

Title:

Backstory of an Avatar: A Teacher Autoethnography Reflecting on Border Crossings

Abstract:

Through a multimodal text an English teacher shares the borders and boundaries crossed as an American living and working in South Korea. The presentation is a counterstory to how English teachers are depicted in South Korea. The presenter shares her story and analyzes her life as a liminal, third space between cultures. Discussion on the meaning and manifestation of 'liminality' will examine the power and knowledge that is needed to work as an alien teacher. The bureaucratic literacies needed to live on the margins safely are analyzed via socially situated linguistic and semiotic practices including English, Korean, Konglish, body language, and the presenter's own micro-language of Maria Talk (마리아 말) in which she transverses the borderlands of culture, generation, and audience expectations as she works in Korea.

Bio:

Maria Lisak is celebrating her 22nd anniversary of her first steps in South Korea this year. From the Midwest in the US, her Chicago accent still plagues her Korean pronunciation. In answering the question that a Korean colleague asked her last semester, she is still here because she can live a simple life while pursuing her love of learning in a community that values education. She has been teaching public administration and social welfare at Chosun University since 2012. You can check out her degree pedigree on her blog: koreamaria.typepad.com/gwangju