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INTERCULTURALITY AND LANGUAGE TEACHING: EXPERIENCES IN A KOREAN COURSE

INTERCULTURALIDADE E ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS: VIVÊNCIAS EM UM CURSO DE COREANO

INTERCULTURALIDAD Y ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS: EXPERIENCIAS EN UN CURSO DE COREANO

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ABSTRACT
This work aims to highlight the importance of the intercultural perspective in teaching foreign languages, based on a case study in a Korean language course based on the author's experience. The definitions of identity, difference, culture, and language, as well as their interrelationships, and how intercultural perspectives can be applied in the classroom are analyzed. The study investigates the presence of interculturality in the educational environment and how theories are practiced. It is concluded that interculturality plays an essential role in teaching foreign languages, allowing students to better understand the culture of the target language, without resorting to stereotypes, and at the same time respect their own culture as the basis of identity. The theoretical framework includes authors such as Byram, Hall, and Hanna, who discuss identity, culture, and interculturality in the context of language teaching.

KEYWORDS: Interculturality; Foreign language; Korean language; Identity; Socio-cultural.

RESUMO
Este trabalho tem como objetivo destacar a importância da perspectiva intercultural no ensino de línguas estrangeiras, a partir de um estudo de caso em um curso de língua coreana, com base na experiência da autora. São analisadas as definições de identidade, diferença, cultura e língua, bem como suas inter-relações, além de como as perspectivas interculturais podem ser aplicadas em sala de aula. O estudo investiga a presença da interculturalidade no ambiente educacional e como as teorias são praticadas. Conclui-se que a interculturalidade desempenha um papel essencial no ensino de línguas estrangeiras, permitindo que os alunos compreendam melhor a cultura da língua-alvo, sem recorrer a estereótipos, e ao mesmo tempo respeitem sua própria cultura como base identitária. O referencial teórico inclui autores como Byram, Hall e Hanna, que discutem identidade, cultura e interculturalidade no contexto do ensino de línguas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Interculturalidade; Língua estrangeira; Língua coreana; Identidade; Sócio-cultural.*

RESUMEN
Este trabajo tiene como objetivo resaltar la importancia de la perspectiva intercultural en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, a partir de un estudio de caso en un curso de idioma coreano, a partir de la experiencia del autor. Se analizan las definiciones de identidad, diferencia, cultura y lengua, así como sus interrelaciones, así como la forma en que las perspectivas interculturales pueden aplicarse en el aula. El estudio investiga la presencia de la interculturalidad en el ámbito educativo y cómo se practican las teorías. Se concluye que la interculturalidad juega un papel esencial en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, permitiendo a los estudiantes comprender mejor la cultura de la lengua meta, sin recurrir a estereotipos, y al mismo tiempo respetar su propia cultura como base de identidad. El marco teórico incluye autores como Byram, Hall y Hanna, que discuten la identidad, la cultura y la interculturalidad en el contexto de la enseñanza de idiomas.

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***PALABRAS CLAVE**: Interculturalidad; Lengua extranjera; Idioma coreano; Identidad; Sociocultural.*

1 INTRODUCTION

The internet has democratized access to culture, music, and languages, making it easier to exchange ideas globally. In the 21st century, learning a foreign language is essential for improving communication and developing global citizenship, especially in a multicultural context, such as Brazil, where bilingual education has become fundamental (MELLO COSTA DE CARVALHO; DE BONA, 2024). Despite advances in translation, there are still limitations, especially in socio-cultural aspects that technology cannot reproduce. Therefore, learning a language implies understanding the society and culture that use it, avoiding misunderstandings and offenses.

The Korean language, in particular, attracts many students in Brazil, driven by South Korea's economic growth and the popularity of brands like Hyundai and Samsung, which prefer Korean-speaking employees. In addition, the wave of K-pop and K-Dramas, with idol groups such as BTS, has increased the demand for Korean language courses, as many young people want to better understand their music and programs.

The “Korean wave” phenomenon is also related to the South Korean government's investment in its culture, highlighting films and series that have gained international recognition. For example, the series "Round 6" has become one of Netflix's biggest hits, attracting a growing audience interested in Korean culture.

