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For the degree of Master of Arts

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF ENGLISH

AND

ENGLISH EDUCATION IN SOUTH KOREA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

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ABSTRACT

Im, Jihyun. M.A., Purdue University, December, 2009. A Sociolinguistic Profile of English and English Education in South Korea. Major Professor: Margie Berns.

The focus of this paper is a sociolinguistic profile of English and English education in South Korea. Following the discussion on Korea and several Expanding Circle countries that share issues and concerns in relation to English, a brief sketch of contexts of English in South Korea will be presented. The focus will be on English education at the secondary level; the national English curriculum, English textbooks, the national qualification exam for English teachers, and the Plan for Effective Public English Education (The Presidential Transition Team, 2008) will be examined in order to identify areas in need of improvement. Lastly, based on the description provided, suggestions will be proposed for systematic and substantial change in English education in the public sector of South Korea.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

As in many EFL countries, such as China (Wang, 2007, p.87) and Japan, the national curriculum, which is applied to both primary and secondary schools, is the most influential foundation for educational practice in Korea. However, despite the significance of the national curriculum, Koreans' strong desire for English learning have often led to hasty and whimsical changes in language planning and policy for English. Such haphazard alterations in language policy and planning in English education have produced positive and negative results for South Korean society.

For example, the Korean government recently implemented two transformations in the educational domain in the pursuit of keeping pace with the internationalized world: one is that children begin to learn English as a required subject from the first grade, instead of the third grade; and the other is that major universities are starting or planning to adopt English as a medium of instruction. Although the extension of English use provoked public scorn and a state of anomie due to insufficient resources and support, it appears to be an inevitable direction for English education in South Korea, considering the state of English as an international language and the range that only English can provide as a lingua franca.

Also, soon after the 17th president was elected on December 19, 2007, the presidential transition team announced The Plan for Effective Public English Education on January 14, 2008. This plan drew huge attention among students, parents, administrators, and educators due to its drastic changes and seemingly unrealistic goals. For some time since the announcement, newspapers were full of articles devoted to the plan, and the public's responses were acrid on the internet. The main reasons for such boisterous reactions are assumed to be the infeasibility of the plan and lack of preparation in English education contexts in Korea. Nevertheless, as of March, 2009, the new national curriculum for English education, grounded on this plan, was implemented (The plan will be discussed in chapter 4 in detail.).

Then, why do such policies continued to be planned, regardless of the reality of English classes in the public sector? Public English education in South Korea is evaluated as a failure among Koreans; this is why several plans have continued to be proposed and implemented. Despite the endeavors and hopes to improve English education in Korea, not many policies and plans have been assessed as successful; they have been often criticized as whimsical and haphazard proposals rather than systematic and organized suggestions.

Thus, in this paper, the author attempts to describe contexts of English learning in the public sector in order to diagnose fundamental problems and to search for realistic solutions based on her experience as an English education major and English teacher at the secondary level in the public sector. Even though this can hardly be an objective description, a reality check is hoped to be

helpful for suggesting achievable goals and methodical schemes. The guidelines, for sociolinguistic profiles from the journal, *World Englishes,* will be borrowed for the description; four categories will be provided, following Berns (1988, p.37-39), Friedrich (2000, p.215-223), and Petzold & Berns (2000, p.113-124): a brief description of South Korea, users of English, uses of English, and attitudes as evidenced in range of uses and variety of users. Following the brief profile of Korea, the focus will be on English in education in Chapter Four.

All over the world, more and more people use English, and a great number of varieties of English are being used. This increase in English users also means an increasing demand for teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language. Since the Grammar Translation Method in the 19th century, numerous language teaching methods have been developed and practiced in class. According to Richards and Rodgers, "The history of language teaching throughout much of twentieth century saw the rise and fall of a variety of language teaching approaches and methods" (1986, p. 14). After the so-called the methods era, Communicative Language Teaching or the Communicative Approach was introduced, and it became the most popular option for language teaching in today's classrooms.

Also, Richards and Rodgers maintain that "the Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication" (1986, p. 159). Also, the goal of the language classroom is to help students to develop "communicative competence." The term was coined by Dell Hymes in the early 1970s, who defined it as "the aspect of our competence that enables us to

convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts" (Brown, 2000, p.246). Later, Canale and Swain presented a definition of communicative competence which has four different components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. They defined sociolinguistic competence, which is closely related to world Englishes studies, as "the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse" (Canale and Swain, 1983).

According to Berns, "the notion of communicative competence has proven indispensable to world Englishes (WE) studies because of its attention to the issue of appropriateness in language use" (2006, p.718). Stressing the importance of the context of multiple and diverse settings for the learning and use of English, she argues that "the determination of what is or is not 'normal' cannot be made without accounting for local norms of the users of English in a particular setting." In addition to her, several scholars underlined the significance of the context of situation; J.R. Firth said that "a piece of speech, a normal complete act of speech, is a pattern of group behavior in which two or more persons participate by means of common verbalizations of the common situational context, and of the experiential contexts of the participants" (1930, p.173). Also, Savignon stated that "only in a full context of this kind can judgments be made on the appropriateness of a particular utterance" (1983, p.37).

