국내 영어학과 수업 내 한·중·일 학생들의 영어 학습에 관한 인식
Perspectives on Learning English of Korean·Chinese·Japanese Students in an English Department in Korea

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요약

　본 연구의 목적은 환경, 상호작용, 그리고 희망사항을 중심으로 국내 한 대학 영어학과에 재학 중인 한국·중국·일본학생들의 영어 학습에 관한 인식을 살펴보는 것이다. 참여자는 영작문 수업을 수강한 한국(32명), 중국(10명), 일본(14명)학생들이며, 자유설문지와 인터뷰가 주된 데이터이다. 분석을 위해 '의향내용분석'과 '비평담화분석' 모델이 사용되었다. 영어와 영어-한국어 동시 습득이 목표인 상황에서, 한국에서의 영어 학습에 대한 만족도는 일본학생(80%), 한국학생(71.9%), 중국학생(50%) 순이었으며, 일본학생들의 높은 만족도는 풍부한 인간관계에 기인하고 있었다. 세 그룹 모두에게 가장 어려운 요소는 영어 말하기였다. 외국학생들과의 소통을 위해 한국학생들(43.8%)은 한국어만 사용한 반면, 중국·일본 학생들은 영어와 한국어를 함께 사용하였다. 대다수 한국학생들(78.1%)은 외국학생들과의 친밀한 유대를 원하고 있음에도 상대방이 먼저 다가와 주기만을 바라는 소극적인 태도를 보였다. 이러한 결과는 다문화 환경에서 학생들이 서로의 문화를 공유하고 보다 적극적인 영어 사용을 유도할 수 있는 다양한 프로그램이 필요함을 시사하고 있다.

■ 중심어 : | 한국·중국·일본학생 | 영어 학습 | 의향내용분석 | 비평담화분석 | 상호작용 |

Abstract

　This study reports on the perspectives of Korean·Chinese·Japanese students (KS·CS·JS) on learning English at multi-cultural classrooms in Korea. The participants were 32 KS, 10 CS, and 14 JS in EFL writing classes, and the data comprised open-ended questionnaires and interviews. In analyzing the data, 'Intentional content analysis' and 'Critical discourse analysis' were adopted. The findings show that the learning of English in Korea was supported by 80% of JS, 71.9% of KS, and 50% of CS. The highest satisfaction of JS was caused by rich interactions with others. English speaking was the most difficult area for all the groups. Whereas KS (43.8%) used only Korean, CS and JS used both English and Korean for communication. Most KS (78.1%) hesitated to socialize with foreign students despite their wishes. These findings suggest that a variety of programs should be developed so that students share different cultures and use more English in the multi-cultural Korean context.

■ keyword : | KS·CS·JS | Learning English | Intentional Content Analysis | Critical Discourse Analysis | Interaction |

I. INTRODUCTION

English language learning cannot be separated from the social contexts in which it occurs and is inextricably linked to learners′ purposes, learning environment, and educational interactions. In particular, for the students in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, English is established within what I call ′situated learning′ that refers to the environment and interpersonal dynamics for the target language. This is related to the sociocultural theory which focuses on learners′ social interactions in a given context[1].

The sociocultural environment represents distinct linguistic landscapes where students′ relationships and identities are strongly influenced by the language(s) they speak. At classroom, language directly affects the course, students, and achievement. It is critical to understand how students learn language(s) and think about academic success in contexts and their perceptions of which of these settings are most helpful to them[2].

Teaching EFL to Asian students has been investigated worldwide, yet limited studies were examined for Korean·Chinese·Japanese students simultaneously. This study thus aims at investigating Korean·Chinese·Japanese students′ perspectives on learning English in the English Department at a university in Korea. It is based on the assumption that the three groups of Asian students′ views about learning English in Korea are expected to be unique compared to those in English-speaking countries. This uniqueness is investigated in the light of four main categories: purposes for learning English in Korea, learning environment, interactions, and desires. These issues reflect a sociocultural approach to the learning in the multi-cultural classroom in a Korean educational setting. Based on the above speculations,

the following research questions are dealt with in this study: (a) How do the Korean·Chinese·Japanese students perceive about the environment for learning English in Korea? and (b) To what extent do they have interactions with others for learning English at a Korean university? (c) What are the desires of the three groups for learning English in a multi-cultural context?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Foreign Students (FS) in Korea

Over recent years, a large number of FS continues to increase in Korea with the tide of the globalization. Globalization refers to the global circulation of capital, goods, knowledge, and people. It is the economic, political, and societal drive for increased international involvement of higher education in the twenty-first century. Under the globalization, the diversification of students' exchanges occurred all over Korea, representing cultural and educational exchanges[3][4].

