Teaching Landeskunde within the Framework of Korean as a Foreign Language¹⁾

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I. Introduction

In the era of globalization and internationalisation, it has become more and more common that well-qualified students both in Germany and in Korea have better job opportunities if they gain not only specific knowledge in their major subject, but also competence in one or more foreign languages as well as intercultural competence.

In the case of foreign language education scientists are assigned to develop and to provide teaching methods for foreign language teachers, who are nowadays required to promote aforementioned competences. Therefore foreign language teachers are especially entailed to teach and mediate foreign languages and cultures.

Translators, just as it is the case for foreign language teachers, also mediate between foreign languages and cultures. But compared to foreign language teachers, translators apply their foreign language and intercultural competences while translating. In addition, they have to gain knowledge of translation techniques as well as knowledge of certain subjects. Therefore, translation is rather a reflection of all above mentioned competences and it is the optimal case when

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translators have already acquired foreign language competence and intercultural competence within their foreign language education.

In the following this article aims at showing the difference between a foreign language teacher and a translator as well as the discussion regarding the promotion of intercultural competence within the framework of *Landeskunde²*) in Korean as a Foreign Language.

The first part deals with the definition of Landeskunde and the definition of intercultural competence in general. Then it is questioned why the promotion of intercultural competence is of such importance and whether today the promotion of intercultural competence is actually being realized within the framework of teaching Korean as a Foreign Language. The cited articles regarding the definition of Landeskunde and intercultural competence are mostly written by scholars of German as a Foreign Language, since the discussion on Landeskunde within the framework of foreign language education was lead extensively in Europe, in Germany, France and the UK in particular, as well as in the USA. However, when I refer to the discussion on the promotion of intercultural competence within the framework of teaching Korean as a Foreign Language I cite articles written by Korean scholars since they question the state of research in case of Korean as a Foreign Language.

The second part deals with the difference between a professional translator and an advanced foreign language speaker when translating texts. It will be questioned which competences a professional translator needs in order to overcome linguistic barriers. In this context I will also give a definition of communication and signs as they are usually seen in the field of linguistics and translational theories, since translation is characterised as a special form of communication. The literature cited in this part was mostly written by scholars of translation theories and linguistics.

²⁾ The term *Landeskunde* (Area Studies/ Cultural Studies) is mainly used in German speaking countries and has been connected to the study of foreign languages (see Kramer 2000:325).

II. Landeskunde and Intercultural Competence in Teaching Korean as a Foreign Language

A. The definition of *Landeskunde* and *Landeskunde* teaching methods

There are numerous definitions of *Landeskunde* in the field of foreign language education, which can be traced back to the historical development of foreign language education in general. Nowadays foreign language education consists of three parts: language, literature and *Landeskunde*. But the most impressing and interesting aspect of *Landeskunde* is that it forms an independent research field within foreign language education theories whereas in practice, *Landeskunde* cannot be taught without language and literature. Another interesting aspect of teaching *Landeskunde* is culture. However, due to lack of space the concept of culture will not be discussed in this article.

In the following I will give a definition of *Landeskunde* and a short summary of the three existing concepts of *Landeskunde*. Then I will discuss how these three concepts correlate with the three competences to be acquired by a foreign language learner.

In German as a Foreign Language there are several approaches defining *Landeskunde*, but Penning offers the most pragmatic approach, which is accepted by the majority of German as Foreign Language scholars. He defines *Landeskunde* as dealing primarily with non-linguistic elements, rules and ways of communication that are necessary to understand a foreign culture. In this point of view *Landeskunde* is not an own scientific discipline, but has a strong interdisciplinary approach. Therefore *Landeskunde* has a strong affinity to other scientific disciplines like geography, politics, history, sociology (Penning 1996:628).

As already mentioned above, the concept of *Landeskunde* changed during the last centuries, just as foreign language education itself did. The first concept of *Landeskunde* was teaching facts (Realienkunde). The second concept was teaching culture (Kulturkunde) and the third and last concept of *Landeskunde* is the intercultural concept which still exists today

(Penning 1995:638).

