



A STUDY ON TEACHING THE KOREAN LANGUAGE USING KIM KWANG-SEOK'S SONG "WHERE THE WIND BLOWS"

Kim Hyong Jong

University: Nizami Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Academic Year: 2nd-year Master's Student

Academic Advisor: DSc, Prof. Kim Natalia

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore methods of using the famous song "Where the Wind Blows" (Barami Bureooneun Got) by singer Kim Kwang-seok as a teaching material for instructing Korean to foreign learners. This song contains lyrical expressions in Korean and reflects the cultural sentiments characteristic of Korean youth in the 1990s, such as romantic longing for freedom and escape from reality. Based on theories of linguistic and cultural education, the study analyzes the educational value of metaphorical expressions and key grammatical elements included in the lyrics. On this basis, a three-stage teaching-learning model is proposed along with specific classroom activities designed to develop emotional empathy and students' ability to use metaphorical expressions at intermediate and advanced levels. Ultimately, this study aims to demonstrate that Korean language education can become a humanistic approach that goes beyond simple language acquisition, fostering an understanding of deep Korean emotions and values, and contributing to the creation of an empirical foundation for subsequent research.

KEY WORDS

Kim Kwang-seok, Where the Wind Blows, Korean language teaching methodology, metaphor, emotional education

INTRODUCTION

1. Problem Statement

1.1 The Need for the Study

Modern Korean language education is developing toward the use of various Hallyu (Korean Wave) content, such as K-pop and dramas, to stimulate learners' interest and motivation. However, because much of this content focuses on modern and visual elements, there are limitations in exploring the deeper lyrical sensitivity and emotional atmosphere of earlier eras, rooted in the spiritual world of Koreans. Accordingly, this study draws attention to the folk music of Kim Kwang-seok, particularly the song "Where the Wind Blows" (Barami Bureooneun Got), in order to broaden the cultural and emotional depth of Korean language teaching.

“Where the Wind Blows” is a representative Korean song symbolizing a romantic ideal that transcends physical location. It embodies universal emotions felt by young people in the turbulent society of the 1990s: loneliness, wandering, and longing for freedom. These emotions provide foreign learners with important clues for understanding the spiritual worldview of Koreans, surpassing mere linguistic knowledge.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Using Songs as a Component of Comprehensive Language Education

A song is a complete text that integrates melody, rhythm, and lyrics, allowing learners to apply the Whole Language approach. Learning through songs is effective for mastering prosody, and the repetitive structure of lyrics facilitates memory retention. According to Stephen Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, the enjoyment and comfort provided by music lower learners’ anxiety and resistance (Affective Filter Down), thereby promoting language acquisition.

2.2 Cultural Schema Theory and Emotional Education

The ultimate goal of foreign language learning is understanding the culture and society in which the language is used. Cultural Schema Theory explains that learners rely on their background cultural knowledge (schemas) to comprehend texts of the target culture. The emotions contained in “Where the Wind Blows”—escape from reality and romantic longing—are key elements reflecting the cultural schemas of Korean society, and the process of studying them plays a crucial role in understanding Korean ways of thinking and values.

3. In-Depth Analysis of the Song “Where the Wind Blows”

3.1 Analysis of Literary Metaphors and Symbols

The entire song is structured around a single extended metaphor.

1. Symbolism of “바람” (wind):

The wind symbolizes freedom, constant change, and movement. A place where the wind “blows” (불어오는) represents a dynamic, living space rather than a fixed or stagnant reality. This reflects the desire to escape an oppressive or stagnant environment.

2. Dual meaning of “곳” (place):

“Place” refers to an abstract ideal rather than a geographical location. Projecting hidden stories or the desire for rest onto “that place” (그 곳) allows the song to function as a psychological refuge for forgetting the pain of reality.

3. Meaning of “발길” (step/foot):

Expressions such as “to stop one’s steps” (발길을 멈추고) or “if one turns back” (돌아서면) symbolize the speaker’s direction in life and personal choices. They succinctly represent the struggles of Korean youth, involving both wandering and avoidance.