According to the Korean Statistical Information Service, around 932,983 foreigners live in Korea, including 84,711 FS from 160 different countries in 2012. Many students come for exchange programs or short programs such as Korean language classes. Some of them choose regular education at Korean universities. The attractiveness of education for the students is conditioned by the programs itself and reputation of institutions in general. The proportion of the international faculty, proportion of international students, and student exchanges are important criteria for the university[5].

Many universities in Korea provide FS with a number of programs and events, including special departments, language schools, exchange programs and scholarships. In general, the quality of academic

life for FS depends upon the quality of infrastructural development that includes a variety of elements, such as curriculums, classrooms, libraries, staff, health, and resource centers. However, there is still a lack of studies on the FS at Korean universities. Along with the increased number of countries of FS in Korea, it is still insufficient for universities to have international education as the development strategy[5][6].

Some universities in Korea provide opportunities for learning and teaching, and its physical environment is one of the meaningful features that influence students' decisions to a higher institution. It is suggested that a good learning environment can contribute to the improvement of the academic achievement which can be a motivation for FS to choose a nation for further studies and challenges[7].

Most studies on FS in Korea have focused on the whole physical environment or facilities that can be related to the global education space rather than students' views on learning. To compensate this, the present study will focus on how FS, particularly Asian students, think about learning English in Korea, including purposes, environment, interactions, and desires. This attempt will explore the perspectives of both Korean students (KS) and FS on English learning and give suggestions to help them complete their disciplines successfully and broaden experience in Korea[5][7].

2. Learning in Multi-cultural Contexts

Given the increased number of students studying in foreign environments, much attention has been focused on the multi-cultural contexts. A multi-cultural context refers to a situation where individuals from multiple cultures or nations are operating in a foreign culture. Here, the students' attitudes or behaviors may be qualitatively different, since they are in a cross-cultural context where individuals from a particular culture study and reside in another country. That is, individuals in a multi-cultural setting have to contend not only with working and residing in a foreign environment but also with adjusting to and interacting with individuals who are also from outside the host country and culture[8].

Theme of the studies on learning in multi-cultural context can be mainy categorized into two: learning achievement and perspectives. For instance, a study has examined how learning achievement in a foreign context should be inferred from perspectives or attitudes, rather than perspectives inferred from achievement or knowledge. On the other hand, some studies have discussed the relationship between the academic achievement and learning behaviors of FS[9].

Many of these have confounded individual determinants such as knowledge, skills, and abilities with the behaviors that learners engage in. Another line of study on exchange students has examined the learning performance in foreign contexts. It has consistently conceptualized performance and adjustment with respect to three issues: task-related activities, interpersonal interactions, and adjustment to general conditions of living abroad.

However, empirical research pertaining to the appropriate level of specificity or generality of learning achievement in foreign contexts is very limited. It is attempted to fill this gap by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis to investigate students' performance in a multi-cultural context, working with international business students. Their conclusion were supportive to identify students' behavioral aspects, and the model used in the study offers a promise for measuring students' performance in a multi-cultural setting[10].

Even though the previous review provides a

preliminary understanding of learning in multi-cultural contexts in general, there are still difficulties in assuming that these aspects would be similar for Asian students in an EFL context, where learning English may add unanticipated challenges for them. Thus, this study examines three groups of Asian students' learning of English in Korea where English is not an official medium language in the educational setting. This hopefully can show how learning English in an Asian multi-cultural context can be different from that in an English-speaking context.

III. METHOD

1. Context and Participants

The investigation of this study took place in two EFL writing classrooms in the English Department at a university in Korea. The course was designed to provide students with paragraph-focused English writing and opened to those, except freshmen, who completed grammar and reading courses. The two classes included 12 Chinese, 14 Japanese, and 1 Venezuelan students besides 33 Koreans. Among them, 56 Asian students, i.e., 32 Korean, 10 Chinese, and 14 Japanese students, participated in this study. There were 22 sophomores (39.3%), 19 juniors (33.9%), and 15 seniors (26.8%) among 27 male (48.2%) and 29 female (51.8%) students. Their ages ranged from 21 to 26. The Chinese students (CS) stayed in Korea for average 4.1 years, and Japanese students (JS) for average 4.2 years.

