

# The role of pragmatic education in avoiding miscommunication between native Korean speakers and Russian learners of Korean

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## I . Introduction

Recognizing the fact that no language is culture-free, it is apparent that learning a second language implies learning a second culture. Language users use a language in a certain cultural context that imposes conditions to apply certain communicative functions. It follows that the imposing conditions would differ from one culture to another culture. So, language can be thought as a part of culture, not just an entity closely related to culture. It then follows that understanding the

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culture of the member of a society is a most essential part for the foreign language learner.

It's a well-known fact that cultural difference may provide a basis for communication breakdown and misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication because a certain communicative behavior is not expected or expected in some cultures. As shown in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Worf, 1956), people tend to interpret speech acts through the filter of first language and culture. The main problem of sociocultural miscommunications is that a failure in communicative competence can be perceived as 'an intentional act, not a mistake' (Gass & Varonis, 1991 : 130). That's why understanding of communication rules, sociocultural norms, and inferences involved in conversation are very important in language teaching and learning for effective communication in intercultural interactions. In addition, grammatical miscommunications can be found in the difference between the grammars of the interlocutors' native languages<sup>1)</sup>. Grammatical miscommunications are also can be caused by cultural differences (e.g. usage of the possessive pronoun 'our' instead of 'my' in Korean).

Without a pragmatic focus, foreign language teaching raises students' metalinguistic awareness, but it does not contribute much to develop their metapragmatic consciousness in L2

As pointed out in Kasper (2001 : 503~504), although compared to

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1) In this paper I will follow the classification of miscommunications proposed by Gass & Varonis(1991) who presented two main sources of communication breakdown : sociocultural and grammatical miscommunications. The former relates to the ways in which conversation is perceived, including the indirectness/politeness continuum ; the latter relates to the grammar of language.

studies of L2 grammatical development, the history of research on L2 pragmatic development is neither long nor particularly rich. He discerns three phases of emphasis. 1) A few early studies that were conducted as explicit test cases of Canale & Swain (1980)'s framework. The first comprehensive investigation of the development of communicative competence was Schmidt's study (1983), which expanded the prevalent focus on interlanguage structure to functional aspects of L2 acquisition. 2) The second phase of developmental L2 pragmatics examined learners' pragmatic ability as an independent component. Grammar and, to a much lesser extent, discourse and strategic competence (Hassall, 1997), were discussed as some among a range of possible factors that influence pragmatic development, but their relationship to learners' pragmatic ability was not the focal research question (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999). The most prominent of these perspectives are information processing hypotheses, sociocognitive theory, and language socialization theory. 3) Recently, a concurrent interest in the relationship of pragmatic and grammatical knowledge and their development has reemerged.

It is my view that learning pragmatics entails mastering both linguistic forms and socio-cultural knowledge. In order to prevent communication breakdowns between Russian learners of Korean and native Korean speakers, researches on causes and types of both grammatical and socio-cultural miscommunications should be done. The results of such researches should be reflected in Korean language teaching materials, Korean language curriculum, that is well integrated into a Korean education field. Assuming that sociocultural and grammatical miscommunications caused by differences between Russians and Koreans can become a barrier in communication between

Russians and Koreans, an attempt to explore the nature and main sources of such miscommunications between native speakers of Korean and Russian learners of Korean language is made in this study. In this study I attempt to analyze the main sources of socio-cultural and grammatical miscommunications between native Russian-speaking students of the Korean language and Koreans in order to better understand the nature of the associated language barrier.

## II. Miscommunications between Russian learners of Korean and native Korean speakers

### 1. Research methods

The data referred to in this study emanates from interviews with eighteen Russian respondents. The population of the survey represents graduate students at Korean universities (9), scientific research professionals employed by Russian/Korean universities (5), migrant women married to Koreans (4). The survey involved 12 female and 6 male participants with an in-country experience ranging from 2 years to 8 years. About 72% of them majored in Korean language and have a good command of Korean language (advanced level and above). 28% of respondents have the intermediate level of Korean language. Russian respondents were asked to think about any funny (strange, irritating, etc.) situation where miscommunication with Korean person took place, though the respondents knew the meaning of all the words used by

their Korean counterpart. The answers of the respondents were systemized to find out common types and spheres of miscommunication.

