Korean Language Studies: Motivation and Attrition

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to determine attrition rates of students learning Korean in university courses, their motivations to study the target language, why many drop out, and what educators can do to address and decrease high rates of attrition. A survey was administered to 129 students enrolled in lower-level (101–202) Korean language classes during the years 2005–2010 at a large, private university in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States. Self-identifying heritage students comprised 45.7% of those who completed the survey. Surveys were administered to students via email and returned in the same manner; as such, they represent a response and convenience sample. Five of the 12 survey questions utilized a 5-point Likert scale. The overall attrition rate from class to class during this time period was 85%. Students identified that the most motivating factors in their decision to take Korean were "It's an important language," "Future career benefits," and "I have Korean heritage." More students desired to learn only basic words and phrases than any one other proficiency category. The most common reason for quitting Korean was that it didn't fit students' schedules. Likewise, students indicated that had a following course been offered at a different time or if a language lab offering tutoring were made available, they might have been influenced to continue taking Korean. Surveys also addressed language-learning anxiety. Based on the results gathered, this study makes suggestions for improving Korean language instruction in order to reduce student attrition.

Introduction

Korean is one of many Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) in America, distinguishing it from Spanish, French, and German. Since the start of the Korean War and the related diaspora of Koreans to the United States and elsewhere, it has become more common for major universities to offer Korean classes to their students. However, Korean is difficult for most native English speakers to learn—perhaps more so than Germanic or Romance languages. This is due in part to a very different sentence structure and a non-cognate vocabulary base. The United States' Defense Language Institute, for example, puts Korean in the Category IV language class with Arabic and Chinese; at the Institute, 64 weeks of instruction are expected to bring a native English speaker to limited working proficiency in these languages, compared to the 26 weeks required for the same proficiency in Spanish, French, Portuguese, or Italian.[1]

The difficulty of Korean versus other languages is clearly evident as the attrition rate for Korean language classes is very high, even among the over 80% of students who are heritage language learners in Korean programs throughout the United States (You, 2001, as cited by Lee and Han, 2007, p. 35). For example, between the years of 2005 and 2010 at Brigham Young University, language attrition in the first four semesters of the Korean language course was 85% compared to attrition rates in languages such as Spanish, French and German, that range from about 12% to about 24% depending on the university and the source. In order to better understand these trends, this study sets out to determine the attrition rates of students learning Korean in university courses, their motivations to study the target language, why many drop out, and what educators can do to address and minimize relatively high rates of attrition.

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[1] Campbell, C. (Associate Provost) (2010, January 29). Defense Language Institute overview. *Language proficiency: Common questions, common goals.* Lecture conducted from Flagship Zero to Two Project and the Texas Language Center, Austin.

Literature Review

Initial Motivations for Enrolling

There are many reasons why students decide to enroll in language courses. These motivating factors often include the following[2] (in no particular order):

1. To connect with their heritage
2. To communicate with family members (grandparents, etc.) or a significant other
3. To fulfill general education or graduation requirements

4. To satisfy an interest (inspired by pop culture, the media, other academic disciplines, etc.) in the language of choice
5. To follow the suggestion of a friend or acquaintance
6. To learn a language for the sake of language study itself
7. To enhance future career opportunities
8. To prepare for future study and academic work (e.g., comparative literature, history, linguistics, or Asian studies)
9. Because the language seems important and/or to obtain communication skills in that language
10. To enhance "one's own personal culture though the study of the literature and philosophy of another people" and/or "to increase one's understanding and appreciation of another culture" (Zelson 1973, p. 79)

Certainly, students will experience and express various motivating factors for enrolling in language study courses, and these students will each be motivated by different factors.

A current trend in second-language research is to study heritage language learners (HLLs)[3] and non-heritage language learners (non-HLLs) separately because their experiences and motivations before entering the classroom (as well as in the classroom) are

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[2] This list is derived from professional literature, including Zelson (1973), as well as the authors' thoughts and experiences teaching and learning Korean.

[3] According to Valdés (2000), an HLL is a "student of the language raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (p. 375).

different. Reynolds et al. (2009) suggested that heritage is "a widespread motivator for choice of language study" (p. 107). Certainly this is true in Korean language courses across the United States, where, as was mentioned, over 80% of students are HLLs (You, 2001, as cited by Lee and Han, 2007, p. 35). Of the participants in our survey, however, only 45.7% indicated having at least one Korean parent.

Many studies have addressed the experiences of Korean HLLs in the language classroom (Jo, 2001; Kim, 2006; Kim, 2001; Kim, 2002; Lee & Kim, 2008; Yang, 2003, to name a few). Korean HLLs enter "the heritage language classroom with high levels of integrational (i.e., to communicate with family and friends) motivation" (p. 122) and cultural connectedness (Damron & Forsyth, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2009). Non-HLLs experience lower levels of cultural connectivity and integrational motivation (and alternatively, higher levels of instrumental motivation, which refers to motivations such as career benefits) (Kim, 2006; Yang, 2003; Kim, 2002). While this comparison provides valid insight into the experiences of students in the second-language classroom, the primary purpose of the present study does not seek to address distinctions between these two types of learners.