As English has become the language of international communication, several scholars have attempted to represent the spread of English in addition to

the most common classification of Englishes—ENL (English as a native language), ESL(English as a second language), and EFL(English as a foreign language) in ELT. Meanwhile, the varieties of English, namely, World Englishes, were conceptualized with a theoretical framework in the early 1960s.

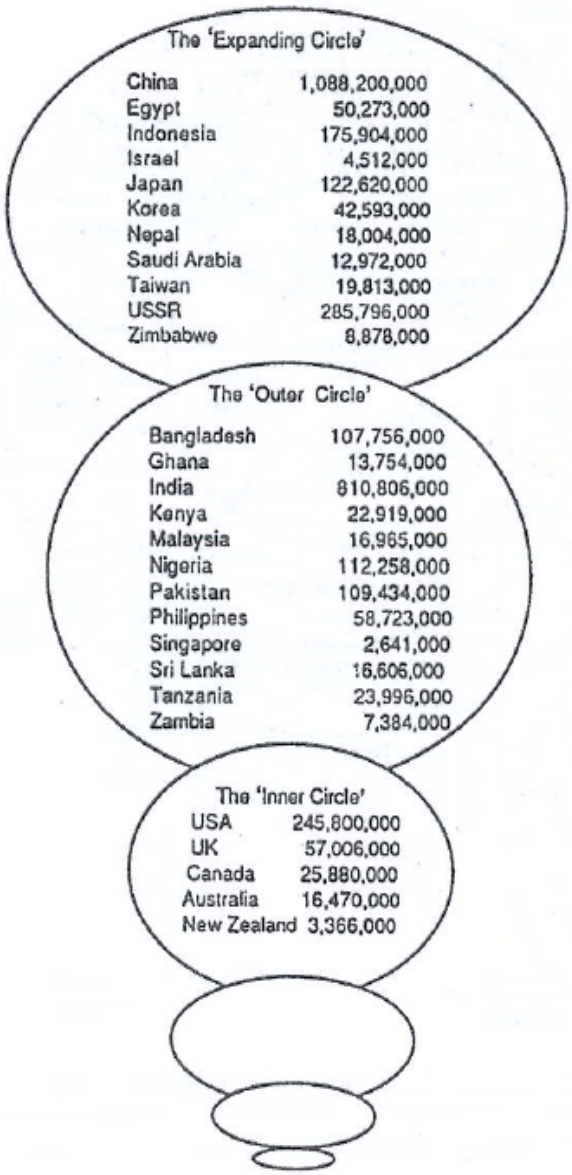

Figure 1.1 Kachru's Circles Model of World Englishes (From Kachru, 1988, p.5)

Braj Kachru recognized “the social realities of the growing use and nativization of English and demand for English instruction around the world” (Berns, 2006, p.720). He argued for the need for a new research paradigm to explain varieties of English around the world, and suggested a three concentric circle model as in the figure 1.1., which he explains as follows:

> The current sociolinguistic profile of English may be viewed in terms of three concentric circles…The Inner Circle refers to the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English. The Outer Circle represents the institutionalized non-native varieties (ESL) in the regions that have passed through extended periods of colonization… The Expanding Circle includes the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL contexts.
>
> (Kachru, 1985, p.366-7)

“The term “Englishes” symbolizes the functional and formal variations, divergent sociolinguistic contexts, ranges and varieties of English in creativity, and various types of acculturation in parts of Western and non-western world” (Kachru, 1992, p.2). In the article, *State of the art: World Englishes*, Kachru (1992) argues that “the concept emphasizes ‘We-ness’, and not the dichotomy between *us* and *them* (the native and nonnative users).”

Besides the concentric circle model, he proposed a polymodel approach, which proposes the recognition of diversity and varieties of Englishes in the world

and which is based upon “pragmatism and functional realism (Kachru, 1882, p.66).” He noted the diversity of context of situation in the world and argued that “the polymodel approach presupposes variability related to acquisition, function, and context of situation” (1982). Also, he argues that “the aim of teaching World Englishes is to make professionals and advanced students aware of such aspects as: sociolinguistic profile, variety exposure, attitudinal neutrality, range of uses, contrastive pragmatics, multidimensionality of functions, expansion of the canons, and cross-cultural intelligibility” (Kachru, 1992, p.10). In line with this, as an attempt to take a first step to fulfill this aim, the author tries to provide an overview of Korean English in this thesis.

In chapter two, a discussion on the issues and concerns that are shared by several Expanding circle countries and Korea will be presented, followed by research questions.

