

# ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF KOREAN CULTURAL EDUCATION IN KOREAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES.

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*The goal of this paper is to ascertain the importance and necessity of cultural education in Korean language education. At the first phase of the research, the emphasis is on examining Malaysian students' purpose of learning Korean language as a second foreign language. Our survey reveals that many students are eager to know more aspects of Korean culture such as traditions, customs, costume and food while they are studying Korean language. Subsequently, a second survey is designed to prove necessity of Korean cultural education in Korean language education. The students' knowledge about Korea and Korean culture, their demands on Korean cultural education are highlighted in this survey.*

*This research contains three groups of Korean language learners. The first group comprises of UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: National University of Malaysia) students who are taking Korean language as an elective subject. The second and third groups comprise of UM (Universiti Malaya: University of Malaya) students who are taking Korean language as an elective and major subject respectively. The results of the survey reveal a significant similarity among the three groups in terms of their views and interest on Korean language and cultural education. This research illustrate the importance and the argues for the inclusion of cultural education in Korean language education in the Malaysian context.*

## 1. Introduction

The Korean language was introduced as a foreign language to Malaysian universities when the Malaysian government initiated in the mid-eighties the "Look East Policy" - for closer economic and academic collaboration with East Asian nations.<sup>1</sup> The first phase (until 1990s) of Korean language education in Malaysian universities can be characterized as introductory level, basic grammar and emphasis on communicative competence. It is

thus appropriate at this level that Korean language education focused on the language proficiency skills such as reading, writing and grammar, as well as communication skills. This state of affairs is also related to the situation and development of Korean language education in Korea.

The second phase of Korean language education could be traced to begin from the mid 1990s when the role and importance of cultural education in teaching Korean language are acknowledged by educators. Since then the visual teaching aids such as VTR and VCD materials are frequently used in the class. Through these teaching materials, Malaysian students are exposed to Korean culture and have shown their interests, understanding and eagerness for more

<sup>1</sup> More explanations for introduction of Korean Language to Malaysian Universities see Rou Seung Yoan. 2006. Program Bahasa Korea dan Program Pengajian Korea di Malaysia. in *Writing the Past into the Present: Reflections of 35 years of Scholarship in Language and Literary Studies*. Edited by Shanta Nair-Venugopal, Khazriyati Salehuddin, Shantini Pillai, Vanjuree Sriadulpan. Malaysia: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. pp.180-194.

knowledge about Korean culture. The students' inclination affirm Thanasoulas's (2001:1) view that "foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own or another culture. 2 In addition, studying language is not only learning verbal skills, but "through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the culture that use that language; in fact, students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. 1996: 27)<sup>3</sup>

The cultural teaching aids have been developed to meet the students' demands during late 1990s and the first Korean text book in Malaysian language was published in 2003. It is deserving of mention that the text book "Bahasa Korea Untuk Warga Malaysia (Korean Language for Malaysians) was recognized as the first Korean language text book written in the Malaysian language. This book was written for the several purposes 1) to help Malaysians to learn Korean easily through a phonetic comparison of Korean and Malaysian languages, 2) to facilitate 'customized dialogues' that took into account the context and circumstances of Malaysia such as the multi-racial society, culture diversity and religious sensitivity and so on, 3) to broaden students' knowledge of Korean culture through various aspects of society such as way of greeting, tea culture, traditional costume, games, food, etc. However, it seems that the students' desire to

learn the Korean culture has been growing in line with the increase in Korean language course enrolment in both universities. At this point, some questions could be raised, 'to what extent do students in Korean language courses also want to learn more about Korean culture? If the answer is in the affirmative, which cultural components do they prefer to study?', and finally what will be the content, difference between elective course students and major students in terms of the cultural education? This paper focuses on two major themes, i.e. how cultural education plays its role and how important cultural education is in Korean language education. The framework of this paper comprises as follows: i) Views on cultural education in language education ii) Surveys and analysis on Korean language education and cultural education in Malaysian universities iii) Conclusion: The problems and prospects on Korean cultural education in Malaysian universities.

