A Case Study about Koreanese-Japanese Students' Convergence Cartoon Using Photovoice

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Abstract

Today's universities have a keen interest in educational reform. The issue of population decline in college-age due to population decline is not new. Universities have been developing quantitatively for a long time and are now considering ways to survive rather than qualitative growth. Since the sharp decline in the school-age population due to the population decline has no clear solution immediately, universities are overcoming this crisis by creating many alternatives. Attracting international students is one of them.

In this study, the effectiveness of photovoice was examined through the analysis of the case of the Korean-Japanese convergence cartoon class. The photo-voice method has sufficient potential as a teaching method for foreign convergence classes and can be expected to play a role as a teaching method suitable for students participating in convergence classes with different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. In particular, in the convergence class, since participating students generate research materials through photo production, it can be a tool for inner exploration necessary for webtoon production and a tool for narrative inquiry for storytelling. It is expected that expanding the understanding and use of photo voice will have the methodological value of convergence classes. In addition, the teaching method using photo voice produced in the composition of photos and stories is likely to be used as an appropriate tool for convergence classes for students with different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Keywords: Qualitative Research, Photovoice, Class Case, Convergent Class, Cartoon

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Purposes

The issue of population decline in college-age due to population decline is not new. Universities have been making quantitative progress for a long time and are now considering ways to survive. Since the sharp decline in the school-age population due to the population decline has no clear solution immediately, universities are overcoming this crisis by creating many alternatives. Attracting international students is one of them. In addition, the formation of knowledge and the change in educational methods according to the development of media are changing not only the structure of knowledge but also the fundamental paradigm of class construction in university classes. Convergence classes taught by students with different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds are also a natural phenomenon in the recent educational field.

In today's cartoon class, various teaching methods have been developed to explore cartoons as a discipline and to create teaching method theories that can be applied to actual cartoon production. As a study, comics are actively being studied as research topics, research subjects, and research tools. In addition, cartoon research is actively conducted from various academic perspectives, including the profound symbolic system expressed in cartoons, the messages it creates, social and cultural relationships, storytelling, color, line, and contrast. Recently, the status and development of webtoon content, which has become very popular around the world, are increasing the presence of Korean comics.

When making cartoons or webtoons, photographs are used for a wide variety of purposes. Photographs are sometimes recreated as characters in cartoons, used as background materials, and used as props. In particular, Photo-ton, which uses photographs instead of paintings by taking necessary scenes, uses photographs as visual elements to convey stories, making it easier and easier to create images and contain the intended message of the artist, and in some cases, creators who are not good at drawing can deliver the message they want through photos.

This paper explores the possibility and implications of convergence classes targeting students with different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds through teaching methods using photovoice. The class consisted of Korean and Japanese students for two semesters, the second semester of 2021 and the first semester of 2022. Case studies of convergence classes for foreign students in university education are still insufficient, and the photo voice teaching method can be very useful considering future changes in the university environment and the educational environment. This is because photo voice is a combination of photo, which means photo, and voice, which means voice, and it can be understood that one makes one's voice using photography. Today, photographs are also equipped with functions on mobile phones, making it easier to create, share, and utilize visual images, making them more convenient and familiar than other visual media.

The photovoice methodology is a type of participatory behavioral research and can be said to be an art-based study using photography. Since its introduction in Korea, many studies have been conducted, and the following are the research cases used as a 'teaching' tool focusing on the way in which researchers and participants form common sense, such as Cho, Cheol-ki and Kim, Byoung-youn(2020), 「Exploring the Potentials and Implications of Photovoice as a Pedagogical tool for Geography」 [1], Park, Jin-hee and Son, Won-kyoung. (2021). 「An exploratory study on the awareness of infant and early childhood teachers about a play-centered curriculum and their roles in it using photovoice method」 [2], and Chung, Hyo-jin(2022), 「A Study of Self-introduction Speech Applying the Photovoice Methodology in Real-time Remote Learning: Focusing on Content Creation and Intimacy Formation」 [3]and so on.