## 2. Results and discussion

### 1) Socio-cultural miscommunications

The most serious type of miscommunication is caused by the deep features of the cultural background of the people in contact. Interactants may evaluate the behavior of other participants according to their own cultural and communicative norms (Mariott, 1995). This is true in both mono-cultural and multi-cultural contact situations. However, in intercultural situations, misunderstandings and miscommunications are more frequent because the behavior of participants reflects more divergent underlying communicative and socio-cultural norms. Yet interactants are for the most part not fully aware that their evaluation of other's behavior is rooted in culturally-based "ways of talking", and they generally conclude that their interlocutors are "difficult", "awkward", or the like. This phenomenon is labeled "dissonance" or "socio-cultural miscommunication" (Mariott, 1995 ; Öberg, 1995). It often results in failure to reach common understanding, particularly when misunderstandings are linked to the affective or relational dimension of interaction. Lack of knowledge about conversational norms related to social and cultural backgrounds lead to pragmatic failures, i.e. an inability to understand "what is meant by what is said" (Thomas, 1983).

These differences can further be found in such communicative

functions as making complements, greetings, expressing disagreement, gratitude, opening/closing conversations, making requests and so on.

### ① Compliments/responding to complements.

In Russia and in the Western countries, a compliment is often used to 'maintain social harmony and to sustain social interaction' (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991 : 158). In contrast with the Russian and European culture, in Korea, a compliment to the speaker is restrained since it might appear to be a sort of flattery when spoken in the face of the speaker. Also, self-appraisal is considered to violate a cultural virtue of being humble and modest for the Koreans. Also, for the Koreans to respond to a compliment as Russians do sometimes can be considered arrogant. Let us compare the Russian and Korean styles of responding to a complement.

〈Table 1〉 Response to a complement

Russian style of response	Korean style of response
–Какая красивая сумочка! (That's a nice bag!)	–와우, 가방 정말 예쁘네요(Your bag is really nice).
–Спасибо(Thanks).	–아니, 별 거 아니에요./별로 좋은 거 아닌데요 꿰[lit., Oh, no. It's nothing/It's no so good].
	–그래도 정말 예뻐요(Nevertheless, it looks really nice).

It should also be noted, that the speaker usually does not really mean that the object of the compliment is not praiseworthy at all. Such kind of respond can be considered as a way to demonstrate one's modesty and thank the collocutor for the compliment at the same time. '별 거 아니에요' is not the only way to respond to a compliment, answers like '정말, 나도 마음에 들어(Really? I also like it)<sup>2)</sup>/‘고마워

2) This style of response to a compliment('정말, 나도 마음에 들어') is more characteristic

(요)(thanks)' are also possible.

Also, Koreans often use a word ‘부러워요 (I envy you)' when they are trying to express their admiration of someone's talents, success etc. This wording is thus also regarded as a kind of compliment. In the Russian culture, a person who envies others is considered to be an evil person. This is why usually a Korean who says 'I envy you' is perceived as a bad or hostile person.

## ② Giving gifts. Offering food to guests.

The Korean cultural virtue of being humble and modest is also reflected in various communicative functions, such as giving gifts or offering food to the guests. Russians can be a little bit puzzled when a Korean giving them a gift tells them that this present is not good, or when Koreans inviting guests to sit at a table say that they did not prepare any food.

〈Table 2〉 Giving presents

Russian	Korean
Разрешите преподнести вам этот подарок (Let me give you this present).	별 것 아니지만, 받아 주세요(Here's a worthless gift, please, take it).

Usual reaction of Russians is something like this : 'If the present is really not good, why are you giving it to me?'.

〈Table 3〉 Offering food to guests

Russian	Korean
Прому за стол. Угостайтесь (Please, take a sit. Help yourself).	차린 건 없지만, 끓이 드세요.(Lit. We did not prepare anything, but enjoy your meal).

Normally, this Korean phrase sound strange to most Russians who hear it for the first time. The first thing a Russian would think is usually 'If you did not prepare anything, what should we eat then? How strange.', though for Koreans it's just a courteous phrase for offering food to guests.