CHAPTER 2. KOREA AND THE EXPANDING CIRCLE COUNTRIES

As many people use English as an international language all over the world, English has a strong influence on several societies and creates complex issues. Accordingly, several scholars in the Expanding Circle countries have written on diverse phenomena in relation to English's spread. Among those articles, a few discuss the issues and concerns that are shared by South Korea. In this chapter, at first, the work that is of particular relevance to this study and provides important insights to the Korean situation is presented, and then the issues of Korea in relation to English are discussed. After highlighting the insights gained from the work, the author uses them in an interpretation of the current state and the future direction of English education in South Korea.

Specifically, section 2.1 examines selected articles presenting various perspectives on English spread in the Expanding Circle countries, examining English spread in the educational domain, and focusing on English teaching and learning in the Expanding Circle countries. For example, Modiano (2003) and Nickels (2005) suggest English should be considered and developed as an original language, not others' language. Some scholars such as Al Haq & Samdi (1996) and Dogancay & Kiziltepe (2005) address the down-side and fear of

English spread. Also, Ciscel (2002) proposes a new perspective, namely linguistic opportunism. As for English spread in the educational domain, Hilgendorf (2007) and Velez-Rendon (2003) talk about influx of English in the educational domain in Germany and Colombia. Lastly, Reichelt (2006) and Hasanova (2007) focus on the current situation of teaching and learning English in other Expanding Circle countries such as Spain and Uzbekistan.

In section 2.2, several issues and concerns of Korea that are shared by other Expanding Circle countries, such as English as native speakers' language, strong motivation for English learning and side effects, and English spread in the educational domain and related issues, are presented.

2.1 Issues and Concerns in the Expanding Circle Countries

Since English vigorously spreads in various functions in the Expanding Circle countries which are free from the history of colonization, many scholars have discussed how to view English and its spread. Among conventional models of World Englishes, a few scholars suggest we consider English as a new language. Modiano (2003, p.40) argues that we should "rethink the way in which ELT practitioners react to the language which our students actually use"; we should "begin looking at the way in which L2 speakers enrich the tongue by transferring features of their L1 into the English language." He introduced the new conceptualization of "NNS English which is not based on the belief that the NNS, by default, is to be judged against the benchmark of NS prestige varieties" (2003, p.40). While pointing out that it is no longer valid to devalue the English of

mainland Europeans in an age where English operates as a lingua franca among large groups of non-native speakers, he criticizes what he calls a linguistic hierarchization that devalues other varieties of English (2003).

Also, Nickels (2005) argues that a new concept of English is needed because the conventional model does not fit in certain contexts. Nickel (2005) presents a profile of English in Puerto Rico where the status of English is somewhere between the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle; English in Puerto Rico is seen as a second language due to its official status, yet, English is also considered a foreign language in Puerto Rican's thinking due to the political and historical baggage. She maintains that labeling English in Puerto Rico as Puerto Rican English, instead of second or foreign language, would stimulate the learning of English as a language of Puerto Rico, as "original", without learners being resentful or feeling as if they are denying their Hispanic heritage, and thus allowing the teaching and learning of English to grow (2005). In addition to the frustrating fact that the language issue is repeatedly used to influence elections, the most impressive argument in the article was Nickel's suggestion that there would be an advantage to label the variety of English used in Puerto Rico as Puerto Rican English.

Unlike the scholars who propose a new perspective on English spread, a few academics hold a critical perspective. For example, Dogancay and Kiziltepe (2005, p.263) argues that "English is not likely to spread vertically in Turkish society; it appears to be gradually spreading horizontally" in the sociolinguistic profile of English in Turkey. This is based on an examination of English's role in

national education policies, Turkish views on the presence of English, and such examples of unplanned language spread as lexical borrowings from English, Al Haq and Samdi (1996) maintain that Saudis fear that the use of English will lead to increasing westernization, feelings of detachment from their country, and erode their commitment to their religious beliefs. They investigated these fears by surveying 1,176 undergraduate students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And the results from the survey show that the fears are groundless with regard to the debilitation of national identity and the contamination of their religious commitment. Also, the authors argue that the students in their survey consider learning English to be the fulfillment of both their national and religious duties as Saudis.

Ciscel (2002) proposes an interesting perspective differing from that of traditional linguistic imperialism. Ciscel (2002) investigates the role of English in Moldova, suggesting "a weak form of linguistic dominance based on the notion of 'opportunism'." The definition of "opportunism" in the Merriam-Webster's online dictionary is "the art, policy, or practice of taking advantage of opportunities or circumstances often with little regard for principles or consequences" (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 2009). Thus, it would be interpreted in this case as English learners' use English for the advantages and opportunities that English could offer. According to the results of his investigation (2002), he found that English in Moldova is learned for perceived opportunities that English provides, and the strength of the role of English is diminished by the Moldovan, Romanian, and Russian identities which compete among themselves, and by residual

integrative motivation to learn French. Thus, he argues that the notion of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) lacks descriptive power to account for various levels of dominance observable in such factors as the economy, culture and society, and language, which are all interrelated. Also, Ciscel suggests that the term "opportunism" rather than imperialism is better to capture the current state of English in Expanding Circle countries because an either/or notion of linguistic domination cannot account for the complexity that is found in many instances of language coming into contact with one another.

