

A Study on the Multiliteracy Experiences of College Students Through an Intercultural Exchange Project

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The purpose of this study was to explore how college students perceived multiliteracy experiences through the intercultural exchange project in an online EFL class. This study explored students' perceptions of the communication experiences with partners from different cultures and their intercultural understanding. Two types of data were collected from 30 Korean college students: qualitative data including activity reports, reflection notes, and final tasks; quantitative data including the responses to the perception questionnaire and intercultural sensitivity survey. Results of statistical analyses did not reveal significant differences in paired *t*-tests for cultural sensitivity. However, data showed that students experienced meaningful practice of multiliteracy and intercultural understanding. Students experienced four dimensions of the pedagogy of multiliteracy and improved their cultural sensitivity. Researchers suggest that EFL teachers find ways for learners to become multiliterate communicators with learning experiences of multiliteracy in English classes.

Key words: multiliteracy, cultural sensitivity, intercultural exchange

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the present age, multiliteracy and integrated literacy ability beyond traditional literacy are required due to the development of digital media and the need to understand various cultures. The term multi-literacy began with the recognition that a broad perspective on literacy is needed as the diversity of communication channels and cultural and linguistic diversity increases (New London Group, 1996, p. 60). According to these changes and demands of the time, the current literacy education is moving from writing-reading education, which has been focused on text to text, to multimedia-based multiliteracy education. Therefore, in response to the changing literacy education environment, it is important to reflect on and improve the necessity of new literacy learning activities in language classes.

Meanwhile, educators, in today's dynamic world, face the challenge of teaching multiliteracy skills to learners born in a digitalized and multi-modal environment. Likewise, learners are expected to learn basic skills on how to use and apply digital technologies in society. Therefore, teaching and learning should be related to these changing needs, and literacy education should be designed to enable learners to "analyze and construct multi-modal texts." (Cooper, Lockyer, & Brown, 2013, p. 1). In this regard, language and culture integrated education using media content may be able to provide interest and motivation to language learners (Kim, 2020).

Multiliteracy is a comprehensive concept that includes informational, visual, linguistic, critical, and cultural literacy (Ihm, 2015; Kim, 2020). Among them, this study was conducted with an emphasis on cultural literacy through an intercultural exchange project. Cultural literacy refers to the ability to understand the cultural context underlying the content of a text in addition to the information given when teaching culture. This cultural literacy is one of the important skills for language learners (Callins, 2006; Shamsayooadeh, 2011). In particular, cultural literacy has been discussed as a new literacy skill required in current circumstances where we live in a world with numerous digital content and communication devices.

For the above reasons, changes in literacy pedagogy have become a prerequisite rather than an option. Accordingly, as Mills (2009) stated, many educators are now changing their literacy pedagogy so that learners can actively participate in technologically and culturally diverse societies. This study, therefore, aims to present examples of how to practice multiliteracies through intercultural exchange projects in online EFL classes and to report students' perceptions of multiliteracy learning experiences and cultural understandings in the intercultural exchange project. The research questions are as follows.

First, how do students perceive the multiliteracy experience through the intercultural exchange project conducted in an online EFL class?

Second, how do students perceive the learning experience with partners from different

cultures and their intercultural understanding in the online exchange project?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Multiliteracies and Language Learners

Since the New London Group (1996) outlined a pedagogy of multiliteracies in the mid-1990s with a concern for changes in language, literacy, and education, many scholars have become interested in new literacies. A pedagogy of multiliteracies deals with multimodal texts integrated with various modes (linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, and spatial) of language. It also notes the integration between the multiple modes of media and cultural practices in the contemporary world (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Multiliteracy, therefore, refers to the ability to understand information conveyed through a variety of media other than traditional text.

Cope and Kalantzis (2009), the leading scholars of the New London Group, asked "Why multiliteracies?" and explained the need for multiliteracy from the perspective of workers, citizens, and persons. First, in terms of workers, they argued that multiliteracies can help create conditions for a critical understanding of discourses on work and power. Second, they emphasized that for citizens, multiliteracy proposes a pedagogical approach for active citizenship in which learners are centered as an agent in their knowledge process and negotiate differences between communities. Next, they noted that one of the goals of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is to create the learning conditions that support the growth of the person: a person comfortable with themselves as well as being flexible enough to collaborate and negotiate with others who are different from themselves in order to forge a common interest" (p. 174).

In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, New London Group proposed four dimensions are integrated in multiliteracy education (Newman, 2002). Table 1 shows the four dimensions (or components). First, *situated learning* is to allow learners to experience through actual activities such as media reading or production. Second, *overt instruction* includes direct information delivery, training, and mechanical memorization, as well as the involvement of teachers or experts in learners' learning activities. In other words, *overt instruction* includes providing scaffolding that allows learners to complement what they already know or have achieved before and learn new things. Next, *critical framing* refers to interpreting and critically looking at the socio-cultural content of actual activities through contextual activities. Fourth, *transformed practice* refers to performing a new form of meaning-making according to other contents or cultural situations.

TABLE 1
Dimensions and Knowledge Process of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Dimensions	Knowledge Process: Activities	
Situated learning	Experiencing	<i>the known the new</i>
Overt instruction	Conceptualizing	<i>by naming with theory</i>
Critical framing	Analyzing	<i>functionally critically</i>
Transformed practice	Applying	<i>appropriately creatively</i>

According to the New London Group, to take the four dimensions into practice, a wider range of knowledge processes (i.e., experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying) should be used, and more powerful learning occurs by explicitly and purposefully weaving between different knowledge processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). In particular, a pedagogy of multiliteracies regards languages as dynamic processes of transformation, not processes of reproduction. As such, language learners are regarded as meaning makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning rather than replicators or simple users of what they have been given. Therefore, in the perspective of multiliteracies, literacy teaching aims to create an active designer of meaning with an open sensibility to differences, change, and innovation.