Reasons for Dropping Out

Horwitz (1988) boldly states, "large scale attrition in foreign language programs is a well-known phenomenon" (p. 292). Just as students enroll in second-language classes for a variety of reasons, a combination of factors likely contributes to many students dropping out -85% of students in the case of Korean in the present study. These reasons include the following (in no particular order):

1. Anxiety or stress related to language learning
2. Loss of interest in the target language or more interest in the art, culture, and/or history of countries where the language is spoken than in the language itself[4]
3. Satisfaction with what has already been learned and a corresponding lack of desire to learn more
4. Graduation from the university or program

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[4] Aida (1994) listed interest in other aspects of the country besides language as a possible cause for student attrition (p. 165).

5. Choice of an alternative way to complete general education or graduation requirements
6. Perception of the course or the language as too difficult or too easy
7. Dissatisfaction with what was being learned compared to what students expected or hoped to learn[5]
8. Lack of confidence in the target language ability (uncomfortable moving up to the next class)
9. Friend or significant other who spoke the target language no longer available
10. Coursework was too time consuming or the next level of the course didn't fit into the student's schedule
11. Incompatibility with the teacher
12. Unavailability of resources for extra help, such as a learning lab offering tutoring
13. Dislike for classroom environment or learning activities

One of the factors that likely contributes to a student's decision to drop out is language-learning based anxiety. Bailey (2003) found that "students who dropped out of their foreign language classes tended to report statistically significant higher levels of anxiety"; their data "suggest moderate to large relationships between components of foreign language anxiety and student attrition" (Cohen, 1988, p. 189).

As cited by Aida (1994, p. 156), Horwitz et al. (1991) noted three types of anxiety in the second-language classroom: (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative feedback. However, Aida cited another study (Macintyre and Gardner, 1989) that found that the second of these, test anxiety, was "a general anxiety problem; it was not significant to foreign language learning" (p. 162). Identifying the real sources of student anxiety that contribute to attrition help the educator address the specific concerns of the anxious language-learner.

In a study of students in the Japanese language classroom, Saito and Samimy (1996) found anxiety to be a more significant

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[5] For example, see Horwitz (1998), p. 291 for a discussion of attrition resulting from discrepancies in expected and actual proficiency and effort expended.

factor in intermediate and advanced courses than it was in beginning courses.   (In Saito and Samimy's study, in the beginning-level Japanese classes, a student's year in college was a better predictor of performance than was language anxiety.) This difference is attributed to less pressure to perform in a beginning class than in intermediate or advanced classes.   Thus, heightened anxiety may accompany heightened expectations.   Saito and Samimy even found increased levels of anxiety during different seasons: "students became more anxious and/or felt more embarrassed and awkward about speaking Japanese in class in the spring quarter than in the autumn" (p. 241). Students who experience communication apprehension or fear of negative feedback, it appears, are more apt to choose not to have the language learning experience over the anxiety or embarrassment associated with those aspects of our classrooms.

A student's year in college, and not anxiety, was the primary predicting factor for success in beginning levels of Japanese. Saito and Samimy cite Macintyre and Gardner (1989), who found that "at the earliest stages of language learning, motivation and language aptitude are the dominant factors in determining success. During the first few experiences in the foreign language, anxiety plays a negligible role in proficiency" (p. 245).

However, language anxiety leads to less risk taking in language-learning activities, lower grades, and "negative attitudes toward the class" (p. 246).   In fact, Aida (1994) explored the relationship between performance (indicated by student grades) and anxiety, and found that "while students having a high anxiety level were more likely to receive a grade of B or lower, those with a low level of anxiety were more likely to get an A" (p. 162). Many studies in addition to this have found and addressed the relationship between anxiety and performance; Bailey (2003) cited some of these (Horwitz el al., 1986; Macintyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991b, 1991c; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000). In these studies, anxiety was found to relate to several factors, including whether students had experience in Japan (the country of the language being studied), whether the class was an elective or was required, and whether the students were satisfied with their grades in the courses of the language of study. Students who were taking the course as an elective, had been to Japan, and/or were satisfied with their grades in Japanese courses were shown to experience less anxiety (p. 163).   This is notable because of the

established correlations between anxiety and both performance and attrition mentioned earlier.

Unrealistic expectations of teacher and student also have a role in student attrition (Lemke, 1993, pp. 14–15). Students who enter the foreign language classroom expecting to become fluent in an unreasonable amount of time and without expending the necessary effort will be disappointed when they do not reach the level they desire. Horwitz (1988), in a study of first-semester language students, found that her subjects generally believed that some people have a greater aptitude for foreign languages; many also had unrealistic expectations about the amount of time it would take them to reach their desired or anticipated level of proficiency (pp. 286–87). This discrepancy may lead to frustration in students who perceive early on that fluency will require much more time and effort than they expected when they enrolled in the class. When this occurs, Horwitz writes, "the majority will probably quit language study as soon as permitted" (p. 291). This frustration may be related to the aforementioned anxiety associated with language learning.