The concept of teaching facts in *Landeskunde* came up at the end of the 19th century when the demand for foreign language speakers dramatically increased due to economic and international exchanges. Accordingly, foreign language learners had to know economic, geographic, social and political facts of the target culture.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a new concept of Landeskunde developed. Not only facts but the deeper understanding of the target culture became more and more important due to the ever increasing contacts with other countries. For that reason characteristic features of the target culture had to be implemented into the foreign language education curriculum. Therefore sociolinguistic aspects as well as the communication in everyday situations were more emphasized in class. But a negative side effect was that at that time characteristic features of the target culture were often marked as strange and inferior to the source culture.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the intercultural concept of *Landeskunde* developed. Here the comparison of different cultures plays a very important role, but contrary to the concept of just teaching culture, the intercultural concept puts more emphasis on the reflection of the learner's source culture as well as the difference between cultures in general.

In addition, there are three different approaches as to which competences a foreign language teacher has to promote in *Landeskunde* classes, namely the cognitive, communicative and intercultural competence (Pauldrach 1992:6ff). The cognitive competence can be promoted by just teaching facts and thus it coincides best with the first *Landeskunde* concept.

The communicative competence can be promoted especially by teaching everyday language and practicing everyday situations that a foreign language speaker is easily confronted with. The foreign language teacher as a native speaker represents the target language speaker and therefore predominantly uses the target language during the lesson. Therefore the promotion of this competence coincides best with the second *Landeskunde* concept,

since in this concept oral language plays a more important role.

Intercultural competence can be promoted by pointing out the differences between source and target languages and cultures. The central objective is not only communicating in the foreign language, but rather the reflection of source and target culture in general. The foreign language speaker gains the competence to be sensitive to misunderstanding due to cultural differences. Therefore the last concept of *Landeskunde* coincides best with the promotion of this competence. Before I discuss selected reasons for the promotion of intercultural competence, intercultural competence has to be defined.

B. The definitions of intercultural competence

There are several definitions of intercultural competence. Knapp-Potthoff, for example, supposes that foreign language speakers who communicate with other foreign language speakers do not necessarily have full knowledge of the foreign culture, but due to their intercultural competence they have already learned discourse strategies how to come to successful conclusions (1997:196). According to her, intercultural competence can be defined as the ability to communicate successfully with members of foreign communication communities as well as with members of one's own community. For Knapp-Potthoff, there are four characteristic features of intercultural competence: affective components such as empathy and tolerance, culture specific knowledge regarding the foreign and one's culture, general knowledge about language, communication and culture as well as discourse strategies for specific communication situations(ebd. 1997:199ff).

Byram defines intercultural competence 'as the ability to interact in one's own language with people from another country and culture'. According to him 'intercultural communicative competence means performance in a foreign language (Krumm 2003:142; Boeckmann 2006:11).

Guilherme defines intercultural competence as follows: 'Intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own' (2002:297).

All these above mentioned definitions have one thing in common: A person with intercultural competence has gained the ability to compare source and target culture concerning cultural, social, economic and political features. In addition, one has gained the ability to reflect and question the results of the comparison.

Provided that the foreign language learner has critically questioned his beliefs, habits and values in the foreign language classroom, he achieves cultural awareness towards source and target culture. In comparison to communicative competence, intercultural competence is more complex, since according to Günter communicative competence only concentrates on grammatical, lexical, socio-cultural and pragma linguistical knowledge as well as the knowledge of discourse strategies (1989:433ff).

Therefore, according to the intercultural language teaching approach teachers need to discard their role as ambassadors of a foreign culture and the concept of a static, self-contained and strange culture. Instead, they must acknowledge the interactive nature and the social, political, and ethical implications of learning and teaching culture (Guilherme 2002:299).

C. Reasons for promoting intercultural competence

There are numerous reasons why intercultural competence should be promoted when teaching *Landeskunde*. Primary factors are increasing contacts between members of different cultures due to globalization and internationalization, the need of reducing prejudices and student's confrontation with stereotypes, the preparation for a stay or a journey in or to a foreign country, and last but not least multicultural societies.