## **2. General Views on Cultural Education in Language Education**

### ***2.1. Views on Cultural Education in Language Education***

Language is a part of culture and it reflects culture and represents various aspects of its own culture. Any item of behavior, tradition or pattern can only be understood in light of its meaning to the people who practice it. A knowledge about the codes of another people's behavior is important if today foreign language student is to communicate fully in the target language. Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. For foreign language students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak it or the country in which it

<sup>2</sup> Dimitrios Thanasoulas. 2001. The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom. Radical Pedagogy.

<sup>3</sup> National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. 1996. Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century. Yonkers. NY: Author.

is spoken.<sup>4</sup> (Deborah Peck. 1984:1) It is worth to note that Samovar, Porter and Jain's definition of the relationship between and language and culture. They said:

Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... culture... is the foundation of communication.<sup>5</sup> (Samovar, L., Porter, R. & Jain, N. 1981:24)

Regarding the relation between language and culture, in other words, the interaction of language and culture, there are some ideas of prominent scholars on this matter such as Humboldt (1876), Saussure (1966), Chomsky (1968), Quine (1980), Wittgenstein (1980; 1999), Dilthey (1989), Adorno (1993), Foucault (1996) and Davidson (1999) and Whorf (1956) and Sapir (1962). The core of their views is that a) we perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in our native language and b) what is found in one language may not be found in another language due to cultural differences.<sup>6</sup>

To learn foreign language is to learn foreign culture, furthermore it is, according to Dimitrios Thanasoulas' words on Kramersch's culture in language learning, that to learn a foreign language is not merely to learn how to communicate but also to discover how much

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Peck. 1984. Teaching Culture: Beyond Language. Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.

<sup>5</sup> Samovar, L., Porter, R. & Jain, N. 1981. Understanding intercultural communication. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

<sup>6</sup> This is summarized Bilal Genc, Erdogan Bada's article "Culture in Language Learning and Teaching". Vol. 5, No. 1, April 2005. The Reading Matrix. P. 74. They also mentioned that the need of teaching culture in language classes was started from 1980s and the time reaching climax was in 1990s thanks to Byram and Kramersch.

leeway the target language allows learners to manipulate grammatical forms, sounds, and meanings, and to reflect upon, or even flout, socially accepted norms at work both in their own or the target culture.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is important that educators allow students to observe and explore cultural interactions from their own perspectives to enable them to find their own voices in the foreign language speech community. It was 1960s, when many educators have concerned themselves with the importance of the cultural aspect in foreign language learning. Hammerly (1982), Seelye (1984) and Damen (1987) began to consider the ways of incorporating culture into language teaching. Afterward emphasis has been moved to the situational context of the foreign language in 1970s and followed by Savignon's valuable work on communicative competence. The role of culture in the foreign language curriculum was enhanced by Seelye (1974) and Lafayette (1975). The scholars have not study deeper on the dynamics of culture and its vital contribution to 'successful' language learning and the value of cultural learning till 1980s.. The formal is done by Byram, Morgan (1994) and the latter was considered by Littlewood.<sup>8</sup>

In Korea as well, some scholars and educators have shown their concerns on cultural education and have started researchs on Korean cultural education in Korean language education in the middle of 1990s. Moreover, Korean language education has been developed numerically and qualitatively in Korea as well as in other foreign countries. This is observed that number of universities or

<sup>7</sup> Dimitrios Thanasoulas. 2001. The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom. Radical Pedagogy. P.2.

<sup>8</sup> This is summarized Dimitrios Thanasoulas' the article "The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom. About 1980s to 1990s' works on culture in foreign language education see p. 4.

other institutions that offered Korean language education were drastically increased from 10 places in 1990s to 70-80 institutions up to mid 2000. Furthermore, the number of institution that offer the diploma and certificate courses in Korean language education has increased tremendously in Korea as well as in foreign countries. With this increment of Korean language institutes, there was a strong tendency to introduce cultural aspects to the class and teaching materials.