Furthermore, teachers who expect all students to perform at the same high levels and who fail to make accommodations for students whose natural abilities make language learning a slower but perhaps deeper process than that of their peers also likely contribute to the high attrition rates associated with second language learning. Lemke (1993) writes that some high school second language teachers "cope with slower, less able students by allowing them to drop out" (p. 12). When teachers fail to recognize variability in student learning, slower students can become discouraged and quit. According to Smith (1968, as cited by Zelson, 1973), "teachers who are expected to teach for mastery before proceeding to new materials may be at least 1.6 times 'more effective in their teaching than teachers who are not held responsible'" (p. 107). Therefore, perhaps teaching at a slower pace would be an effective method of improvement for the foreign language teacher, along with implementing methods for teacher accountability.

Researchers have also identified other causes for student attrition in foreign language courses. One of these is choosing another option for general education requirements (Lemke, 1993, who also cites Myers et al., 1979). Another reason was teacher-student incompatibility. In Lemke's study, where students selected

their top three to five reasons for discontinuing foreign language study, incompatibility was the fifth most common reason listed (pp. 37–8).

As is evident, previous studies have addressed student motivations for language study, why students drop out, and the rate at which they drop out. However, a comprehensive analysis of these questions as they relate to Korean language programs with both heritage and non-heritage student experiences together is lacking.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the actual attrition rate from Korean language classes at the university where the research was to take place, to find out why students take Korean, why they drop out and what can be done to reduce high levels of attrition.

To find the attrition rate of students taking Korean, the investigators conducting this study tracked student enrollment using university generated class rosters. Starting with Korean 101 in the fall of 2005, the investigators followed the enrollment of students for two years until they were to enroll in Korean 202. This procedure was replicated starting with the students who enrolled in Korean 101 in the fall of 2006, the fall of 2007, the fall of 2008, the fall of 2009, and the fall of 2010. The total number of students who were enrolled in Korean 101 between 2005 and 2010 was 131. To answer the questions regarding motivating factors for taking Korean and factors that promote attrition, surveys were sent to 129 undergraduate students from Brigham Young University, a large private university in the western United States.[6] All 129 research

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[6] Because Brigham Young University (BYU) is owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, some may wonder what role religious motivation plays in student enrollment in language classes (i.e., are students learning Korean at BYU in preparation for a church mission in Korea?). While many students work as missionaries around the world for periods of 18 or 24 months, language preparation for missionaries requiring language instruction typically takes place at missionary training centers at the start of their service. Because prospective missionaries may submit application

subjects were students at BYU at the time they took Korean classes. They ranged in age from eighteen to twenty years old. Of the 92 subjects who responded to the survey, 32 were male (35%) and 60 were female (65%). Students ranged from beginning to high intermediate learners. Students were from a variety of majors, including economics, management, biology, and business, as well as students with no officially declared major. Of the 92 students who answered the question pertaining to heritage background, 50 students (54.3%) had no Korean parents, 26 students (28.3%) had one Korean parent, 16 students (17.4%) had two Korean parents, and none were adopted from Korea.

All students enrolled in Korean language classes by choice, although completion of two years (four semesters) of a foreign language fulfills a university core requirement for graduation. First- and second-year Korean language courses involve five contact hours per week and meet on a daily basis. Two of these (Tuesday and Thursday) are with a professor and a class of about 30 students. For the remaining three (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) two sections of 15 students each meet with one TA. The University of Hawaii Press's KLEAR textbooks are used. As part of the course, students are required to meet with a Korean-speaking study buddy for ten hours each semester outside of class.

Surveys were sent via email to students who had taken Korean classes between 2005 and 2010 and who had current contact information on file with the university. Not every question of the survey was answered by every student. Data here represents only data that was reported. One of the surveyors was a professor in the Korean Department; the other was an undergraduate research assistant. The students represent a response and convenience sample.

The survey, which is reproduced with formatting edits in

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packets only up to 120 days in advance, BYU students would generally not have enough time to take a formal, semester-long language class at BYU after receiving their assignment. Additionally, prospective missionaries do not self-select where they will work or what language(s) they will be expected to work in. Not a single student identified religious reasons on their survey as a motivating factor for taking Korean.

Appendix A, asked 12 questions, with 5 of the questions utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. Numerical results were input into a Microsoft Excel file. Results of questions implementing the 5-point Likert scale were analyzed based on "high," "mid," and "low" responses, where 5=high, 2-4=mid, and 1=low. Results were then graphed and percentage, mean, and standard deviation calculations were done using Excel.