### ③ Disagreement and refusal.

Koreans don't freely express their disagreement and refusal as Russians do. Koreans are more likely to prefer more indirect communication style, than Russians. It's also unusual to express their disagreement in a direct way, especially to senior. On the other hand, according to Ten (2009 : 28-29) Russians experience a significant discomfort and high pressure when communicating with Korean seniors. Koreans usually avoid saying 'no' or about negative results. Such indirectness of Korean people is another source of misunderstandings for Russians, who expect verbal promises should be kept, while saying 'no' directly is ok. Very often when Russians need Koreans to do something and they are not able to do it, anyway, Koreans reply positively or avoid the direct answer and use indirect expressions that are very difficult to understand for Russians.

〈Table 3〉 Disagreement and refusal

Russian	Korean
–Не согласен (I disagree).	–글쎄요 (Well).
–У меня другое мнение (I have a different view on that).	–어렵겠는데요.(I think it is going to be difficult).
–Не могу с вами согласиться (I can not agree with you).	–곤란한데요(I'm in a difficult position).
–Я так не думаю (I don't think so).	–지켜봅시다./한번 봅시다(Let's wait and see).

—Думаю, это невозможно (I think, it's impossible).	—무슨 수가 있을지 생각해봅시다(Let's think what we can do about that).
—К сожалению, ничем не смогу помочь в ам (Unfortunately, I will not be able to help you).	—시간이 걸리는 중이에요. 생각보다 시간이 많 이 걸릴 것 같아요(It will take more time than I thought).

So sometimes, it's rather difficult to understand whether Korean refused indeed or not. Sometimes, this kind of misunderstanding complicates further the communication process between Russians and Koreans.

#### ④ Greetings.

Usually Russians find Korean greetings very interesting and amazing, though beginner learners which are not exposed to Korean culture elements seldom understand their meaning and as a consequence get confused and fail to fulfill the communication task.

For example, if you were asked in the morning ‘어디 가세요?’ It usually doesn't mean than someone is trying to find out where are you going, it can mean good morning, and it's not necessary to tell in details where are you going and why. ‘어디 갔다 오세요?’ can also be a greeting and mean ‘good evening’. And ‘진지 잡수셨어요?/점심 먹었어요?/ 아침 하셨어요?’ is also can be regarded as a greeting not requiring the exact information about meals you ate today.

Russian students of Korean often try to answer these questions not realizing that they are just greetings. In the same fashion the Russian students can be confused when Koreans (even those they don't know very well) ask such ‘strange’ questions about their private life such as

‘Where are you going?’, ‘Did you have lunch?’, etc. A question like ‘Did you eat?’ in Russia can sometimes be addressed to a person who does not work well. In this way this Korean greeting can also be interpreted by the Russians as a reproach. The question ‘**오셨어요?**’ sounds strange as well to an average Russian person : ‘It's obvious that I came in here. Is there any need to ask this unnecessary question?’. When you are talking on the phone, you can also encounter expressions like : ‘**들어가세요.**’ When I heard it for the first time I was a little bit puzzled and could not understand where I had to go. But it means just a kind of greeting that means “bye”. Welcome expression also sounds interesting to Russians — if you translate it directly into English it will be something like ‘come quickly’.

〈Table 4〉 Russian and Korean greetings

Russian	Korean
Доброе утро. (Good morning.)	—어디 가세요?(Where are you going?) —아침을 하셨어요?(Did you have breakfast?)
Добрый вечер. (Good evening.)	어디 갔다 오세요?(Where are you coming from?)
До свидания. (Goodbye. Lit. Until (next) meeting./ See you)	—들어가세요.(Go in) —다녀오겠어요. 다녀올게요.(I'll go and come). —(안녕히) 다녀오세요.(Go and come back(peacefully)).
Добро пожаловать. (Welcome)	—어서 오세요.(Come quickly.)
Здравствуйте.(Hello. Lit. Be in good health).	—진지 잡수셨어요?/식사 하셨어요? / 밥 먹었어요(Did you eat your meal?) —오셨어요?(Did you come?)/ 안녕히 다녀오셨어요(Did you go and come peacefully?) 안녕하세요?(Are you peaceful?)

## ⑤ Starting conversation

Many respondents said also that the Korean phrases for starting a

conversation were quite hard to comprehend, especially when they heard them for the first time. Let us consider the following example.

