

Orienting Native English Teachers to Korean Students: From Sociocultural Perspectives*

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Under the assumption that different expectations by people from different native cultural backgrounds might lead to serious mismatches so as to affect them in a teaching and learning relationship, this paper looks into the religious tradition of Korean culture and the process of recent economic development, two major determining factors of molding their current distinctive cultural identity. Some typical student-specific characteristics of Koreans are then derived and compared with those of Americans which although there are differences, would be relatively similar to other native English teachers (NETs) in Korea. Additionally, several common behaviors of Korean students in and around the classroom are summarized, followed by those of NETs which are likely to render awkward feelings among both parties. Based on these, specific guidelines are provided to help NETs teach their Korean students more effectively and vice versa, i.e., for Korean students to understand their NETs. Finally, the results of the practical application of this orientation material to the selected NETs are presented.

**[Korean culture/cultural identity/sociocultural
background/Confucianism/한국문화/문화정체성/사회문화적 배경/유교]**

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most serious stumbling blocks in intercultural communication,

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together with both verbal and nonverbal language differences, is to presume that there are sufficient similarities among people from different cultures. In teaching-learning situations, this might lead to serious mismatches between the teaching styles of teachers and the learning styles of students (Rao, 2001). In addition, those mismatches are likely to cause confusion and tension to both parties, and affect learning seriously. Brown (2000) states the following.

Consider, for a moment, a university student from Japan who is studying at a pre-university language institute in the United States. This student has some very specific roles that for 12 years of schooling he has been taught to play. He must give the utmost "respect" to his teacher, which means a number of things: never speak in class unless spoken to—always let the teacher initiate communication; let the teacher's wisdom be "poured into" him; never call a teacher by a first name; respect older teachers even more than younger teachers. But, in his new language school, his teachers are very friendly and encourage a first-name basis, they ask students to participate in group work, they try to get students to come up with answers to problems rather than just giving the answer, and so on. Kenji is confused. (pp. 189-190)

Bridging their gaps, however, would enable students to maximize their learning experiences. It would make teachers maximize their teaching outcomes at the same time. In short, by helping NETs¹ to understand Korean students' behaviors both in and out of the classroom and Korean students to understand NETs' behavior in the classroom, both parties would gain considerably.

Information technology has of course made our world smaller; people do business across countries, and they would not be able to survive if they restricted themselves to their own country alone. Even North Korea, which has long been behind the so-called 'iron curtain,' is opening its door. In this international world, people are becoming so internationalized as to lose their natural characters to some extent. Their thoughts are, however, still so deeply rooted in their own

¹ Most of them are from the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. Those were the countries from which the Ministry of Education recruited NETs for the EPIK (English Program in Korea) in 1996.

cultural background that they, nevertheless, maintain their unique national identities. A survey carried out in 2001², for example, shows that Korean students are perceived by eight American English teachers as follows.

- Strong in grammar (4)
- Hardworking (4)
- Reluctant to speak: Hesitant to ask for help or to state a problem (4)
- Quiet (3)
- Polite: Respectful (3)
- Shy (2)
- Serious (2)
- Care a lot about their family (2)
- Overly concerned about doing things correctly (1)
- Don't like to try unless they can do it perfectly (1)
- Organized (1)
- Smart (1)
- Need structure (1)
- Have high morals (1)

Unless NETs understand the influence which Korean culture has in forming some of those characteristics, they might develop a somewhat negative attitude toward their Korean students, particularly as they perceive Korean students as being reluctant to speak, being shy, or being overly concerned about doing things correctly and perfectly. The NETs who teach English to Korean students, regardless of where they teach, thus need to be enlightened from sociocultural perspectives in order to understand their Korean students' typical behavioral patterns related to teaching and learning. Unfortunately, there have been very few studies (if at all) done on this subject yet. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to mainly look into the socio-cultural behavior of Koreans and to make helpful suggestions for the NETs who have been pouring into Korea as well as

² The teachers were teaching English in an American language institute attached to a state university in the Eastern part of the United States. They were asked by the author to write anything about Korean students.

for those who are experiencing a large influx of Korean students in their homelands these days. In the meantime, under the assumption that those NETs are from Western society whose thought patterns are either American or relatively similar to Americans', general American characters and American students' behavioral patterns are compared to those of their Korean counterparts in order to help Korean students understand foreign English teachers in the classroom. Suggestions are also provided for the Korean students. The last part presents some major findings based on the analysis of responses to survey questions from the selected NETs while using this material for their orientation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies concerning typical behaviors of Koreans and other East Asians in the classroom. Ferguson (2001) states as follows.