Numerous studies have applied these components of multiliteracy pedagogy in developing teaching materials and implemented them in varied contexts. For example, Ihm (2015) developed the content and language integrated material adapting the four components for elementary learners to learn multiliteracy skills and to get them exposed to meaningful language input. Syam (2020) investigated how Indonesian lecturers applied their understandings and experiences of multiliteracy pedagogy to their reading class. The result showed that the lectures applied the multiliteracy pedagogy (i.e., situated learning, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice) in many ways to teach reading. The researcher concluded that the understanding and experiences of the lecturers on four components of multiliteracy pedagogy contributed to innovative and creative teaching and learning process.

2.2. Cultural Literacy and Language Learners

Given that language and culture are inseparable, cultural understanding and intercultural communication have always been important issues in foreign language education (Brown, 2006). In other words, culture plays a highly significant role in teaching and learning a language. Therefore, one of the goals of foreign language teaching is the development of

culturally literate individuals who can understand and negotiate with other cultures. Maine, Cook, and Lähdesmäki (2019) stated that culturally literate means “to be disposed to be, and competent in being, sensitive to one’s own and others’ identities, heritages and cultures.” (p. 384). Moreover, they also noted that culturally literate individuals are empowered to participate in and moderate their own culture.

As mentioned earlier, cultural literacy refers to understanding the cultural context in which text content is based in addition to information given during literacy education. In particular, such cultural literacy is an important skill for fluent language learners (Callins, 2006; Shamsayooadeh, 2011). According to Parkinson and Saunders (1999), “Cultural literacy is concerned with perspectives - an appreciation of alternative realities.” (p. 4). Maine et al. (2019) stated that “cultural literacy empowers intercultural dialogue” and noted the need for “effective cultural literacy learning, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding” in school education (p. 383). They considered cultural literacy as “a dialogic practice enabled through constructive encounters about what it means to be different from each other.” (p. 384).

Recently, Kim (2020) applied a multi-literacy education program using Korean Drama content to foreign students who want to learn the Korean language and culture. She found that the participants showed statistically significant improvement in Korean language ability, learning interest, participation, and confidence compared to the control group. In particular, in this study, foreign students were able to understand authentic Korean language through drama media and cultivate the ‘cultural knowledge’ needed to fuse their knowledge and experience with unfamiliar and different Korean societies. These results showed that foreign language learning using media content led to an improvement in their target language multiliteracy, the ability to understand and think about complex meanings.

Therefore, cultural literacy is a dialogic social practice, so teachers enable students to engage productively with each other and encourage them to learn about their own and others’ cultures through regular experiences within classrooms.

2.3. Multiliteracies and Technology

Media content is becoming a primary medium for global cultural convergence between Korean culture and other cultures. In the current digital era, the young generation, known as digital natives, live their lives with new technology and use it for second or foreign language learning. This phenomenon shows that language education using digital media can interest and motivate them. At the same time, there are increasingly demanding efforts of language teachers to use technology effectively. The term multiliteracy with multiple meanings emerged due to the integrative nature of the text form of digital media. And digital media users are required to have multi-literacy skills, which is an integrated literacy ability to

understand and utilize each text format (Ahn, 2002). Kalantzis and Cope (2005) also addressed the potential of multiliteracies assisted by digital technologies, mentioning learning environments relevant to a changing world. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the wide use of various media technologies from the perspective of multiliteracy education.

Knobel and Lankshear (2006) distinguished "two broad ways of thinking that people use to understand and orient the world" (p. 80). They suggested the second mindset that has emerged through digital technologies and explained the new perspective of mindset about knowledge production. As such, the changing technological environment and digitized society of the present era have led people to change the way they explore knowledge and define value. Accordingly, literacy education has also changed to multiple and multimodal literacies as it adapts to the changes.

A previous study in this regard, Cooper et al. (2013) found that secondary school students had meaningful multiliteracy learning experiences in a technology-mediated environment. They noted the significant role of technology by emphasizing the imperatives of technology-based literacies in teaching and learning. They also wrote that "technology-based literacies are a social practice that involves learners using technology to engage with multimodal texts to construct knowledge in digital and other forms." (p. 94)

In looking at the studies that applied the multiliteracy approach, first of all, Nabhan (2019) investigated how the process writing approach incorporated with multiliteracies affects pre-service teachers' English writing skills and digital literacy improvement. The researcher found that it not only helped the pre-service teachers writing improvement by providing opportunities to use multiple modes of meaning-making but also promoted their digital literacy skills. In addition, Im (2020) explored the characteristics of the mobile platform that attract English language learners and the meaningfulness of the interactions on mobile platforms based on the New Literacy Studies (NLS) perspectives. The result showed that interactions on mobile platforms promoted multimodal modes of communication. The findings of the studies showed the positive result of the multiliteracy approach to language teaching and learning. Moreover, they also proved that digital technology-supported multimodal learning environments helped language learners be multiliterate.

3. METHOD

In order to explore the ideas presented in the literature on multiliteracy and learners' learning experiences, an online-based intercultural exchange project was developed that paired university-level students in two countries, the U.S. and Korea.

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were thirty sophomore students enrolled in the course, Communicative English, which the researcher taught at a university in D city, Korea. Twelve out of them were male, and the remaining eighteen were female. They agreed to participate in the study and their consent forms were collected before the study began. In terms of English proficiency levels, most participants were intermediate-level English learners with an average TOEIC score was 625. The participants' average age was 22.65. The university students in the U. S. were the interlocutors who took an intermediate Korean class. However, this paper addressed only the multiliteracy learning experience of the students in Korea as part of the entire project.