Korean : (저기) 있잖아요 (There is..).

Russian : ?? (??What is over there?).

#### ⑥ First meeting conversation

Koreans can discuss private, personal, intimate matters during first conversation. The most typical questions Koreans tend to ask during first meeting are as follow. (몇 살이에요?/나이)가 어떻게 되세요? (How old are you?) ; 남자(여자) 친구 있어요? (Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?) ; 결혼하셨어요? (Are you married?) ; 아이가 있어요? (Do you have children?) ; 무슨 일을 해요? (What is your occupation?), etc.)

In Russia such questions are usually asked between friends, but not when one meets an almost unfamiliar person for the first time. In Russia, age and social status are not so important as they are in Korea. On the other hand, Koreans need to confirm as much detail about your personal background as possible in order to place you into the right niche in the system of social hierarchy. Korean personal relationships are characterized by a strict vertical structure, and Korean language reflects this structure to a great extent. For that reason, without knowing one's social ranking (determined by one's age, occupation, etc.) it is difficult for Koreans to decide what language style to use and how to address you in a conversation. It is also pointed out in Ten (2009 : 49) that in Korean culture it is necessary to ask personal questions to find out the social standing of the counterpart and establish seniority, but is misinterpreted by Russians as bluntness and lack of sophistication. Comments or questions about appearance, age,

family status or income can be even insulting to Russians.

## 2) Grammatical miscommunications

Russian students usually suffer also so-called grammatical miscommunications caused by phonetical, syntactic and lexical differences. However, in this study I will only focus on the lexical and syntactic differences

### ① Pronouns.

#### a. Pronoun omitting in Korean.

Koreans often omit personal pronouns, so it's sometimes quite difficult for us to understand whether they are talking about themselves or someone else. Russians usually get confused and fail to get the main idea of the utterance.

〈Table 5〉 Pronoun omitting

Russian	Korean
Я хочу изучать чайную церемонию (I'm going to learn the tea ceremony).	다도를 배워 보려고 해요 (Going to learn the tea ceremony).

#### b. Usage of the possessive pronoun 'our' instead of 'my'.

Russians are usually a little bit puzzled when they hear such expressions like 'our husband' or 'our wife'. Such misunderstanding is also caused by the lack of Korean culture understanding. Korea is a high-context collectivist culture and it finds its reflection in language.

⟨Table 4⟩ possessive pronounces 'our' and 'my'

Russian	Korean
Моя страна (my country)	우리나라 (our country, Korea)
Мой дом (my house)	우리 집 (our house)
Мой муж/моя жена (my husband /wife)	우리 남편/우리 집사람(our husband /wife)
Моя сестра/мой брат (my sister/brother)	우리 언니(누나)/우리 형 오빠/ 우리 동생(our sister/brother)
Любимый мой /любимая моя (my darling)	우리 자기야(our darling)

c. Personal pronoun substitution by kinship terms, professional titles.

Korean society is characterized by a strict vertical structure, which makes the interpersonal relationships among Koreans also vertical. Korean terms for address and reference reflect this vertical way of thinking. It is normal practice in Korean conversation to substitute for personal pronouns with professional titles and kinship terms. Let us consider some examples.

⟨Table 5⟩ Russian and Korean terms of address

	Russian	Korean
University	Иван Петрович (Name+Middle Name)	선생님(Teacher) 교수님(Professor)
Company	Иван Петрович (Name+Middle Name)	과장님(head of a section) 부장님(head of a department) 사장님(president of a company)
Family/ Friends	Ира (Affectionate nickname) Саша (Affectionate nickname)	언니(elder sister) 형(elder brother)

When Russian students address Koreans by their names, that usually sounds strange and offensive to Koreans. For example, consider the following dialogue that occurred during Korean class :

—Russian beginner student (addressing to the teacher) :

전문○!!! (Korean teacher's name).

—Korean teacher : ?? (displeased)

Korean first person pronouns are often substituted for with such words as 언니, 엄마, 아빠, 오빠, etc. For that reason it sounds to Russians that Koreans are not talking about themselves, but about someone else. (e.g. 엄마가 해줄게. Mother will do it for you. (=I will do) ; 언니가 도와줄게. Elder sister will help you. (=I will help).)