1.2   Research Method and Scope

An important component of the photo voice is the photo, the various symbols contained in the photo, and the interpreting view of it. In class, students explain their thoughts and production intentions through photos taken by themselves. At this time, the kind of symbols contained in the picture becomes a semantic system. Students can tell the story of why they took the picture they took. The meaning system in the pictures created by students is interpreted as a symbol, and this process is an act of sharing and communicating students' perspectives.

In this study, we will explore the practical role and function of the photovoice methodology as a useful tool to share students' perspectives and thoughts in convergence classes with different cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds.

2. THE CLASS CASES USING PHOTOVOICE

2.1   The Concept of Photovoice

Photovoice research is explored in-depth by allowing research participants to express their values or thoughts through photographs. [4]

Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris coined the term "photo novella" in the early 1990s, in which photo voice originated. Unlike Photo-novella, however, photovoice does not value a novella itself, but rather expands its meaning by including the concept of the right to speak and opinions, as explanations, that is, a narration of photographs is treated as important.

Looking at the photovoice process, there should be a place to study, a subject to study, and a purpose for research. In the case of Photo Voice as a teaching tool, students who participate in the class are asked to take pictures of elements related to the class topic and share them. Next, students who participate in the class talk about their experiences and intentions in the picture, drawing out their inner thoughts, that is, their production intentions. Finally, through the opinions of other students who participated in the class, they compare and reflect on their results, and make positive changes.

This process of Photo Voice is applied to cartoon classes as follows. First, class participants record and share issues related to cartoon topics in pictures. And it conveys the production intention by talking about the experience and intention in the picture. Third, listen to other students' opinions on photo voice and have critical views and views on their work. Through this process, class participants are promoted in the process of strengthening their competencies.

In the field of qualitative research, Pauwels (2011) categorized the types of photographs into three types. It is divided into found photographs, researcher-generated photographs, and participants-generated photographs. [5] The photo voice study corresponds to a photo taken by the study participant, that is, a photo generated by the study participant.

In a similar example, in the cartoon research methodology, the types of cartoons are divided into three categories: existing cartoon data, cartoons made by researchers with intent, and cartoons made by research participants. Kwon Kyung-min and Yang Jung-bin (2017) conducted a qualitative study focusing on the case analysis of autobiographical produced by the participating elderly, that is, the study participant-generated cartoons, to study how to revitalize senior cartoon classes in culture and arts education. [6]

Title: One of my villagers is sick because of unclean water.
ⓒProject BOM. Pictured by Koleta Notice. All Rights Reserved

**Figure 1. Project BOM
(http://projectbom.org/archives/blog/587)**

Figure 1 shows "Title: One of my villagers is sick because of unclean water". In this way, through the photo, the participants have a voice that dirty water is threatening people's health. Also, photos accompanied by language convey a powerful message beyond language to the viewer, and can symbolically show ideology such as desire, thought, and ideology.

2.2   The Characteristics of Korean-Japanese Convergence Class Participants

The characteristic of this Korean-Japanese convergence class was that Korean language students from Baikogakuin University(梅光學院 大學), Japan, who came to Korea as exchange students, participated in the cartoon class of the Department of Visual Arts Design at Namseoul University. The class period was held for two semesters (the 2nd semester in 2021 and the 1st semester in 2022).

Looking at the characteristics of the class participants, the total number of participants was 57, 28 Koreans and 29 Japanese, and 4 men and 53 women, consisting mostly female students. According to a student survey for classes, Korean students' visual (67%), auditory (29%), and kinesthetics (4%) were overwhelmingly close to visual arts students' vision when asked to choose their preferred communication methods among Visual (color, model, place, design, etc.), Auditory (tone, tempo, volume, rhythm, etc.) and Kinesthetics (touch, movement, motion, emotion, temperature, air pressure, etc.), reflected the aptitude of students majoring in visual arts, showing that vision was remarkably high at nearly 70%. Japanese students accounted for the largest portion of vision (57%), hearing (35%), and touch (8%), but hearing accounted for 35%, which is relatively high, reflecting the aptitude of language majors.