3.2. Instruments

To understand the students' perception of their multiliteracy experience, a semi-structured questionnaire was used as a post-survey instrument. To explore the students' understanding of other cultures, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS; Chen & Starosta, 2000) was employed before and after the project. Intercultural Sensitivity is defined as "an active desire to motivate oneself to understand, evaluate, and accept differences between cultures" (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 231), and it is closely related to the ability to communicate between cultures. Therefore, the tool can be regarded as an appropriate tool to examine the students' cross-cultural understanding related to cultural literacy. The ISS contains 24 items and consists of four factors, i.e., interaction participation (7 items), respect for cultural differences (6 items), attitude toward interaction (6 items), and confidence in interaction (5 items).

3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data included the responses to the perception questionnaire and intercultural sensitivity survey. Qualitative data included the students' activity reports (discussion materials and multimodal products produced by the participants), reflection notes, and final tasks (writing the partner's biography). These sets of data allowed the researchers to gain an understanding of students' English multiliteracy practice and intercultural understanding.

The data from the perception questionnaire and the pre-and post-intercultural sensitivity survey were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. For the quantitative data, paired *t*-test was conducted to find if there were statistically significant differences between pre-and post-surveys. Qualitative data on the students' multiliteracy experience were analyzed focusing

on the four teaching dimensions of multiliteracy. Moreover, qualitative data on the students' cultural understanding were analyzed focusing on the four categories of the intercultural sensitivity scale.

3.4. The Project

As an online meeting platform for this study, the students used Zoom. It provided easy access and necessary functions to share ideas, record discussions, and save archives. Students met three times to discuss the topics decided with the partners and had an informal meeting for proofreading activities. Table 2 displays the outline of the intercultural exchange project.

TABLE 2
Timeline of the Intercultural Exchange Project

Week	The Task	
	Schedule	To do
1	Partner assignment	Contact each other
2	Scheduled meeting time & topics	Set a meeting, decide on topics, & post a list of questions/discussion points to Google Drive
3	Exchange meeting 1	Conduct a meeting, record the conversation, & upload it to Google Drive Write an <i>activity report</i> before the 2 nd meeting
4	Exchange meeting 2	Find a relevant article, share it a week prior with partners & post a list of questions/discussion points Conduct a meeting, record the conversation, & upload it to Google Drive Write an <i>activity report</i> before the 3 rd meeting
5	Exchange meeting 3	Find a relevant article, share it a week prior with partners & post a list of questions/discussion points Conduct a meeting, record the conversation, & upload it to Google Drive Write an <i>activity report</i> before the 3 rd meeting
6	Writing portfolios	Create portfolios about three exchanges using PPT
7	Proof reading	Get proof reading (feedback & comments) from the partner & revise the draft
8	Presentations	Share the portfolios & Activity reports

The students first contacted each other via *Kakao Talk* or e-mail, and they selected common interests as topics for discussion. Korean students were asked to find relevant

articles written in English, and U. S. students were asked to find articles written in Korean. Students searched and used various materials online and shared them through Google Drive a week before the discussion so that partners could prepare for the meeting. Students were also asked to post a list of questions or discussion points on each topic. After the exchange meeting, the students had to submit an activity report which includes four parts: *what we did* (a summary of interaction), *what I learned*, *what I still want to know*, and *what I plan for the next meeting*. They also had to upload the recorded conversation file to Google Drive. Therefore, in this study the students were exposed to English before, during, and after the meeting.

4. OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Multiliteracy Learning Experiences

Throughout the project, most of the students were actively engaged in the intercultural exchange by discussing, negotiating, and co-constructing meaning with their partners. To report the students learning experiences in the view of the multiliteracy approach, we arranged our findings according to the four dimensions of multiliteracy activities: situated learning, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.

4.1.1. Situated learning

In this study, the one-on-one interaction conducted in Zoom helped form a consensus among students, and students shared personal experiences related to learning topics with their partners. In addition, as the meeting continued, it was found that the number of cases where they shared their experiences increased. Therefore, students did meaningful activities using their real-life experiences, which shows that they participated in *situational learning* through this project. Figure 1 is a student's reflection that shows a pair of students' shared experiences and thoughts about the topic, education.

FIGURE 1
Students' Experience of Situated Learning

어떤 교육 방식이 좋은지에 대해서 물었을 때 독일의 bilingual 교육 방식이 좋다고 하였다. 나는 bilingual 이라는 단어를 들었을 때 문득 1학년 때 배웠던 언어학개론이 생각났다. bilingual은 이중 언어를 학습하는 것을 말할 하는데 독일에 bilingual 교육이 잘 되어있다고 하여서 관심 있게 듣게 되었다. 또한 나는 평소에 미국이 학생들이 교육을 받기에는 자유로운 나라라고 생각을 하였지만 사실은 한국과 똑같은 상황에서 공부를 하는 것을 들었을 때, 미국을 너무 자유로운 나라라고만 생각한 내 생각이 어리석었음을 깨닫게 되었다.

In addition, to prepare for their discussion with partners, each student had to select appropriate reading materials from the Internet. In other words, they were required to search topic-related discussion materials, make summaries of the materials, and prepare discussion topics and questions. Throughout the process, the students could experience actual multiliteracy activities such as reading media materials and producing discussion materials. One of the students expressed that she experienced the opportunities to interact with an authentic audience within an authentic context, and was able to improve her English skills.

It was good to communicate directly with native-speaking friends living in the area and to know the local situation and culture accurately, and my pronunciation and listening skills improved while talking in English.