Given these motivations, teaching the Korean language in an intercultural context is crucial. This paper investigates the importance of foreign language teaching in this context, addressing identity, difference, and culture based on Lacan's (1998) theories, as well as exploring how interculturality can be incorporated into Korean language classes.

2 INTERCULTURALITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1 Identity, difference, culture and language

Communication between people always involves culture, identity, and difference. According to Prof. Dr. Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (2003, p. 62), identity is "what one is", an autonomous characteristic. Lacan (1998) describes that the construction of the "I" begins in a baby's first encounter with its reflection, where the basis for future identifications is established.

Kathryn Woodward (SILVA, 2003) adds to this by explaining that the recognition of "I" depends on the perception of the other, emphasizing that identity is relational. For example, saying "I am Brazilian" implies that I am not Chinese or French; identity is defined in contrast to difference (SILVA, 2003, p. 9). Identity and difference are thus linked to systems of cultural and social representation.



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It is crucial to know the other person's social identity when communicating, as factors such as profession or age influence the way they speak. Furthermore, identity and difference are products of acts of linguistic creation, i.e. they are not natural essences, but social constructions (SILVA et al, 2003, p. 64).

Therefore, identity and difference are formed by culture and society and are produced through language. It is now necessary to define what is meant by identity, difference, culture, and language.

2.2 Definition of Culture and Its Relationship with Language

The term "culture" comes from the Latin *colere* and simply means plowing and cultivating the soil, an activity that today is known as "agriculture". "Culture, then, is any human effort and work done in the cosmos to discover its riches and make them available to man for the enrichment of human existence, for the glory of God" (VAN TIL, 2010, p. 32). On the other hand, it is important to be clear that culture is always a human enterprise, so a city is the result of culture, but a beehive, an anthill, or even a beaver dam is not (VAN TIL, 2010, p. 32-33). It is also worth pointing out that, "[...] culture is a social enterprise that is not carried out in isolation, but through interaction and cooperation [...]." (VAN TIL, 2010, p. 35).

Raymond Williams (2002, p.93) opines that a culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained in; and the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested.

> We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life - the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning - the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of these senses; I insist on both, and the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and every mind.

He explains that these are the common processes of human societies and human minds and that we see through them the nature of a culture: that it is always both traditional and creative, presenting both the most common meanings and individual meanings.

Thus, whether traditional or creative, culture is created by human beings, and this culture manifests itself through communication and interaction through language to be experienced in society. Prof. Dr. Terry Eagleton (2011, p. 51) has pointed out that "it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the word 'culture' is both too broad and too narrow", since the anthropological meaning of 'culture' apparently covers everything, while the aesthetic meaning of 'culture' leaves a lot out (EAGLETON, 2011, p. 51-52).

2.3 National culture, globalization, and postmodernism

Discussions on the inclusion of cultural elements in foreign language courses began in the 1970s, initially focusing on the national culture of the target language. Stuart Hall (1987, p. 50) defines national culture as a discourse that shapes actions and perceptions of identity, reflecting the search for a cultural identity that unites past and future. However, national culture is not homogenous; there are differences of opinion and identity between different social classes. Hall points out that trying to unify these differences with the idea of a "single-race" is flawed, as there is no completely pure population, as evidenced by the history of Korea.

Since ancient times, cultures have always interacted. Italo Calvino (1993, p. 11) observes that literary classics bear the marks of their multiple readings and cultural influences. In the modern era, globalization has redefined national culture, making the distances between nations smaller and favoring cultural exchange.

Globalization, with its "space-time compression", means that events in one place immediately impact other regions (HALL, 1987, p. 67). Thus, national culture is no longer seen as something exclusive. Vera Hanna (2019, p. 17) points out that technology and globalization influence language and highlight transnationalization in cultural pedagogy, where the world is a network of interconnected communities.

Stuart Hall (2006) and Ernest Laclau (2022) argue that modern societies are decentralized and characterized by diversity, resulting in multiple identities. Therefore, cultural identity is interconnected and not limited to a single nation or society.