In addition to the discussion on how to consider English and its spread, several scholars have attempted to draw sociolinguistic profiles of English in various contexts in order to interpret how, in which functions, and to what degree English has been used and become significant. For example, Hilgendorf (2007) and Velez-Rendon (2003) attempt, respectively, to describe sociolinguistic profiles of English in Germany and in Colombia. Hilgendorf (2007) is interested in the history of Germans' contact with English, the functional allocation of English in various domains, and Germans' attitudes toward English with the language. She describes these in a sociolinguistic profile of English in Germany. Based on the findings of the study, she concluded that Germany represents a particularly fluid situation in which users of English are steadily moving toward adopting it for use in the official (administrative/regulative) function (Hilgendorf, 2007). Particularly, in arguing that German English should be seen as a variety of English, she notes that initiatives introduced by government policy that advocate English as an additional medium of instruction marks a major step towards

making this a reality (2007). Also, Velez-Rendon (2003) offers a sociolinguistic profile of English in Colombia, following the framework provided by Berns (1990). After providing an overview of English spread in four functions of English — interpersonal, instrumental, regulative, and creative/innovative domains, she continues to explain English in the educational function in detail (Velez-Rendon, 2003).

Additionally, a few scholars provide a sociolinguistic profile of English with a focus on teaching and learning. Reichelt (2006) offers an account of English in a multilingual society, Spain, which is concerned with present day enthusiasm for learning English, the successful private commercial market for English language teaching, and reforms of public school curricula and the initiative to introduce English into ever earlier levels of education. Reichelt argues that these developments are a sign of a firm commitment to improving English language proficiency levels across the country (Reichelt, 2006). Also, she optimistically concludes that "the determination will result in the desired results for increased achievement. (2006, p.8)" Also, Hasanova (2007) provides a review of the current situation in a post-Soviet Central Asian republic, Uzbekistan. She focuses on the English in educational institutions with respect to differences between the period of Soviet influence and the post-independence era in Uzbekistan. She also indentifies complicating factors of English education, such as the shortage of qualified English teachers, low teacher salaries and poor benefit packages, teachers move into higher paying government positions or into full time private tutoring, the introduction of teachers who used to teach Russian as English

teachers after only short term training, and a lack of quality teaching materials. Hasanova notes that although the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the British Council produced a series of textbooks with a communicative goal, they are hardly affordable because of their relatively high price in an unstable economic context (Hasanova, 2007).

The issues and concerns mentioned above are shared by Korea's situation. Due to the short history of English Contact and the economic relationship with the US, English is often seen as the native speakers' language, not a neutral foreign language. Additionally, strong motivation for English learning has created several societal issues. English spread in the educational function has also brought about unexpected outcomes. In the following section, these topics will be discussed.

2.2 Issues and Concerns in Korea

Due to the unique status of English as the language of the most powerful country in the world, namely America, and the economic and military relationship, English is not a neutral foreign language despite Korea's not having been colonized by an English speaking country. For this reason, strong linguistic hierarchization exists in the Korean classroom as well in common situations. Since the goal of English instruction is to teach students to become native-like English users, the focus is often on the form of English, not the content. Such dependency on the Inner Circle countries' English has undermined the

development of Korean English as a distinct and self-sufficient entity. For example, Korean students tend to be very quiet in English classroom, believing they are only allowed to produce a perfect native like performance. On the contrary, a varied form that results from L1 interference is often punished by classmates, and even English teachers who maintain the teaching ideology that only Standard English, American English in the case of Korean context, should be valued.

However, ironically, even Korean English teachers do not reach the level of non-native English speakers, a level that seems unachievable. Such an oppressive mindset and the contradicting reality of Korean English teachers as non-native speakers have sapped their confidence and motivation to teach quality English. Particularly, when the Korean government declared the implementation of English education in English in secondary schools in 2001 without any preparation for Korean English teachers, the responses of the practicing teachers were bitter. Since they also learned English in this oppressive context as students, and then in college, teaching English through English had not been provided; it was natural that the unrealistic and haphazard language policy resulted in a state of anomie.