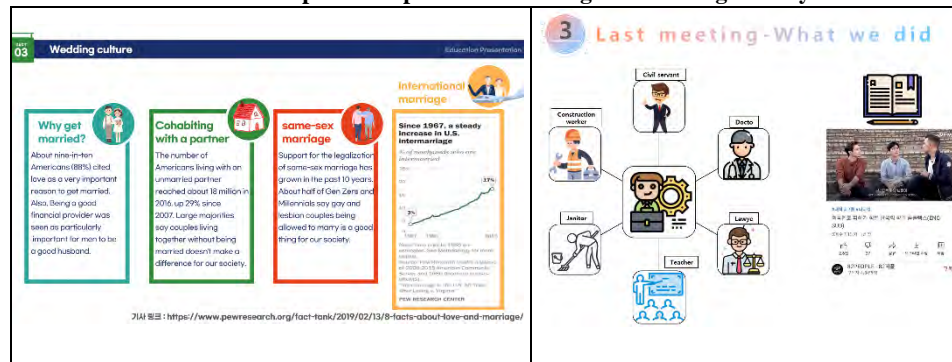
As Biswas (2002) wrote, online space helps the learners' promotion of collaboration. Similarly, Zoom played the role as a convenient and powerful tool for a collaborative platform by facilitating the sharing, discussing, and presenting of information. Using the platform also helped review learning by maintaining records of each meeting. All the learning practice that took place on Zoom with collaborative partners and classmates allowed them to practice and understand the value of the exchange activities. The students' reflections also show that they were involved in the situated learning through this project.

In the first meeting, I met Jazie while talking to her without preparing varied materials, and in the second meeting, I prepared and met with various materials. There was a big difference between preparing and without preparing meeting data. After watching the video, I could understand American culture better, ask more questions, and have more time to talk.

4.1.2. Overt instruction

Overt instruction takes place when teachers provide systematic and detailed instruction. It allows students to gain experiences of learning “to understand systematic, analytic, and cognizant explanations of different modes of meaning” (Biswas, 2002, p. 40). In this study, the teacher guided the students to summarize their learning process and clarify how the interaction proceeded and what they learned and felt during and after the exchange activity. For example, students reviewed their assignments using graphic maps and presented a summary of their activities during and at the end of the semester with visual materials. Figure 2 shows the students’ presentation materials used for the 3rd exchange meeting.

FIGURE 2
Students’ Graphical Maps of Summarizing the Learning Activity



The teacher’s guide provided the overt instruction by providing them systematic and explicit explanation. As a result, the overt instruction seemed to allow the students to involve different mode of meanings (New London Group, 1996; Newman, 2002; Mills, 2009). Moreover, the students were encouraged to use their prior knowledge, including language and technological skills, during the exchange activities. For example, it was found that the students’ reflections showed that they used their prior knowledge while participating in the discussion. Namely, students compared their prior knowledge with new information obtained from their partners during the discussion. As shown in Figure 3, the students’ activity reports indicated their experiences of overt learning.

FIGURE 3
Students' Experiences of Overt Instruction

2. What I learned/ felt
<p>항상 TV에서 보는 미국 교육 환경을 봤을 때는 자유롭고 편안한 분위기에서 공부한다는 느낌을 많이 받아 나도 나중에 미국에 가서 수업을 들어보고 싶다고 생각했었다. 하지만 이러한 자유로움 안에서도 미국도 어렸을 때부터 사교육을 하고 있다는 사실을 알게 되었다. 또한, 이번에는 영어로 인터뷰가 진행되어 내가 모르거나 한국에서 발음하는 것과는 다른 단어들 많이 있었다. 그 예로는 slang word라는 단어가 있었고 slang word가 한국어로는 줄임말이라는 것을 알게 되었다. 그리고 ambivert라는 단어가 양함의 성격을 가지고 있다 라는 의미를 지닌다는 것을 배웠으며, loanwords라는 외래어를 영어로 어떻게 표현하는지 배우게 되었다. 또한 영어로 인터뷰를 하면서 한국 발음과 다른 부분이 많았는데 Asian food를 원어민 친구가 발음할 때 자꾸 agent food라고 들려서 이해를 못 했었는데, 원어민 친구가 채팅으로 적어서 보내주고 발음을 다시 알려주었으며, vegan이라는 단어도 내가 생각하고 들었던 발음과 달라 어려움이 있었으나 원어민 친구가 친절히 알려줘서 다행히 이해하고 넘어갈 수 있었다.</p>
2. What I learned/ felt
<p>미국은 대학생은 1학년 때는 기숙사 생활을 하며, 기숙사의 인원수는 한국과는 많이 차이가 나지 않는 것으로 보였지만 미국은 물가가 굉장히 비싸서 기숙사가 훨씬 저렴하다고 한다. 한국과는 다르게 미국은 수업 시간에 굉장히 적극적으로 질문하며, 수업 도중에 옆자리 사람들과 대화를 많이 나누고 토론을 즐긴다고 하였다. 이에 Sharia가 한국의 사람들은 토론을 즐기느냐고 물어서, 그렇지 않은 사람이 많다고 이야기하자 놀란 눈치였으며 강의실 분위기가 매우 다름을 느꼈다.</p> <p>가장 놀랐던 것은 미국의 교재 가격이 매우 비싸다는 것이다. 전공교재의 가격이 약 300달러라고 이야기하였다. 현재 내가 사용하고 있는 교재의 가격은 미국 달러로 약 15에서 40달러이기 때문에 굉장히 차이가 커서 미국 학생들이 교재의 가격을 굉장히 부담스러워하는 것을 알았다. 또 미국 학생들은 전공을 자주 바꾼다고 들었다. 한국 또한 전공을 바꿀 수 있는 전과 시스템이 있지만, 이야기를 들어보면 미국이 훨씬 많이 바꾸는 것 같았다.</p>

4.1.3. Critical framing

Teaching *critical framing* helps students improve their ability in solving problems and learn meaningful expressions of different learning concepts. In the exchange project, the students were requested to write the partner's biography as a final task. The students wrote the biography based on the information obtained from discussions and interviews with their partners. When they wrote the first draft, the native English-speaking partners provided several comments on their writing. Then the students had to decide whether they accept or reject the suggested comments. The partners' feedback included grammatical, word choice, spelling, semantic errors, etc. For example, Figure 4 below shows a student's draft with her partner's diverse comments.

