

Cooperation and Competition in a Korean Middle School English Class: A Case Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the culture of the middle school English classroom from a viewpoint focusing on cooperation and competition. Being basically ethnographic, this study examines the macro- and micro-level context of the interaction among students in class. The findings of this study reveal that the ultimate purpose of cooperation among students as group members in performing a learning task is to win intergroup competitions. In the classroom, the principle of cooperative learning intended by learning activities and the principle of competition pervasive in society collided with each other, and competitive interaction still seems to have a more significant effect on the progress of the class than does cooperative interaction. In a situation without any explicit instruction on cooperative learning, the larger sociocultural context seems to wield a greater influence on the students' behavior than do teaching methods devised by the teacher.

Key words: cooperation, competition, interaction, group work, middle school English class, classroom observation

I. Introduction

Cooperation is one of the virtues inculcated in youngsters and students. In the process of modernization, however, South Korean society has demanded competition from its people in the struggle for existence in our small country. Such competition has been induced on the basis of the recognition that Korea is deficient in natural resources and, for national growth, must therefore develop its human resources above all (Jo, 2001). This competitive tendency among Koreans has been intensified by neoliberalism, which is the central ideology of modern society in the 21st century. Based on the principle of market economy, neoliberalism emphasizes free competition and the maximization of profit. Due to the influence of such a principle, competition has been intensified even in education in order to maximize efficiency and profit.

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The neoliberalist logic of competition and efficiency is easily observed in the Korean government's educational policies. Policies such as the abolishment of high school equalization and the establishment of special-purpose high schools and independent private schools, currently being drafted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE), all aim at inducing competition among schools for the satisfaction of users' demand and the improvement of the quality of education. Another example is the tracking policy implemented under the 7th National Curriculum, which took effect in 2001. Although intended to provide students with education appropriate to their learning abilities and to increase the efficiency of learning, this policy in fact grades students primarily on the basis of their scores, thus forcing them to compete for higher scores in the process.

What we truly need in order to live in the 21st century, however, is not competition but cooperation with others. S.-M. Lee (2002) claims that digitalization based on Internet technology demands as the most important trait the wisdom to live together. This is because the vertical social structure of enterprises is disintegrating in the Internet age, Lee continues, thereby increasing the importance of horizontal relationships among enterprises and individuals. It is therefore expected that, in the future, an individual who can derive creative knowledge from harmonious relationships and shares it with those around him or her will be valued more highly for not only economic but also moral reasons.

Likewise, some teachers agree that, in education, greater emphasis should be placed on cooperation than on competition. The Korean Teachers' Union (KTU) and a number of teachers assert that the goal of education should lie in the fostering of healthy citizens of a democratic society rather than arrogant and selfish individuals. In addition, they claim, education should not isolate the talented few but help them to harmonize with the group and society at large. According to a survey (S.-L. Lee, 2001), middle school English teachers opposed tracking for the reason that it promoted a sense of inequality and decreased learning motivation among students. Some of these teachers answered that, as an alternative to the tracking policy and ability grouping of the 7th National Curriculum, they practiced cooperative learning in heterogeneous groups, whereby students with disparate abilities were grouped together and encouraged to solve problems through mutual cooperation.

The present study is based on the classroom observation of a middle school English class in terms of cooperation and competition. Its purpose is to examine the way in which the principle of cooperation introduced by the teacher and the socially pervasive principle of competition interact and are realized in an actual English class. Through this study, it will be possible to gauge the applicability of cooperative learning theory and its practical difficulties in actual English classes.

II. Theoretical Background

A. Cooperative Learning

According to Olsen and Kagan (1992), cooperative learning is a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (p. 8). Regarding the reason for the implementation of cooperative learning, Kagan (1988) claims that cooperative learning maximizes the learning effect since it motivates students through interaction among themselves. As the advantage of cooperative learning to high-achieving students, Kagan cites an opportunity to acquire leadership, self-esteem, conflict resolution skills, and role distribution skills.

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1991) urge that the following components be structured in each lesson in order for cooperation to work. First, students must be taught to recognize that the group to which they belong is a community with a common fate and that their respective efforts thus contribute to mutual benefit. Second, students must be inculcated with a sense of responsibility for individual and collective development at the same time. Third, interaction must be oriented so as to promote individual learning. Fourth, students must be instructed in interpersonal skills required for small group activities. Fifth, students must review together the degree to which their group has developed as well as the degree to which each member has contributed. In sum, the five components above imply that, in cooperative learning, the discipline of each student is more important than is the seating arrangement or grouping.