According to Kim Jungsup, there are two definitions of 'concept of culture' and 'method of cultural education' defined by Korean educational world, that is 1) claim about cultural education in broad sense that deals with general Korean cultural items and 2) claim that narrow the scope of Korean language education down to 'language education'.<sup>9</sup> In most of Malaysian universities, the Korean language is offered as an elective course. Therefore, there is restriction to have cultural class due to insufficient teaching hour. Bae Hyun Sook has pointed out that "cultural education is needed for effective communication (Min Hyun Shik. 1996) or 'what is role of culture in language education' (Sung Ki Chul. 2001) and 'Korean language education through culture' (Chang Kyung Eun. 2001), many scholars just treat culture as a kind of simple instrument. In case that if culture is considered as a method of induction for student's interest, we minimize the value of culture and moreover it is no need to discuss.<sup>10</sup> However, as mentioned earlier,

<sup>9</sup> He categorized as that Cho Chang Wan(1996), Kim Jung Sook (1997), Park Rho Ja (2000), Park Yeong Soon (2002) and Cho Hang Rok (2002) fall under the former group and Min Hyun Sik (1996), Lee Seok Joo (2002) and Cho Hyun Yong (2003) Kim Jungsup. 2005. Present Trends and Prospects of Korean Culture Education Research for Foreigners. Journal of Bilingualism. Vol. 27. pp.61-62.  
<sup>10</sup> Bae Hyun Sook. 2002. The Prospects and Problem in Cultural Education in Korean Language Education. Journal of Bilingualism. Vol. 21. p.180..

practically it is hard to conduct cultural class in present situation. Rather than having separate cultural class, it is recommended and suggested that to develop cultural teaching aid such as audio and visual materials and utilize them effectively.

## ***2.2. Korean Cultural Education in Korean Language Education at Malaysian University***

There were some serious considerations in the process of writing text book "Bahasa Korea untuk Warga Malaysia such as 'how to teach Korean language effectively' and 'how to make Malaysians to acquaint Korean culture in Korean language education'. In relation to that Tomlin & Stempleski's 'goal of cultural education' was the main guideline in preparation of cultural items.<sup>11</sup> (1993: 7-8):

1. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
2. To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
3. To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.
4. To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
5. To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
6. To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize

<sup>11</sup> Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. 1993. Cultural Awareness. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

information about the target culture.

7. To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture and to encourage empathy towards its people.

Here are some examples of utilizing cultural education in Korean language education in the text book. It includes the comparison of Korean language and Malaysian language linguistically and Korean culture and Malaysian culture. These cultural aspects are as follows:

### 3. Surveys and Analysis on Korean Language Education and Cultural Education in Malaysian universities

#### 3.1. Brief on Korean Language Education in Malaysia

Apart from this book, various cultural teaching materials have been used for Korean language classes. Even though cultural teaching aids have been upgraded year by year to meet student's demand, it seems that there are many other things to be considered. This circumstances made researchers to conduct research on this topic 'cultural education in language education in Malaysia'.

It has been 20 years that Korean language education was introduced to Malaysia. At present, 7 Malaysian universities offer the Korean language as an elective course and one university i.e., University of Malaya offers Korean Studies Program together with Korean language as an elective course.<sup>1</sup> Compare to other languages such as Mandarin(Chinese), Japanese, French, Russian, Thai which have