2.4 Interculturality in Foreign Language Teaching

Foreign language education involves a gradual process of exploring the unknown. Johann Amos Comenius (COMENIUS, 2015) was a forerunner in pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of teaching the Latin language in connection with other subjects and with nature. He criticized the practice of teaching written rules without considering the student's understanding: "when beginners in the Latin language are given rules written in Latin" (COMENIUS, 2015, p. 238). Comenius argued that each language has its particularities and that teaching should respect this: "[...] each language has a particular relationship with the Latin language" (COMENIUS, 2015, p. 239).

According to Byram et al (2002, p. 3), knowledge should be interconnected, allowing for gradual construction. Learning a language is an act of communication between cultures, which also involves non-verbal language and understanding the socio-cultural context. Byram's theory emphasizes that "learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways"

From the communicative approach, it became clear that learning a language involves understanding its culture and society. Simple interactions, such as greetings, can cause confusion if

there is no knowledge of the social context, especially in hierarchical cultures. Teaching must therefore take social and cultural aspects into account (NEVES, 2010, p. 9).

Cultural pedagogy covers a wide range of topics, such as everyday life, music, and social conditions. Culture pedagogy, which began with the communicative approach in the 1970s, focuses on practical knowledge for effective communication (RISAGER, 2012, p. 1-2). Hanna (2019) explains that communicative competence involves understanding sociocultural rules and cultural contexts (HANNA, 2012, p. 45-46).

As Byram et al (2002, p. 17) point out, the focus of teaching should not only be on cultural information, but on developing skills for interacting with people from different cultures: "What the teacher should ask is not how much more information about a country and its cultures can I include in the syllabus, but how can I develop those other competences". Living in culturally diverse environments should be taught without prejudice.

The aims of language teaching in the intercultural dimension include helping students to interact as equals and to understand their own identities (BYRAM et al, 2002, p. 5). Culture and identity are fundamental to communication; there is no interaction without them. Brazilian culture, for example, is multifaceted, reflecting a diversity of customs and values. Therefore, interaction in a foreign language between students from different backgrounds is essentially intercultural.

3 CASE STUDIES

3.1 Introduction to the Korean School

The Korean language school "Aliança Coreana", linked to the Água Viva Presbyterian Church, is located in the Perdizes neighborhood in the city of São Paulo. Founded in 2011, it was officially recognized by the Korean Consulate in 2013. Maintained by OKF (The Overseas Koreans Foundation), the school occupies the second basement of the church, which also houses a children's school.

Currently, the Korean Alliance has two classes for children aged 5 to 12, with face-to-face classes on Saturdays from 2:30 pm to 5 pm, as well as five classes for adults and teenagers who have online classes once a week, lasting an hour and a half. The students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Korean, Japanese, Bolivian, and Brazilian descendants. Since March 2020, the school has undergone adaptations due to the Covid-19 pandemic and is now well-established in attracting new students.



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Figure 1: Corridor of the Korean Alliance School



Source: author's collection (2018)

Figure 2: School playground



Source: author's collection (2018)

3.2 Two types of interculturality in foreign language teaching practice

Interculturality is essential in foreign language teaching and should be applied practically in the classroom. Raymond Williams (2002, p. 93) highlights two aspects of culture: the traditional and the creative, both of which deserve equal attention in lesson planning. In this way, we can structure activities to include a part that teaches customs, values, and attitudes, and another that addresses creative arts, such as sports, crafts, and music.

3.2.1 Teaching Traditional Culture

The first step is to know the objectives of lessons taught in an intercultural context. To insert interculturality, which refers to values, attitudes, or etiquette in the classroom, Barry Tomalin et al (1993,

p. 8) adapted and updated seven culturally oriented objectives that Ned Seelye (1984) wrote in his book *Teaching Culture*:

> 1) to help students develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally conditioned behaviors.
> 2) To help students develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence how people speak and behave.
> 3) To help students become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.
> 4) To help students increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
> 5) To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
> 6) To help students develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
> 7) To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people. In our translation.
> (TOMALIN et al, 1993, p.8)