Next, as it is a convergence class for Korean and Japanese students, we asked about the language learning period of the other country, which is the main element of the class, and the experience of subscribing to cartoons and webtoons, which are the core elements of the class. According to the results of the survey of Korean students, students who did not have Japanese learning experience accounted for a large proportion, with "no Japanese learning period at all" (68%), "about 6 months" (16%), and "more than 1 year." On the other hand, the period of subscription for comics/webtoons was 'more than one year (95%)' and 'about six months (5%), showing great interest in cartoons/webtoons related to their majors. On the other hand, Japanese students were Korean language major students, and the Korean language study period was 'more than one year (100%).' However, when asked about their experience in subscribing to Korean comics/webtoons, students who had no experience in subscribing to webtoons accounted for a large proportion, with "none" (66%), "about 6 months (30%), and "more than 1 year (4%).

Table 1. The Characteristics of the Class Participants

Question	Korean Students	Japanese Students
Preferred Communication Method	**Visual (67%)** **Auditory (29%)** **Kinesthetic (4%)**	**Visual (57%)** **Auditory (35%)** **Kinesthetic (8%)**
Period to Study the Language of the Other Country	**None (68%)** **About 6 months (16%)** **More than 1 year (16%)**	**None (0%)** **About 6 months (0%)** **More than 1 year (100%)**
Experiences to Read Cartoon/ Webtoon	**None (0%)** **About 6 months (5%)** **More than 1 year (95%)**	**None (66%)** **About 6 months (30%)** **More than 1 year (4%)**

Based on the results of the survey, most Korean students had no Japanese learning experience and had very high webtoon subscription experience, while Japanese students had very high Korean learning experiences and very low webtoon subscription experiences.

2.3 The Environmental Characteristics of the Korean-Japanese Convergence Cartoon Class

This convergence class was operated as a total of 30 classes, with 15 weeks of the second semester in 2021 and 15 weeks of the first semester in 2022. In terms of learners' characteristics, Korean students had high class-related knowledge and experience instead of not knowing Japanese, and Japanese students had very low experience and knowledge of class-related cartoons and webtoons instead of learning Korean. In particular, most Japanese students majoring in the Korean language had little chance to draw, including cartoons, so they were worried and anxious about the initial assignment and practice of the class.

According to a survey conducted on students, for the question <What was the most difficult thing in class?>, most Japanese students wrote "difficulties in drawing," "difficulties in composing a story," and "difficulties in drawing while understanding classes." On the other hand, Korean students with the same question had the most linguistic problems such as 'difficulty in communicating with Japanese students. In the question <What was the best thing in class?>, Japanese students answered "Conversation with Korean students," "making friends with Korean students," and "Getting knowledge on Korean webtoons," and Korean students had some opinions on "Conversation with Japanese students," but most of them answered about their majors about "Learning Actual production of Webtoons."

Table 2. The Environmental Characteristics of the Class

Question	Korean	Japanese
The Most Difficult Thing in Class	**1.Communication with Japanese Students**	**1.Drawing** **2.Composing Stories** **3.Understanding Class Contents**
The Best Thing in Class	**1.Actual Production of Webtoons** **2,Conversation with Japanese Students**	**1.Conversation with Japanese Students** **2. Making Friends with Korean Students** **3.Getting Knowledge on Korean Webtoons**

Class management was divided into four groups of seven to nine people, and group activities and individual activities were conducted according to the class theme. In addition, for Japanese students who have no basic knowledge of creative cartoon production, Korean students' presentation topics were made and presented in videos on various methods of cartoon production, and Japanese students gained an understanding of cartoon production through Korean students' presentation videos. Figure 2 is a video of the process of making cartoons with hand drawings, and Figure 3 is a video of the actual production process of how to make cartoons by taking pictures. In addition, there was a presentation on how to make cartoons using movies or TV shows or using computers or smartphones. In the actual survey, the question, <Did you feel the videos on how to produce webtoons (comics) from presentations by Korean students were helpful?>, Japanese students answered "It was

helpful (80%), "It was not helpful (0%), "I don't know (20%)," and Korean students who filmed the production process and made videos answered "It was helpful (84%), "It wasn't helpful (4%), and "I don't know (13%)."