B. Cooperative Language Learning

Most research on the effect of cooperative learning on second language acquisition has focused on proving that a group of students who have undergone cooperative learning exhibit a statistically significant increase in their scores on the achievement of specific language skills. Bejarano (1987) reports that learners in an EFL context showed improvements on their scores on listening comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary tests through cooperative learning. Klingner and Vaughn (2000) report that, in a content classroom, cooperative learning facilitated students' reading.

Furthermore, Klingner and Vaughn emphasized the importance of role assignment in cooperative group activities. They clearly defined the students' helping roles and provided instruction on how the students could help one another in order to structure the learning environment in a way conducive to cooperative interaction. Their research findings were that the frequency and type of helping behavior varied according to the personalities, cooperative skills, and English proficiency of group members. Their study suggests that, in cooperative learning, attention must be directed not only to the composition of the learning environment itself but also to the students' orientation.

Active since the late 1990's, Korean research in this field has concentrated mostly on the correlation between cooperative learning and improvements in students' reading skills (Bang, 2002; D.-J. Lee, 1999; Hong, 2000; Jung, 2000; Kim, 2000; Park, 1998). All such research is characterized by its product-oriented approach: it quantified improvements in the students' academic achievement when the treatment of cooperative learning was applied to an experimental or quasi-experimental situation. Such an absence of ethnographic or process-oriented research can be interpreted in two ways. First, because cooperative learning theory has yet to be introduced to teachers, it is rare to find those who voluntarily put it in practice,²⁾ thus making observation in the classroom difficult. Second, qualitative research is avoided because it is an arduous task that demands more time, effort, and expertise than does quantitative research.

In education research, however, all the more necessary is an ethnographic research in which the observer endeavors to perceive the reality of a classroom environment from the viewpoint of the class participants. Such qualitative research enables the researcher to interpret the events in the broader context of the classroom. Loughrin-Sacco (1992), through ethnographic research, further revealed macro-level constraints on teaching and learning in the foreign language classroom. These constraints were institutional and social, including the competitiveness of the institution, low priority of the elective courses, and the mixed levels of students in any given class. In order properly to understand classroom culture, it is therefore necessary to conduct a macro-level analysis of the relevant institutions and society at large.

III. Research Methods

The present study was conducted in the first semester of academic year 2002. Basically ethnographic, it aimed at discovering the phenomenal characteristics of the 8th-grade English class through classroom observation.

A. Participants and Setting

1) The Teacher

The participant was Ms. Shin,²⁾ a middle school English teacher. A calm yet enthusiastic and committed teacher with a teaching experience of nine years, she voluntarily served as an executive of the Korean English Teachers' Group (KETG)³⁾ and had studied

2) An example of an open organization that researches and practices cooperative learning in relation to English education is the Ulsan English Teachers' Group (UETG), which is a research group under the Korean English Teachers' Group (KETG). For more information, refer to their web site (<http://uetg.njoyschool.net>).

2) This is an alias.

grammar instruction, classroom activities, and cooperative learning in a sub-group of the same organization for over a year. The reason she had been selected for the present study was that she endeavored to realize cooperative learning in her classes.

The priorities of her English classes were enjoyment, motivation, and active participation. She tried to introduce a variety of interesting activities to increase her students' motivation. In particular, she showed careful concern for low-achieving students, presenting at least one easy activity during each class session so that every student could accomplish it successfully and thus feel proud of himself or herself. As reported in interviews, such concern and the variety of classroom activities were known to and appreciated by her students.

The drawback to Ms. Shin's classes, however, was that she practiced the theoretical principle of cooperative learning only implicitly. She neglected to take the first step in cooperative learning-i. e., introducing the concept of cooperative class to her students at the beginning of the semester and teaching them ways of cooperating. Moreover, she tended to proceed with classroom activities without explicit instruction. The reasons can be attributed to excessive work load and the added burden of the training. Ms. Shin was unable to obtain precise information regarding the students' achievement levels because it was the beginning of the semester. In addition, besides performing duties as a homeroom teacher and those related to administrative procedures at school, she had to receive training in English conversation provided to English teachers by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE). Consequently, she had to go to the Seoul Education Training Institute (SETI) every day after four consecutive class sessions during most of the research period. For these reasons, it was difficult for Ms. Shin to devise new ways of cooperative learning carefully while proceeding with the school syllabus. Consequently, as she admitted in an interview, the teacher was unable to put to practice full-fledged cooperative learning in her classes during the research period. Instead, she put her efforts into organizing activities that all her students could participate in and that could prompt them to help one another during the learning process rather than compete.