In addition to the low confidence of English teachers due to the view of English as Native Speakers' language, the stereotyped perspective on English led to a negative mindset on varieties of English created in the process of internalizing English in accordance with the linguistic rules of Korean. That is, there is a self-reproaching attitude toward the use of Koreanized English exist,

which is usually referred to as “Konglish.” The term is defined in the Naver dictionary, which is one of the popular online dictionaries in Korea, as follows: “the compound word of Korean and English, meaning an incorrect or wrong English expression only used in Korea” (Naver Dictionary, 2009). This shows well how English influenced by Korean is seen by the general public in Korea. In addition to the stigmatized definition of Koreanized English, another example would be several popular books published in Korea, the content of which is how to speak standard English, such as *Konglish clinic, Konglish 119* (119 is the emergency call number corresponding to 911 in the US)*, and Killing Konglish*. As shown here, Konglish is thought of as something to be fixed, rescued, and even removed.

Korea belongs exclusively to the Expanding Circle; this is different from the situation in Puerto Rico where English carries a certain amount of emotional baggage due to historical and political events. Therefore, it appears that Korean society has comparatively more advantageous linguistic circumstances where English could be embraced and developed as an original language detached from negative emotional baggage. The detachment from such an oppressive mindset, which significantly undermines Koreans’ English teaching, learning, and further natural use, needs to be achieved through education which emphasizes the nature of English in the Expanding Circle countries and a new perspective on English; it is originally created and developed, so it is not native speakers’ English, and its use should be seen as enrichment of the linguistic environment. Thus, the use of Koreanized English deserves to be seen as not erroneous

performance to be corrected, but as a creative and original variety of several possible Englishes.

In addition to the view on English as Native speakers' language, the important issue in Korea concerning English is strong motivation for English learning and related phenomena, such as a wild goose family, expeditionary delivery, and English as the divide between the rich and the poor.

Similar to Moldova, Korea belongs to the Expanding Circle. Thus, it is hard to see English use in Korea from the perspective of linguistic imperialism. Instead, some Korean fathers reluctantly choose to live apart from their family members for the sake of their children's English learning. These fathers are called "wild goose fathers". This term refers to the father who lives and works in Korea to support financially his wife and children residing in the US for the sake of the children's English learning. Previously, wild goose fathers were mainly from the highest tier of society, such as professors, lawyers, and doctors. However, as the desire to provide quality English education to children grows, this phenomenon has expanded to the middle class. Though this phenomenon started from the idea that it would be better for a mother to stay with her children and take care of them in their new environment, the ills of the wild goose father have been greater than expected.

Numerous news shows have reported that a wild goose father who is working alone in Korea suffers from a sense of alienation, looking at himself as a money making machine. This situation has often led to devastating cases, such as marital infidelities and suicide. Unfortunately, what may appear extreme to

those outside Korea sounds familiar to Koreans since they have learned of many such cases through the media. Another serious problem is a rupture of relations between a father and his children, and sometimes between the parents because of the long period of time that they live apart. Since children absorb the English speaking culture like a sponge, they often feel confused about their roots and origin. This has resulted in the breakage of family bonds, and it sometimes ends up with a breakup of the family.

Some parents take action with regard to their children's English learning even before the children are born. The detachment from one's national identity, which appears in Al Haq and Samdi (1996), has been discussed as a particularly serious issue in Korea due to the practice of parents who willingly give up their babies' Korean national identity. The parents usually belong to Korea's upper class, and they travel to the US in order to give birth to a baby. Once the babies are born, they become US citizens due to the territorial principle, and this means they could receive various benefits when it comes to schooling in the US. For this reason, many expectant mothers are boarding flights to the US. Such a practice called "an expeditionary delivery" is truly a shame, but it is a hidden aspect of Korea, where the national identity is abandoned for the sake of gaining English proficiency.

However, this story may sound unfamiliar to many Koreans who belong to the working class. English is often seen as the divide between the wealthier, educated urban population and those who belong to other socioeconomic and geographic groups, and this is also true in South Korea. Due to the inefficacy of

public English education system, students cannot reach their desired level of English after six to nine years of exposure to English teaching. As a result, many students in the middle and upper classes choose to study abroad in English speaking countries such as America, Canada, Australia, and the Philippines. Since the cost of living and studying in Canada and Australia is more affordable than in the US, those countries are favored. Also, as the number of students who want to study abroad increases, such Outer Circle countries as the Philippines have become very popular because the cost is very low compared to the Inner Circle countries; so it is possible to have one on one tutoring for the same amount of tuition.

However, the choice of studying abroad is not affordable for everyone in Korean society. Considering the unique cultural practice of Korean young adults living with their parents until their marriage unless their workplace is very far from their hometown and being financially dependent on parents in general, the choice that costs over 15,000 dollars per year is a matter of choice for only certain classes. Nonetheless, this trend has been on the rise since the late 1990s. Since English proficiency is required and valued in almost every job in Korea, the fact that the desired English proficiency is achieved through studying abroad creates an invisible and insurmountable bar for the employment opportunities of people from the lower socioeconomic classes.