Results

Overall Attrition Rate

Student attrition from first semester through fourth semester Korean classes averaged 85%. This means that from the beginning of the fall semester in 2005 to the beginning of the winter semester in 2012, the overall average attrition rate for all groups that started each fall was 85%. The number of students (16) who started Korean 101 in Fall 2005, for example, decreased by approximately 88% by the beginning of the fourth class (see Figure 1). In this 2005 cohort, the number of students decreased by 57% from 101 to 102 and 72% from102 to 201 and zero percent from 201 to 202, leaving only two students in the 202 class from the original 2005 cohort.

Figure 1. Student Attrition in Korean Classes From 2005 to 2010

	Attrition from 101 - 102	Attrition from 102 - 201	Attrition from 201 - 202	*Overall attrition from 101 – 202
Fall 2005	57%	72%	O%	88% (16 Ss→2 Ss)
Fall 2006	50%	40%	17%	75% (20 Ss→5 Ss)
Fall 2007	50%	40%	50%	85% (20 Ss→3 Ss)
Fall 2008	31%	50%	67%	89%

				(26 Ss→3 Ss)
Fall 2009	58%	45%	20%	81% (21 Ss→4 Ss)
Fall 2010	43%	75%	75%	97% (28 Ss→ 1 S)

Initial Motivators

Figure 2 shows, in a comparative format, the degree to which several ideas or factors motivated students to take first-semester Korean. Students were presented with (or identified themselves) a possible factor and given the choice of 1 (low) to 5 (high) regarding the strength of that factor as a motivation in their decision to enroll. The factors ranked highest are "It looked interesting," which had the largest number of "high" responses (54); followed by "It's an important language" (40); "Future career benefits" (39); and "I have Korean heritage" (38). The factors with the largest number of "low" responses (less effect on student motivation) were "I have Korean heritage" (46), "It fulfills an academic requirement" (42), and "I have a Korean friend/significant other" (42).

Figure 2. Initial Motivators For Enrolling In First-Semester Korean
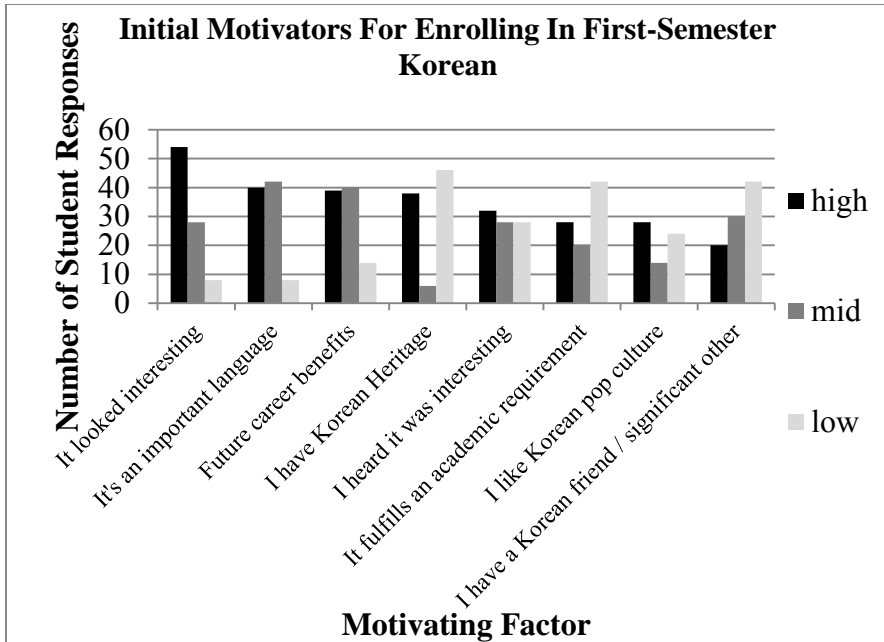
These factors can be analyzed further by breaking them up into three categories: integrational motivation, instrumental motivation, and other interest.

Integrational motivation includes having Korean heritage or having a Korean friend/significant other. As would be expected, students had either high (42%[7]) or low (51%) heritage association and most were not highly motivated to enroll in the class because of a friend or significant other (31% were).

Instrumental motivation refers to the extent to which students expect that having Korean language ability would be beneficial to them in their careers, in school, and so on. The vast majority of students were motivated ("high" or "mid" answers)

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[7] Percentages are based on the number of students who answered each question, which is usually different from the number of students who returned a survey. Not all students answered every survey question.

because the language seemed important for future career benefits (85%), while fulfilling academic requirements was a lower-level motivator for most students (69% answered "mid" or "low"). Instrumental motivation seemed to be the highest motivator for students to enroll in Korean as can be seen in a cursory glance of data presented in Figure 2.