... the U. S. teacher welcoming a new Korean student into the classroom could expect a quiet, well-behaved child (valued in our society) who does not participate in class or ask questions (not valued in our society). The Korean child expects the teacher to control the classroom, and open-ended discussions or exploratory learning exercises will be met with confusion and blank stares. (p. 22)

It is just the opposite of American students who are used to explanations since childhood rather than to pronouncements or encouragement to emulate. It is observed that questions are taken not as a sign of hostility or as a challenge to his/her authority, but as a sign of intellectual independence or a sincere desire to participate in the discussion of a subject which interests them (Carroll, 1988).

Rao (2001) lists the following stereotypical descriptions of East Asian learners (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese), though he acknowledges individual exceptions.

(1) Introverted: Being quiet, shy and reticent in the classroom, they dislike overt expressions of opinions.

- (2) Closure-Oriented: Disliking ambiguity or uncertainty, students want their teachers to be the authority.
- (3) Visual: Korean students' being ranked the first among those East Asian learners, it is assumed that gaining information by such visual means as the blackboard in the classroom is attributed to this visual learning style.
- (4) Concrete-Sequential: With this learning style many Korean students like to follow the teachers' guidelines demanding full information.

Teachers are, therefore, expected to be authoritative, the most important figure in the classroom. They are to give precise and detailed explanations on any subject related to their students.

Kilryoung Lee (2003) identifies several sociocultural factors associated with Far-East Asian students' reticence after interviewing eight ESL students, four of whom were Koreans. Four other factors, in addition to teacher-centeredness, were identified. Those four are summarized below:

- (1) Classroom turn-taking: It is controlled by the teacher who appoints speakers. Students are neither encouraged to challenge nor voluntarily question teachers' words.
- (2) Dominance by talkative classmates: Interrupting or taking away the floor is considered rude.
- (3) Perfectionism: Students consider speaking in public as a kind of test either of knowledge or speaking ability.
- (4) Conformity: Students view the 'person' not as an autonomous being with abstract qualities but as somebody who belongs to a group. They value harmony.

Kilryoung Lee (2003) continues to point out that Asian students still maintain their unique behavioral pattern in the foreign classroom environment. A strong desire to save face among Asian students is mentioned by others. Saito and Ebsworth (2004), for example, found that they react negatively when a teacher calls on students randomly, voicing that they prefer knowing exactly which questions they would be answering so that they could prepare themselves in

advance. In the meantime, perfectionism and intolerance of ambiguity were already identified as contributing factors to Korean, Japanese and Taiwanese students' reticence in the ESL classroom (Mi-Jeong Song, 1994).

On the other hand, there are also studies about typical American behavioral patterns related to teaching and learning. First, Ferguson (2001) states that Americans tend to be informal with each other, focusing on doing rather than being. As for the American teachers, they do not assert to know everything about a subject. Their value of individualism and competition encourages independent thinking and learning as well as individuality.

Second, Sang Ok Park (2001) reasons that the principle of equality and individuality of Americans gave birth to democracy and led to form a conversing society. 'Informal communication style' is thus widely recognized. In the meantime, Americans' traditional trait of moving around frequently explains, in part, the reason why they make friends easily, but don't maintain long-lasting friendship, and why they value privacy.

Third, Kilryoung Lee (2003), characterizing the American style of interaction as open, relaxed and friendly, compares the Westerner's view with the Asian's in 'why-questions.' The former considers it as a basic and starting point of an interactive discussion, while the latter thinks of it as too provoking. Lee further points out that Western teachers tend to employ inductive reasoning and thus encourage students to think in various ways about solutions to a problem.

Fourth, Satio and Ebsworth (2004) make a couple of observations about the ideal American teacher's behavior. They should act as facilitators and resource people soliciting students' original ideas through active verbal participation in the class.