It has been 12 years since the start of English education in primary education. Since 1997, students began to learn English from the third grade, and the Korean government recently announced the extension of English education

into the first grade beginning in 2009 as an attempt to narrow the gap due to limited opportunities for English learning. Though there was much public outcry about English learning at such an early age at first, it is now believed that the implementation of English education in primary school resulted in the transformation of Korean English education in a more practical direction and the provision of equal access to English for all the children. In this sense, positive results from the extension of English education in primary schools are anticipated, although some argue that the improvements in the current system, such as the expansion of hours of English class, should be carried out before any extension.

Despite the Korean government's efforts to provide equal opportunity for English learning, it seems that parents' enthusiasm for their children's English learning far surpass them. While the Spanish government supports English learning of young children whose age is three to six, Koreans' early education in English rests completely in the hands of parents; that is, English learning of preschoolers in Korea is done in the private sector. However, it does not make any difference whether English education for young children is operated in the public sector or private sector considering that Korean parents' desire to let their children learn English is as strong as that of Spanish parents. For instance, this is evidenced in the results of an internet survey of 1,218 parents: 53% answered that their children have already started to participate in English lessons before the age of three. The tuition for private preschool for learning English ranges

from 400 dollars to 1,500 dollars per month in urban areas, and it has no maximum limit in the case of one on one tutoring.

Also, the market for preschool English learning has been increased by as much as ten times in the last ten years; the share of the market reached one third of the total budget of the Ministry of Education in Korea. For those in the upper class, private lessons are manageable, but a significant number of under-privileged parents and children cannot afford such lessons.

Due to the close relationship between English learning and socio-economic status, the marginalizing role of English has caused unexpected consequences in Korean society. That is, in Koreans' attitudes toward English, best characterized as ambivalence. Such mixed and contradictory attitudes toward English are noteworthy because it has been transformed from blind love in 1990s to the current ambivalent attitude in 2000s. Since Seoul was chosen as the host of Olympic Games in 1998, Koreans were eager to accept western cultures, including English language and English speaking people, in order to learn English. At that point, the desire to learn English was so intense that it was described as English fever. As a result, many borrowings were streamed into Korean lexicons, and English speaking visitors were strongly welcomed into Korean society.

However, soon after such indiscriminate acceptance, different points of view started to be formed. One of the controversial issues related to English speakers was the comparatively well-paid native English speaking teachers. Since the economic crisis called IMF (which is Koreanized English, means the

period of financial hardship due to the economic crisis in 1998 along with support from International Monetary Fund), young adult unemployment including, graduates of high school, college, university, and even graduate school has been prevalent. In contrast to the economic reality of Korean young adults, the minimum salary of native English speaking teachers is over 2,000 dollars, and these teachers usually double their earnings or more through private tutoring. Considering the satirical term “88 man-won generations” meaning the young generation in their 20s and unemployed because the average paycheck from a part-time job is 88 man-won (880 dollars) in Korea, it is not surprising that anger or jealousy from the sense of deprivation is often directed toward English speakers who seem to earn money in an easier way.

No matter what the unexpected outcomes, it is evident that English has spread more and more in various functions of Korean society. As learning a language means learning the culture of the language, it is natural that Koreans accept western values with the spread of English. Particularly, the most significant contributor to the spread of English speaking culture in Korea is American TV dramas and situation comedies. Since the late 1990s, it has become very popular among young adults watching American dramas and comedies such as Friends, Sex and the City, Will and Grace, and Ally McBeal. It was considered fabulous to talk about the American sitcoms, and not only the external aspects, like their fashion styles, but also the internal values such as the actors’ and actresses’ way of life became fashionable in Korean society. That is, Korea has been transformed from a traditionally conservative society with a

strong influence from Confucianism into a westernized society; for example, the issues which had been taboo, such as open love affairs, pre-marital sex, the existence of gays and lesbians, and single mothers were recognized, discussed, and finally accepted. Though the fear of losing their own identity with the spread of English exists among some Koreans, it appears that western culture is willingly embraced, especially by the younger generation in Korean society.

In addition to, the spread of creative functions, Korea is currently entering on a new phase with regard to the status and range of English. Since the government promulgated the introduction of English as the only medium of instruction in higher education, it appears that functional complementarity, which is addressed by Halliday (2003), as one of the two key elements for successful language learning, has been provided. He argues that people learn a language when two conditions are met; one is sufficient resources for language learning, such as competent teachers and teaching materials. However, he points out that even with all the necessary resources deployed, the students do not always learn because they do not perceive a need for what they are learning (Halliday, 2003). He explains that functional complementarity is the other condition for successful language learning (Halliday, 2003). Functional complementarity is reflected in the case of an individual who is in a situation in which he or she needs a language other than the one he or she already knows in order to do what needs to be done in the situation (e.g. to order food, to make friends, and to get a promotion). Just as a Korean does not need English to survive in Korea, a Korean in an English dominant context does need English to get these things done. Although Korea

still lacks the necessary educational resources, English as the medium of communication is evaluated positively because doing so sparks the use of Korean English in its instrumental function.