On the other hand, the Russian beginner learners tend to use such personal pronouns as ‘너/당신’ quite often, which is why they can sound strange or even rude.

—Russian student : 당신이 러시아에 언제 왔어?

—Korean students : ??(slightly smiles)

## ② Yes/No questions respond.

We usually give responses to yes/no questions in absolutely different ways. If you ask a Russian 거기 가지 않았어요? he/she can answer you 아니오 (meaning No, I did not go there, 거기 가지 않았다), while Korean 아니요 will mean — No, I go there, 거기 갔어요.

Such differences also provides a basis for miscommunication between Russians and Koreans.

## ③ Asymmetrical and different speech levels.

### a. Kinship terms

〈Table 6〉 Kinship terms

Russian	Korean
Дядя (uncle)	친삼촌(uncle of father's side) ; 작은 아버지 (uncle of fathers side) 외 삼촌(uncle of mother's side)
Тётя (aunt)	고모(aunt on father's side) ; 이모(aunt on mother's side) 작은 어머 니(uncle's wife)
Бабушка (grandmother)	친할머니(grandmother of father's side) ; 외할머니(grandmother of mother's side) ; 작은 할머니(wife of grandfather's younger brother of father's side) ; 큰 할머니(wife of grandfather's elder brother of father's side)
Дедушка (grandfather)	친할아버지(grandfather of father's side) ; 외할아버지(grandfather of mother's side) ; 작은 할아버지(grandfather's younger brother of father's side) ; 큰 할아버지(grandfather's elder brother of father's side)
Сестра <sup>3)</sup> (sister)	언니(elder sister for a girl) ; 누나(elder sister for a boy) ; 언 동생 (younger sister)
Брат (brother)	오빠(elder brother for a girl) ; 형(elder brother for a boy) ; 남 동생 (younger brother)

The system of kinship terms is also vertical and hierarchical, as is the Korean society as a whole. So it is rather difficult for the Russians to deal with lots of Korean kinship terms that sometimes can have the same meaning in Russian.

#### b. Masculinity : Women' s speech and men's speech.

Korean masculinity is well reflected in the Korean language. Korean women (especially aged women)'s speech tends to be less assertive and more subservient to men's, as shown in the example below.

Wife : 당신이 해 보세요(Why don't you try?)

3) Usually Russians don't use such words as 'elder/younger' when referring to sisters and brothers (especially if there is no need to emphasize the age of their sisters and brothers).

/higher pronoun 당신] polite style of speech –‘해요체’/

Husband : 자네가 해 봐.(You try).

/familiar pronoun 자네, intimate level of speech –‘해체’/

Russian women's and men's speech do not differ as much as do the Korean. Russians appreciate equality not only between people of different ages and social positions, but between men and women as well. Different styles of speech used by men and women also may produce an impression of discrimination against women in Korea.

c. Polite and familiar styles of speech.

Korean language has six levels of speech. Russian language has only two. That is why it is difficult for most Russians to decide what level of speech they should use. Levels of speech in Russian and Korean differ not only in their quantity but also in their usage (for example, Russians usually use familiar style of speech when talking to their parents and senior relatives ; Russians can use familiar style of speech to people who are older or who enjoy a higher social status if they are closely acquainted with each other.)

④ Russian and Korean time.

Let us consider the following conversation.

—Korean : 밤에 전화해도 돼? 오늘 밤에 전화할게(Is it OK, if I call you at night?. I'll call you at night.)

—Russian : ??(puzzled)

In the conversation above the Korean person was referring to the period of time that Russians usually call evening. Usually, in Russia

they do not call anyone on the phone after 11 PM unless there is a serious reason to do so. Such kind of misunderstanding can occur because Russians and Koreans have different perceptions of time.

⟨Table 7⟩ Russian and Korean time

	Korean	Russian <sup>4)</sup>
Dawn/새벽	새벽 1시~5/6시	
Morning/아침	아침 6시~11/12시	4~10/11 часов утра /morning/
Day(time)/낮	낮 12시~16/17시	11/12~16 часов дня /day/
Evening/저녁	저녁 17시~20/21시	17~23 часов вечера /evening/
Night/밤	밤 20/21시~24시	24~3 часов ночи /night/

### III. Different cultural types and communication styles

Hall(1976)<sup>5)</sup> distinguishes between two categories of culture with respect to the quality of information conveyed by a message. In some of the cultures information is explicit, it is largely verbalized. These

4) Russians usually don't use the word 'dawn'. Instead of this word we usually use the word 'night'.