Whether the class looked interesting, the student heard it was interesting, or the student liked Korean pop culture, these factors together create a third category of initial motivation identified as other interests. Students weren't particularly motivated to take Korean because they heard it was interesting; however, most were highly motivated because it *looked* interesting, with 36% and 64% recording "high" responses, respectively. Students were split on Korean pop culture as a motivator. Interestingly, a significantly small number of students chose to mark this factor at all: 66 students (mean: 87, standard deviation: 9). Of the students who answered, they were highly motivated (42%) to take the class because of their interest in pop culture, or pop culture was a low motivator (40%) for them. Interest in pop culture is likely correlated with exposure to it.

Students also indicated their desired level of proficiency when they first started taking Korean 101. Thirty-nine percent of students responded that they desired "only basic words and phrases." This was followed by, in order of number of responses, "somewhat conversational" (27%), "fluent" (22%), "like a native" (9%) and "no expectations about proficiency" (3%) (see Appendix B, Figure 1).

Reasons for Discontinuing Studies

When presented with 11 possible factors for deciding to stop taking Korean (see survey in Appendix A), students were again asked to rank each factor. The factor with the greatest number of "high" responses (more than twice that of any other factor) was "It didn't fit my schedule." Other factors with 16 or more responses included "It was too time consuming," "I wasn't comfortable moving up to the next class," "I fulfilled my requirement," "I wasn't learning as much as I wanted," and "It was too difficult."

Likewise, the factors with the highest number of "low" responses were "I no longer had a Korean friend/significant other" (80), "I lost interest in Korean" (66), and "It wasn't challenging

enough" (60).

    Surprisingly, the responses relating to why students discontinued their Korean studies, the total number of "low" responses (570) more than doubled the total number of "medium" responses (216) and more than tripled the total number of "high" responses (165). This result suggests that students may have stopped taking Korean on account of one or two major concerns and/or several minor concerns.
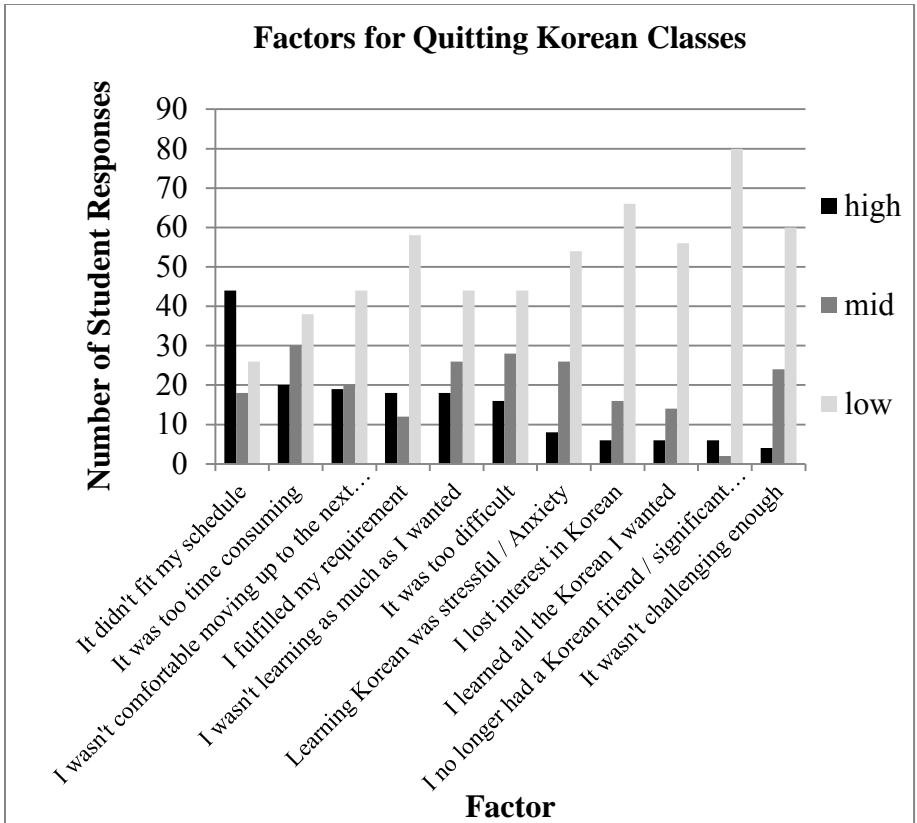

Figure 3. Factors for Quitting Korean Classes

When asked if they received satisfactory grades in Korean classes, 90.5% of respondents answered affirmatively, while 9.5% answered negatively, suggesting that grades are not a major factor for quitting Korean language study.

Would-be Motivators
The survey also addressed factors that would have influenced students to continue taking Korean classes—in other words, would-be motivators. The factors with the largest number of "high" responses were "Offered at a different time" (36) and "The addition of a language lab offering tutoring" (31).

As occurred in the previous section with reasons for discontinuing studies, the "low" category received a notably large number of responses—more than double that of both the individual "high" and "mid" categories.