Table 1. Cultural Items in Korean Text book in Malaysia

Chapter	Cultural Items (Linguistic)	Cultural Items(Tradition/Custom/ etc)
Chap. 1-5	Pronunciation Korean (comparative way between Korean and Malaysian language)	
Chap. 6		- Way of Greetings (comparative way between Korean manner and Malaysian manner) - Expression of appreciation
Chap. 7		Song (children)
Chap. 8	Linguistic comparison	Traditional song
Chap. 9		Culture (Tea/ Coffee)
Chap. 10		Culture (Family)
Chap. 11	Linguistic comparison (Korean, Malaysian and English)	Culture (Costume)
Chap. 12		Manners & House
Chap. 13		Markets in Seoul
Chap. 14		Song (children)
Chap. 17		Song (children)
Chap. 18		Culture (Traditional sports)
Chap. 19		Culture (Food)
Chap. 20		Culture (Season)
Chap. 21		Manner (Dinning )
Chap. 24		Culture (Traditional game)

Foundation. Seoul: Eul-yu Munhwasa. 187-215, 925-937

uch longer history in Malaysia, the progression from the Korean language to Korean studies major program in 20 years is a considerable development of academic area of study.<sup>2</sup>

However, considering more than 20 years history of Korean language education in Malaysia, only one university offers Korean studies Program and there is no university which has Korean language department. It seems that the development of Korean language education in Malaysia is little bit slow and feeble especially when we see the rapid growth of Korean language department in other neighboring countries like Thailand, Vietnam and India. However it could be understandable when we observe the Malaysia' situation and government's policy in language education.

In Malaysia, as a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural nation, "language is seen as an important means of linking the nation together, and Malay is the national language and the medium of instruction for school children. English, however, is widely used, especially among the elite. There are numerous Chinese dialects, notably from South China (Hakka, Teochew, Hokkien, Cantonese and Hailam) as well as Mandarin. Among the Indians Tamil is most common, but numerous other regional languages from the sub-continent are also spoken. About fifteen different languages can be found among peninsular orang asli, while the linguistic diversity in Borneo makes it a fertile field for research. The linguistic complexity is matched by the range of religious and cultural traditions within Malaysian society." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Rou Seung Yoan dan Kim Keum Hyun, 2001. Korean Language and Korean Studies Programs in Malaysia, *Journal of the Korean Society of Bilingualism*, Vol. 15, 95-110. Korean Society of Bilingualism. Seoul. Korea.  
<sup>3</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, Leonard Y. Andaya. 1982. *A History of Malaysia*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

(Barbara Watson Andaya, Leonard Y. Andaya. 1982: 4) In addition to these three major languages, such as Malay, Chinese and Indian, English is one of major language used by Malaysians in daily life.

The importance of English gained her weight more and more when the Malaysian government imposed new language policy into school educational system. Saran Kaur Gill points out "the (Malaysian) government has realized that despite its efforts to modernize the Malay language and make it into a knowledge language, the country will lose out if the people are not proficient in the English language. Therefore, the Ministry of Education implemented a policy of reverting to English as the medium of instruction for science and math subjects (in school)." <sup>4</sup> (Saran Kaur Gill. 2006: 161) In these circumstances such as diversity of languages in Malaysia and government's educational policy in language, it seems that the importance of foreign language is overlooked or neglected. Therefore the fact that Korean Studies Program is offered only in University of Malaya and there is no Malaysian university to open the department of Korean language could be understood. The Korean language program and Korean studies program in Malaysia are still in the process of development. Considering 20 years history of Korean language education, it could be said as a gradual and steady development.

<sup>4</sup> Saran Kaur Gill. Saran Kaur Gill. 2006. English Language Policy Changes in Malaysia: Demystifying the Diverse Demands of Nationalism and Modernization. in *Writing the Past into the Present: Reflections of 35 years of Scholarship in Language and Literary Studies*. Edited by Shanta Nair-Venugopal, Khazriyati Salehuddin, Shantini Pillai, Vanjuree Sriadulpan. pp.153-165.

## 3.2. Surveys and Analysis on Korean Language Education

### 3.2.1. Data Collection and Participants

This survey is a introductory level for analyzing general points of views on Korean language education among the Malaysian students. The survey was done in two universities i.e. National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: UKM) and University of Malaya (Universiti Malaya: UM). The data for this research at National University of Malaysia was collected during 1st and 2nd semester of 2007-2008 academic year and at University of Malaya was collected during 1st semester of 2008-2009 academic year.