It is clear that there are fundamental differences between Koreans and Americans which can be traced to their individual distinct sociocultural background and thus affect teachers and students in the classroom. It does not mean that both from either culture should adapt their styles to suit the other party, but implies that they should be guided to understand each other as stated in the introduction.

In the following, distinctive behavioral patterns of Koreans in general and Korean students, in particular, will be discussed from two aspects: one from the

country's deep-rooted religious and social history, the other from the process of recent economic development. The former has played a very important role in shaping Koreans' spiritual part, while the latter their material part. Those then will be briefly compared with typical behavioral patterns of American students.

III. BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS OF KOREANS AND WESTERNS (AMERICANS)

Confucianism is Koreans' long-preserved religion or guidelines of social ethics. Ferguson (2001) states that nothing has shaped Korean society as much as Confucianism and that it has influenced Korea more than Confucius' native country of China. Confucianism was dominant especially during the Chosun Dynasty from the 14th to the early 20th century. It basically teaches people how to behave in order to maintain good human relationships as follows.

- Filial piety between fathers and sons
- Loyalty between rulers and subjects
- Distinction between husbands and wives
- Respect of the young to the old
- Trust between friends

We find that paternalism, hierarchism, trust and humility are deeply embedded in Confucianism. The following Korean characters appear to be derived from this religious and social tradition.

First, Koreans in general are age-sensitive. One of the most frequently asked questions when they meet for the first time is "How old are you?" Without this knowledge of the interlocutor's age, it would be impossible for them to afford the respect s/he deserves (Ferguson, 2001, p. 18). In the meantime, Becker (1991) rendered this trait to the social history of Korean society. That is, in such a rice-growing culture as Korea, experience was traditionally considered most important to escape from natural disasters like floods and dry weather spells. The older one is, the wiser s/he becomes, they believed. We often hear, "I'm ___

years old, how about you?" on the street from one of the two when they are involved in a small conflict resulting from a traffic accident, for instance.

Second, Koreans in general are formal. There is extensive use of kinship terms in Korean society. They don't use first names, but special terms even among siblings. Smiling and humor have not been prevalent in communication between persons of different hierarchical position.

Third, Koreans in general are warm-hearted. Koreans are said to have an 'affective communication style' or a 'situation-oriented communication style' in contrast to the 'instrumental communication style' or the 'self-assertive communication style' of Americans (Myung Seok Park, 1979). Becker (1991) used 'telepathic intuition' to refer to this kind of noncommunicative culture. They are presumed to be understood among themselves without clear verbal expressions. There are sayings, "Silence is golden," "The superior man is diligent in duty, but slow to speak." In this culture, even words to compliment others are frequently considered unflattering.

Many examples are found in relation to Koreans' warm-hearted and affectionate behavior; the host-pays-all rather than splitting the cost, urging food until being accepted, sharing food from the same dishes, to mention only a few.

Fourth, Koreans in general lead a family-centered life. Family ties have been very strong. Parents believe that the bond between their children and themselves is inseparable. For example, if their business goes bankrupt, they would not let their children be left helplessly behind them. This brings about even tragic events whereby the parent(s) kill themselves and their children at the same time. Also, parents believe that supporting their children financially for schooling is the surest way to advance the whole family's social position. In the old days, passing 'Kwageo', a national exam, was thought to be the gateway to success in one's life, thus an honor for the whole family by practicing filial duty to his/her parents (Sun-young Park, 1991), since only those who were successful in the exam were appointed as government officials and gained 'noble' status (Underwood, 1991).

Fifth, Koreans in general are passive. They have accepted the elders' teaching without making any judgment. Memorizing textbook information and what the

teacher lectures in the classroom has been their main source of learning. Important exams have largely demanded memorization.

These represent the long preserved Korean characters. Korea, however, has been changing into a more egalitarian, less formal, less friendly, more individualistic, and more direct society in general mostly due to the fast changing social ethics and moral standards caused by the rapid economic development since the 1960s. In addition, it is said that Koreans have become quick-tempered with little patience. This is contradictory to the old general description of Korea like 'the hermit Kingdom' or 'the country of morning calm.' Another consequence derived from rapid economic development is that Koreans have become materialistic. Making money is considered more important than ever before and education has become a tool for money-making and thus 'earthly success.' All in all, however, the typical traditional characteristics of Koreans seem to be very much alive. Based on those, the following student-specific characters of Koreans can be derived.