2. Open-ended questionnaires and Interviews

This study was based on two sets of data: open questionnaire and interviews. The open questionnaire was designed to examine the students' perspectives on English learning in Korea. Since the three groups were faced in different contexts one another, two versions of questionnaire were established: one for Korean students (KS), and the other one for both Chinese students (CS) and Japanese students (JS). The questionnaires were focused on students' background (Q1-Q3), purposes for learning English in Korea (Q4), learning environment (Q5-Q9), interactions for learning (Q10-Q12), and desires to peers or the university (Q13). Meanwhile, out of the 56, 6 students (2 from each of the three groups) were interviewed, mainly focusing on the students' ideas or suggestions for effective learning of English in Korea. This was useful to find any relations to the findings from the questionnaires.

3. Procedure for Data Collection

At the end of the course, students were asked to answer to the questions in a written form freely rather than taking Likert scale to pursue a qualitative approach. The questionnaires were distributed to 60 students and yielded 56, from the KS, CS, and JS, completed them for a response rate of 93.3%.

On the other hand, the 6 interviewers were selected in terms of the students' willingness to participate in the study. This was an attempt to listen as much as views about effective English learning in Korea from the most positive students, which can be useful to suggest implications.

4. Frameworks for Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, two frameworks were used: 'Intentional content analysis (ICA)' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)'. The ICA was developed from the model 'Word Count System' (Lee, 2015), which is a framework to count keywords and phrases that represent frequency and meanings in written texts. The 'Word Count System' was insufficient to

capture the intentions and context sensitivity in written answers of the KS, CS, and JS because of the word-based counting system[11].

To compensate this, the ICA was built up with three phases to deal with the students' written texts [Figure 1]. The ICA aims to understand and describe a participant's intentions in his/her written responses to the open-ended questions. Because it is presumed that the three groups have common elements, such as living in the same epoch and context, and learning in the same language, the ICA is useful to reveal the cultural and emotional aspects that can influence their views or behaviors.
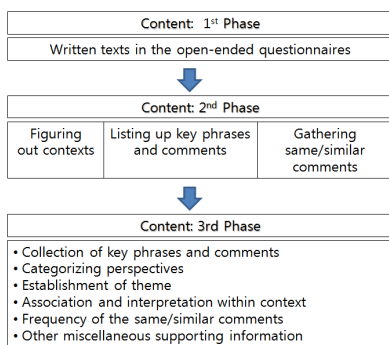

Fig. 1. The three phases of ICA

In the first phase of ICA, the students' written answers were carefully examined and reproduced. In the second phase, the given context was carefully considered, and each of the phrases or comments were listed up and shifted in terms of related issues. These were categorized into specific themes and counted for environment, interactions, and desires for learning English in the third phase.

On the other hand, the CDA is an approach to examine the relationships between language and society. In language, there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity). To understand the learning of the KS, CS, and JS in Korea, it is significant to know *who* is saying it and *what* the person is trying to do. [Table 1] shows an example of CDA for an interviewee in this study. Since the purpose of interviews is to interpret what the participants think based on their statements, the CDA was useful to reveal the underlying ideologies of their spoken discourses.

Table 1. An example of CDA

Transcript	Situated meaning	Social language	Discourse model
Researcher: Is there anything you want to do with KS?	•anything: except study	•Questioning •Gathering information	Students' interactions need to be taken into account.
Student A(SA): Yes, I'd like to visit a Korean family to experience the life of Koreans.	•Yes: an earnest hope	•Answering to the question •Showing her hope	Students' needs and interests should be taken into account.
Researcher: Do you have any close Korean friends?	•close: someone who can invite SA	•Asking a question •Gathering information	Teachers need to know students' social life.
SA: But nobody invites me.	•But: discordance with SA's hope	•Answering to the question •Showing disappointment	Teachers should help students be happy in a new environment.

The CDA includes three steps: 'transcribing data', 'selecting data', and 'analyzing the selected data', being accompanied with four elements: (a) transcript, (b) situated meaning, (c) social language, and (d) discourse models. The 'transcript' presents what the interviewee says or writes. The 'situated meaning' is heavily dependent upon context. The 'social language' refers to a purpose or certain types of language used in a given context. The 'discourse model' is an implication from the discourse[12][13].