2) Classroom and School Contexts

The research site was one of Ms. Shin's 8th-grade English classes conducted at a public middle school in Seoul. The teacher offered this particular class herself because it showed the most active and frequent learner interaction of all her classes. The average score of this class on English examinations was equivalent to the average score of all 8th graders at the same school.

The class consisted of thirty-five students, of whom eighteen were male and seventeen were female. Although determined by the homeroom teacher, the seating arrangement

3) The KETG is a voluntary association of secondary school English teachers established in 1988. For more information, refer to their web site (<http://english.njoyschool.net>).

was changed before or during the English class so that the students could work in small groups.

The school was located in a lower middle-class residential area. Because most of the students came from the lower middle class, their parents could not afford extracurricular lessons or private tutorials, and paid relatively little attention to the education of their children. Such a tendency resulted in a considerable number of students who had low motivation and showed little interest in schoolwork.

The large number of low-achieving students was a challenge to teachers at this school. Individual guidance being practically impossible, Ms. Shin unavoidably faced a large and academically mixed-level class consisting of excellent and highly motivated students, low-achieving students, and students who had already lost all interest in English.

3) English Lessons

The main textbook was *Middle School English 2* published by Didimdol, Inc. Each lesson followed the sequence of the textbook: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and, finally, checkup.

Each class session included a number of sections in the following order: introduction of the goals of the day's lesson; teaching and learning; practice; and checkup. The introductory and learning sections were directed by the teacher and generally included her presentation and explanation. The practice and checkup sections led the students to internalize what they had learned through peer interaction. In these latter two sections, students participated in either pair work or group activities. In order to attract the attention of the students, Ms. Shin utilized a variety of teaching aids such as a computer, a 40-inch monitor, a cassette player, handouts, cue cards, CD's manufactured by the textbook publisher, and self-made PowerPoint files for classroom presentation and explanation.

As for group activities, students were randomly grouped by the teacher according to their original seating arrangement rather than their English proficiency. This grouping caused a discrepancy in ability among groups and an uneven distribution of high-, average-, and low-achieving students within groups.

B. Data Collection

Data were collected from class observation and interviews. After negotiating access to the research site and completing the ethical review procedure, the researcher observed Ms. Shin's English classes approximately once a week, from March to June.

The total number of classes observed amounted to six 45-minute sessions, which included instruction in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and vocabulary learning. Class procedures were videotaped and tape-recorded during each 45-minute

class session and field notes were taken immediately after each observation. Regrettably, however, the recordings were limited to interactions between the teacher and the entire class or to intergroup interactions. Consequently, the data collected exclude intragroup interactions.

During the research period, the researcher interviewed Ms. Shin whenever necessary and, at the end of the period, interviewed eight students with disparate English proficiency levels. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in Korean, tape-recorded and transcribed afterwards. In order better to understand the classroom culture, the researcher also interviewed the homeroom teacher and had access to course documents including the school's curriculum guides, English textbooks, lesson plans, supplementary materials, and the students' grades.

C. Data Analysis

All of the recorded and transcribed data were analyzed qualitatively. The theoretical framework of the data analysis was derived from Miles and Huberman (1994). From the field notes and transcriptions, episodes that revealed competitive and cooperative interactions among the students were sorted out. Each episode was analyzed on the basis of 5W1H (who, when, where, why, what, and how) in order to discover the cultural rules of cooperation and competition operative in the classroom.

The validity of the interpretations was checked through indefinite triangulation. The researcher asked the participants questions on particular issues or requested comments on the interpretations of competitive and cooperative events. Their answers were then recorded and compared to the researcher's own interpretations.

IV. Results

In order to examine the cooperative and competitive aspects of the classroom culture, the data collected from the observation of a total of six class sessions were analyzed. From these data, a total of six episodes in which interactions occurred among learners were derived.

A. Cooperation and Competition in Six Episodes

Each episode, a unit of the tasks performed by the students, forms a part of one class session. These activities took on various forms — individual tasks, pair work, and group activities — and differed in their respective duration. The types and procedures of the activities are as follow.

Episode 1. Bingo Game

Pair work. The students work in pairs to answer the quiz questions and write in their answers in a Bingo grid. While a student designated by the teacher reads out loud a word in his or her grid, the rest of the students cross out the word if it is also in their own grid. When words crossed out form a line vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, that pair wins the game and cries out, Bingo.

