.6)
6) To understand Korean people and their way of life.	21 (25.9)
7) To get a good/better job.	12 (14.8)
8) To communicate in writing in Korean.	15 (18.5)
9) To enjoy Korean music and other types of art.	12 (14.8)
10) To read Korean newspapers and magazines.	8 (9.9)
11) To enjoy Korean literary texts.	5 (6.2)
12) Motivated by "Hallyu" (Korean wave).	4 (4.9)
13) Encouraged by family members to study Korean.	3 (3.7)
14) Other reasons[3]	2 (2.5)

The respondents saw the relevance of almost all the reasons, but the following three reasons were shown to be very relevant to students' choices:

    1) to understand TV drama and films in Korean;
    2) to hold conversations with Korean people; and
    3) found the Korean language interesting.

Very important for the students was learning Korean with a view to being able to understand Korean TV dramas and films in Korean and holding conversations with

---

[2] Some students gave more than three reasons, which were reflected in the statistics.
[3] Other reasons include: "As a member of Cassiopeia (Dong-Bang-Shin-Ki official fan club), my role is a translator. Learning Korean will help me communicate with other fans across the world with same interest."

Korean L1 speakers. They also learn Korean because they find the language interesting. These responses indicate that the students are strongly conscious of both integrative and instrumental outcomes when choosing to study the Korean language. It seems that many students were initially motivated by Korean popular media and entertainment culture sweeping through Asia and beyond under the name Hallyu (Korean wave). This seems to have led them to their desire to talk with Koreans and their interest in the language itself. Thus, the students have their practical reasons for learning Korean but these reasons seem to be motivated by or closely related to their interest in the Korean culture featured in TVs, films and other types of popular media.

Beside these reasons, three reasons receiving strong support from the students as being relevant or very relevant for their choices were:

4) to have a personal relationship with Koreans;
5) to be able to get around Korea; and
6) to understand Korean people and their way of life.

In addition to the hope of understanding the popular cultural media, the capacity to hold conversations and the interest in the language itself, the reasons for learning Korean were closely related to personal motivation - having a personal (e.g. boyfriend or girlfriend) relationship, travelling around Korea and understanding Korean people and their way of life. In these responses, the perceived relevance of putting the Korean language to personal use is obvious. The students wish to use the language in personal situations and when travelling overseas, but they also wanted to learn the language to understand the Korean culture and people better. Thus their learning Korean was oriented from both instrumental and integrative motivation.

For most respondents, job prospects, written correspondence, Korean music and arts were not the immediate reasons for their study of Korean, and the capacity to understand newspapers and magazines, literary works and family influence on their motivation do not appear to be very relevant. Strangely, Hallyu (Korean wave) as a social phenomenon was not relevant either, despite the fact that Korean TV drama and films were most relevant to their reasons. There are three possibilities for this contradictory response: one, the concept expressed as an abstract word was not fully understood by many respondents; two, they did understand the concept but the whole range of socio-cultural phenomenon was not the reason that attracted them; and three, the respondents simply chose the concrete reason over the intangible abstract concept.

The results discussed above suggest that there were two important motivational factors influencing student choice.

- A utility factor - the capacity to understand Korean drama and films; the aspiration to communicate in Korean; the hope to put the language to use overseas.
- An interest factor - the interest in the Korean language itself; the personal relationship with Koreans; the interest in Korean people and their way of life.

These factors are not surprisingly new, but the results emphasize that more attention should be paid to the practical goals related to using the language without losing everyday socio-cultural contexts. When assessing the results as a whole, it seems reasonable to state that the respondents in this study were instrumentally motivated but the instrumental

reason was developed or modified through cultural or personal motivation. Course developers and instructors, therefore, need to note the importance of the utility factor, especially the emphasis on the speaking and listening skills, but at the same time it should also be noted that the respondents strongly expressed their interest in Korean culture and people. They did not lose their integrative sight in studying the language. What this implies to instructors or curriculum planners is that throughout the language study, more background or cultural components should be introduced and taught, and if circumstances are permitted, a separate provision such as 'culture' course should be made to be able to meet the needs of students.