First, Korean students in general are obedient to their teachers, because teachers are their elders as well as the main transmitters of knowledge. There is an old saying, "Students should not even tread on their teacher's shadow."

Second, Korean students in general want to build a long-lasting friendship based on mutual trust. In many instances friends mean those with whom they maintain permanent personal relationship with each other. This seems to be one crucial reason why they are very much interested in knowing about others' personal matters. In order to find something in common they are not in the least bothered about asking such private questions as "Are you married?" "How many children do you have?" "How much are you paid?" and what not.

Third, Korean students in general are strongly group-oriented. They feel safe when they belong to a certain group. Most usually do not want to stand out, but want rather to be hidden in the group. They thus tend to gather among themselves in and outside the class. For this reason, peer pressure is very high. Conformity, rather than individuality, tends to take precedence in their daily life. One of the first things foreigners notice is that youngsters in Korea look like they are wearing the same shoes and clothes, or carrying the same bags and so on.

Fourth, Korean students in general have a strong need to save face. They especially think they have lost face when they give wrong answers in class. They are, therefore, afraid of speaking up unless they are 100% sure of the answer. On the other hand, they become irritated when a couple of students monopolize the whole class. The others would think that they know better than them, but that they just do not want to talk for fear of losing face. Likewise, on the part of the teachers, they think they have lost face when they cannot give correct responses to their students' questions. Teachers are expected to know everything in their subject fields and to control the class well.

Fifth, Korean students in general are indirect. They avoid saying 'no' directly to requests from others for fear of hurting them. They are not used to giving direct compliments, or apologies, either. They also hesitate introducing themselves directly to others. They feel more comfortable when there is a mediator between them. Furthermore, they prefer using expressions like 'it seems,' 'I think' or 'approximately' rather than 'absolutely' or 'exactly.' Korean rhetorical device in writing is also known to be indirect. They do not usually express precisely what they want to until the very last moment. Even in writing business letters, many are still used to starting with greetings or warm-up expressions to build up a friendly atmosphere and getting to the point at the last moment.

Sixth, Korean students in general are dependent. Until they graduate from high school, their only main job has been to study hard memorizing textbook materials in order to enter a prestigious university. They thus do not feel comfortable in an open class environment. They want a structured classroom with adequate supervision. It takes a long time for them to learn to be independent both economically and spiritually.

Seventh, Korean students in general have low self-esteem. Li (1998) makes the following description after he was involved in teaching Korean English teachers for their in-service education in Canada.

Although the English teachers generally felt that they were highly proficient in English grammar, reading, and writing, they all reported that their abilities in English speaking and listening were not adequate to conduct the communicative classes. Surprisingly, even respondents who spoke English fluently and

communicated well thought their English was too poor. (p. 686)

It shows how low their self-confidence in oral English proficiency was. In another case, although the subject was in Math, not in English, Krauthammer (1990) describes typical Korean students' attitude about themselves as follows:

A standardized math test was given to 13-year-olds in six countries. South Koreans did the best. Americans did the worst, coming behind Spain, Britain, Ireland and Canada. Now the bad news. Besides being shown triangles and equations, the kids were shown the statement, "I am good at math." Koreans came last in this category. Only 23% answered yes. Americans were No.1 with an impressive 68% in agreement. (p. 52)

We can see that these characteristics of Korean students are very different from those of American students which can generally be described as follows:

First, American students do not hesitate to ask questions to their teachers, while teachers are not expected to know everything about their subjects.

Second, American students are informal, which comes from their strong egalitarian value orientation. It is natural for professors and students to use first names with each other.

Third, American students are individualistic. They put emphasis on independent learning and thinking. They do not care about others unless something interferes with their business. Privacy is very important.

Fourth, American students are direct. They will directly approach strangers and also do business directly without any mediator. In addition, they are not reserved in expressing compliments and thanks. Kaplan (1966) earlier found that English discourse in writing proceeds in a straight line, starting with the main point followed by several supporting details and examples.