Episode 2. Combining Words into Sentences

Group activity. Pieces of paper with an English word written on each of them are placed in an envelope. By combining these words, the students form a sentence that includes a relative pronoun. Student groups each send out a member to the teacher, who checks to see that the student has completed the activity by having him or her read and translate the sentence thus completed.

Episode 3. Word Identification

Pair work. From a sheet of paper with various English words scribbled on it, the students find and circle as quickly as possible the words that the teacher explains. Each student verifies his or her seating partner's English vocabulary by having the latter read and define the words thus found and circled.

Episode 4. Guessing the Ingredients of Dishes

Group activity. The students think of the ingredients of various dishes and write them on a sheet of paper in English. Seven small groups perform this activity by passing around a sheet of paper with the names of seven different dishes written on it.

Episode 5. Quiz

Pair work. The students, in pairs, record on a small white board their answers to problems read out by the teacher and raise the board. When the teacher announces the correct answers, they check their respective answers.

Episode 6. Reciting an English Expression

Individual task. All students stand up before they perform this activity. When the teacher reads out loud in Korean the meaning of one of the sentences in the dialogue section of the textbook, the student who knows the original English sentence raises his or her hand and recites it. If the answer is correct, the student can take his or her seat. Students unable to give the correct answers must remain standing.

In order to elucidate the rules of the classroom culture in terms of cooperation and competition, the researcher analyzed each of the episodes above on the basis of the principle of 5W1H. The details of this analysis are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Characteristics of the Six Learning Activities

Activity Type	Episode	Time (min)	Cooperative Behavior	Competitive Behavior	Reward
Individual Task	Reciting an Expression	10	Students tell the correct answers to their desks	Students raise their hands and recite English sentences before others do so	Participation
Pair Work	Bank Game	35	Students in pairs tell in the Bank King and banknotes in the game	Students try to find same pairs with cross-out words in their Bank King before those in other pairs do so	Card
	Word Recognition	13	Students speak and collect their second banknote, English dictionary	Students think of the correct words before their second banknote do so	Ball
	Game	40	Students think of answers together with their second banknote	Students solve more problems than do those in other pairs	Card
Group Activity	Compound Words and Sentences	33	After compound and meaningful English sentences together, students in two pairs tell answers written by the teacher	Students think of more correct sentences than do those in other groups	The teacher announces the results and the ranking in front of the students
	Guessing the Definitions of Phrases	11	Students think of the definitions' then tell out their English definition together	Students think of more definitions than do those in other groups	The teacher announces the results and the ranking in front of the students

As the table indicates, both cooperation and competition are present, in greater and lesser degrees, in all these classroom activities, and indeed in classroom activity in general. As illustrated in Table 1, the students' concrete behavior and the time that they spent on each activity differed according to the contents of the activity performed. One common factor uniting all these activities was the fact that cooperation was internally directed whereas competition was externally directed. In other words, cooperative interactions were limited to pairs and members of the same group; in intergroup activities, only competitive interactions occurred. Because they must be performed among individuals, however, individual tasks exhibited both cooperation and competition, with a time difference between the two modes of behavior. For example, during Reciting an Expression (Episode 6), the students each had to say out loud a sentence in English. Until he or she could recite the correct English sentence and thereby be exempt from punishment, each student competed against others. Afterwards, he or she tended to tell friends the correct answers, thus acting as an advisor. The overall characteristics of the episodes are as follows. In the case of Ms. Shin's English classes, even learning activities originally intended to induce the participation of all students exhibited the coexistence of cooperative and competitive behavior. Cooperation and competition were complementarily distributed, however: while cooperation was evident in intragroup interactions, competition occurred in intergroup interactions. The reason for these students' competition seemed to lie not in any wish for external compensation such as candies or rewards from the teacher but in symbolic compensation such as a sense of high self-esteem and others' recognition of their superiority. Indeed, the students enjoyed competition for itself and showed interest in

its results but were neither overjoyed at nor envious of their own or others' reception of rewards. All of this will be discussed in greater detail in a concentrated analysis of a case that illustrates cooperation and competition among the students particularly well.

B. Analysis of an Exemplary Episode: Guessing the Ingredients of Dishes

In order to examine closely the cooperative and competitive culture of Ms. Shin's English classes, the researcher selected one of the episodes and analyzed it in detail. The episode *Guessing the Ingredients of Dishes* (Episode 4) was selected because this activity best exhibited cooperative interactions and a balance between cooperation and competition among the students.