3. Learning Experience and Expectation

Now we turn to classroom situations to see what the respondents actually experienced and what they wish to learn most. To find out what the learners actually had experienced in the classroom, the students were asked to give their views on classroom practices they experienced, by completing the following open-ended statements: (1) The aspects of language learning I most enjoyed were ...; (2) The aspects of language learning I least enjoyed were ...; and (3) The aspects of the Korean culture I found most interesting were .... The respondents' answers were categorized for each statement and are set out below under each sub-heading in order of frequency.

Most enjoyed aspects:
1) Conversation and speaking practice;
2) Role-play, games and fun ways of teaching/learning;
3) Learning to read and write, and comprehension;
4) Learning the Hankul alphabet;
5) Learning Korean as a new language;
6) Korean songs, dramas and films;
7) Korean culture.

The types of answers summarized above suggest that students were enjoying oral and other language skills, as well as cultural aspects that were presented in interesting ways. Some of the comments dealing with the aspects of language learning they most enjoyed were as follows:

Conversation and speaking practice:
"I most enjoyed the conversation practice..."
"I enjoy learning about simple conversations that I can use in daily lives...."
"Interaction with other people and practicing to speak Korean"
"Practice Korean language with other classmates"

Role-play, games and other fun ways of teaching:
"Being able to learn it in a fun way made it easy to remember it."
"Play card game in class"
"Games and role play were interesting"
"Daily conversation through fun and games"
"Through role-play and games, I enjoyed learning new vocabulary."

Learning to read and write, and comprehension:
"Learning to read and write"
"Being able to read texts early is very rewarding"
"Learning how to write and read in Korean"
"The ability to understand the writing..."

"Understanding the language"

Learning the Hangul alphabet:
"Learning the alphabet"
"Theory behind the way the alphabet was formed."
"Different writing style to English is interesting."
"Writing - alphabet in Asian form looks impressive"
"Learning Hangul and learning more and more vocabulary"

Learning Korean as a new language:
"Learning a new language not similar to English"
"Knowing more about the Korean language..."
"Learning new vocabulary and grammar"
"Getting to know other people's language"

Korean songs, dramas and films:
"Understanding Korean songs, dramas and movies"
"Korean TV drama"
"Watching dramas, listening to songs"

Korean culture:
"Knowing more about ....the way that Korean people live"
"Korean customs and their way of life"
"Korean culture"

On the other hand, learning grammar, memorizing vocabulary, numbers, and homework and tests, were unpleasant parts of language learning. Comments were also made about problems with some classroom practices and management. Observe the summary and comments below.

Least enjoyed aspects:
 1) Grammar;
 2) Vocabulary and pronunciation;
 3) Learning numbers;
 4) Homework and tests;
 5) Classroom practices/management.
 6) Grammar;
 7) Vocabulary and pronunciation;
 8) Learning numbers;
 9) Homework and tests;
10) Classroom practices/management.

The respondents' comments which referred to the aspects they least enjoyed include:

Grammar:
"Grammar was difficult"
"Trying to memorize and understand the Korean grammar"
"Differentiating the topic particle and subject particle"
"Honorifics and grammar is difficult."

Vocabulary and pronunciation:

"Memorizing vocabulary"
"Understanding pronunciations"
"Similar words and confusing meaning"
"How to sound Korean"
"Remembering vocabulary and grammar"

Learning numbers:
"Learning the numbers"
"Numbers -it's so confusing."
"The alphabet and number"

Homework and tests:
"Homework"
"Tests sometimes give a little bit pressure."
"Home study"

Class management:
"Repetition of writing exercises"
"Waiting for other students to finish. Sometimes other students are too slow."
"I don't like spending time on browsing online education website at school..."
"Too fast"
"Doing presentation / role play in front of class"

Although the above aspects that students referred to as least enjoyed are also essential parts of language learning in Korean or other languages, they should be taken as problematic areas that might be playing a role as an impediment to their learning or aspects which should be improved in future course development as well as classroom practices. In particular, more attention should be given to the choice and use of materials and effective teaching strategies with the resource materials.