However, the provision of functional complementary without the necessary resources in the current educational system resulted in confusion; what happens now in universities since English has been adopted as the medium of instruction is that professors recite the content of lecture in broken English, and most of students cannot follow it since their English proficiency is not high enough. Instead, students download the notes of the lecture on a website that the professors uploaded for students, of course in Korean. They both know they are not ready for this kind of radical transformation. A measure to fix this chaotic situation is to get students and instructors ready for the lecture in English. Namely, an intensive English prep-course needs to be offered before students take university courses. In addition, the need for instructors with training for the ability to teach these intensive courses in English cannot be overemphasized.

At this critical moment of Korea's entrance into a new phase of English use, it is significant to search for a new perspective on English as a linguistic tool to make their lives better and to liberate Koreans' restrained minds. By doing so, the side effects and chasm caused by a strong desire for English learning would be gradually ameliorated. In order to explore suggestions for Korea's situation in relation to English and English education, the following research questions are asked.

2.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to develop a sociolinguistic profile of English in South Korea with a focus on English education. In order to achieve the objective, the following questions will be addressed:

Who uses English in Korea?

How and where is English being used?

What do Koreans think of English?

Who teaches and learns English at the secondary level?

What is in the curriculum?

What needs to be done to improve Koreans' English education?

CHAPTER 3. SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF ENGLISH

In this chapter, a sociolinguistic profile of English with the focus on its use, its users, Koreans' attitudes, teaching and learning at the secondary level, and its curriculum will be described in order to answer the first five of the six questions. Before getting into the profile, a brief introduction of South Korea will precede the sociolinguistic profile for better understanding of readers who are not familiar with the country.

3.1 Brief Description of South Korea

South Korea is one of Expanding Circle countries (Kachru, 1992, p.3), and its dominant language is Korean. Historically, Confucianism has been a strong influence, and China and Japan, which are in close geographic vicinity, have also influenced Korean culture substantially. For instance, seniority is considered significant on almost any occasion, and people fear shame and losing face. According to the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs of South Korea, the population is over 48,600,000 as of July 1, 2008, and the size of country is 100,032 ㎢.

The English language started to be taught in 1883. The first English institution was Tongmunhak, whose purpose was to train interpreters (Jeong, 2004, p.40). However, the opportunity for such direct contact with English was

limited to upper class men who could afford the lessons. With the end of WWII, English became a required subject in all secondary level schools. Previously, the knowledge of Chinese characters was the symbol of education and sophistication, but English replaced its position. The late nineteen eighties, when the Asian Games and the Olympic Games were held in Seoul, Korea, brought a new era for the use of English by Koreans (Shim, 1994, p.225-244). Since the 1990s, communicative competence has become a motto of teaching English, initiated by the reformation in 1993 (The 6th National curriculum, 1990).

As for the general presence and availability of English, it is extensively used in the form of code mixing, switching, and borrowing words in both informal and formal contexts. English media such as radio programs (American Forces Network in Korea), TV programs, cable TV stations, English movies, advertisements, newspapers, and magazines are available. Presence of English is prevalent in sub-cultural domains such as pop songs, the Internet, and commerce as in other expanding circle countries.

3.2 Users of English

Given that it is difficult to define an English speaker, the number of English users varies depending on the definition. If it includes people who have received English education, it would be over 80 percent (Crystal, 1997) of the population since the people who first learned English as a compulsory subject in school would be in their mid sixties, and currently English is being taught in elementary school. However, if by English users is meant speakers with a certain level of

English proficiency, it becomes a different story. The issue of proficiency is addressed in the article, *English in Asia, Asian Englishes, and the issue of proficiency* (Bolton, 2007). Bolton argues that the number of Asians who use English is rapidly growing while “high-level” English users are still small in number. According to the data in the article (see Table 3.1), English speakers in South Korea are assumed to be 10% of the whole population, which means 4,860,000 people (Thailand with 6.5 million and Taiwan with 2.3 million also show the same percentage-10% of English speakers), yet Bolton is also cautious about the guesstimate. Bolton wrote back to the author’s question on the figure as follows: “Actually, the figure on Korea was a pure guesstimate, although I looked at the figures from David Crystal's Encyclopedia of the English Language (Bolton, email to author, March 25, 2009).”