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Environment for Learning English in Korea

As a starting point, it is worthwhile to examine the purposes of KS, CS, and JS for learning English in Korea. More than half of KS (51%) had concerns about English itself and wished to work in a variety of fields such as education (29%), trading, or airlines.

The CS hoped to study both Korean and English (40%) and desired to work for Chinese-Korean-English translation (40%) or Korean companies either in Korea or in China (40%). The JS wished to learn both Korean and English (47.4%) and work at trading or foreign companies (50%) outside Japan.

These findings indicate that the KS study English for general purposes to work in a variety of areas, whereas the CS and JS had more specific plans related to their own languages, Korean, and English. That is, while the KS pursue macro-purposes for learning English, the CS and JS have micro-purposes. These can be interpreted as the 'purpose-driven' approaches. The environment for learning English includes students' views about five elements: (i) advantages of multi-cultural classrooms, (ii) difficult aspects in learning English in Korea, (iii) views about studying with FS/KS, (iv) differences of English learning in Korea and in English-speaking countries, and (v) languages for communication[Table 2].

Table 2. Perspectives of KS·CS·JS on the environment for learning English

	KS (N=32)	CS (N=10)	JS (N=14)
Advantages of multi-cultural classrooms	Preference: 71.9%	Preference: 50.0%	Preference: 80.0%
	•Different culture and languages (38.2%) •Useful to study (17.6%) •E speaking (14.7%) •Sharing ideas (11.8%)	•Being friends with FS (30%) •Learning both E & K (10%) •Competition and enthusiasm: (10%)	•Learning both E & K (46.7%) •Competition and enthusiasm (20.0%) •Making friends (13.3%)
Difficult aspects	•E speaking (45.1%) •E writing (38.3%) •E listening (16.6%)	•E speaking (38.5%) •K in classes (30.8%) •E listening (15.4%) •E writing (7.7%)	•E speaking (56.2%) •E writing (18.8%) •K in classes (12.5%) •E reading (12.5%)
Studying with FS/KS	Useful (65.6%)	Useful (60.0%)	Useful (71.4%)
	Reasons		
	•Use of E	•Helpful in studying •Use of both E & K	•Helpful in studying •KS' enthusiastic attitude
Learning E in Korea vs. in E speaking countries	•Lack of using E (69.9%) •Different way of thinking (45.5%) •Learning attitudes (27.2%)	•Lack of using E (66.7%) •E pronunciation(11.1%) •Easier life in Korea than other countries (11.1%)	•Lack of using E(61.5%) •Stiff learning atmosphere (15.4%) •Close human relationship (15.4%)
Language of communication	For FS: •K (43.8%) •Both E & K (37.5%) •E (18.8%)	•E for FS (100%) •K for KS (100%)	•E for FS (100%) •K for KS (100%)

Note) E: English, K: Korean, FS: Foreign students, KS: Korean students

The KS (71.9%) and JS (80.0%) more preferred the multi-cultural classrooms in Korea than the CS (50.0%) did with the reasons for the experience of

'different cultures and languages' and learning 'both English and Korean', respectively. The CS regarded 'social life with FS' as the major advantage of the multi-cultural classrooms.

All the three groups felt that English speaking was the most difficult area, showing 45.1% of KS, 38.5% of CS, and 56.2% of JS, respectively. In particular, the CS and JS were faced with difficulty of Korean as the medium language in the classrooms. This indicates that those students still need higher level of Korean proficiency to attend lectures although they had stayed in Korea more than for 4 years.

With respect to studying with FS/KS, 65.6% of KS, 60.0% of CS, 71.4% of JS felt it useful. While the KS valued 'use of English with FS', the CS and JS felt that KS were helpful in their academic work. These findings reflect two issues. First, multi-cultural classrooms can be a significant pedagogical site where meaningful challenges and cooperation take place. Second, in general, the FS in Korea tend to be confronted with a difficulty in completing their disciplines because of the lack of Korean proficiency.

In addition, 69.9% of KS, 66.7% of CS, and 61.5% of JS pointed out the lack of using English as the first and major difference of learning English in Korea compared with English-speaking countries, as it can be easily assumed. Here, English department where particularly a number of FS exist needs to provide students with more English lectures, considering their purposes and academic needs.