Along with the language learning experience, students were also asked to give their views on the cultural aspects they found most interesting. As summarized below, the most interesting cultural aspects include the way people show respect to other people, food and drinking, entertainment media, lifestyle and way of thinking, and history. Body language of Koreans and their traditional costumes are also interesting cultural elements to the students.

Most interesting cultural aspects:
1) Showing respect, relationships and associated language;
2) Food, drinking and table manners;
3) Music, drama and films;
4) Way of life and way of thinking;
5) History;
6) Body language;
7) Traditional costume.

Here are some of the comments made in relation to the above points:

Showing respect, relationships and associated language:
"The way they show respect to different aspects of life and people"
"The different ways to speak to different people"
"I find the emphasis on age, seniority, deference and respect to older people or people of higher rank/status interesting."
"Relating people with different expression"

"The different degrees of politeness"
"Relationships between different members of society and associate language"

Food, drinking and table manners:
"Food"
"The food culture is quite attractive."
"Food incl. table manners"
"Eating and drinking habits"
"Drinking culture"
"Korean dinner manners"

Music, drama and films:
"Movies and drama"
"Korean songs"
"Korean drama and lifestyle"
"Music and TV drama"
"TV drama, movie stars, celebrities"

History:
"The history of Korea"
"Korean history (ancient and modern)"

Way of life and way of thinking:
"Lifestyle"
"Learning about special occasions, i.e. Choosuk, weddings ..., beliefs such as the 'double spring' year, match-making, fortune-telling"
"Work ethic, patriotism, homogeneity, culture, politics..."
"What Korean families do, how young Korean differ from the other generation and way of life in Korea"
"Very different way of thinking from us"
"Woorinara ['our country'] spirit"

Body language:
"Their style of speaking and body action is very dramatic."
"Gestures"
"Traditional behavior"

Traditional costume:
"Korean traditional dress. Very artistic"
"Traditional costume"
"Korean clothes"

To reach some understanding of what was seen as a desirable emphasis on culture in the language work, the students were asked to give their opinions on what cultural aspects they wish to learn more about, and as summarized below, the responses were similar to the aspects they found most interesting and enhanced their desire to learn more about those cultural aspects. The students wanted to learn more about aspects such as Korean lifestyle, art and entertainment, culture-specific language, history, and food.

Cultural aspects: wish-to-learn more:
1) Lifestyle, customs and daily life;
2) Art, entertainment and media;
3) Culture in the language;

4) History;
5) Food and cooking;
6) Others (e.g. fashion, business, literature, education).

Comments expressing the cultural aspects they wish to learn more about include:

Lifestyle, customs and daily life:
"I like to learn more about what their everyday life is like."
"Lifestyle, working holiday"
"The way Korean people live their daily life"
"Customs, etiquette"
"Their values at different age groups"
"Korean family customs and relationships"

Food and cooking:
"Food, cooking and diet"
"Cooking, human relations/interactions"
"Cooking Korean food"

Art, entertainment and media:
"Entertainment culture"
"Korean traditions, films, art"
"Korean martial arts, drama on TV and history"
"Korean traditional musical instruments"
"Art, including films and TV (especially documentations and current affairs)"

History and politics:
"History, especially past-Korean war"
"Korean history, fashion, stories, drama, food, etc."
"Relationship between North and south Koreas"

Culture in the language:
"Slang, the recent words, the trends at the moment"
"The traditional and very formal way to write or speak in Korean"
"How to use honorific to intimate words"
"How to react with people and language to use and speak with them"

Others:
"The younger generation's fashion, music, interest, etc."
"Business relationships"
"Education in Korea"
"I would like to learn how to wear a Korean traditional dress hanbok"
"The reason why they have strong characters"
"It's literature I wish to read once I get to learn more of Korean"

Overall, the respondents seem to favour the placing of more emphasis on practical speaking and listening skills. At the same time many of them wish to learn more about general everyday life and culture of Korean people. Others are interested in learning more about some specific Korea-related topics such as history, politics, business, education and fashion. It is necessary to integrate the cultural components of general nature into the language program, and as for the content-based social topics about Korea, it may be desirable to offer a separate course or a series of lectures where possible.