FIGURE 4
Peer Editing of the Partner's Biography

<Jasmine's funny Life>

Jasmine London is currently attending Kennesaw State University in Georgia. She was born on August 8, 1992 and is 28 years old in American age. She was born in a state called Florida, **but she did not live for a long time, but lived for only two years.** Her major is Asian studies TEFL concentration with Korean Minor in Linguistics. She **have** younger brother and older sister. And all of them are close. Her hobby is rollerblading and she likes to dance, so **she rides rollerblading and does Zumba dance.** It looks very scary, **but it is said to be fun to try it in person.** When she is at home, she usually listens to music, watches TV, watches Korean dramas and animations. She listens to a lot of Korean music for Korean language listening and pronunciation practice, and among them, she likes "Daechuita," and she likes Khalid's "Love likes." **American health food has fish and vegetable food. Because it is a healthy food,** she often eats it, and she likes fish the most among them. **Korean food likes ramen because it is easy to cook and likes Korean convenience stores.** She is most afraid of spiders because, **spider is so ugly and has poison.** In the U.S., private education is taught from a young age like Korea, but private education is **received from** the age of 2-3 years old | in the U.S. There are homeschooling and academies in private education, and public education are said to be daycare centers and kindergartens. She told me about the pros and cons of American education, first of all, they teach many languages, told me that math classes and homework were different from school to school, and the disadvantages were that there were only a few items that students needed, such as computers and books. Her personality is said to be very outgoing, **and if she defines herself, she has a ambivert.** The reason is that they are both extroverted and introverted depending on the situation.

Jasmine London
2020.11.25.
you can just say " i lived there for only two years"

Jasmine London
2020.11.25.
wrong form of "had"

Jasmine London
2020.11.25.
you don't need this sentence

Jasmine London
2020.11.25.
I think it needs to be re-phrased

Jasmine London
2020.11.25.
"she likes Korean food"

Each student revised their draft using the partner's feedback and produced the final composition. The writing process helped students develop logical thinking by recognizing and analyzing errors in their writing. In addition, the feedback motivated the students to think about further learning how to improve their language skills. They also had opportunities to learn new ways of meaning-making in their target language and think about linguistic and cultural differences in expression while interacting with an authentic audience. As Bok (2013) noted, collaborative and interactive experiences are important for ELLs from the language and literacy learning perspectives. Therefore, as a critical framing activity, the biography writing activity in this study could encourage students to experience meaningful communication practice and helped them develop English knowledge which is used with different meanings.

4.1.4. Transformed practice

Since *transformed practice* helps students link their learning experiences and their tasks, the exchange project in this study was designed for them to engage in those practices (Biswas, 2002). For instance, the students had opportunities to exchange ideas or information while engaging in reciprocal conversations with their partners living in different cultural situations. As shown in Figure 5, the student noted in her reflection that she learned how the meanings of the words such as dream, characteristic, and solo are used differently in the US. This shows that she experienced negotiating meanings and understanding new meanings in different forms of usage used in Korea in general.

FIGURE 5
Learning New Meanings Suited the Different Culture

2nd Meeting 배운점

- ➔ 꿈이라는 표현에서 Dream도 많이 쓰지만 In the future 이라는 표현을 더 많이 쓰는 것 같았다. 왜냐하면 Dream으로 질문 했을 때 나의 파트너 Chloe는 In the future이라는 단어로 대부분 대답을 하였다.
- ➔ What kind of person do you want to be in the future? 이라는 질문을 하였을 때 Kind of person으로 사람의 특징을 묻기 보다는 Characteristic 이라는 단어를 사용하여 사람의 특징을 묻는 것이 자연스럽다는 사실을 배웠다.
- ➔ 지금 배우는 과목 중 ELT라는 과목에 있는 CLT 부분에서 같은 단어지만 나라에 따라서 단어 쓰임이 다르다는 것을 배웠었는데 예를 들어 한국에서 Solo라고 하면 Couple이 아닌 경우를 말하지만 영어권 나라에서는 Solo라고 하면 약기 Performance를 혼자 하는 사람이라고 쓰인다. 위에 두 가지를 알게 되었을 때 정말 단어의 쓰임이 나라마다 다르다는 것을 다시 한번 깨닫게 되었다.

According to Egbert (2004), technology tools can help language learners transform information into knowledge. In terms of the technology-enhanced learning, the students in this study incorporated text with various visual materials for the discussion with the partners


FIGURE 6
Textual and visual Integrated Materials Produced by Student

PART 01 Food culture Culture exchange

1. Usually, The family eats dinner together.
2. They share special food on Sundays.

Dinner culture

Regional representative food




1. One of the nation's biggest Holidays
2. Turkey, Stuffing, Mashed potatoes, Gravy, Cranberry sauce, Corn, Green bean casserole, Candied yams, Pies (apple, pumpkin, pecan)

Thanksgiving Day

Recommended foods

- Hamburger (Five Guys)
- Chicken & Waffles
- Tacos (Mexican)
- Fast food restaurant (Zaxbys)
- Pizza (Marco's Pizza)



기사 링크 : <https://www.traveller.com.au/the-traveller-10-musttry-american-food-gqbjjm>

and presentation task in their online class (see Figure 6). It can be said that the combination of various tools promoted the students understanding in learning not only language but also other skills such as social and cultural learning.

In addition, it was found that most of the students perceived that their English skills improved in various aspects such as listening, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.

I didn't have many opportunities to talk one-on-one with a native-speaking friend, but I was very satisfied that I was able to talk through this opportunity, and I also liked that a native-speaking friend corrected my own writing. And it was nice to know a lot about English pronunciation and words while having conversations using English.