Figure 2. Production Video for Hand-drawing Cartoon (Left)
Figure 3. Production Video through Taking Pictures (Right)

2.4　Photovoice as Convergence Class Tool

1) Sharing Internal Voice

By applying Photo Voice to cartoon classes, students can record and share related elements by taking pictures based on class-related topics, and draw their inner voices through the photographed photos to reflect on themselves and develop a critical view of the contents of the objectified photos. Also, students from both countries can make positive changes by sharing and interacting with each other expressed in photos. In the qualitative study based on photography by Kim Do-hyeon (2017), photography as a research tool is divided into three categories: photography as an observation tool, photography as an interview tool, and photography as a narrative inquiry tool.[7] In convergence classes, photography becomes a way for foreign students whose language is poor to deliver their thoughts more accurately. In addition, the characteristics of cartoons consisting of text and pictures can be expected to serve as an effective communication tool by recording visual details with text to express one's intention and message.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 are photos taken by class participants, and they express their emotions and feelings in detail in the picture. Figure 4 is captioned with, "I made it while eating my favorite chocolate snacks sent from Japan." While living in Korea as an exchange student, he conveys his nostalgia for Japan in a picture of chocolate sent from Japan. In Figure 5, it reads, "It is a scene where I am in a hurry to go to school and finish my assignment while I was almost late because I was dozing off while counting nights and doing my assignments." He is showing his hard work on the assignment by taking pictures of the messy classroom and the results of his work on the laptop that is working on the assignment.

The important actor in the photo voice is the participant, not the researcher. This is because participants take pictures with their judgment and tell stories, or narratives, about the pictures. According to Wang (1999), the photovoice methodology discusses images produced by participants and gives or interprets meaning to their images.[8] It is the role of participants to interpret these photos. In this way, photo voice in class allows class participants to deliver their narratives through photos. In particular, Japanese students, who have difficulty communicating with students and are unable to express their thoughts and feelings in Korean, can share these inner sounds and convey the message they want to convey more effectively through visual media, that is, photos. Of course, this method is equally useful for Korean students.
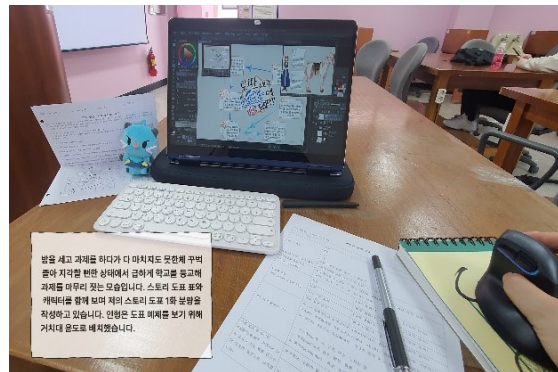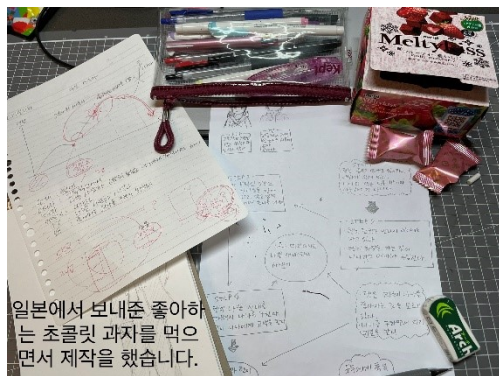
Figure 4. A Photovoice by a Japanese student (Left)
Figure 5. A Photovoice by a Korean student (Right)

2) A Tool of Narrative Inquiry

Cartoons are media that convey messages with stories and pictures. The photo voice method is very suitable for expressing the story, which is a key element of cartoon class, with visual images. Photos used in cartoon classes can be used as a tool for narrative inquiry along with the text. In the class, students composed narratives according to the class theme and took pictures to create the situation. For example, on the subject of the class on "Eyesight," students conceived a story that fits it, photographed it, and completed it into a cartoon. Figure 6 shows the characteristics of the narrative that depicts and expresses the causal relationship while describing and expressing the event. If you look closely at Figure 6, the first column shows an avocado character who is alone, and the second column shows a close-up of the avocado character so that you can see the character's emotions. In the third compartment, the appearance of new characters is shown from an objective perspective, and in the fourth compartment, you can see the expression of the avocado characters looking at them. And in the next cut, the expressions of the characters who newly appeared with the eyes of the avocado character are shown, and in the last cut, the appearance altogether is finished with an objective gaze. At the bottom of the picture, a simple story written by the participating student is written. In this way, you can find out how the narrative is being done using photo voice. As a tool for narrative inquiry, photography allows students to grasp their intentions more effectively, and even Japanese students who are poor at drawing can visualize their ideas through familiar filming techniques using their smartphones.