4. Learning-Style Preferences

To find out how the students like to learn Korean in the classroom, the respondents were asked to rate the preference of each statement concerning learning-styles using a four-point scale (i.e. 1, 2, 3 and 4 in order of preference). The statements were modified from Willing (1988) and contained 20 items relating to various learning activities and methods. The results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Learning-Style Preference

Learning preferences	No (%) out of 81 per item
By conversation in class	46 (56.8)
Through pictures, TV drama and films	33 (40.7)
My teacher to tell me all my mistakes	26 (32.1)
By writing something	25 (30.9)
Korean words by doing something	21 (25.9)
By studying Korean grammar	19 (23.5)
By reading	18 (22.2)
By going out with the class	15 (18.5)
By listening to Korean songs	14 (17.3)
Through games	13 (16.1)
By listening to cassettes, CDs, etc.	2 (2.5)

As observed above, some activity types received high ratings. Two learning methods were most preferred, and these were learning by conversation practice in class (56.8%) and through pictures, films and videos (40.7%). This learning-style preference reflects the findings dealing with the aspects of language learning they most enjoyed, which was presented in the previous section. Other preferable learning methods include learning by error correction, writing something and doing something. Learning types that received low or very low ratings (16.1%-18.5%) include learning by using set-up situations, listening to Korean songs, and strangely learning through games.[4] Students did not support the idea of listening to or using cassettes and CDs.

It seems that many students do have rather fixed ideas about what is taught and how it is learnt. It is likely that students' previous learning experiences and personal background account for common and individual learning styles shown in the results. Every learner's wants and desires may not always be catered for in language programs, but such wishes could influence the effectiveness of teaching and the acquisition of language, therefore practicing language teachers need to take them into account in teaching and developing resource materials.

5. First Image or Impression of Korea and Korean People

The first image or impression one perceived from a target-language country and its people will have an effect on the continuity of the student's language learning in the future and their intention to integrate into the target culture, as well as their current enthusiasm and performance. To find out what first image or impression the learners of Korean perceived

---

[4] It seems that the respondents are saying here that they enjoyed learning through games and fun ways but those are not their own preferable learning methods.

of Korea and Korean people, the respondents were asked to give their first perception by completing the open-ended statement: "The first image or impression I had of Korea and Korean people was ..." The overwhelming majority of the respondents gave very positive comments on Koreans, Korea and its culture, while some respondents gave mixed or neutral views. Comments on negative images or impressions were very minimal. In the following, comments are presented in three categories: positive, neutral and negative.

5.1 Positive perception

The positive image or impression of Korean-speaking people that the students perceived is summarized in a variety of positive attributes such as sincere, kind, lovely, respectful, polite, fun-loving, high spirited, friendly, hospitable, hard-working, honest, straight, interesting, humorous, proud, nice, gentle, close bond, welcoming, vibrant, united, neat, good-looking, good skin, stylish and good at arts and sports. Some of these positive comments on Korean people are listed below:[5]

> **The people:**
> "Sincere, kind, lovely"
> "Very respectful and polite, fun loving and very high spirited"
> "Very friendly"
> "Hard working, honest people"
> "Funny and interesting"
> "Friendly and hospitable"
> "Proud, hard-working, sensitive"
> "Polite, nice and gentle"
> "Koreans have a very close bond to each other - the sense of "togetherness."
> "Most people are very nice, very welcoming."
> "Vibrant. Korean people are brash, very united, enjoys going out in groups."
> "Neat, hard-working"
> "Good looking, gentle people with good skin"
> "The Italians of Asia, good at arts, sports, etc."
> "Korean people are very stylish.
> "Korean people - polite, they value manners."
> "Proud of their country, good sense of humour"
> "Very straight, honest people"

Students also gave positive comments, though smaller in number, on Korea, its culture and its media productions. To them Korea was a country which has both old and new: rich in culture with a long history and yet technologically advanced. They perceived positive impressions of both traditional costumes and modern fashion. Two of the national brands, Tae-kwon-do and Kimchi, were among their first images of Korea, while Korean entertainment such as TV drama and music along with Korean celebrities greatly appealed to them. Such comments include the following:

> **The country, culture and media:**
> "Korea is an interesting country with very interesting culture."
> "Korea - technologically advanced"
> "Korean traditional dress"
> "Fashion"
> "Long history, old palaces/temples, delicious food"

---

[5] Many attributive words were repeated in the responses and such repeated comments are avoided or minimally listed here.