Fifth, American students are independent. When they reach adolescence, they are gradually expected to be independent both financially and affectively. Carroll (1988) writes as follows:

American parents worry if their children hesitate to stand on their own two

feet, if they give what parents interpret as signs of dependency, of insecurity, of an unhealthy need for protection, or if they act like children. (p. 52)

Sixth, American students have high self-esteem. As is described earlier, Krauthammer (1990) criticizes that American students feel exceedingly good about even doing bad in math and science. He continues that pursuing that good feeling in education is 'a dead end' and advises that the way to true self-esteem be through real achievement and learning.

Although some readers might feel that the differences between Koreans and Americans are somewhat exaggerated, it is very important for both Korean students and NETs to understand these in order to maximize English learning and teaching either in Korea or in the target English speaking culture. Based on the studies outlined above, I would like to suggest the following specific guidelines for both parties:

First, to the teachers:

- do not be embarrassed at being asked private questions.
- call upon students personally and ask questions directly.
- try to initiate interaction.
- do not spend too much time with a couple of students only.
- give a lot of encouragement personally and be empathetic toward their feelings and problems. Avoid using negative feedback.
- structure the class hour tightly, giving clear directions and structured explanations, and supervising them individually as much as possible.
- be prepared for all the class activities with confidence and build trust with the students as soon as possible at the beginning of the session.
- disengage students gradually from rote learning and lead them into real communication.
- make an effort to incorporate small group work in order to deal with students' reluctance to express themselves and monitor these groups closely.

Second, to the students,

- do not feel uncomfortable by teachers' being informal or casual (this is particularly true of American/Canadian teachers rather than Europeans who tend to be more formal).
- volunteer to speak up without waiting for your teacher to call upon you individually.
- do not hesitate to ask questions or express your opinion freely.
- make an appointment in order to meet teachers outside of the class or visit them during their office hours.

While the NETs should take care in adjusting their teaching style to meet the requirements of Korean students by following the above steps, Korean students should also make efforts to adjust theirs to the NETs so that both parties will be able to meet halfway and, thus, maximize their teaching and learning experience.

In the next part, I will present the method and results of the applications of this orientation material to the NETs who have been teaching English to Korean students.

IV. METHOD AND RESULTS OF APPLICATION

12 NETs were selected for application of the orientation material. They consisted of six Americans, three Australians, two British and one Canadian. They were all teaching elementary school students at Incheon English Community Village. After learning from the pilot study³ that the material would be particularly useful for those who are new to Korea, only those who had taught English in Korea for less than six months were selected for this study. Their teaching experience ranged from three to five and a half months. Their main sources of background information about Korean culture were through friends, books and/or the internet.

³ This was carried out with nine NETs who had been teaching at a university during the 2005-2006 academic year. They said that they had lived long enough in Korea (three to 10 years) to be affected significantly by the orientation material.

The whole implementation process consisted of three stages: conducting a pre-survey, sharing the orientation material and conducting a post-survey which had identical questions to those of the pre-survey (see Appendix 1). The time gap between those two surveys was from one month to one and a half months during May and June of 2007. 11 survey questions were divided into two types, six embarrassing or annoying situations for NETs and five distinctive characteristics of Korean students. Each question was to be rated on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Since the orientation material was given to every NET immediately following the pre-survey, its effects were to be measured by comparing NETs' responses in the pre-survey with those in the post-survey. The results of T-test for matched pair samples are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Results of T-test

Questions	Respondents (N)	t	p
Q1	12	4.06	0.0019
Q2	12	4.49	0.0009
Q3	12	4.06	0.0019
Q4	12	3.45	0.0055
Q5	11	2.76	0.0200
Q6	12	3.08	0.0105
Q7	12	-0.46	0.6576
Q8	12	-1.32	0.2143
Q9	12	-2.16	0.0538
Q10	12	-4.18	0.0015
Q11	12	-3.19	0.0086

The above results indicate that there were significant differences between the two survey responses in all the questions except for two, Question 7 (being respectful to teachers) and Question 8 (lacking creative thinking ability). Question 9, being group-oriented, was significantly different between periods at $\mathcal{L} = .10$ and others at $\mathcal{L} = .05$. In other words, it can be concluded that the orientation material was mostly effective in changing NETs' attitudes toward Korean students

whom they taught during the period of one month or so. We need, however, to examine some of the specifics based on the respondents' mean scores and standard deviations as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations

Questions	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD
Q1	12	2.83	1.20	1.83	0.72
Q2	12	4.0	0.43	2.75	0.87
Q3	12	2.75	1.06	1.75	0.62
Q4	12	2.75	0.87	2.00	0.60
Q5	11	3.55	1.04	2.73	1.35
Q6	12	3.08	1.08	2.25	1.21
Q7	12	3.58	1.00	3.75	1.22
Q8	12	2.42	1.08	2.92	1.38
Q9	12	4.25	0.45	4.67	0.50
Q10	12	3.50	1.00	4.25	1.14
Q11	12	3.17	0.94	4.08	1.00

First, at the time of the pre-survey, NETs seemed to agree that one very embarrassing or annoying situation in the classroom is when students are silent (Question 2, $M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.43$). Many of them became less embarrassed or less annoyed, however, at the time of the post-survey ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.87$).

Second, contrary to our expectations that NETs would be embarrassed or annoyed by private questions such as age or religion (Question 1), they were in the middle at the pre-survey ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.20$). They again became less embarrassed or annoyed in the post-survey ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 0.72$). It is assumed that some of them were already tolerant of that subject after experiencing similar situations frequently enough in Korea.

Third, pretty low average scores in the pre-survey on being embarrassed or annoyed by not making eye contact with teachers (Question 3, $M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.06$) and by not accepting teachers' mistakes in class (Question 4, $M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.87$) might be rendered to a lack of those incidents NETs experienced while teaching.

Fourth, as to the general distinctive characteristics of Korean students, NETs appeared to be very firm in judging them to be strongly group-oriented (Question 9, $M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.45$) at the time of the pre-survey. They had stronger opinion later in the post-survey ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.50$).

Fifth, two statements concerning the characteristics of Korean students in general are worth mentioning. One is 'Korean students are very respectful of the teachers' (Question 7). The other is 'Korean students seem to lack creative thinking ability' (Question 8). Their opinion of them seemed to be weaker than expected in the pre-survey, ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.00$ and $M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.08$ respectively), although they became a little stronger in the post-survey ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.22$ and $M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.38$ respectively). This might show that Korean students now have changed both in their attitude toward their teachers and in their ability to think creatively. Or especially in the former, they would have been somewhat rude to foreign teachers simply because they were not Korean.

Sixth, two more Korean students' general characteristics, preference for structured classes (Question 10) and lack of self-confidence (Question 11), particularly stand out in the post-survey ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.14$, and $M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.00$ respectively). NETs might have particularly noticed them, after being affected by the orientation material.

As a matter of fact, items selected in the survey were presumed to be culturally distinctive to Koreans in general based on the relevant literature reviewed in this study. Although significant differences are found between the pre-survey and post-survey, quite possibly thanks to the orientation material, responses of NETs in the pre-survey were lower than expected in most cases. As discussed above, some might be attributed to NETs' tolerance due to their increased teaching experiences, to their students' age group (elementary school students), to their lack of similar circumstances already encountered, or to Korean youngsters' changed attitude. It is, however, very fortunate to find that the orientation material affected NET samples significantly and in a positive way. It should be mentioned that NETs' responses were not categorized by nationalities for analysis, since nothing distinctive was found by native countries.

V. CONCLUSION

The 'Internet revolution' has made English truly the international language. The English language is now said to be being used by more people in the world than those whose native language is English. In line with this, the Korean government has put great emphasis on English education, making a tremendous financial investment in order to hire more native English speakers in secondary schools. They will be recruited from Western countries like America, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. Although these speakers of English come from different cultural and social backgrounds, they are probably much more similar in their basic thought patterns among themselves than they are to Koreans. Americans have been selected for comparison in this paper, but it is unquestionably understood that even among the Americans, the Canadians, the English, the New Zealanders and the Irish there are also characteristic and behavioral differences. However, the main purpose of this paper is to help NETs either in Korea or overseas understand their Korean students.