The participants in this research are 165 UKM students (31 males and 134 females) and 23 UM students (2 males and 21 females) who are taking Korean language as an elective subject in both universities. Next tables show participants' personal particulars clearly as follows:

As shown in Table 2 and 3, most of students in both universities are female students in the

range of 80-90% and major race who are taking Korean language is Chinese. At UKM, around 50 % of students are 1st year students and the other half is divided by 2nd and 3rd year students evenly. Half of students are from Faculty of Science of Technology (55.8%) and the other students are from Faculty of Social Science and Humanities (17.6%), Faculty of Economics (17%), Faculty of Education (7.3%), Faculty of Engineering (1.8%) and Faculty of Business Management (0.6%).<sup>5</sup> In UM's case, 100% of students are 1st year students from Faculty of Arts.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire utilized in this survey aimed to assess five themes: (1) personal particulars of participants which are shown above, (2) knowledge about Korea and Korean language, (3) background to take Korean language, (4) purpose of studying Korean language and (5) plan after the semester.

The second theme of the questionnaire aimed to know participants' knowledge of Korea and Korean language. If the students are aware of some aspects of Korea, which component of Korea and how did they gain that information and also the way of learning Korean language

Table 2. Participants (Gender) in UKM and UM

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	31	18.8	2	9
Female	134	81.2	21	91
Total	165	100	23	100

Table 3. Participants (Race) in UKM and UM

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Malay	14	8.5	3	13
Chinese	147	89.1	20	87
Indian/Others	4	2.4	-	-
Total	165	100	23	100

are questioned.

The third and fourth themes are concerned more on the participants' perceptions and attitudes to the Korean language. The third theme of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the reasons of taking Korean language, on the other hand the fourth aimed to find out the purposes of studying Korean language. The last theme of the questionnaire aimed to assess the participants' plans for further study in Korean language.

**3.2.3. Data Analysis**

For analysis of collected data, the SPSS statistical program has been used. Through the tabular form, the results and their interpretations referring to each section in the questionnaire will be discussed.

Theme 2: Knowledge about Korea and Korean Language<sup>7</sup>

In this section, participants were asked whether they know about Korea and if so, in what field of Korea do they know and how do they gain the information. More than half of UKM students (91: 55%) have little knowledge on Korea, however UM students who have some knowledge about Korea are 14 students (61%). (Table. 4)

**Table 4. Knowledge about Korea**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very well	0	0	1	4
Some	59	36	14	61
A little	91	55	8	35
None	15	9	-	-

<sup>7</sup> Analysis on Korean language skills will be illustrated and explained in analysis on cultural education section. It is due to some questions are same.

**Table 5. Area of knowledge on Korea**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
History	9	3	2	4
Economy	4	2	0	0
Politics	4	1	1	2
Culture	46	16	15	44
Movie or Drama	153	53	21	31
Music	61	21	8	17
Others	10	4	1	2

**Table 6. Sources of information on Korea**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Self Study	8	3	3	8
Through Friend	36	15	5	14
Through Drama/ Movie	159	68	20	54
Through Internet	27	12	6	16
Others	4	2	3	8

The result shows that students' knowledge about Korean history, economy and politics are very limited compare to their knowledge on movie/drama and culture in both universities. Regarding the sources of 'the way of getting information about Korea', most of UKM and UM students obtain the information about Korea through Korean dramas or movies. Table 5 and Table 7 clearly illustrate the results collected for these items.