Figure 4. Would-Be Motivators
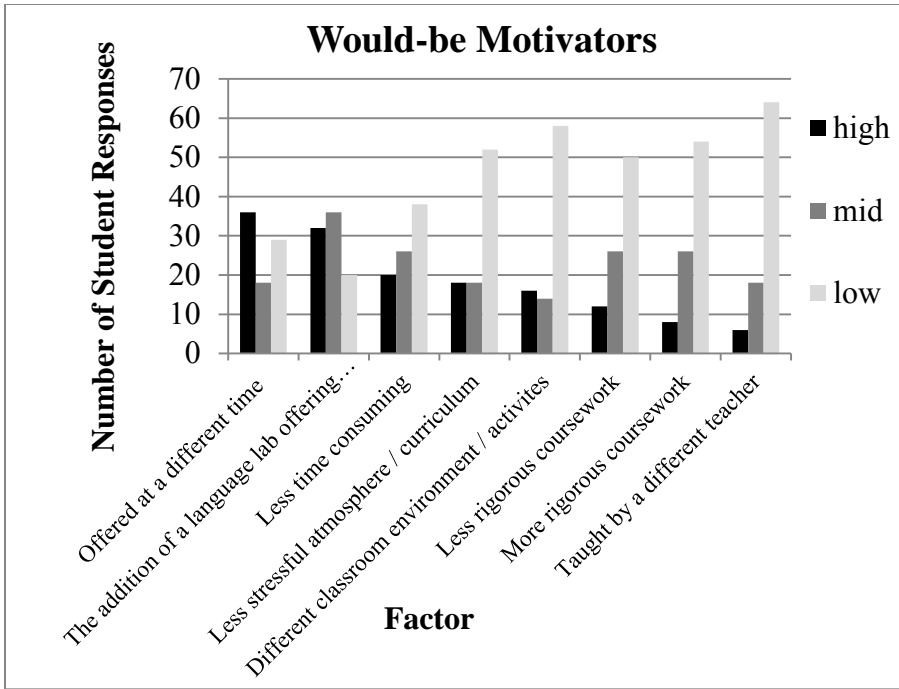
Factors Related to Language Anxiety

Students also answered questions pertaining to anxiety associated with language learning. Anxiety is well recognized as a contributing factor in students' decisions to discontinue language studies. More students responded to the question "How good do you consider yourself at learning languages?" with "high" meaning the students believe themselves to be a good language learner (22) than with "mid" (18) or "low" (5).

Students were also asked to rate how stressful three activities were in learning Korean: speaking Korean in class, taking written tests, and being evaluated orally on their Korean ability. Data is presented in Appendix B, Figure 2. The most stressful activity as reported by students was being evaluated on their Korean oral ability—44 students (out of 90 total respondents to the question) indicated that this was a high-stress activity. Students indicated that

speaking the target language in class and taking tests[8] were mid- to low-stress activities.

Discussion

This study had four purposes: 1) to determine levels of attrition in first- and second-year Korean courses, 2) to better understand why students decided to study Korean in the first place, 3) why so many quit studying the language at the university, and 4) to determine what can be done to reduce student attrition. Results for the first three points have been presented. In this section, researchers will address what can be done to reduce attrition rates in Korean language programs.

According to research on the topic, there are many things educators can do to reduce student attrition in the foreign language classroom. These may include: providing an option to minor in the language, implementing activities that allow students to make practical use of the language, discussing misconceptions about language learning with students, and addressing anxiety (discussed in more detail below). This study then suggests three additional things educators can do to increase enrollments and/or reduce student attrition.

First, educators can make foreign language classes more available to students of many disciplines. Zelson (1973) suggested that this can be accomplished by providing, in addition to the major option, a minor option for study. Zelson writes, "foreign language study as a major field has a somewhat limited appeal for large portions of the student body, but as a minor field, languages may present quite a different picture." (p. 177). The university where the present study was conducted offers both a Korean major and a Korean minor; therefore, attrition rates probably reflect such

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[8] The survey question for this result asks students to rate how stressful each activity was in learning Korean, including speaking Korean in class, taking tests, and being evaluated on oral Korean ability. Being evaluated on oral Korean ability refers to oral evaluations. Depending on the course, one to three individual oral exams were administered by teaching assistants to class members of each course.

conditions as Zelson suggests.

Just as providing a minor option for students who study the language for reasons other than pure academic motivation may decrease attrition, providing practical applications and activities in foreign language courses may also help maintain student interest and motivation. Citing Sims (1981), Lemke (1993) suggested that "lack of practical use of the foreign language may also help explain the large number of students electing to drop from the program" (p. 13). Krashen (1984) found that students in the 1990s were "more interested in 'using' the language, not just learning about it" (p. 13). Korean language educators are at a slight disadvantage with Korean resources in The United States because there are fewer native Korean speakers with whom students may interact on any given day. Students learning languages such as Spanish may have more opportunity and access both to written material and native speakers of the language. Consequently, Korean language educators may adjust to students' practical interests by providing language activities and materials relative to their majors (perhaps through independent projects), and by suggesting and providing ways for them to integrate themselves into local and/or online communities that use the target language.