1. Globalization and internationalization

Due to globalization and internationalization economic, political, scientific and cultural contacts have increased in Germany as well as in Korea, and English as a lingua franca has become very common when people from different countries communicate with each other. However, it is often forgotten that everyone has his own way of thinking and his own discourse strategy originating from speaking a different native language (Bredella 2002:130). That is why despite of communicating in English misunderstanding still occur due to cultural and linguistic interferences. A foreign language speaker with intercultural competence, however, has become aware of these problems and has also learned to anticipate and solve theses problems, for example, with specific questionnaires.

2. Overcoming prejudices and discussing stereotypes

As I have already mentioned culture is very complex and cannot be recognized as whole. The results are unavoidable prejudices and stereotypes. But since these prejudices and stereotypes have great impact on the discussion of cultural differences foreign language education is required to deal with them (Bredella 2002:141). Only then is a foreign language learner sensitive to intercultural misunderstandings and is possibly more open-minded towards foreign cultures. With respect to the Korean culture Cho states that it is not well-known within the international community and this aspect itself is one reason for the promotion of intercultural competence (2005:441).

3. Preparation for a stay abroad

Another important reason for promoting intercultural competence is the preparation for a journey or a longer stay in a foreign country.

It has become more and more common that undergraduate and graduate students move to a foreign country in order to do research or just take part in an exchange programme. Therefore they have to get quickly acquainted with everyday life and the habits of the foreign country. But it happens quite often that after some time living in the foreign country it happens quite often that a culture shock³⁾ sets in. Foreign language education

³⁾ Culture shock is defined as the psychological and social disorientation caused by confrontation with a new or alien culture.

is hence one possibility for preparing them for what lies ahead while they are still in their home country.

4. Multicultural societies

The last reason that has to be mentioned is the phenomenon of multicultural societies. In the last centuries international mobility and migration have increased so that truly homogenous societies are now hard to find. In Korea, the demand for foreign workers and the number of binational marriages have recently increased. The return of Koreans who have been living abroad for a long time is another aspect in this context. Generally speaking, a certain degree of immigrants assimilate to the foreign culture but it should not be forgotten that even those who have already assimilated successfully to the foreign culture still keep some of their own cultural standards, ways of thinking and behaviour.

This brief overview of the definition of *Landeskunde* and *Landeskunde* teaching concepts as well as the competences that a foreign language learner has to acquire within *Landeskunde* classes was necessary to understand the following discussion on *Landeskunde* within Korean as a Foreign Language.

D. The implementation of teaching Landeskunde within Korean as a Foreign Language

Teaching Landeskunde within the frame of Korean as a Foreign Language has not been discussed as much as teaching Landeskunde within the framework of German as a Foreign Language. Therefore for a long time Landeskunde only played a subordinate role in the curriculum of Korean as a Foreign Language.

Since the beginning of the 1990s Korean language education scholars have increasingly discussed whether, and if yes, how intercultural elements ought to be implemented into Korean language lessons. Until then, the communicative teaching method dominated in Korean language education and during that time Korean culture was mere subject within Korean language lessons

when verbal and non-verbal communication strategies were taught. This aspect is very important when discussing the implementation of intercultural teaching methods within Korean as a Foreign Language, because Boeckmann refers in this context to the fact that even today intercultural communicative teaching methods are more likely to be used than intercultural teaching methods (2006:10). The difference between them is firstly the role of the teacher and secondly the topics dealt with in class. In the intercultural communicative approach the teacher as a native speaker still represents the target culture and for handling everyday situations with sociocultural elements one needs to be trained within class. According to the intercultural approach, on the contrary, foreign language is merely perceived as an instrument for communicating so that in this approach teacher and learner are both in the process of learning.

When looking for the teaching methods currently dominating *Landeskunde* lessons in the Korean language classroom, the discussion of Korean language education scholars on learning objectives, teaching methods, topics, textbooks and materials as well as evaluation should be examined in more detail. In this article, however, I can only present a brief overview.