Meanwhile, 43.8% of KS used only Korean to communicate with FS, and 100% of CS and JS used English for FS and Korean for KS, respectively. This is contradictory for the KS who wish to improve English through FS. Thus, it is necessary to establish additional activities and events to encourage KS to use English as lingua franca. This may enable them to improve English in the multi-cultural context.

2. Interactions for Learning

Interaction is regarded as more a social 'activity', consisting of an implicitly agreed set of 'moves' by all participants[14]. The interactions of KS, CS, and JS for learning English included two issues: number of friends with FS/KS and significant activities with FS/KS at university[Table 3]. Regarding number of friends, whereas about a-third of KS (38%) and CS (30%) made no friends at all with FS and KS, most JS (80%) had more than 10 friends with KS. This reflects that KS tend to make friends with JS rather than CS, and the interactions of CS with other ethnic groups are very limited at university.

Table 3. Interactions and significant activities of KS·CS·JS

		KS	CS	JS	Total
# of friends	None	12 (38%)	3 (30%)	–	15 (33%)
	〈 5	18 (56%)	5 (50%)	1 (7%)	14 (30%)
	6~10	2 (6%)	–	2 (14%)	4 (9%)
	〉 10	–	2 (20%)	11 (79%)	13 (28%)
	Total	32 (100%)	10 (100%)	14 (100%)	46 (100%)
Significant activities		•Group/pair work (35.4%) •E speaking class (19.3%) •Exercises (9.7%) •G-School (English zone) (9.7%)	•Experience of Korean culture (55.6%) •Dormitory with foreigners (22.2%) •Univ. festival (11.1%) •Volunteering (11.1%)	•Festivals: dancing (33.3%) •Making K friends (33.3%) •Experience of Korean culture (16.7%) •Volunteering (8.3%)	

Note) E: English, K: Korean

On the other hand, the most significant activities of the three groups were different from one another. That is, the KS said that 'group/pair work' (35.4%) and 'English speaking classes' (19.3%) were very useful. Whereas the CS were happy with the experience of 'Korean culture '(55.6%) and 'dormitory life' with FS (22.2%), the JS preferred 'festivals (33.3%)' and 'friendship (33.3%) with KS'. These findings indicate that the KS are interested in academic-focused activities, whereas both the CS and JS were happy with the socio-cultural interactions with people around them.

In particular, the JS showed very positive attitudes toward establishing interactions for learning. Their performance of dancing in the local or university festivals is evidence of this. This can be related to their vigorous social interactions with a number of friends of KS and FS unlike the other two groups. These findings suggest that interactions are considered as an important element of the learning environment, as it can influence students' successful adjustment to a given context.

3. Students' Desires

The desires of the three groups based on the open-questionnaires and interviews were divided into two issues: friendship and English speaking proficiency. [Extract 1] reveals the desires and suggestions of the six interviewees for a more successful way of studying in Korea.

Extract 1. Comments of the six interviewees

	Comments
#1	"I want to make friends with foreign students from many countries in the department. So I hope they need to make efforts to associate with our Korean students ahead." (K1)
#2	"If they are from English-speaking countries or they can speak English well, I myself would be willingly to make friends with them first." (K2)
#3	"I think the department has English medium classes quiet a lot, but we need more speaking courses to improve English." (C1)
#4	" I'd like to make many friends with Korean students. This will enable me to develop more concerns and understanding about disciplines. In particular, I really want to visit a Korean family to experience Korean culture and their lives. Unfortunately, nobody invites me." (C2)
#5	"I very often use the G-school at the university as I should use only English there, and this is very useful to improve my English. The G-school is a good system for all students to practice English and make friends." (J1)
#6	"I'd like to suggest that more English conversation classes with students from different cultures should be in learning English." (J2)

Note) The underlines are the main parts of the comments.

In the open-ended questionnaires, more than two-thirds of KS (78.1%) requested FS to try to be friends with them first in a more positive way rather than trying to do this ahead. This passive attitude also appeared in the interviews with two KS in #1 and #2. In particular, the student K2 in #2 showed passive and discriminative attitudes toward FS from non-English speaking contexts. This reflects that KS should be encouraged to build up more active

friendship with FS through a variety of programs or events related to English beyond classrooms. The comments in #4 reflect to what extent the student C2 is eager to construct a strong relationship with KS and experience the Korean life during her stay in Korea. This can be related to the reason why 80% of the CS had no or few friends with KS, as discussed in the previous section.