Horwitz (1988) suggested that educators can reduce attrition rates by correcting or addressing student beliefs about foreign language learning, including the apparent belief that attaining fluency requires "relatively little effort" and that "acquiring another language is a special 'gift' that some people have and that most people do not have" (p. 283[9]). The value of this "deconditioning" is argued by Holec (1981), as cited by Horwitz, who claims that "psychological preparation or 'deconditioning'" rids them of "preconceived notions and prejudices which would likely interfere with their language learning," and that it allows students to "become effective self-directed learners" (pp. 283–284, 292). Horwitz suggests that students who continue with language learning are those whose beliefs about it are probably different from their dropout peers (p. 291).

Correcting the misconception that language learning requires little time and effort may be an effective method in combating attrition due to students' unrealistic expectations. Both non-HLLs

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[9] Horwitz takes the second quote from Acheson (1987) and Simon (1980).

and HLLs may enroll in language courses with unrealistic expectations, but these beliefs can be particularly intense for HLLs. In one qualitative study of Korean HLLs, Damron and Forsyth (2010) found that frustration was an emotional factor that affected some students' motivation in studying their heritage language—they were frustrated that enrolling and completing a single class was not leading to the fluency and literacy they expected, and that "becoming literate in Korean would be in some ways just as difficult and time-consuming" for them as it was for their non-HLL counterparts (p. 89). To address these concerns, Horwitz suggested, "it would probably be useful for teachers to discuss with students reasonable time commitments for successful language learning and the value of some language ability even if it is less than fluent" (p. 286).

Anxiety can be addressed in the language classroom through positive reinforcement of the students' self-esteem. Aida (1994) suggested that anxious students who possess high self-esteem "may be able to handle anxiety provoking situations" (p. 164). Greenberg et al. (1992, as cited by Aida) "proposed a terror management theory which posits that 'people are motivated to maintain a positive self-image because self-esteem protects them from anxiety'" (p. 164–65). Teachers might reinforce student's self-worth in language classes by correcting mistakes kindly, with an accompanying compliment and by pointing out that mistakes students make in class are common to most learners of the language. Educators may also, as Bailey (2003) recommends, discuss anxiety with students to determine causes.[10] Students with particularly serious cases of anxiety may be identified[11] and given particularly positive attention and/or referred to a professional counselor. Educators should also be sensitive to learning-related disabilities.

Lemke (1993) also found that the introduction of an outcomes-based approach was successful, and attrition levels varied

[10] Bailey refers the educator to Bailey, Daley, & Onwuegbuzie (1999); Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley (2000); Horwitz & Young (1991); and Young (1999) for more information.

[11] Bailey (2003) lists some behavioral signs of anxiety, including "avoiding class, not completing assignments, and a preoccupation with the performance of other students in the class" (citing Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986).

according to who taught classes in a given year (p. 43) and that, as mentioned earlier, teaching at a slower pace may increase effectiveness of principle mastery.

Based on results from the present study, three additional suggestions will be made for what educators can do to increase enrollment and/or reduce student attrition in Korean language classes. These include advertising the course in a manner that appeals to students' initial motivations, teaching the course at hours where students are less likely to have schedule conflicts, and creating a language lab that offers tutoring.

First, 91% of students responding to the survey said they were motivated ("high" or "mid" answer) to take Korean because it looked interesting and because "it's an important language." Eighty-five percent were similarly motivated for future career benefits (mean: 69%, standard deviation: 17%). Considering these motivators, it seems that promotional activities (i.e. fliers, booths in the student union, cultural activities, etc.) around campus catered to these motivating factors may increase enrollments. In addition, creating classroom activities that cater to these motivations (i.e. Role playing business interactions, practicing buying and selling, working with money, etc.) may decrease attrition.

Next, 70% of students responding to the survey chose 'schedule conflicts' as an important factor ("high" or "mid" answer) in deciding to stop taking Korean (mean: 40%, standard deviation: 17%). Therefore, offering more class times or teaching the course at a less popular hour (early morning or late afternoon, perhaps) may be the best way to decrease student attrition. In addition, for students who are serious about continuing Korean but have major required courses that conflict with the daily schedule, it may be appropriate to allow students to attend the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday sessions or the Tuesday and Thursday sessions and have them work with the TA during office hours or in the language lab to keep up with the class work.

Seventy-seven percent of students responding to the survey noted that the addition of a language lab that offered tutoring would have been an important factor in influencing them to continue (mean: 48%, standard deviation: 17%). If resources allow, this could be another option to prevent high attrition rates. However, at the university where this study was conducted there are teaching

assistants, who have mandatory office hours, available to all students for approximately twenty hours each week. Their services are rarely utilized.

Conclusion

This study set out to measure attrition rates in Korean language classes at a large university in the United States, to determine reasons for Korean language class enrollment and reasons for attrition, and to consider what educators can do to address high rates of attrition in language courses.