Having a foreign friend who I can contact directly was the best part of this project. Also, I think my English listening and speaking skills have improved at the same time.

As can be seen from the above excerpts, most students stated that this project provided meaningful experiences not only in improving English proficiency but also in many other aspects. For example, students mentioned that they were satisfied with various experiences such as having a foreign friend to communicate with, having a one-on-one private conversation with a foreign friend, being able to grasp their English skills directly, and improving their confidence in English. In particular, more than half of students mentioned that their confidence in English had improved.

By talking a lot with foreign friends, I was able to get rid of my fear of English and gained confidence.

I was very grateful that I had the opportunity to interact with a foreign friend even though everything stopped due to the COVID-19.

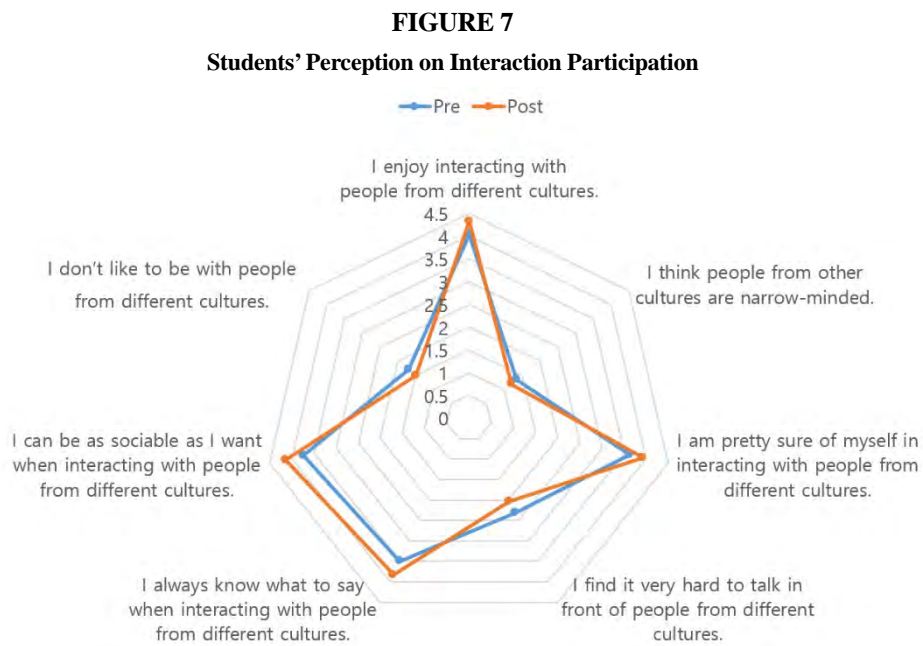
Overall, the students were grateful to be involved in this project. In particular, they perceived that it was good to be able to talk about common interests with peers in the COVID-19 situation, where opportunities to directly communicate with native English speakers have decreased. The students showed that they solved the task with enjoyment rather than the burden of the task. For example, it was found that the conversation took longer than the given conversation time in the last meeting than in the first meeting, and the topic of conversation was expanded to more private content.

4.2. Cultural Understanding

The results of the paired t -tests of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale data were not statistically significant. However, the students' intercultural sensitivity improved in almost all areas.

4.2.1. Interaction participation

Figure 7 shows there were differences between the pre-and post-survey with respect to *interaction participation* factor. Although the result did not show statistically significant differences, a close look at the results revealed meaningful changes. In particular, the result of the post-survey revealed that negative aspects of interaction with people from different cultures decreased.



Qualitative data from the perception questionnaire also support these results. For example, students wrote how their thoughts changed on interaction with the TL speaker partner in their reflection notes. The reflection shows that their confidence in talking with foreign friends increased through the interaction opportunity.

Before I talked with Shadia, I was worried that my English conversation would not go smoothly. However, as our meeting went on, my worries disappeared. I asked Shadia to talk easily when I found a word I didn't know.... We continued our conversation by helping each other, and I could get a lot of help in studying English conversation.

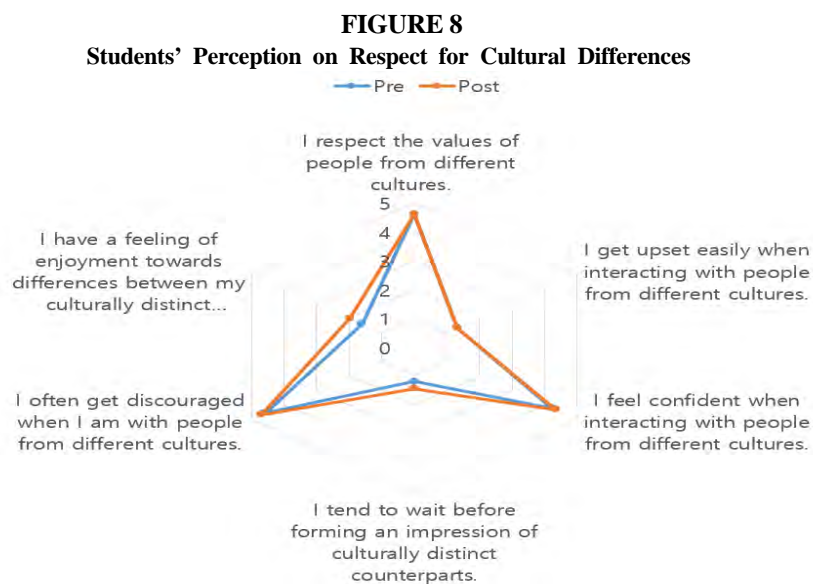
It was not easy to speak honestly with foreign friends anywhere, but I think speaking out in English through Zoom really helped me to improve my English confidence.

By talking a lot with foreign friends, I was able to get rid of my fear of talking in English and gained confidence.