Theme 3: Motive of taking Korean language

However, the students' answers differ in the question to 'select three main reasons to choose Korean language'. Their preference selections are personal interest (UKM: 33%, UM: 32%), second language choice (UKM: 20%, UM: 28%), time table is suitable (UKM: 19%, UM: 25%), to clear the unit (UKM: 14%, UM: 6%), easy to get good grade (UKM: 10%, UM: 6%) and no other choice (UKM: 4%, UM: 3%). Regarding the question of "if you have

Most of UKM (84.8%) and UM (82.5%) students took Korean language because of their personal interest. As shown in Table 7, second reason to take is to clear the language unit and the others reasons are friend and senior's advice. When the participants were asked to select three main reasons, UKM and UM students gave quite similar reasons. The main reason is the personal interest (33%, 32%) and its follows by second language choice (20% 28%) and time table is suitable (19%, 25%) respectively.

other reasons to choose Korean language? 8 UKM students gave their answer "to understand more about Korean language" and 3 students answered "to learn Korean culture" respectively.

Theme 4: The purpose of studying Korean language

Next three items are designed to clarify the purposes of studying Korean in terms of

**Table 7. The main reason of taking Korean language**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Personal interest	140	84.8	19	82.5
To clear the language unit	13	7.9	2	8.7
Senior's advice	4	2.4	1	4.4
Friend's advice	7	4.3	1	4.4
Others	1	0.6	-	-

language proficiency. Table 8 shows that both UKM and UM students want to study or improve their conversation skill most. However to the question 'numbering the 3 main purposes to study Korean language among 4 skills', the participants gave different. Besides language proficiency, this survey tried to find out the subjects that stimulate interest. Table 9 shows clearly the students' interest in Korean culture. It is also interesting to point out that the reasons of their choices are 'to travel to Korea' (UKM: 37%, UM: 36%) and

Theme 5: Plan after this semester

This question aimed to know students' plan to study Korean language. As most of participants are taking Korean language as an elective course, it is expected that only half of students will continue the course. However the result is very positive as shown in Table 11. In the case of UM, majority answered to continue (96%), except one student who has to stop due to graduation. The 20 students cannot decide if they continue the course due to time table. Most of students will continue

answer from the previous question. UKM students gave three main reasons reading (29%), conversation (27%) and hearing (25%) whereas UM students answered reading (33%), conversation (32%) and writing (18%) respectively.

followed by 'to understand Korean dramas and movies' (UKM: 26%, UM: 19%) as shown in Table 10. On the other hand, studying 'to get a job' is marked as the lowest reason compare to others.

to study further (UKM: 97%, UM: 88%) whereas a few students continue to study because of their faculty's regulation (UKM: 3%, UM: 12%). The reasons that 25 UKM students do not or cannot continue are first, enough to clear the unit (56%) second, going to graduate (32%) and other reasons (12%).

### ***3.3. Surveys and Analysis on Korean Cultural Education***

#### **3.3.1. Data Collection and Participants**

**Table 8. The area of interest in Korean language**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Reading	64	21	12	28
Writing	51	16	9	21
Conversation	122	40	15	35
Hearing	70	23	7	16

**Table 9. The area of interest about Korea**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Culture	121	40	22	44
Korean people	78	29	12	24
Movie/Music	86	26	13	26
Politics	9	3	2	4
Others	5	2	1	2

**Table 10. The purpose of studying Korean culture**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
To get a job	37	13	7	16
To understand Korean Drama/Movie	74	26	8	19
To communicate with Korean friend	58	21	7	17
To travel to Korea	103	37	15	36
Others	8	3	5	12

For this research on Korean cultural education, the data was collected during 2nd semester of 2007-2008 academic year at National University of Malaysia and 1st semester of 2008-2009 academic year at University of Malaya. 126 numbers of UKM students (18 males and 108 females)<sup>1</sup> and 13 numbers of UM students (3 males and 10 females) participated in this survey. The UKM students are taking Korean language as an elective course<sup>2</sup> and UM participants are the students who are majoring in Korean Studies Program. Racial ratio is divided by Malay (16), Chinese

(107) and Sabahan/Indonesian (3) at UKM whereas Malay (4), Chinese (8) and other (1) at UM.