It was determined that students took Korean primarily because they heard it was interesting, thought it was an important language, saw future career benefits, and/or because they had Korean heritage. Interestingly enough, student expectations were reasonable; most began in Korean 101 with a desire for proficiency in basic words and phrases or somewhat conversational fluency. Most (90.5%) students were satisfied with their grades in the class. However, this study observed an average attrition rate from the 101 class to the 202 class of 85%. As stated before, timing was the biggest issue: students indicated that the most important factor in deciding to quit Korean was that it didn't fit their schedules. Anxiety did not appear to be a major factor in attrition; most students felt that they were either good or average at learning languages. However, one high-stress activity for almost half of those who responded to this question was being evaluated on their Korean ability. When asked what would have motivated them to continue taking Korean, it became apparent that by offering more times to take a class (possibly with smaller class sizes), and by creating a tutoring/ language lab, many students would continue to take it.

This study has several implications for further research. The first of these involves a new analysis of the data presented here, comparing heritage versus non-heritage student responses. This analysis was beyond the intended scope of the present paper. Other comparisons may be made, including if/how one's gender, etc. affects their motivations. Next, if the administration of a Korean program decides to apply some of the suggestions outlined here to decrease attrition, a significant study would compare attrition rates and student survey responses before and after any change(s).

Additionally, it may prove insightful to study categories of motivating factors (i.e., instrumental motivation) and determine whether or not, for example, various instrumental factors about which students responded are statistically correlated, and if so, how they compare to other categorical groups (i.e., integrational motivation, etc.).

Additionally, there were several limitations. First, religious motivations may have been addressed specifically in the survey to determine if these had any impact on student enrollment and/or attrition. Next, this sample was a response/convenience sample. While as far as the authors know, this study is the first to present student attrition rates in university-level Korean language classes, it calls for a more methodical approach in the future, with either all students or a random sample of students completing the survey.

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Appendix A
Survey

1. When did you take Korean 101?

Fall 2005   Fall   Fall   Fall   Fall   Fall2010

2. What was the last Korean Class you took?

101   102   201   202   301   still

3. Please indicate on the scale how important each factor was in deciding to take Korean 101.

	Less				**More**
I have Korean Heritage	1	2	3	4	5
It fulfills an academic requirement	1	2	3	4	5
I heard it was interesting	1	2	3	4	5
I like Korean pop culture	1	2	3	4	5
I have a Korean friend/significant other	1	2	3	4	5
Its an important language	1	2	3	4	5
Future career benefits	1	2	3	4	5
It looked interesting	1	2	3	4	5
Other/Comments:_____	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please indicate how important each factor was in deciding to stop taking Korean.

	Less				**More**
I lost interest in Korean	1	2	3	4	5
I fulfilled my academic	1	2	3	4	5
I learned all the Korean I wanted	1	2	3	4	5
It was too difficult	1	2	3	4	5
I wasn't learning as much as I wanted	1	2	3	4	5
I wasn't comfortable moving up to the next	1	2	3	4	5
I no longer had a Korean friend/significant	1	2	3	4	5
It was too time consuming	1	2	3	4	5
It didn't fit my schedule	1	2	3	4	5
It wasn't challenging enough	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Korean was	1	2	3	4	5
Other/Comments_____	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please indicate how much each of the following would have influenced you to continue taking

	Less				**More**
Less time consuming	1	2	3	4	5
Offered at a different time	1	2	3	4	5
Taught by a different teacher	1	2	3	4	5
Different classroom environment/activities	1	2	3	4	5
Less rigorous coursework	1	2	3	4	5
More rigorous	1	2	3	4	5
The addition of a language lab offering tutoring	1	2	3	4	5
Less stressful	1	2	3	4	5
Other/Comments	1	2	3	4	5

6. How proficient did you want to become when you first started Korean 101?

a. Like a native   **b.**   **c.** Somewhat

d. Only basic words and phrases   **e.** No expectations about

7. Did you receive satisfactory grades in your Korean classes?

a. Yes, I did as well as I had hoped

b. No, I did not get the grades I had hoped for

8. Are you Male/Female ? (please circle one)

9. What is your Major?   _____

10. Do you have ?

a. One Korean parent   b. Two Korean parents   c. I'm adopted from Korea   d. No Korean parents

Other Korean

11. How good do you consider yourself at learning languages?

Very Poor   **Very**

       1   2   3   4   5

12. Please indicate how stressful each activity was in learning Korean.

	Less Stressful				**More**
Speaking Korean in class	1	2	3	4	5
Taking	1	2	3	4	5
Being evaluated on your oral Korean	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Figure 1. Initial Desired Level of Korean Proficiency

6. How proficient did you want to become when you first started Korean 101?

	# of Respondents	% of Total
a. like a native	12	9.38
b. fluent	28	21.88
c. somewhat conversational	34	26.56
d. only basic words and phrases	50	39.06
e. no expectations about proficiency	4	3.13

Figure 2. Stress Levels for Class Activities