YongSon Choi (2001), after an experimental study of NETs who had participated in EPIK, suggested that much effort be made to have them overcome their socio-cultural shocks arising from different social and cultural patterns. 'Maladjustment' was the word she used about their problems. Cheongsook Chin (2002) emphasized the importance of an orientation to help the teachers understand cultural diversity based on his review of Banatt and Kontra's report on two studies which surveyed comments of the students and EFL colleagues about NETs. We have seen, therefore, what has mainly shaped the Korean character as it is today and distinctive behavioral patterns derived from both Koreans in general and Korean students in particular. Where appropriate, we have also seen general American characteristics and American students' behavioral patterns to help Korean students understand Western teachers of English.

Based on these findings, some specific guidelines were presented for both NETs and Korean students. What is interesting in this study was to follow the next practical application of the orientation material to 12 NETs at an English camp for elementary school students. In order to see if the material was effective in changing their attitude toward Korean students, a pre-survey was prepared with 11 questions which deal with causing possible embarrassment or annoyance

because of their culturally typical behaviors in the classroom and which are considered distinctive characteristics of Korean students. Right after the survey sheets were collected, those NET samples were given the orientation material to read. Post-survey sheets with 11 questions identical to those of the pre-survey were given after a month or so. Statistical analysis revealed that on the whole, the orientation material was significantly effective in changing NETs' thinking about Korean students. It is also very interesting to find that NETs were especially sensitive to Korean students' being silent in the classroom. In the meantime, Korean students these days seem to be more open and creative than in the past rather than just being submissive to their teachers. It is strongly suggested that private institutes and schools use this kind of orientation material when they employ newly arrived NETs who have very little knowledge about Korean culture.

This study has several limitations. First, the literature review was not extensive enough to cover all the relevant background information on this subject. Second, NET samples were limited in number and work place. Third, Korean students whom NET samples taught were also limited in terms of their grade level. Fourth, the time duration between the pre-survey and the post-survey was too short. Fifth, the orientation material was not given to Korean students for the orientation purpose before they were placed in the class with NETs. A further in-depth and extensive study of this kind is in need in the future (e.g., its application for different durations, a comparison of two groups of Korean students with two NETs' groups, one with the orientation and the other without it, and so forth).

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APPENDIX

Pre-Survey Sheet

Date:

This survey is to help you find out what you yourself know about Korean students before you read '**Orienting Native English Teachers to Korean Students—from sociocultural perspectives.**' We hope the paper will make you better understand those who have different ways of thinking from you and thus help you teach them in classes afterwards. Please give your frank opinions for each question with further personal comments. A post-survey sheet will be given to you again after some time to see how this kind of orientation material will have worked for you.

Name:

Current work place:

Nationality:

Education(including your major):

Date of arrival in Korea:

1. What did you do before you came to Korea? If you had taught English to Koreans, write about it (subject(s), place, time(from when to when)),
2. Write about your experience of teaching English to Koreans in Korea? (subject(s), place, time(from when to when)), etc.
3. What kind of background information did you have about Koreans before you had started teaching English to Koreans? (Or if you have just arrived, what kind of background information do you have about Koreans?)
4. Where did you learn the background information?

For the following objective items, please select the best choice for each along with any personal comments if you have.

* Under what circumstances have you been embarrassed with or annoyed by Korean students?

- 1) When they ask private questions such as age, marital status and so on

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

2) When they are silent in the class (no volunteering, no response to direct questions, for instance)

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

3) When they look on the floor or other(s) instead of looking directly at the teacher's eyes while communicating, especially while being scolded

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

4) When they don't seem to accept it when you as their teachers make mistake(s) in class

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comment:

5) When they are not punctual

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

6) When they don't use expressions of thanks, apology or compliment appropriately

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

*What do you think are distinctive characteristics of Korean students in general?

7) They are very respectful of the teachers, even being hesitant to call them by their first name at the beginning.

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

8) They seem to lack creative thinking ability.

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

9) They tend to go with others as a group rather than be individualistic.

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

10) They prefer structured classes rather than those in a free atmosphere.

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

11) They don't seem to be confident even if they do well in the English class

① strongly disagree ② disagree ③ undecided ④ agree ⑤ strongly agree

Comments:

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

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