외로운 아보카도 곁에 나타난 두 마리의 친구들 덕에 행복해진 이야기

Figure 6. A Work by a Participating Student

3. CONCLUSION

In the case of convergence classes with students with different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, various issues can be considered. In the case of the Korean-Japanese convergence cartoon class, the biggest problem recognized was a communication one. According to the results of the survey conducted class, In

response to the question, <Have you worried about classes with students with different languages?>, 75% of Korean students answered that they were worried, with "there was (58%), "some 17%", and "no" (25%). In the question of <What were you worried about?>, language communication problem was the highest with 'language communication (78%), and 'cultural difference (18%) and 'class content (4%) followed in order. Japanese students also came out as "Worried (74%)" and "None" (26%), and for concern, "Language Communication (75%)" was the main cause, while "Class Content (25%)" accounted for 25 percent of the concerns about cartoon classes, as it was not their major. From the results of the survey, it can be seen that all Korean and Japanese students had concerns about communication regardless of the language ability of the other country.

This study investigated the effectiveness of the cartoon class through the use of photo voice as a tool for the Korean-Japanese convergence class and its experience. Photo Voice was generally accepted in a new way by Japanese students who are not good at drawing as well as students who are familiar with drawing, as it replaces the process of creating cartoons using text and painting with pictures. In an open-ended survey of classes, there were opinions such as "It was fun and most impressive to perform activities with photos, not just by hand," and "It was amazing to convey my thoughts through photos." In this way, the photovoice method is to capture one's inner thoughts with intent, and on the other hand, one can think about the photos he or she took while looking at them from a third party's perspective. Since it is delivered through the visual medium of photography, participating students can contain their thoughts with a less psychological burden. Cartoon classes using photo voice can more effectively visualize students' thoughts and experiences. In addition, as can be seen in Figure 7, personal meaning and emotion can be actively drawn through narrative inquiry for cartoon production. The process of actively communicating and interacting with each other's works can be seen as the most meaningful element in convergence classes.
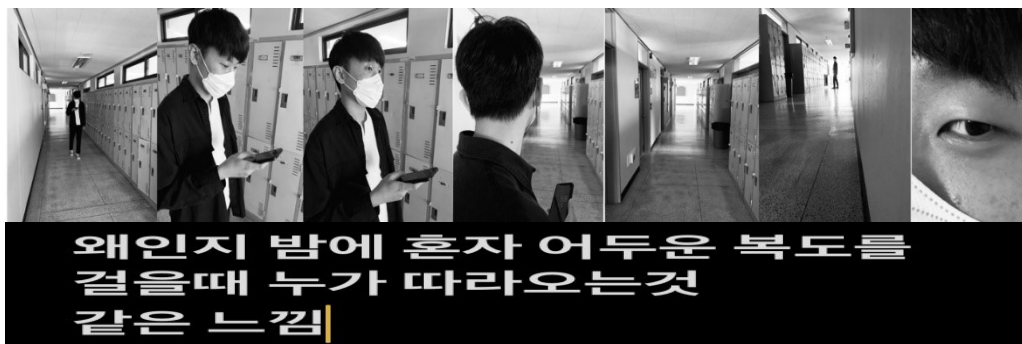

Figure 7. A Work by a Participating Student

In today's cartoon class, various teaching methods are establishing theories. However, the photo voice method is still very insufficient to discuss its use in convergence classes. This study focused on the development of a lecture model using photo voice and its utility through the analysis of cases of convergence classes between Korea and Japan.

In convergence classes, participating students generate research materials through their photo production, so it can be a tool for inner exploration. This can further expand the understanding and effectiveness of convergence classes, and it is expected that the development of a class model through photography will have another methodological value as a teaching method. In addition, it can be said that it is highly likely to be used as a cartoon class method for foreign convergence classes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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