1. Learning objectives

When dealing with foreign language education one has to define first which aims should be achieved in class, and the ideal case is when these aims are discussed and defined between foreign language teacher and learner. In principle all Korean language education scholars agree on the implementation of cultural aspects within the Korean language curriculum (Park 2006:33; Sung 2001:115). But there are three coexisting approaches concerning learning objectives: the communicative approach, the intercultural communicative approach and the intercultural approach. Sung stresses the promotion of communicative competence, since the Korean language learner achieves a profound understanding of the Korean society, is able to overcome culture shock and assimilates better to the Korean society (2001:121). Kim, on the contrary, is a proponent of the

intercultural communicative approach, since in her point of view language still plays a more important role (see Park 2006:35). Park is proponent of the intercultural approach. She stresses the comparison of source and target cultures and the sensitivity to cultural differences, although Language should still be subject within the classroom (2006:35).

A general outline of learning objectives is given by Han, who distinguishes between beginners', intermediate and advanced level. For beginners she recommends, for example, the promotion of self-consciousness when speaking Korean, the training of general skills for a successful communication in Korean and the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes regarding the Korean culture. For intermediate learner she recommends the understanding of Korean phrases that need cultural background knowledge and the understanding of the Korean society as well as typical Korean traditions and additionally for advanced learner she recommends the ability to understand written and oral communication as well as the profound knowledge of traditional Korean culture (2005:517ff).

2. Teaching methods

Teaching methods are necessary to achieve the previously discussed and agreed-upon objectives. Moreover they also help a foreign language teacher with the promotion of a foreign language learner's foreign language competence.

The discussion of teaching methods within the frame of Korean as a Foreign Language is as extensive as the same discussion in German as Foreign Language, since several competences are to be acquired by a language learner. Therefore many Korean scholars agree on the importance of providing special teaching methods for *Landeskunde* lessons, but they all complain about the lack of a systematic approach for teaching *Landeskunde* in the case of Korean as a Foreign Language (Cho 2005:287, Kim 2005:502, Park 2003:82).

In this case Han recommends many teaching methods, for example explanations given by the teacher, the usage of audiovisual media within class, role plays, invitations to lectures given by famous Korean authors, excursions, culture capsule, culture assimilator etc. (2005:521ff).

3. Cultural topics

When teaching *Landeskunde*, representative cultural topics are mostly selected by the foreign language teacher in order to provide the foreign language learner with a comprehensive understanding of the foreign culture. But when selecting representative cultural topics the problem of unintended promotion of prejudices and stereotypes can also occur. Foreign language education scholars therefore provide the foreign language teacher with a list of topics that have to be taught in class.

There are also several approaches regarding the topics that are to be taught in *Landeskunde* lessons within the framework of Korean as a Foreign Language. Cho presents a general approach (2005:284). He distinguishes everyday, current and traditional culture whereas Park differentiates mass culture and high culture (2006:19). Sung proposes in this context the classification of everyday life, the grade of assimilation to the Korean life style, the integration of linguistic exercises as well as the grade of comprehension (2001:124). However, the most detailed classification of topics is presented by Park in her handbook of Korean culture (2006:20).

In general a Korean as a Foreign Language teacher can teach, for example, in beginners' courses the characteristic feature of Korean names and the meaning of the number "four", in intermediate courses the meaning of typical Korean phrases and idioms like "Let's go and have something to drink" or "sing'gŏun saram" and in advanced courses phrases of traditional fairy tales like "P'ach'wi ŏmma" (Han 2005:526ff).

4. Teaching Materials

Teaching materials also provide foreign language teachers with the topics that have to be presented in class. They include linguistic, literary and cultural aspects. Textbooks are the most

traditional teaching materials and after a detailed analysis of several textbooks which are used in foreign language classes, the foreign language teacher can decide which textbook coincides best with the level, age and motivation of his learners. In case of Korean as a Foreign Language the development of *Landeskunde* textbooks has increased, but there is still a lack of materials. Moreover, in most textbooks for Korean as Foreign Language cultural aspects are only included if the foreign language learner is supposed to learn socio-cultural communication strategies (Cho 2005:281).