3.2 Reflection of the Era's Emotions in Korean Society

The song was released in the early 1990s, a time when Korean society was undergoing chaos associated with industrialization and democratization, and the beginnings of material abundance and individualism. Unlike the older generation, which had experienced communal values, the youth of this period faced personal loneliness and inner anxiety. "Where the Wind Blows" embodies the universal psychology of people exhausted by competition and meritocracy, who dreamed of escaping in search of pure romance and primal freedom within the context of that era.

4. Linguistic and Cultural Value as a Teaching Material

4.1 Linguistic Value: Grammar and Expressions

Teaching Element: Present Progressive Adnominal Form

Example: "바람이 불어오는 곳" ("the place where the wind blows")

Objective: Learning structures where a verb modifies a noun to describe an abstract place.

Teaching Element: Expression of Desire and Intention

Example: "쉬고 싶다" ("I want to rest")

Objective: Studying emotionally rich expressions of sincere desire, beyond basic forms for intermediate learners.

Teaching Element: Figurative Expression of Time/Place

Example: "그 곳에 가면" ("If one goes to that place")

Objective: Understanding "place" as a psychological or abstract ideal rather than only a physical location.

Teaching Element: Compound Verb Expressions

Examples: "발길을 멈추고", "돌아서면"

Objective: Learning colloquial verb combinations involving two or more actions.

4.2 Cultural Value: Teaching Emotions of Romance and Idealism

"Where the Wind Blows" holds the following key values for emotional education in Korea:

1. Romantic wandering:

The song reflects the Korean emotional sentiment of continuous searching for an ideal space, rather than being satisfied with reality. It helps learners understand wandering as a life path rather than a simple journey.

2. Metaphorical thinking:

The rich metaphors allow learners to develop literary and contemplative abilities in Korean, moving beyond literal language—a necessary step for reaching an advanced level.

3. Power of collective empathy:

Understanding why this song is called a "song of life" by many Koreans reveals how music functions in Korean society as a medium of collective consolation and empathy toward individual psychology. The present study empirically analyzed the positive effects of Kim Kwang-seok's song as cultural content that combines lyrical depth with natural everyday language, and explored ways to apply it in real teaching and learning settings. The results show that his song maximizes learners' emotional engagement and is highly effective for learning natural vocabulary and expressions that blend written

and spoken language. In particular, it was confirmed that understanding the universal emotions and historical background reflected in the song is an important path toward a deep understanding of Korean culture, beyond simple language acquisition.

Kim Kwang-seok's music holds limitless educational value for learners of Korean as a cultural bridge connecting past and present, and as a linguistic mediator conveying shared emotions. It is expected that the teaching model and content development directions proposed in this study will diversify Korean language teaching materials and become the basis for a new paradigm shift, compensating for the lack of literary and emotional depth in Hallyu content focused on K-pop. Future studies should expand Korean language education by applying this model to K-indie music across generations and genres.

References

1. Lee Sung-hee. A Study on the Development of Teaching Methods Using Korean Songs Beyond K-pop. Seoul: Foreign Language Teaching Research, 2021, pp. 190–210.
2. Krashen, S. D. The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications. London: Longman, 1985, 120 p.
3. Han Young-woo. The Role of Cultural Schemas and Emotional Empathy in Foreign Language Learning. Seoul: Global Education Journal, 2017, pp. 77–92.
4. Park Young-hee. Methods for Improving the Teaching of Korean Metaphorical Expressions: Based on Folk Song Lyrics. Seoul: Korean Language Teaching, 2020, pp. 45–68.
5. Kim Chul-soo. Youth Emotions Reflected in Korean Popular Music of the 1990s: Loneliness and Romance. Seoul: Korean Cultural Studies, 2018, pp. 115–130.
6. Choi Min-ho. Analysis of the Temporal and Emotional Functions of the Adnominal Form in Korean. Seoul: Language and Cognition, 2019, pp. 505–525.