### 3.3.2. Questionnaire

Another set of questionnaire aimed to assess two more themes: (1) knowledge about Korea before taking Korean language course and (2) students' opinions about Korean cultural class after attending Korean language class.

The second theme of the questionnaire aimed to know whether participants have some knowledge about Korea before taking Korean

**Table 11. Continuation of studying Korean language**

University	UKM		UM	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	120	73	22	96
No	25	15.2	1	4

language class. According to the result of questionnaire for Korean language education, two more questions were thrown to the participants to find out how many movies and dramas they have watched and how frequently they watch Korean dramas and movies.

<sup>1</sup> The UKM students who participated in this survey are different students from the participants to the survey for the language education.

<sup>2</sup> 114 students (90%) are taking Korean language as PB (Free elective subject), 11 students (9%) are taking the course as Audit (Not count in PNGK) and 1 student (1%) from East Asian Studies Dept. is taking the course as Wajib (Compulsory)

Table 12. Participants (Level) in UKM and UM

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Level 1	73	58	-	-
Level 2	25	20	13	100
Level 3	15	12	-	-
Level 4	13	10	-	-
Total	126	100	13	100

The third theme is focused on participants' opinions on Korean cultural class and some other details such as preferred subjects, cultural class hour and so on.

### 3.3.3. Data Analysis

The SPSS statistical program was used to analyze the data, which illustrates the results and participants' interpretations referring to each section.

Theme 2: The Cultural Class before taking

#### Korean Language Class

To response the question about students' knowledge about Korea before taking Korean language class, UKM students answered 'yes' (71%) and 'no' (29%) and UM students answered 'yes' (92%) and 'no' (8%). However, their knowledge about Korea is not that profound as shown in Table 13.

The source of information about Korea is mainly movies or dramas rather than text

Table 13. Knowledge on Korea

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Little	66	52	5	38
Some	59	47	8	62
Very well	-	-	-	-
Hardly	1	1	-	-

Table 14. The source of information about Korea

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
School textbook	18	7	3	8
Newspaper	28	12	8	22
Parents	1	0	0	0
Friend	34	14	7	19
Internet	40	16	7	19
Korean Drama/Movie	119	49	12	32
Others	5	2	-	-

Table 15. The information of Korean culture provided in the present text book

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
It is enough	8	6	1	8
Needs more	90	72	11	84
Fair	28	22	1	8
No. need	-	-	-	-

Table 16. Reasonable contact hours for Korean cultural class in one semester?

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1-4 hours	16	28	2	18
5-10 hours	20	34	5	46
11-20 hours	14	23	1	9
More than 20 hours	9	15	3	27

books or newspapers as follows.

As far as Table 6, 9 and 14 are concerned, quite number of participants are depending on Korean drama and movie to get information about Korea. It explains that around 80-90% of participants have watched and are watching Korean dramas and movies frequently.

In relation to the number of dramas or movies students watched, the result shows that most of students watch Korean dramas and movies. 60% of participants watched more than 5 movies (UKM: 56%, UM: 77%), in the mean while, 70% of participants watched more than 5 drama series (UKM: 71%, UM: 83%).

### Theme 3: The Cultural Class after attending Korean Language Class

The students' high expectation about Korean cultural class can be observed in UKM (77%)<sup>3</sup> and UM (100%). Regarding other topics about Korea that they are interested in, UKM

students indicate their preference in history (54: 27%), religion (44: 22%) and education (43: 22%) while UM students choose history (11: 24%), economy (8: 18%) and religion (7: 15%). Their preference mainly based on 'personal interest' (UKM: 86%, UM: 50%) whereas second and third reasons are different between UKM ('just want': 11%, 'my major: 3%) and UM ('my major': 44%, 'just want': 6%).

Next five questions mainly focused on issues of 'Korean Cultural Education'. Even though present text books contain various cultural aspects of Korea, most of students want more information on Korea. It shows clearly in Table 15 below.