5) The research conducted by Hall(1976) and Hofstede(1980), which led to the formation of their oft-cited cultural dimensions, is frequently criticized for being outdated, and especially archaic in their practice of utilizing geographical borders between nation-states as boundaries for cultures. By contrast, in the light of the accelerating process of globalization, cultures are increasingly recognized as fluid and amorphous entities (Morley & Robins, 1995) – never absolute, but constantly in transition. It is acknowledged here that rigid categorizations of populations foster stereotypes, and also that the world has moved on since the 1970s. Thus far, however, there has been no convincing demonstration that relative differences with regard to the prevailing norms in cultures do not exist in practice, and on the basis of this that Hall's and Hofstede's cultural parameters should be discarded completely.

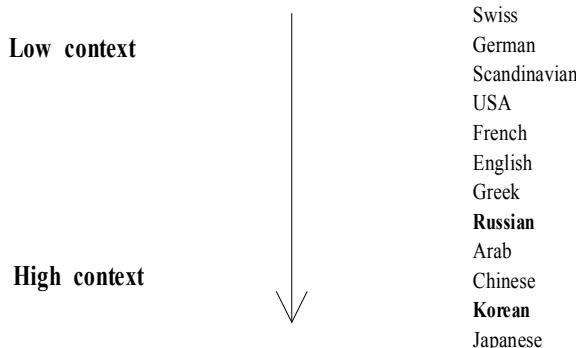
are defined by Hall as low-context cultures. In other cultures, utterances cannot be understood solely on the basis of the language-related signs. They can be adequately interpreted only if the context is known. Such cultures are defined as high-context cultures (Hall 1976 : 91).

The concept of high- and low-context communication is associated with the theory of individualistic-collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988 ; Hofstede 2001). Individualistic cultures (for example, Germany, United States, Scandinavian countries) are referred to low-context cultures ; collectivistic cultures (Asian countries—Japan, China, Korea ; Arabic and other countries) are referred to high-context cultures (Hall 1976 ; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988 ; cited in Samovar & Porter 2004 : 77).

In individualistic low-context cultures private life is separated from the other life spheres, thus the interlocutors do not know much about each other and for communication they need detailed information (Hall 1976, Hall & Hall 1990 : 6~7). In collectivistic high-context cultures people are involved in close relationships with family members, friends, colleagues ; they have extensive information about the life of people around them and therefore do not impart detailed information (Hall 1976, Hall & Hall 1990 : 6~7). Thus, when people from low context cultures converse with people from high context cultures, there can be cultural misunderstandings or conflicts : people from high context cultures might perceive low context people relying on verbal messages as less credible, whereas people from low context cultures might perceive high context people employing indirect and implicit mode of communication as being devious and inscrutable.

Russian culture is not a low-context culture as are the Western

European or American ones, however, it is not a high-context culture as the Korean one, either.



⟨Figure 1⟩ Contextual background of various countries<sup>6)</sup>

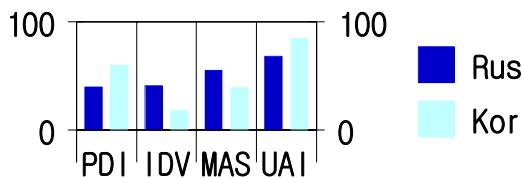
In Korea, people feel relatively less need to verbalize what they feel or think, because Koreans know each other so well that enough information has already been amassed and shared among them. Ethnically, Korea is still one of the most homogeneous and endogamous countries in the world. Another reason for better knowledge of each other and contributing to the use of silence is that Koreans emphasize closer and more consistent social relationships. Korean people like to establish and belong to various groups, clubs, bodies, or associations where they find their identity, security, status, and even their dignity. In addition, Korea is a small country in terms of population and area.