If students don't learn how to greet each other correctly, misunderstandings can arise during the first meeting between a Brazilian and a Korean due to cultural differences. In the first lesson of the Korean for Beginners course, we teach how to say "Hello" and also how to make the first physical contact. We shared a personal experience of the teacher, who, when meeting a Brazilian, was surprised by the difference in greetings: while Koreans greet each other from about a meter away, bowing their heads, hugging, and kissing are cultural clashes. The teacher explained that, despite the differences, immigrants end up adapting to the new culture. She has adopted Brazilian greetings and uses them even among Koreans, which helps to break the students' culture shock and achieve our goal of "helping students become more aware of conventional behaviors in the target culture".

The students have learned to greet according to the social relationship or age of the interlocutor. Although the Korean language may seem complex because it has different forms of address, we highlight simpler aspects, such as the absence of articles and the flexibility of gender. For example, in Korean, there is no differentiation between "Good morning", "Good afternoon" and "Good evening"; the greeting is always the same. Thus, they realized that cultural differences don't make one culture easier than the other and were curious to learn more about the new culture.

A striking feature of the Korean language is that the formality of speech varies according to age or social relationship, requiring the use of titles before or after the name. This poses a challenge, especially for students from Western countries, where such cultural rigidity is less common. Unfortunately, many teachers ignore these nuances when teaching languages to simplify learning. For example, when learning Portuguese, one teacher focused only on the conjugations of "você", without considering "senhor" or "senhora". By the time the students realized that this difference could be seen as disrespectful, a lot of time had passed.

To avoid this kind of mistake, we teach from the start that there are different ways of speaking and that we need to learn to call someone properly in Korean depending on the person we are communicating with. For example, we teach you that a person a year older than you in Korean



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culture cannot be called a "friend". You need to call them "언니" (eónni), or "오빠" (O-ppa) if the speaker is a woman, and "형" (Hyeong), or "누나" (Nuná) if the speaker is a man, which means "older sister" or "older brother", but these words are used for people who are close to you. For this reason, in one of the beginners' classes, we explained these rules and read a conversation from a textbook adopted by the course (KIM, 2020, p.78). The conversation read out was as follows:

- **A**: 누구예요? 친구예요? (Who is he? Is he a friend?")

- **B**: 아니에요, 친구가 아니에요. 형이에요. (No, he is not a friend. He is "Hyeong", the older one.)

Reading this conversation, the students were surprised to ask how older people can't be called "friends". We explained that although friendship is possible, the term "friend" is inappropriate due to the Korean hierarchy, which is based on age or social position. During the lesson, we compared this culture to Brazil's, pointing out that Koreans admire Brazilians' ability to form friendships regardless of age, recognizing the richness of this social interaction. In this way, the students' contact with the language fostered learning that aroused curiosity about the new culture and empathy for the Korean people, while at the same time valuing the positive aspects of their own culture.

When teaching the customs of the target language, we emphasize the importance of verbal and non-verbal language. In Korean culture, the perception of eye contact differs from Western culture: holding a gaze can be interpreted as a desire to argue while looking away is a sign of regret. This small gesture can lead to misunderstandings, making it essential to teach non-verbal language in the classroom.

Since the pandemic, our school has started offering online courses for teenagers and adults, facilitating access for students from different regions and enriching cultural experiences. Students learn that, even within Brazil, there are variations in accents, customs, and cultures, promoting a valuable exchange about their experiences and Korean culture.

Figure 3: Online Korean course for adults and teenagers



Source: author's collection (2022)



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As most of the students live in Brazil, there isn't much contact with Koreans who speak the Korean language. However, many students watch Korean soap operas, enjoy listening to Korean music, and observe Korean customs, attitudes, and values through the media. One way of teaching culture is to use authentic material. Prof. Dr. Vera Hanna explains the importance of using authentic material:

> From menus to product labels, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, articles, books, music, films, television programs, and various cultural products, they allow learners to observe social situations in an environment, customs, behaviors, and interactions of the people of the target language, offering them the opportunity to infer and compare values and attitudes. Dozens more items could be added which would also give students the chance to interpret the most diverse social situations in a disparate cultural environment. (HANNA, 2012, P.59-60)