"Tae-kwon-do"
"The TV drama, Korean celebrities and Kimchi come to mind."
"Their music and TV are great!"
"Korean drama"

Overall, the majority of students had a very positive perception of Korea, its culture and people, and it seems that this was attributable to various forms of direct or indirect contacts and experiences. Their orientation for Korean was strongly influenced by their prior positive perceptions and experiences, and their learning of Korean seems to have reinforced their attitudes towards Korea and its culture. This tells why the first image or impression perceived by Korean L2 learners is critical for the choice of Korean, its increase of demand and the sustainability of a Korean language program.

5.2 Mixed or neutral image

The first image or impression perceived by some students was mixed or neutral. These students saw both positive and negative sides, and commented in a neutral or dispassionate way. This feeling was expressed in contrastive words such as 'proud and selfish', 'friendly but conservative', 'rude and romantic' and 'divided but rich in culture'. Most comments were focused on the general character of Korean people and society. Observe the following mixed and neutral comments:

"Proud of themselves. Selfish and highly confident about themselves"
"Words [speaking] so fast, high temper, good skin"
"Place emphasis on hierarchy"
"Traditional and reserved"
"They are polite people but some of them rarely show their true intentions"
"Very friendly on the outside but always keep to themselves a lot"
"Friendly but conservative"
"Very polite, quite conservative though"
"A bit rude. Very romantic and cool"
"Hasty, emotional, curious, friendly, divided country, rich culture"
"They have their own character, they love to eat and drink."
"Korean food, Korean war, Korean comfort women"
"Similar to Japan and China, except they have a few different cultures"
"Feel they have a lot of things in common with Chinese."

Generally speaking, the above statements on the first images or impressions the students received are fair and insightful in that the comments represent quite an accurate and balanced view on the typical character of Korea and its people. The respondents seem to have observed Korea from an international perspective and as objectively as they could. This is not a bad sign in terms of the students' attitude towards Korean. Rather, it demonstrates the students' analytical capacity, which could lead to a deeper understanding of Korea. Below we will briefly look into the negative comments.

5.3 Negative image

The comments on negative perceptions of Korea were minimal in number and were most likely based on the respondents' own personal experience and observations. Most comments were made on the appearance, behaviour and quality of Korean people. Take a look at the following comments.

"Small eyes"

"Very formal"
"Very smelly - they smell like bulgogi (BBQ)."
"I felt that they are a bit insular keep to themselves"
"Most Korean people are not that nice"
"Blunt"
"Not good at English"
"Isolated culture"

It is questionable how much these comments may be generalized and what effect they may have in forming their attitude towards Korea and the study of Korean, but they make some point - at least in that the students were frank about what they felt and experienced. We are not sure in this research whether negative images or impressions like the above would change for the better or worse through the study of Korean and beyond, since we live in a contradictory world of words: 'The first impression lasts' versus 'Don't judge a book by it's cover.'

6. Any other comments

The students were given an opportunity to make any additional comments regarding their learning of Korean. The comments were mainly requests and wishes concerning class and external activities such as more conversation, movies and songs, effective methods, proficiency test and a home-stay. Below is a list of such comments.