1) Activity Procedure

First, the entire class was divided into seven groups, each of which consisted of 4-6 students. Because it was based on the original seating arrangement, this grouping did not take into consideration the students' disparate English proficiency. Consequently, there were intergroup discrepancies.

This activity asked students to write down the ingredients of seven different dishes in English. The teacher distributed to each group one of seven sheets of paper with the names of dishes introduced in the textbook (sandwich, spaghetti, etc.). In the given time of 1 minute and 30 seconds, each group wrote down on the sheet the ingredients of its assigned dish in English. When the teacher signaled, the sheet of paper was passed on to the next group. Again in 1 minute and 30 seconds, each group added whatever ingredients they could think of to the sheet just passed on to it. In order to distinguish the names of ingredients recorded by different groups, each group used a differently colored marker. In this way, the groups took turns writing down the ingredients of all seven dishes. Finally, each group had its representative bring the sheet of paper to the blackboard, on which the representative wrote down his or her group's ingredients. Then the validity of the ingredients in each group's list was decided by the teacher and the students through negotiation. The group with the greatest number of valid ingredients was the winner, the result of which was announced by the teacher.

2) Cooperation among Group Members: The Variety of Group Members' Ways of Contribution

Within their own groups, the students each played different roles in accordance with their respective abilities and contributed to their groups' problem solving in various ways, thus fulfilling the basic goal of this activity. First, students proficient in English informed their fellow group members of the English names of the ingredients, thereby

acting as advisors. On the other hand, students with low English proficiency levels cooperated in the activity through different means. For example, some students suggested the Korean names of possible ingredients in the dish assigned to their group. Other members solved the problem by asking the English teacher or even the researcher for the English expressions. Still other members took charge of activities unrelated to their English proficiency such as taking care of the proceeding of the game itself. These external activities included the recording of the group's list of ingredients on the blackboard and passing the sheet of paper on to the next group. In order to accomplish successfully the given task, group members each played different roles — from those requiring a certain knowledge of English to those unrelated to it — all of which were necessary for the group's problem solving.

3) Intergroup Competition

In contrast to cooperation among group members, there was fierce intergroup competition. As evident from the teacher's words 'I'll be watching which group comes up with the longest list of ingredients,' the competition required each group to outdo others. Consequently, the students focused on winning the game and created an unprecedented atmosphere of liveliness and tension. In fact, some groups went so far as to engage in foul play: they crossed out the ingredients recorded by other groups, only to write down exactly the same ones themselves. Other groups transcribed into the Roman alphabet the Korean names of ingredients in case they did not know the English rendition. For example, they wrote down 'rice cake' as 'tteok' and demanded that it be acknowledged as a valid answer. Even after class, many students came to the teacher and complained that their answers had not been considered valid (example: 'noodles for sliced rice cake broiled with other ingredients in a hot red pepper sauce [tteok bokk-i]'). All such behavior stemmed from the students' desire to win the game by increasing the number of ingredients recorded by their respective groups.

Contrary to their determination thus to win the game, the students showed almost no interest in the cooperative process or the study of new English words. Indeed, interviews regarding the number of new words acquired and retained through this task reveal that high-achieving students remembered 1-2 words while low-achieving ones hardly remembered any. This can be inferred to mean that, from the students' viewpoint, the goals of this task were not the study of new vocabulary and cooperation but the results of a competitive game and the ensuing fun.

The students seemed to enjoy this task. Indeed, the researcher heard from them comments such as 'Too bad it's over now' and 'That was fun' after class. A large number of students participated more actively in this particular task probably because food is a topic familiar to them and what was demanded of them was not English proficiency or predetermined correct answers but creative thinking and relatively acceptable answers. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that intergroup competition played a

significant role in inducing them to participate actively in the game.

V. Discussion

An analysis of all six episodes and a particular case shows that the purpose of intragroup cooperation which occurred in the course of the learning activities observed was to win intergroup competitions. Consequently, the students were far more interested in the outcome of the game than in the cooperative process or the information newly learned, and reacted sensitively to the teacher's final judgment on game scores. Although the teacher originally intended to induce cooperative learning by devising a task that could be solved with the participation of all group members, her words 'I'll be watching which group comes up with the longest list of ingredients' reveal that not only the students but also the teacher herself used the students' desire for competition and victory as the principal means of inducing their participation.