One practical lesson we did during the Korean course was to study the menu of a Korean restaurant and learn table etiquette, and we met in a Korean restaurant to practice the lesson. The students learned how to say "I'm hungry", "I'm satisfied", "Bon appetit", "It's delicious" or "It's not tasty", as well as the names of Korean dishes. Another cultural point worked on was table etiquette, such as: not lifting cutlery or eating before the elders lift their cutlery; when handing out plates or giving something, receiving or giving with both hands to the older person, as well as the Korean custom of sharing plates or soups.

About these classes, a student in our class commented the following:

> I learned a lot about Korean culture during the class. Very different from Western culture, Korean culture is full of rich details that we are not introduced to in everyday life - since we have more contact with North American and European society - and which are very interesting, such as the use of certain verbal expressions according to the hierarchy within the family, the posture at the table, the care taken with certain gestures (such as handing over a gift or even the change from the market, always with both hands, as a form of respect and gratitude), or even when having a meal with people of different ages and taking care to show respect for the hierarchical position of these people in society, since older people are highly respected by Korean society and this is present at all times in their culture. Not to mention the sense of collectivity that is present not only in verbal expressions but in everyday actions. (Student Karoline)

Figure 4: Practical lesson in the Korean restaurant



Source: author's collection (2022)



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Authentic materials can be used to teach not only culture but also reading, spelling, and even grammar. Prof. Dr. Vera Hanna (2012, P. 60) mentions the following:

> In addition, exposure to authentic material and the contact with the target language it provides lead to the development of lexical-grammatical competence and, at the same time, sociolinguistic competence, since social and cultural aspects are highlighted.

As our class is for beginners, the students started the course with literacy. To encourage students to read in Korean, we prepared posters of Korean series that they like to watch. They found it very interesting how the English words were transcribed into Korean. During the week, the students found Korean letters on the packaging of electronic devices or any television programs in Korean and tried to read the words and share them with their classmates. In this way, they learned Korean spelling through authentic materials.

When the students came to learn about family and relatives, they found it quite difficult, as the names of the degrees of kinship in Korean are much more complex than in Portuguese. For example, uncles or aunts are called in different ways depending on which side of the parents they are from. To make the students feel more familiar with these new terms, we presented family trees from a Korean series to show family relationships. This brought the students closer to the content and, in the end, they introduced their family in Korean.

Figure 5: Authentic material using a Korean series



Source: author's collection (2022)

Regarding the use of authentic materials and practical classroom experiences, a student in our class commented the following:

> Visiting a Korean supermarket added even more to the discussions about cultural aspects (such as the handing over of invoices and receipts by the attendants to the customers using both hands in a form of respect) and gastronomy, enabling us to take home some typical Korean snacks, leading to more conversations in the group reading and translating packaging.
> Exposure is a very important factor in acquiring a new language and this cultural inclusion brings us much closer to it. (Student Juliana)



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Given that there isn't a lesson that doesn't involve cultural issues such as behavior, physical gestures, and formal or informal language, it's worth remembering that teachers' cultural aspects directly influence students. That's why it's important to keep in mind the objectives of the lesson in the intercultural context, always being sensitive not to criticize or stereotype other cultures.

3.2.2 Teaching Creative Culture

In addition to the cultural aspect of tradition, creative culture is another aspect of the nature of culture, and this aspect can be applied in the classroom through creative activities playfully and dynamically. Our school has adopted various types of activities so that students can get actively involved, experiencing interculturality while respecting each other's autonomy.

3.3 Physical activity

A playful way of teaching creative culture is through physical activities, especially in children's classes, which need to be dynamic to motivate learning the new language. Two activities we did were Taekwondo and Korean songs with choreography. Taekwondo, a Korean martial art, allows us to address various cultural aspects. We taught the posture of respect for the master and how to greet him, emphasizing that this practice is not for aggression, but for self-defense. During the classes, the students learned the parts of the body in Korean and how to count from one to ten. At the end of the year, we held a presentation for the parents, where the students received certificates for changing their belts. In this way, they learned the Korean language in a dynamic and contextualized way.