Meanwhile, more than half of the CS (50%) and JS (66.6%) suggested the 'increase of English speaking classes' and/or 'G-school' as the means to be exposed in an English speaking atmosphere. The comments in #3, #5, and #6 are evidences of these. These students combine friendship and use of English simultaneously as an effective strategy to learn English in the multi-cultural context. Here, it is desirable for the department or university to develop and design a variety of programs that demand use of English so that students can develop social relationships and English proficiency. The establishment of "English zones', 'Mentor-mentee projects', 'International days' with food and/or costume, and 'Small groups' after lectures can be good examples of these.

4. A Community of Learning in a Multi-cultural Context

I now turn to the final stage to link the research questions, concerning the relationship among purposes, environment, interactions, and desires. The array of relational findings is represented with a multidimensional model in [Figure 2].

In the model, the English and Korean languages are the students' purposes for learning in Korea. The KS and JS are connected together, whereas the social interactions of CS are disconnected with the other groups, which can be identified as an 'alignment'. The desires of the three groups are mainly categorized

into the 'friendship' and 'English speaking'. These issues are embedded in the multi-cultural classrooms in Korea as the environment.
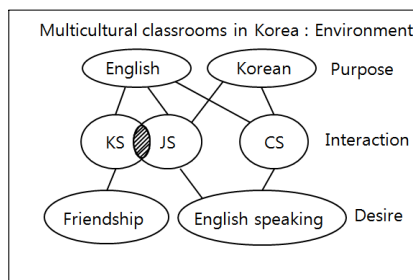

Fig. 2. A community of learning in a multi-cultural context

With language learning increasingly viewed as being contextually mediated, the multi-cultural classrooms in Korea can be considered as the 'community of learning' that provides the three groups of students with opportunities to use English and Korean for their academic discipline. The findings in this study suggest that it should be focused on how and to what extent the universities help students complete their successful learning of English in Korea. The pedagogic practices should be also emphasized on students' purposes, interactions, desires embedded in the learning environment.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has examined Korean·Chinese·Japanese students' perspectives on purposes, environments, interactions, and desires for learning English in multi-cultural classrooms in Korea.

Regarding the purposes for learning, while the KS (51%) were interested in English language (51%), the CS (40%) and JS (47.4%) pursued to learn both Korean and English. The JS (80%) showed higher satisfaction with the multi-cultural context than the

KS (71.9%) and CS (50%). English speaking was the most difficult area for all the students, and this was related to the lack of using English inside/outside classrooms. For communication, whereas 43.8% of the KS used only Korean, all the CS and JS used both English and Korean. Both the KS (38%) and CS (30%) had lack of interactions with others. However, most JS (80%) made a number of friends, and this can be strongly related to the vigorous participations in the social activities of the JS.

Unfortunately, the CS were not happy in their academic lives in Korea unlike the JS. The low level of satisfaction, lack of interactions with KS, and the comments of the student C2 are evidence of this. Here, KS should be encouraged to communicate with FS, particularly with CS, using English. In addition, most of the KS (78.1%) hesitated to get along with FS although they wished to retain a strong relations with them, and this is the evidence to show their passive attitudes toward learning. These findings are consistent with the Korean students' approaches in a study in which they showed passive and imitative strategies in their EFL writing[15]. The CS (50%) and JS (66.6%) struggled to develop both Korean and English speaking proficiency. Therefore, Korean universities should develop a variety of opportunities, tasks, and activities so that KS and FS can explore new ways of challenges, sharing cultures and using English in the multi-cultural context.

An analysis of 32 KS, 10 CS, and 14 JS do not yield sweeping implications generalized to the Asian students in Korean universities. With a large number of participants, the study would have shown the results that can be generalized to Asian students' perspectives on the English learning in Korea. Nevertheless, it is notable that this study uniquely work with the three groups of Asian students to clearly demonstrate the effect of social and academic atmosphere.

Other studies on EFL students have not dealt with these ethnic groups simultaneously. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the English education, bringing into light the expectations and uniqueness in teaching FS in Korea. As the three Asian groups came from writing classrooms, it is suggested to investigate their practices of EFL writing as a further study.

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