"I really like to have opportunities for conversation in Korean"
"I think Korean is a hard language to learn because it's a hard language for beginners, especially the listening part due to the verb conjugation. If something can be formulated to help beginners ease into the listening, then it would be really great."
"I would be keen to take official proficiency test, but know very little about this"
"More movies /songs in class, especially more things related to the real world"
"If there's a homestay program from TAFE, it would be great"
"A variety of learning is great, eg. We watched a movie about the demilitarized zone which I found very interesting"

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The key findings in this survey study can be summarized as follows:

- The reason for the students learning Korean at the technical college is very practical - to be able to speak with Koreans;
- The students were found to be more integrative and less instrumental, with the strong majority of them being motivated culturally;
- The most enjoyed learning experiences were conversation class, language activities, songs and films, whereas the least enjoyed aspects were grammar, vocabulary, numbers, homework and tests;
- The most interesting cultural aspects the respondents found were different ways of showing respect and politeness, food and drinking (including table manners), songs, drama and film, history and lifestyles, in that order.
- The cultural aspects they wish to learn more about include current lifestyles, cultural customs, food and cooking, art and entertainment, history and recently created words including slang.
- The respondents liked to learn Korean through conversation practice in class, visual resources, error corrections, meaningful writing exercises and activity-based vocabulary learning more than any other ways.

- The absolute majority of the students perceived or maintained very positive impressions and images about Korea and its people, while some were neutral or mixed in their perception and students with negative images were very minimal.

In short, the findings show that the respondents are very practical and integrative (rather than instrumental) about their learning of Korean, and very positive about the target country and its people. They wish to learn conversational Korean through fun language activities, to be aware of everyday life in Korea with updated information and to do something interesting, for example, something relating to food, cooking and entertainment culture. It is desirable that the Korean program at the College and other institutions with similar educational goals and settings should reflect the findings.

Furthermore, it is desirable to set up a socio-educational program or institution in metropolitan cities such as Sydney in collaboration with the Korean governmental initiative such as the King Sejong Institute project initiated and managed by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Education represented by and acting through the National Institute of the Korean Language. To promote Korean widely in the community, it is inadequate to rely only on education through school and university programs. We need not only elite-oriented tertiary or systematic educational programs but also a well-structured community-based life-long educational program. Currently there are one or two private operators offering fee-based community Korean programs in Sydney, but there is no socio-educational model of a Korean language program supported and operated by government organizations for free or at face cost in Australia. This is in contrast to the active involvement by the Korean government in North and South Eastern Asian countries for promoting Korean. It is worth noting that the Hallyu phenomenon, though comparatively minimal in mainstream Australian society, has gained considerable popularity among the Asian migrant community in Sydney and other big cities, and that there are a considerable number of Australians such as public servants, business people, families of international marriages, families with adopted Korean children who need, or wish to have access to community-based Korean programs.

CONCLUSION

It seems reasonable to conclude that practical goals related to putting the language to some type of use should be emphasized in such language programs; more attention should be paid to the cultural components through media and practical activities; and entertaining methods should be applied to lessons to keep promoting an interest in the language. More importantly both institutional and community efforts should be made in providing more non-award socio-educational models of Korean programs for the general public, government employees and business people in the community.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Dornyei, Z. (2006). Motivation, Language Attitudes and Globalisation: A Hungarian Perspective. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dornyei, Z. and Csizer, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. Applied Linguistics 23/4: 421-462. Oxford University Press.

Dornyei, Z. and Schmidt, R. (eds) (2001). Motivation and Second Language Acquisition. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Ellis, R. (1997). SLA Research and Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, R.C. (1985). Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation. London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R.C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Dornyei, Z. and Schmidt, R. (eds). Motivation and Second Language Acquisition (pp 1-20). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Gardner, R.C. and W. E. Lambert (1972). Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Gardner, R. C. and Smythe P. (1975). Motivation and second language acquisition, Canadian Modern Language Review 31/3, pp 218-30.

Kwon, M-K. and Lee, S-Y. (2005). Korean as a second language learners' motivation and learning achievement: From the viewpoint of adult learning. Journal of Korean Language Education 16-3: 1-28.

Languages and the Community Committee (1981). Why Learn Foreign Languages? Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Nunan, D. (1988). The Learner-Centred Curriculum. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1991). Language Teaching Methodology. New York: Prentice Hall.

Shumann, J. H. (1987). Social distance as a factor in second language acquisition, Language Learning 37/3: pp 341-359.

Svans B. (1987). Motivation and cultural distance in second language acquisition, Language Learning 37/3, pp341-359.

Willing, K. (1988). Learning Styles in Adult Migrant Education. Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Centre.