Figure 6: Taekwondo Class



Source: author's collection (2019)

During the pandemic, we faced challenges teaching Taekwondo online, so we adapted the classes to include children's songs with choreography. We started with stretches, counting from one to

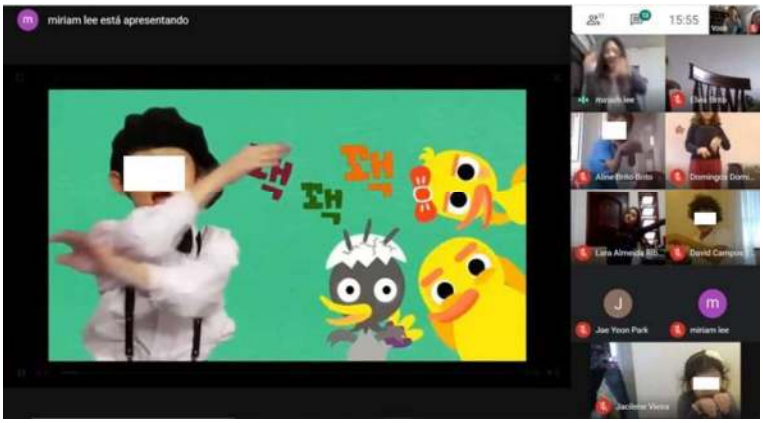


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ten in Korean for each position while learning songs accompanied by gestures. This approach allowed the students to move around, making learning the language more fun.

After learning a song about animals and their onomatopoeia, we compared the corresponding sounds in Portuguese and Korean, highlighting similarities and differences. The students were curious about this, which encouraged spontaneous intercultural learning in the classroom.

Figure 7: Online class learning music about animals



Source: author's collection (2021)

3.4 Handicraft activity

In addition to the physical activities, the crafts promote active interaction between the students and awaken their interest in the new culture. Paper folding, known as origami, is a common practice in South Korea that we applied in class. We used colored paper to teach colors and, as we progressed with the folding, we introduced shapes in Korean. This activity always took place after the vocabulary lesson, allowing the students to associate each animal they had learned - such as pig, dog, and cat - with its respective foldable shape. Recently, we've also learned about fruits and vegetables, such as apples and carrots.

During the pandemic, we adapted the craft activities to include making mask strings, making it easier to learn new words like "mask" and "string". In this way, students learn playfully and engagingly.

3.5 Music Class

Schools in South Korea, even public ones, emphasize teaching music from an early age, including music theory and basic instruments such as the recorder. We tried to implement this approach in our classes, even though most of the students had no previous experience. We started with basic theory and score reading so that they could play the flute.

During the pandemic, we adapted our lessons by sending videos and asking students to record themselves playing. At the end of the semester, we managed to play a Christmas song and record a

collective video. As well as learning the lyrics in Korean, some students sang while others played the flute, allowing them to appreciate Korean culture and have contact with music.

Figure 8: Flute lesson before the pandemic



Source: author's collection (2019)

The percussion instrument course can also teach the Korean language in an intercultural context. Various Korean drums represent folk music, which involves dance and performances. During the pandemic, we opened a drum course, attracting students interested in Korean culture and language, including some who already played Brazilian drums, which generated comparisons of techniques and rhythms.

The students learned about hierarchy in percussion groups, how to shake hands before and after performances, and how to read traditional sheet music. At the end of the semester, we planned a small presentation to show what we had learned.