Regarding the students' demand on separate Korean cultural class from the Korean language class, UKM and UM students answered in a little bit different way. The 85% of UM students (11) answer 'yes' but only 47% of UKM students (59) gave same answers. In addition to this, the participants who want to have separate Korean cultural class, gave various answers about contact hours in one

<sup>3</sup> The number of participants to answer 'no' is 6 and 'do not know' is 23 respectively.

**Table 17. Satisfaction with cultural information in textbook & lecturer's introduction**

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	66	2	68
No	22	34	1	33

**Table 18. The preferred content of Korean culture class**

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Costume (dress)	49	15	7	14
Food	81	24	12	24
Music/song	47	14	6	13
Religion	28	8	5	10
Architecture/House	19	6	3	6
IT	12	4	3	6
Tradition	65	19	8	16
Arts	32	9	6	12
Others	2	1	-	-

semester. (Table 16) Among the participants who didn't insist on separate cultural class, about 70% of them are satisfied with the information in the present textbooks and lecturers' explanation. (Table 17)

It is interesting to point out that there is similarity between UKM and UM students in selection of subjects for Korean cultural class. The subjects most preferred are food(UKM, UM: 24%), tradition(UKM :19%, UM: 16%) and costume(UKM: 15%, UM: 14%). (Table18)

Even though students have shown their interest in Korean culture, it seems too fast to anticipate that the students will actively participate in cultural activities if offered. The

students' eagerness or enthusiasm to learn more on Korean culture does not match with their real participation. It illustrates clearly in Table 19.

However the students' willingness in short cultural trip or event in Malaysia is higher compare to the class of dance or music. The reason to ask about students' will to pay for the trip is to find out the students' willingness to participate in or not. (Table 20)

The reason of the students who answered negatively, that is 'I will consider' and 'I will not go' was mainly due to financial matter (UKM: 71%, UM 33%) and time concerning matter (UKM: 10%, UM: 67%) than lack of

**Table 19. The willingness of participation in Korean Traditional Dance or Music**

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Definitely yes	22	17	3	23
Yes	35	28	6	46
I will consider	64	51	3	23
No, I will not	5	4	1	8

Table 20. The willingness of participation in trip to Korean Company/Culture Centre/ Restaurant etc. in Malaysia

University	UKM		UM (Major)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes, I will	63	50	5	38
I will consider	61	48	8	62
No, I will not (go to B19)	2	2	-	-

interest.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion: The problems and prospects on Korean cultural education in Malaysian universities

A great number of scholars and educators have asserted that the cultural education is indispensable in language learning, particularly among the foreign language learner. The purpose of teaching culture in language education is to cultivate the learners' proficiency of the target language.

In accordance with the ultimate objective of Korean language education, that is enhancing communication skills, cultural education as well as appropriate introduction of Korean culture is essential. However, Korean language education in Malaysia has been practicing the conventional method which is designed to focus on language proficiency without appreciating the role and importance of cultural education. Therefore, this research tried to establish the role, importance and necessity of cultural education in Korean language education. The study has revealed that high demand and enthusiasm for the Korean cultural education exist among the Korean language learners at National University of Malaysia and University of Malaya. It is not too much to emphasize the

importance of the cultural aspects in Korean language education in Malaysia as most of learners absolutely lack exposure to Korean language speakers and culture.

Considering Malaysian learners' learning environment, Korean educators' discretion and commitment are critical in selecting major text books and references and developing the comprehensive teaching materials. Therefore the educators should provide the appropriate sources of materials to the learners such as Korean cultural data, video clips, DVDs, pamphlets, internet web sites and so on. Besides the above teaching materials, the learners should be given the opportunities to participate in all kinds of Korean cultural events for the purpose of interacting with Korean people and Korean society in Malaysia through Korean culture day, Korean sport day, home stay in Korean family, interaction with Korean exchange students.

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<sup>4</sup> For this question, 35 UKM students and 3 UM students answered.

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