In short, many students recognized that as they became close to foreign friends with different cultures, their fear of talking in English decreased and their confidence increased.

4.2.2. Cultural differences

Regarding the students' perception of *cultural differences*, they felt that they had expanded their understanding of other cultures by discovering the differences between Korean culture and other cultures. Figure 8 shows that the students' tolerance and feeling of enjoyment of other cultures increased.



The post survey responses also indicated that their perception of cultural understanding, their overall perspective on other cultures, and their attitudes toward people from different cultures changed in a positive way. Most of participants mentioned that they had opportunities to develop their understanding of other cultures through this exchange project. For example, a student wrote in the survey that she had valuable experiences with her partner to negotiate ideas for her cultural task.

As I exchanged questions about American culture with my partner, I felt that I didn't know much about American culture as I thought. I thought I was interested in other cultures and knew them well, but I don't think I knew them well except for the external things that can only be seen from the outside. Through this interview, I became more interested in learning about other cultures while learning about the local culture of the United States that I hear from real Americans.

In addition, the students recognized cultural similarities and differences among cultures and showed his willingness to learn more about other cultures.

Before we started this exchange program, I didn't know anything about American culture, but my American friend taught me very kindly and generously. There are many differences between American and Korean cultures, but I found learning about other cultures interesting and valuable at the same time. So I would like to learn about the culture of more countries.

Humor culture in the U.S. and Korea is similar in many ways, but when we investigated the humor culture of various countries, we found that the humor culture of Russia and Germany was very different. So I want to learn more about the striking differences between different countries.

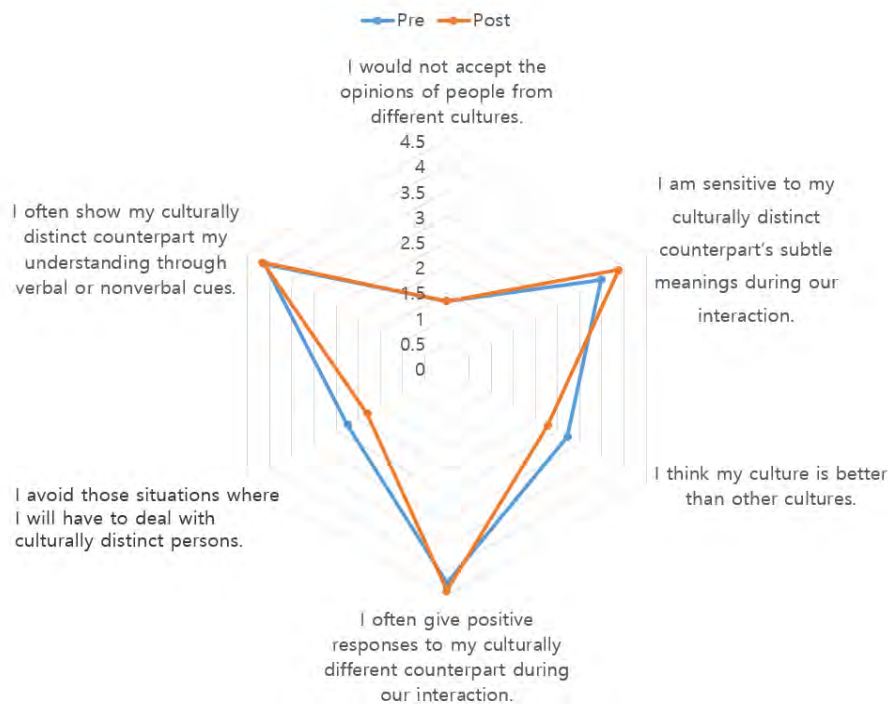
4.2.3. Interaction participation

In terms of the *attitudes toward interaction* with people from other cultures, the result of the intercultural sensitivity score indicated that the students' positive attitudes increased and negative attitudes decreased. One of the students' reflection note below shows their exchange experiences in this project helped them become comfortable and courageous than before.

As the meeting progressed, the pressure and tension of the conversation were relieved to some extent, and I was able to talk more comfortably with my partner. Therefore, I have learned that a flexible attitude helps cultural exchange and smooth communication with people from various countries, and I want to do so in the future.

Figure 9 demonstrates the changes between the pre-and post-survey. In particular, the lower score in the post-survey toward the question, “I avoid situations where I have to deal with culturally distinct people” indicated that the interaction experience in this study decreased students' fear of communicating with foreigners.

FIGURE 9
Students' Perception on Attitudes Toward Interaction



4.2.4. Confidence in interaction

Lastly, with regard to *confidence in interaction*, the result of the post-survey showed a higher score than that of the pre-survey. Specifically, the students answered that they became more open-minded to people from different cultures by decreasing biases and increasing

their more respectful attitudes. The excerpt from students' activity reports and reflection notes supported the result.

Just because you live in different places and races does not change the music or its meaning significantly. We say different things and think differently, but we can become one because of something. I think it's music that makes it the easiest. At first, I started with the desire to find out the differences. However, except for a few differences, enjoying music and loving heart could see the same thing. I was happy that music was the topic that could be talked about and build rapport with each other even if there were language differences, and it was impressive that my partner and I enjoyed the same culture and sympathized with it. Today, I feel happy because I feel like I have grown up to the next level to get a lot of information culturally and to become a person suitable for the global era.