Despite such use of competition as a means, the students assiduously played their roles as cooperators in order to achieve the learning objectives of their respective groups. For example, students with high levels of English proficiency displayed their abilities in group activities not for ostentation but for the provision of aid to fellow group members with lower levels of English proficiency and for the resolution of the problem assigned to their respective groups. Indeed, students reported in interviews that they had been happy about being able to participate together in small group activities and receiving help from fellow classmates with greater English proficiency.

Although the activities of the classes observed did exhibit cooperative behavior, the principal classroom culture was still focused on competition. This is evident from the fact that cooperative system within groups disintegrated and the students' cooperative behavior began to disappear when the difficulty level of the given task was high or when intergroup competition became overheated. When the task became more difficult and demanded greater English proficiency, low-achieving students were left with less room for participation in the task. In addition, when competition was overheated, the students became impatient to complete the task more quickly, and even high-achieving students tried to solve problems quickly by themselves instead of taking time to guide low-achieving group members. As a result, the task came to be dominated by a few high-achieving students and others were left out from the group activity altogether. For example, *Combining Words into Sentences* (Episode 2) was more difficult than other activities in that it demanded precise syntactic knowledge of English. The result was that there were a greater number of students who were left out entirely. This is because the students immediately stopped mutual cooperation when cooperative interaction became disadvantageous to them in terms of competition.

The reason for such intervention of the competitive logic in group activities may be that the classroom culture reflects the larger sociocultural context — i. e., the competitive

culture of Korean society. Even now, the dominant argument is that one must surpass others in order to survive the sheer struggle in Korean society. Some of the obvious examples are the craze for early education and illegal private tutorials. Raised and educated in this competitive culture of Korea, the teacher as well as the students created a classroom culture that precisely reflected the culture of society at large. Consequently, the teacher, despite her cooperation-oriented classroom activities, was unable to restrain the students' competitive urge and ended up introducing competitive elements into her classes instead. Indeed, the principal means of inducing the students to participate in the given task was nothing other than their desire to win.

Competitive and cooperative interactions probably are common to all human societies. The existence of these two elements in the classroom culture therefore is not a problem in itself. It is problematic, however, when one element subordinates the other — when competition becomes the decisive factor in influencing the progress of classroom activities and the students' participation. Educators therefore must aim at securing a balance between cooperation and competition in the classroom environment, guiding learners to be aware of the importance of cooperation, and using competition for the development of all involved parties.

VI. Conclusion

Based on the premise that cooperation is an important value that must be seriously considered in education, the present research aimed at elucidating the cultural characteristics of the middle school English class through classroom observation. The results show that intragroup cooperation and intergroup competition coexisted in Ms. Shin's English classes. More precisely, the principle of cooperation, which the teacher sought to realize, and the principle of competition, a principal characteristic of Korean society, collided in the classroom. Likewise, the teacher herself was contradictory: while endeavoring to practice cooperative learning in order to teach her students a sense of responsibility through cooperation, she induced competition among them, to which they were already accustomed, in order to bring about their active participation in classroom activities.

Because the teacher did not implement cooperative learning thoroughly, it is difficult to discuss cooperative learning in depth in relation to her class activities themselves. Nonetheless, the results of this study leave several implications to teachers who wish to implement cooperative learning. First, before introducing cooperative tasks in class, the teacher must clearly explain to the students the meaning and importance of cooperation and the objective of the cooperative task. Once the expected behavior is clearly explained to learners, it will be possible to share the effect of cooperative learning with the students. Second, the teacher must organize cooperative groups with due care. In order to induce natural cooperation and to secure the smooth progress of classroom

activities, the teacher must ensure that students with disparate learning abilities are evenly distributed among the groups. Third, it is necessary to assign concrete roles in accordance with each group member's abilities. This will minimize the students' nonparticipation and noncooperation due to confusion or misunderstanding regarding their respective roles. Fourth, the teacher must make conscious efforts. Because he or she shares the competitive culture of Korean society, the teacher must recognize the competitiveness within himself or herself and be able to adjust the internal balance between competition and cooperation.

Because it was intended to describe a series of phenomena that occur in reality, this study has attempted to answer various questions related to the principle of cooperative class such as how it is applied in reality, what its practical problems are, and what measures are needed to overcome such problems. Future research should conduct a micro-level analysis of discourse that focuses on the negotiation of meaning among group members as well as a macro-level analysis in observing cooperative learning. In addition, it will be important to examine the changes in the classroom culture when the principle of cooperative class is applied in earnest.

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