By comparison, Russia belongs to a group of relatively higher verbal cultures where nonverbal channels are of less importance for communication. There seems to be a historical, ethnical background

6) Patterned after E.T. Hall.

behind Russia's higher verbal culture (comparing to Korean one). People living in Russia are from diverse ethnic, language and cultural backgrounds : there are more than 130 nationalities, which live in the territory of Russian Federation. This greater cultural diversity made verbal skills more necessary than in Korea. Here one language, Russian, played a great part in integrating this diversity.

Expanding on Hall's definition, Hofstede (1980)<sup>7)</sup> examines four principal dimensions of culture : power distance index (PDI), individualism (IDV), masculinity (MAS) and uncertainty avoidance (UAI). Let's compare Korean and Russian cultures according to these 4 dimensions<sup>8)</sup>.



〈Figure 6〉 Russian and Korean culture

Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Korea boasts a relatively high index of power distance (60), while in Russia this index is lower (40).

7) After conducting an additional study, Hofstede(1991) added a long-term and short term orientation factor. Korean culture is a highly long-time oriented culture, while the Russians do not have a definite time orientation ; instead, they have periods of long-term and short-term time orientation.

8) Source : Naumov, A.I. and Puffer, S.M.(2002) ; [http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_south\\_korea.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_south_korea.shtml)

South Korea has a low individualism rank of 18, Russian coefficient of individualism equals 41. The score on this dimension indicates whether the society is collectivist as compared to individualist. Korean society comparing to the Russian one fosters stronger relationships between its members and everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

Masculinity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders. Hofstede proposes that gender roles are clearly distinct in a society classified as a masculine society where men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success and women are supposed to be more modest and tender, and concerned with the quality of life. According to Hofstede, Korean masculinity index is 39, while Russia has a higher masculinity rank of 55.

South Korea's highest Hofstede dimension is uncertainty avoidance at 85, while Russia has a lower uncertainty avoidance rank of 68. This indicates that Korean society has a lower level of tolerance for uncertainty. Hofstede (1980) has noted that in cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, the need for rules is highly emotional, leading to behaviour based on rules which tend to be unclear, inconsistent, and unwieldy. In this situation, people can be satisfied with a formal structure and ignore reality. When there is weak avoidance of uncertainty, rules are established only when necessary.

It's true that some pragmatic knowledge is universal, and some aspects may be successfully transferred from the learner's L1. As explained above, Korean culture is a higher-context culture compared to the Russian one. For that reason the commonly shared pragmatic knowledge between Russian and Korean native speakers is not so plentiful. Moreover, even in cases Russians and Koreans do share some

common pragmatic knowledge, L2 recipients often tend towards literal interpretation, taking utterances at face value rather than inferring what is meant from what is said and underutilizing the context information (Kasper, 1997). In this way the differences between pragmatic comprehension of native Korean speakers and the Russian learners of Korean may lead to serious miscommunication.

#### IV. Concluding remarks

According to Kasper & Rose (2001), teaching pragmatic competence is beneficial to both second and foreign language students. Although it is not enough for students to be aware that cross-cultural pragmatic differences exist. Learners also need to understand why such conventions are accepted. Striving for intercultural competence does not mean assimilation into the target culture. Rather, intercultural language learning involves the development of a “third though place” between the learner’s native culture and the target culture, i.e. between self and other (Liddicoat, Crozet & Lo Bianco, 1999 : 181). As a process of developing intercultural competence, the learner needs to decentre from his/her own culture[…], and this can only happen as a result of a deliberate process of teaching which brings to the students the kind of exposure they need to begin the decentring process and the skills and knowledge to understand and interpret these experiences in order to achieve decentring. The study of language exposes learners to another way of viewing the world and develops flexibility and independence from a single linguistic and conceptual system through

which to view the world (Liddicoat, 2004 : 301).

Schmidt (1993, cited in Cook, 1999 : 1) highlights the importance of conscious noticing of linguistic forms, functional meanings, speech styles and relevant contexts. Trosborg (1994 : 481) and Kasper (2001 : 515) also advocate the sharpening of learners' awareness of appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behaviour through explicit teaching and metapragmatic treatment of pragmatic features by way of description, explanation, and discussion. As it is pointed out in Kasper (2001 : 522) teachers must be sufficiently socialized to L2 pragmatic practices, so that they can comfortably draw on those practices as part of their communicative and cultural repertoire, and so that their metapragmatic awareness enables them to support students' learning of L2 pragmatics effectively.