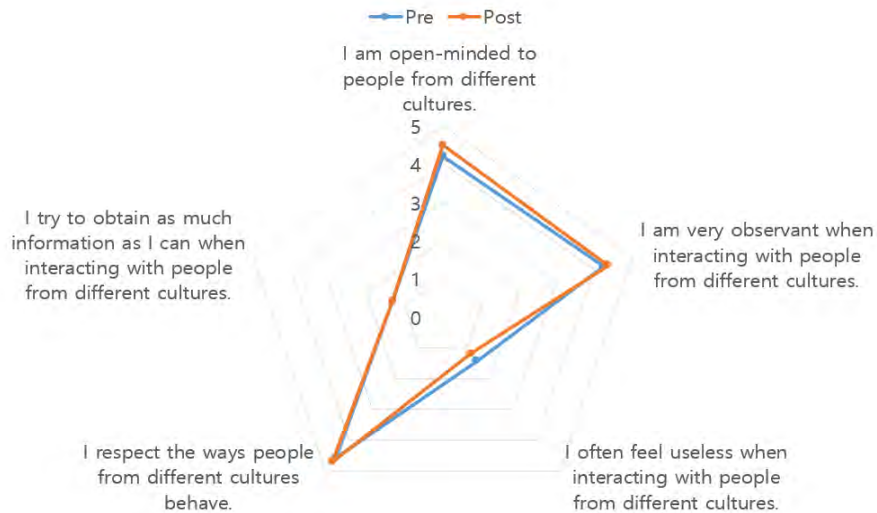
In addition, as shown below many students made efforts to explain and inform their partners about Korean culture through this exchange activity. Through this cultural exchange activity, students went beyond just learning about other cultures and prepared for the meeting by searching for a lot of information on their own to teach Korean culture to their partners. In addition, it was found that the students developed a sense of pride in Korean culture and also developed a respect for other cultures at the same time. As a result, it can be said that the students' intercultural competence was improved.

I studied hard to teach Kathy a lot about Korean culture. By showing various videos, I put a lot of effort into making it easier for her to understand Korean culture. It would be good if she understands Korean culture a lot.

As we shared information about each country's culture and had various conversations, we could learn new contents and understand American culture. Also, it was nice to teach Korean to foreign friends.

Figure 10 shows the comparisons between the pre-and post-survey of the student's perceptions about interacting with people from different cultures. It showed that students perceived cultural exchanges with people from different cultures as more valuable experiences in the post-survey.

FIGURE 10
Students' Perception on Confidence in Interaction



Besides the findings above, students' responses to what they are most satisfied with during this exchange project were as follows. Most of the students mentioned that they had the opportunities to improve their cultural understanding of other cultures as well as their English skills. The examples are as follow figure 11 and excerpt.

FIGURE 11
Students' Reflection on the Cultural Exchange Experience

- 파트너와 비 대면으로 문화교류를 진행하면서 영어로 문화교류를 한 경험은 처음이라 색달랐다. 또, 외국어로 이야기를 오랜 시간 해본 경험이 없었기에 처음에는 막막했는데 부담감을 덜어내고 문장의 정확성을 중요시하기 보다는 쉬운 단어로 내가 말하고자 하는 것을 이야기하려고 노력했다. 줌으로 파트너와 3번의 만남을 통해 미국의 다양한 문화들에 대해 배워볼 수 있었다. 짧다면 짧은 시간이었지만, 매 순간 최선을 하려 노력했기에 매우 값진 시간이었다. 나도 한국의 문화를 잘 설명해주기 위해 찾아보며 공부하는 시간을 가졌다. 각 나라의 문화의 차이를 찾아볼 수 있었고, 은연중에 나에게 있었던 고정관념이나 선입견들을 찾을 수 있었던 시간이었다. 영어로 나의 생각을 명확하게 말하지 못하는 내 모습은 앞으로 영어 공부 특히, 단어를 열심히 해서 내 생각을 더 잘 표현할 수 있도록 공부를 해야겠다는 동기가 되었다. 비록, 파트너와 연락을 하면서 시차, 그 외의 문제가 발생하여 의견차이가 종종 있었지만, 이 또한 내 생각을 누군가에게 명확하게 전달할 수 있는 좋은 기회였던 것 같다.

It was good to communicate directly with native-speaking friends living in the area and to know the local situation and culture accurately, and my pronunciation and listening skills when speaking with foreigners improved.

The students' perceptions above indicated that they gained valuable opportunities to

improve their communication skills, sociality, motivation, and self-discovery beyond language learning and cultural learning through this project.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Today's literacy requires the ability to interpret and analyze media as well as text, and the ability to interpret and analyze digital results from computers. In addition, the meaning of literacy includes 'delivery' and 'communication' (Kim, 2021). In other words, it is to 'reproduce' information based on the analysis and evaluation of the given information. From this point of view, the task in this study might be said to provide the students with an experience as a receiver (analyzer) who understood, analyzed, and interpreted the other person's culture through cultural exchange activities, and as a creator (producer) through making their presentation content.

In terms of multiliteracy practices, the intercultural exchange project in this study is summarized as follows. First, situated learning allowed learners to experience real-life activities such as media reading and discussion of material creation. Second, overt instruction was carried out to guide learners to use their prior knowledge and learn new things at the same time. Third, critical framing was used for students to interpret and critically view the social and cultural content of real-life activities. Finally, transformed practice helped students to convey and recreate new meanings suitable for their social-cultural situations. All these four activities were done integrally.

Regarding cultural literacy, it was found that the intercultural sensitivity of the students improved. Although the quantitative data did not show statistically significant results, various qualitative data supported positive findings. In particular, students recognized that the project provided a more valuable opportunity to communicate in English with foreign friends in the COVID-19 era, where opportunities for face-to-face interactions are limited. As Callins (2006) emphasized, the main contributor to a learner's literacy success is teachers. Therefore, teachers should find creative ways to help language learners become fully functional communicators with multiliteracy skills, including cultural literacy, in any challenging situation.

Although this study includes a short vignette of multiliteracy practice focusing on cultural literacy, it may be helpful for teachers with concrete examples of how to incorporate multiliteracy pedagogies into language teaching in the digital age. We hope this study can provide language teachers with some examples of to better meet English language learners' multiliteracy needs and make their classrooms motivating and interactive.

Applicable levels: Secondary, tertiary

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