

Abstract

In the summer of 2024, I had the opportunity to go to South Korea and learn about their culture, language, and traditions. I was there for a whole month exploring as much as I can. While I was there, I was fascinated by their language, Hunminjeongeum (Hangeul). Hangeul was created by 세종대왕, King Sejong, in 1443. (National Hangeul Museum, n.d.) However, before Korea were using Hangeul they were using Hanja, Chinese characters. Only the upper class had the education to learn Hanja. When Korea was taken over by the Japanese they saw that Hangeul was the nations identity. While in Korea I saw how everyone connected with eachother and the importance of learning Korean.

Introduction

King Sejong created Hangeul because he wanted the lower class to get a chance at an education and the ability to express themselves. At the beginning, Hangeul had 28 scripts in the alphabet, but now it only has 24. The fastest way King Sejong spread knowledge about Hangeul was through religion, Buddhist scriptures. (National Hangeul Museum, n.d.) Later, official documents had translations in Hangeul with them. However, the translations were not required to be attached with the official documents. In 1894 Hangeul became the official writing system and language. (National Hangeul Museum, n.d.) Korea was then taken over by Japan in 1910. The Japanese made their language the official language for Korea. Yet, if Korea was using "Joseon language", their language, it had to relate to the Japanese. (National Hangeul Museum, n.d.) During the 1930's - 1945 Korea was restricted from using Hangeul at all, but that didn't stop them. (National Hangeul Museum, n.d.) The people of Korea kept teaching and researching. In 1945 Korea was free from Japanese rule. During Japanese rule Korea saw that Hangeul was their identity that could not be taken away.

Interviews

- 선생님 김
 - Hangeul is the easiest way to spread information about Korea
 - Small tribes in Southeast Asian countries use Hangeul as their official language
 - A language where its origin can be pinpointed
- Greg Choy
 - Languages is a doorway to broader aggressive thinking mind
 - Identity and language
 - Turned Korea into a literate country
- 이승우
 - Hangeul represents Korea's uniqueness and Independence
 - Understanding Hangeul is essential to get a sense of the culture and the implicit rule of society
 - Unites the Korean people into a community

Methodology

Ethnographic learning was the way I learned about Korea's language, but as well the country. Being there to observe how everyone interacted with one another was informative. Communicating with the locals and comprehending some words they said allowed me to grasp the language. Being able to interview people I met along the way and getting their cultural experiences in Korea. The month in Korea was very active with meetings with important corporations and people and the activities that were planned. There were times where I did solo activities, and they led me to different atmospheres of Korea. It also showed that Korea is a safe place to live, no one bothered me, but assisted when I looked confused. Getting the opportunity to experience an ethnographic learning is impactful. Due to observing reality in a different country, socializing and communication with the locals, and emerging yourself in their way of living. (Eric, n.d.)

Results

- Learning a language takes time, but it is easier when you are immersed.
- Being immersed allows a better understanding of the country and it's culture.
- Hangeul is the identity of the Korea and it's people.
- See how people struggle understanding a new language without any help.

Reflection

Spending a month in another country taught me a lot. I experienced a whole different atmosphere than the one I live in already. Learning their language and trying to speak to people was a struggle but something I would do over again. Especially because the way you could see how there faces glow up seeing a foreigner trying to speak their language. As a future teacher I can understand the feelings of students who primary language is not English. With that I will be able to use the techniques my teachers, in Korea, taught me to allow students to get an understanding of what they are learning. A country's language is an important part of the nation and the people, it makes them who they are.



References:

- Ethnographic learning while studying abroad - eric. (n.d.).
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ608182.pdf>
 National Hangeul Museum. (n.d.).
<https://www.hangeul.go.kr/lang/en/>