This paper is aimed to contributing to the analysis of the main sources of socio-cultural and grammatical of miscommunications between native Russian-speaking students of the Korean language and Koreans. Differences in culture and communication styles between Russians and Koreans cause Russian learners to get confused when they cross the high context and use certain functions in awkward situations where native Korean speakers don't normally use. Russian students have to be taught cultural aspects, strategies and linguistic forms by which the speech acts are realized in Korean in order to develop their intercultural competence. Without the study of culture, culturally specific patterns of behavior and communication, Korean language teaching is inaccurate and incomplete. The need for cultural pragmatics learning in Korean language education arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to Korean cultural elements, seem to encounter significant hardships in communicating

which may contribute to communication conflict or even hostile stereotyping.

Almost all of the respondents were complaining about their lack of prior knowledge on Korean cultural aspects and their influence on one's ability to communicate in Korean, resulting in various communication breakdowns between them and Korean native speakers. In this way, I believe any Korean language curriculum and Korean language teaching materials designed for the Russian speakers should include a part on these cultural differences and their influence on the process of communication between Russians and Koreans. Without this sort of prior cultural pragmatic education the process of learning Korean language is likely to be far less efficient.\*

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<초록>

## 한국어 원어민과 러시아인 한국어 학습자들 간의 일어나는 의사소통 실패를 예방하는 데 있어 화용 교육의 역할

모출 따지아나

한국어 학습에 있어서 상이한 문화권에 속한 러시아인 한국어 학습자와 한국인 원어민 화자 간에 일어나는 의사소통 실패 현상을 줄일 수 있는 교육 방안은 아직까지도 체계적으로 연구되지 않았다. 이는 러시아인 학습자를 위한 한국어 학습 자료들을 통해서도 확인될 수 있다. 그러나 교재 개발자나 교사들은 현장에 활용할 수 있는 직접적인 자료를 구하기 어려운 것이 현실이므로 러시아인 학습자를 돋기 위해서는 러시아 문화와 러시아어의 영향 관계에 기반을 둔 비교문화적 연구의 활성화가 요구된다. 따라서 본 논문의 목적은 러시아인 한국어 학습자들과 한국어 원어민 화자 간의 상호작용에서 일어나는 의사소통 실패의 양상을 비교문화적 관점에서 고찰하는 데 있다. 우선 Hall(1976)에서 제시한 고맥락과 저맥락, 또한 Hofstede(1980)에서 제기한 문화차원 기준에 따라 러시아 문화와 한국문화를 비교해보았다. 러시아인 한국어 학습자를 대상으로 실시한 설문 조사를 통하여 러시아인이 한국어 원어민 화자와의 상호작용과정에서 러시아인 학습자들이 가장 자주 겪는 러시아인과 한국인의 문화적인 차이와 상이한 의사소통 방식에 따른 의사소통 실패와 장애의 양상과 유형에 대하여 알아보았다. 이러한 의사소통 실패를 예방하기 위하여 한국 문화와 의사소통 방식의 특징을 한국어 학습 자료에 반영할 것을 제안한다.

【핵심어】 의사소통 실패, 비교문화적 화용론, 러시아인 한국어 학습자

<Abstract>

The role of pragmatic education in avoiding  
miscommunication between native Korean speakers and  
Russian learners of Korean

Mozol Tatiana

No systematic studies so far have examined the way how Korean native speakers and Russian learners of Korean language can reduce the extent of communication problems arising as a result of cultural differences between the two groups. Since Korean teachers, as well as Korean textbook authors, are encountering great difficulties in the process of preparation of their teaching materials, the need for preliminary cross-cultural education that would highlight the influence of the Russian cultural and linguistic background on the process of Korean language learning is eminent. This paper is focusing on the different types of communication problems between Russian learners of Korean and Korean native speakers from the cross-cultural point of view. I compare the Russian and Korean cultures based on the low and high context communication criteria suggested by Hall(1976), and on four main cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede(1980).

【Key words】 Russian learners of Korean, miscommunication, cross-cultural pragmatics