

## **Cultural Literacy as a Catalyst for Language Pedagogy: Curriculum Innovations and Strategies in Korean Language in the U.S.**

**한국어 교육의 촉매제로서의 문화 리터러시: 미국 내 한국어 교육 과정 혁신과 전략**  
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This presentation introduces a collaborative project between educators in the United States and scholars in Korea to develop a comprehensive, culture-centered Korean language curriculum. As one of the least taught languages, Korean is one of the fastest growing foreign languages in the U.S. educational system, yet it remains one of the most difficult world languages for American students to learn. Despite this significant growth, Korean enrollments still represent only about 6% of all world language enrollments in higher education and less than 1% in K-12 schools. Not only attracting students, but also retaining them at higher levels is a chronic problem, especially at the university level. This is due in large part to the heavy reliance on context, which requires a deep understanding of the surrounding circumstances for accurate comprehension of linguistic communication in Korean. While this contextuality enriches the language, it also poses a serious challenge to learners who need to understand the complex cultural meanings and expressions inherent in the structure, usage, and manner of speaking of the Korean language.

Despite a growing consensus on the importance of integrating culture into language instruction to enhance intercultural and multicultural communication, these components are more often treated as supplemental to core language instruction or as occasional "treats" to entertain students. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many educators are not fully prepared to deal with complex cultural issues in the classroom. My project proposes a paradigm shift in language education by inviting a culture-centered approach to teaching Korean, targeting the K-12(+4) curriculum. It aims to develop a comprehensive culture-centered language curriculum. As the lead scholar of this emerging project, working with a group of K-12(+4) educators in the U.S. in collaboration with many scholars in Korea, I will present the project agenda, the issues unique to American school-age learners that require a culture-centered language pedagogy.