A student of this course, Bruna Tiemi Ogawa, 29, translator, USP student of Letters, commented on the course:

> I started the janggu lessons with a lot of interest and curiosity, but I had even more pleasant surprises throughout the course. During the lessons, we learned various musical terms specific to the instrument in Korean, as well as basic greetings. Myself and some other students had a basic knowledge of the language and the experience as a whole allowed us to be in a space usually occupied only by native Koreans, which was very enriching, even with communication difficulties. I believe that listening to and observing the conversations and interactions of native speakers, even if you don't fully understand them, contributes in some way to understanding the language (in actual use) and the culture.
> As a practitioner of other types of percussion, I imagined that it wouldn't be easy to reach a certain level on the instrument, but the Korean drum seemed to require even more dexterity and precision, not just rhythm and physical fitness. The classes were very practical and there was an emphasis on repetition, on practicing until the body absorbed the rhythm. Rhythm and breathing were points that I didn't imagine (innocently) would be so different from practicing other drums.
> Another interesting point was the difference in the way of teaching and training. In my perception, some Brazilian students (when practicing sports, learning instruments, etc.) expect or demand explanations of the reasons for a certain method, or a certain exercise. In other words, the teacher needs to explain all the theories (even in a simplistic way) to justify a practice. And in a way, this doesn't always make sense. As long as the student doesn't reach a certain level, or doesn't feel any progress in



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> practice, in their body, the theory doesn't help them. I felt this in my janggu classes. Even when learning the basic theory, the emphasis seemed to be on making mistakes, repeating, feeling, and improving. I'm not saying that this is the "definitive Korean teaching method" and I don't think we can characterize or generalize a people and their culture from this, saying that all Koreans are patient, persistent, and obedient. But in a way, having contact with a new type of relationship between drummer-drummer and player-practice allowed me to get in touch with an aspect of the culture. I can say the same about the rhythm and breathing of the janggu.
> I won't claim that this is the "Korean rhythm", making generalizations that this would also be the rhythm of Korean speech or music as a whole. But I feel that trying to incorporate this rhythm (like breathing that becomes automatic, and natural) connects me more deeply with Korean music and culture.

Another student, Giovana, who is studying Korean and drumming, commented on drumming lessons about the Korean language:

> The drum lessons were a lot of fun for me, as while we were there to learn how to play, I learned many other things about Korean culture, history, and language together with my classmates.
> The lessons showed me a lot about Korean culture, and its history, all based on a question of respect between the teacher, the students, and the instrument. The classes showed me how Korean culture has a unique identity. Just like the drum and other instruments, the music itself is part of Korean culture, so it is a reflection of Korean history and education.
> As well as being introduced to the Korean language in class, there is also the issue that in drum lessons we learn the hierarchies between instruments, and respect between instruments, in this way, I learned the degrees of formality and informality within the Korean language, I realized that even though I was in class to learn to play, I absorbed much more than that, I absorbed about the culture and the language. I also realized that you can't learn a language without understanding the culture of the country, because learning about a country's culture is the basis for understanding what that language is and how it is done. So in the drum lessons, I was able to understand where the Korean language comes from and how it works, I understood during the lessons from basic to more complex questions about the aspects that encompass the Korean language, giving me a greater mastery of the language.

It was observed that the Korean drumming course is a channel for students to take an interest in Korean culture, and they are motivated to learn more Korean to understand all the theories and rhythms.

Figure 9: Korean drum lesson



Source: author's collection (2022)



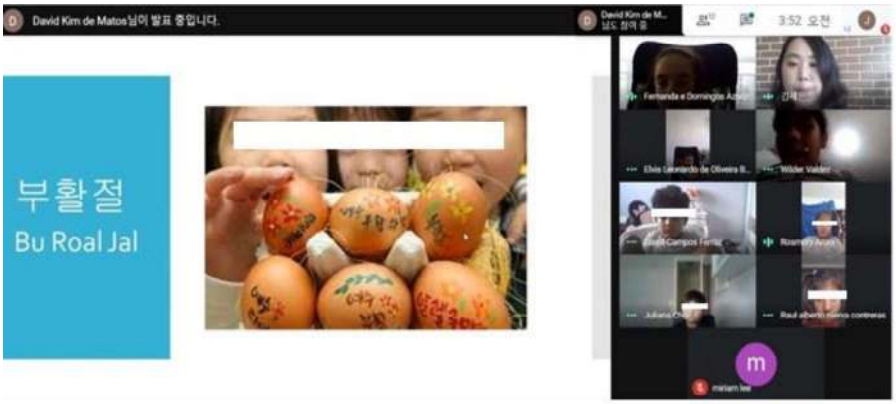
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3.6 Commemorative days

In addition to regular classes, we hold special activities to celebrate Korean holidays such as Father's Day, Easter, and Lunar New Year. By teaching these dates, we explore the similarities and differences between Korean culture and that of the students.