However, Han recommends for the practice to use comics, newspapers or traditional Korean folksongs as alternative teaching materials (2005:524ff).

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is a criterion for both the foreign language teacher and learner. The foreign language teacher evaluates if his teaching methods that were applied were successful and if the afore agreed-on learning objectives have been achieved. The foreign language learner is able to check what he has already learned and at which stage of the foreign language learning process he finds himself.

Park proposes oral or written tests like multiple choice tests or interviews or just open questions concerning cultural aspects which have been subjects within the lesson(2006:46). Cho adds to Park's proposition that the evaluation of cultural competence ought to be combined with *Landeskunde* teaching objectives (2005:297ff). Moreover, the evaluation of cultural competence needs to be adjusted to the foreign language learning process and the learner himself.

In the previous chapter it could be shown, that all cited scholars agree on the implementation of *Landeskunde* within the Korean as a Foreign Language curriculum. I got the impression, however, that a systematic approach regarding learning objectives and learning methods in particular is still missing. At present many objectives exist side by side and a combination to one

subordinate objective is impossible. Moreover it needs to be more discussed which role intercultural competence plays within the frame of Korean as a Foreign Language in general and which side effects occur when the promotion of intercultural competence is implemented within the language curriculum. In addition to that, the development of *Landeskunde* teaching materials needs to be promoted, so that the Korean language teacher can easily use them in class. This has the effect that the quality of education within the framework of Korean as a Foreign Language increases.

Finally it should be mentioned that according to Korean as a Foreign Language the promotion of intercultural competence has already been discussed and accepted by many Korean scholars, but intercultural teaching and learning in general has not become as widely accepted as in German as a Foreign Language.

III. Intercultural competence and Translation within the framework of foreign language education and education of translators

As I have already mentioned in the beginning of this article, foreign language teachers as well as translators mediate between foreign languages and cultures. In comparison to foreign language teachers, however, professional translators need further competences, especially translation competence and the knowledge of certain subjects. In the following this difference will be explained in more detail.

A. Translation within the framework of foreign language education and translation as profession

Until the end of the 19th century the grammar-translation-method was the only teaching method in foreign language education. It consists of translating grammatical and lexical units of one language into another. According to Bausch one characteristic aim of this method is showing a broad knowledge of the target's language vocabulary and grammar through translating (2003:227). Snell-Hornby adds that the foreign

language learner shows his proficiency to translate one chain of units written in the source language into an equivalent chain of units written in the target language (1989:17).

However, this method was used particularly in Europe in the framework of teaching Latin or Greek as a second language. However, nowadays as well, translation exercises have not completely disappeared within foreign language teaching, so it has to be questioned which other competences have to be gained in case of learning and translating living languages. There is one aspect that all have in common: the equivalent translation of grammatical and lexical units of language. From the foreign-language-education point of view the learner shows his foreign language competence and according to this the translation is evaluated.

From the translation-education point of view the translator shows that he has a broad knowledge of source and target languages. According to Bausch this competences can be summarized as general language competence and it is unquestioned that this is the most important competence a translator as well as a foreign language learner ought to have. However, professional translators need further competences: translation competence, knowledge of certain subjects and cultural competence (Bausch 1977:22, Amman 1995:79-80). The knowledge of specific subjects is defined as general knowledge as well as specific knowledge of subjects such as economics, politics, geography, technical terms etc. Cultural competence is defined as the ability to abstract from one's own culture and to compare cultural characteristics in order to guarantee communication (Amman 1995:79). Therefore a translator has to be bilingual, but he also has to be bicultural or better multicultural and this ability can be further promoted by teaching Landeskunde in the framework of translation.

The consequences of afore mentioned aspects are that translating professionally becomes a more complex operation than the simple grammar translation in the foreign language classroom, since the translator has to create a text that has

mostly a similar function in another linguistic and cultural context and the quality of a translation is evaluated by the equivalence of both texts, the one written in the source language and the one written in the target language (Vermeer 1994:33; Nord 2003:25ff). In case of translating professionally the communicative aspect of language therefore gains more importance.

In general, a characteristic feature of communication between human beings is using signs and according to Saussure, the founder of structuralism in linguistics, language can be defined as a precisely and exactly recordable and formally exactly describable system of formal and not substantial elements (Bußmann 2002:658). This means that successful communication between human beings is principally possible, if they have a common system of signs (language). If this condition is not provided, a translator, who has knowledge of both languages, becomes necessary. He is at the same time recipient of a message spoken or written in the source language and transmitter of the equivalent message in the target language. In other words 'translation is one opportunity to overcome language barriers' (Sager 1994:331), and that is the reason why translation is characterized as on special form of communication.

As already mentioned, other important aspects of language are social and cultural elements. Regarding translation, these aspects have been dealt with by Humboldt while referring to his translation of Aischylos' Agamemnon, by Schleiermacher and by Sapir and Whorf, just to mention a few (Stolze 2001:27ff). This inevitably leads to the question, whether languages can be translated in general. But this discussion would lead too far.

All these above mentioned theories, however, show that in the case of translation foreign language competence is mere a mean to an end, whereas knowledge of culture, certain subjects and translation theories play an equivalent or even more important role. In comparison with translation exercises in foreign language education these competences are not required.

B. The promotion of intercultural competence within the curriculum of translators

Usually the curriculum for translators provides *Landeskunde* lessons in which typical cultural aspects are main subject and where intercultural competence especially for translators ought to be further promoted. However, in reality these *Landeskunde* lessons are similar to the first *Landeskunde* approach which only provides facts according to the target culture. Therefore a translator should have already achieved intercultural competence within his foreign language education. Only then he is capable of translating a text written in a source language into an equivalent text written in the target language.

In the following paragraph, however, I would like to refer to some typical translation problems that require intercultural competence from a translator. Typical translation problems that arise when translating Korean into German, for example, are presuppositions and realia.

Presuppositions are defined as implicit required information that both sender and receptor know (see Nord 2003:109). Every Korean reader, for example, knows the "Legend of Tan'gun", whereas the German reader would not understand a text passage in which only the word Tangun occurs. Therefore the German reader requires further information that can be provided in two ways: as a comment or explication within the text or as a footnote. In this case, the translator has to recognize that "Tan'gun" is a presupposition, so he applies his intercultural competence. Realia are defined as mostly culture specific expressions that often cannot be translated into the target language (Koller 1997:232ff). Since realia have to be translated, the translator has to find translation methods in order to solve this problem. In my master thesis, there are many examples regarding the translation of realia, but here I would only like to mention one example: the translation of "kwanhon sangje" - "the four ceremonies when attaining full age, getting married, being buried and being worshiped as ancestor".

IV. Conclusion

This article dealt with the mediation of foreign language teachers and translators across linguistic and cultural barriers. In particular, it was questioned whether the promotion of intercultural competence takes place within the frame of teaching Landeskunde in Korean as a Foreign Language. For this reason, the first part of this article dealt with the definition of Landeskunde as well as intercultural competence. Furthermore it was questioned why the promotion of intercultural competence plays such an important role within the foreign language curriculum and whether there are approaches for promoting intercultural competence while teaching Landeskunde in Korean as a Foreign Language. It can be summarized that in general there are several approaches for the promotion of intercultural competence within the frame of Korean as a Foreign Language. Moreover it could be shown that the discussion on promoting intercultural competence is very vivid but that a systematic approach is still missing.

In the second part of this article the difference between foreign language speakers and translators was discussed with the focus on translation, because in the curriculum of teaching and learning living languages nowadays, translation exercises have not fully disappeared. But there are more competences a translator has to gain if he wants to work as a professional: cultural and translational competence as well as knowledge of certain subjects. In this article cultural competence of a translator was merely required, but finally it has to be emphasized that the translators' cultural competence has partially been acquired in the frame of his general foreign language education and within the framework of his translation training this competence should be further promoted in *Landeskunde* classes for translators that not only concentrate on the provision of facts but also on the comparison of specific cultural phenomena.

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