For example, we discussed how Easter is celebrated in South Korea, where it is not a national holiday and is only celebrated by Christians. Unlike in Brazil, where chocolate eggs are common, in Korea people decorate hard-boiled eggs. These comparisons enriched the students' cultural knowledge, helping them to better understand language in an intercultural context.

Figure 10: Learning Easter from South Korea



Source: author's collection (2021)

Another commemorative date we learned about is Father's Day, celebrated in South Korea on the same day as Mother's Day, May 8th. Koreans give carnation flowers to their fathers, and in the folding activity, we made these flowers to give to our mothers.

Around the time of American Thanksgiving, we learned about "Chuseok", the Korean day of Thanksgiving. On this day, we promoted a cultural event, inviting parents, church members, and friends to experience Korean culture, with traditional games, food, and clothing.

One of the students' favorite events is the "Korean Alliance Fair". During the semester, students earn tokens, similar to Korean money, as a reward for their tasks and attendance. These tokens can be used to "buy" Korean stationery and snacks. To take part, they learn useful phrases in Korean, such as "How much is it?" and the numbers to negotiate prices. At the end of the semester, the fair provides an opportunity for the students to practice their language skills by choosing products, negotiating and making payments, and promoting autonomy and engagement with the language.



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Figura 11: Feira da Aliança Coreana



Source: author's collection (2021)

3.7 Cultural events by the Korean Association

In Brazil, there are 27 Korean schools registered by the OKF Foundation (THE OVERSEAS KOREANS FOUNDATION), all linked to the "Association of Korean Schools in Brazil", of which our school is a member. We attend meetings and cultural events together, sharing the diverse cultures of each institution. One of the most popular events is the cultural-historical camp, held annually, where students learn about a specific topic at a retreat site for two days. Since the beginning of the pandemic, this camp has been adapted to an online format.

Last year, the theme was the immigration of Koreans to Brazil, linking the history of each family to the identity of the students. We covered everything from the first immigrants to the current descendants, allowing the students to create family trees, family journals, or handicrafts related to the theme. This encouraged reflection on how each family settled in Brazil and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

This year, the focus was on the origin of Korean letters, teaching about their creation by King Sejong in 1443, who aimed to make reading accessible to everyone. We took part in an art competition using Korean letters, where a student from the adult class won the prize with a graphic drawing of King Sejong, surrounded by elements of Korean culture, resulting in a beautiful work combining the letters.



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Figure 8: Ilustration by student Gabriel



Source: Gabriel Marco de Souza Lisboa (2021)

CONSIDERATIONS

Researching the relationship between language, culture, identity, and difference, it becomes clear that identity arises from difference, shaped by culture and expressed through language. Culture encompasses tradition and creativity and cannot be reduced to a single aspect. When teaching foreign languages, it is essential to consider the intercultural context, since globalization is shortening the distance between cultures. The new generation, especially immigrant children, faces cultural conflicts between the country where they live and the origin of their parents. Kathryn Woodward discusses how immigration impacts identity in the global age. While globalization promotes a certain cultural homogenization, it can also strengthen local identities or generate new ones.

For students to develop a healthy cultural identity, the role of the school is crucial, promoting interculturality without prejudice and emphasizing cultural decentering (HALL, 2006). In a Korean-language school with many students of different cultural backgrounds, we observed that the way cultures are presented can either confuse or broaden students' perspectives. Our school has implemented activities to facilitate coexistence and respect between cultures. Students such as Karoline and Aline pointed out that Korean classes not only expanded their knowledge of the language but also provided an immersion in Korean culture, making learning fun and meaningful. Silvia commented that studying Korean enriched her understanding of songs and soap operas, emphasizing the importance of cultural respect.

These experiences show that identity is unique and formed through interculturality. Thus, teaching languages in an intercultural context is an essential objective in contemporary schools (SILVA, 2014).

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