Table 3.1 Statistics of Asian Englishes

Society	Approx. population	% of English speakers	Approx. totals
OUTER CIRCLE			
India	1,100 million	30%	330 million
Philippines	91 million	48%	44 million
Pakistan	165 million	11%	18 million
Nepal	29 million	30%	8.7 million
Malaysia	25 million	32%	8.0 million
Bangladesh	150 million	5%	7.5 million
Hong Kong	6.9 million	45%	3.1 million
Singapore	4.5 million	50%	2.2 million
Sri Lanka	21 million	10%	2.1 million
Brunei	0.4 million	39%	0.1 million
Bhutan	2.3 million	5%	0.1 million
EXPANDING CIRCLE			
China	1,322 million	25%	330 million
Japan	127 million	20%	25 million
Indonesia	234 million	5%	12 million
Thailand	65 million	10%	6.5 million
South Korea	49 million	10%	4.9 million
Vietnam	85 million	5%	4.2 million
Burma (Myanmar)	47 million	5%	2.4 million
Taiwan	23 million	10%	2.3 million
Cambodia	14 million	5%	0.7 million
Laos	6.5 million	5%	0.3 million

Note: From English in Asia, Asian Englishes, and the issue of proficiency (Bolton, 2008, p.6)

As addressed by Kachru, to acquire the exact number of users of English across the world is impossible since it depends on what we mean by an 'English-knowing' person (1992, p.3).

Similar to the number of English users, the socio-economic status of English speakers varies depending on how they are defined. Generally, the present author commonly observed among Koreans that people with high proficiency are considered to be middle or upper class in Korean society as they hold highly paid jobs. Those people have usually acquired English proficiency through studying abroad or private tutoring. Therefore, the title of Nino-Murcia's article, *English is like the dollar* (Nino-Murcia, 2003, p.121-142) is also very true for South Korea in that only the middle and upper classes can afford quality English education, and a good command of English is a critical requirement for high profile jobs. Except for those who experienced studying abroad or intensive private tutoring, acquiring high proficiency through public schooling is expected to be very rare.

3.3 Uses of English

In her book, *Contexts of Competence*, Berns (1990) divided uses of English into four categories: the interpersonal function (use as a symbol of prestige; formal, professional use as a link language between/among speakers of languages when it is the only common language; use to establish and maintain relationships, for example, between pen-pals, friends/acquaintances, travelers); instructional function (status of English in educational system as medium of

instruction, in bilingual schools, as the language of scholarship and research); the regulative function (status as a language in legal, administrative domains; use in international treaties, contracts, agreements); and the creative/innovative function (use in literary works, public texts (broadcast commercials, print advertising, borrowings and their nativization) (Berns, 1990, p.52-54).

As for the interpersonal function of English in Korea, it is commonly observed that the younger generation, particularly one familiar with Internet use, often incorporates English loan words or short expressions into their everyday conversation. Also, due to the influx of foreigners, English use for the interpersonal function has gradually increased. Regarding the instrumental function of English uses, English as a medium for instruction has been required by the government since the 7th national curriculum which applied to the elementary and secondary levels since 1997 and 2001, respectively (The 7th National Curriculum,1997). However, teachers are not proficient enough to teach English through English since they also have not received quality English education.

The third category of English use is the regulative function. Since the regulative function, such as in the legal and administrative domains, is generally the last domain in which users adopt English, English use in this domain are scarce. That is, English is not frequently used in the domain in order to avoid confusion due to the language use.

As for creative and innovative uses of English, English is commonly used in formal and conservative types of media, such as daily newspapers as well as

in the entertainment domain. Also, examples of codification of Koreanized English are easily found, including lexico-semantic, morpho-syntactic, and pragmatic phenomena. Nativization of English loanwords, such as truncation, semantic shift, lexical creativity, and hybridization are often observed. Shim (1994) argues that Koreans often choose to use English in order to search for socially appropriate words and to emphasize emotion; for example, “No, thank you” is sometimes used instead of Korean when people refuse some offers, and “oh, my god!” is used to stress surprise and excitement (p.225-244).

3.4 Attitudes as Evidenced in Range of Uses and Variety of Users

Attitudes toward English spread have been rigorously researched (Friedrich, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2003; Velez-Rendon, 2003; Flaitz, 1993). As shown in those EFL countries in the articles, Koreans’ attitudes can be expressed as ambivalence. In the past, there was a tendency to welcome any Anglicism from visible products such as cosmetics, clothes, and food to invisible culture such as linguistic blendings, weddings, and the school system. However, some people realize there might be negative effects on Korean society in the process of accepting Anglicism. This critical view is identified in a book written by several Korean English professors and titled, *English, Colonialism in my mind* (Yun, 2007).

According to one article from Seoul Shin-moon, which is a well known newspaper in Korea, 270,000 students in elementary through high school left to study English abroad (Lee, 2009). Also, according to the student statistics from

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (See Table 3.2), South Korea ranked the number one country of citizenship by active students (students who are currently enrolled), with a total of 83,854 students (US ICE, 2006).

Table 3.2 Top 20 Countries of Citizenship by Active International Students

Rank	Country of Citizenship	# of Active Students	% of Total Active Students
1	SOUTH KOREA	83,854	14.4%
2	INDIA	63,644	10.9%
3	CHINA	53,758	9.2%
4	JAPAN	47,249	8.1%
5	TAIWAN	32,442	5.6%
6	CANADA	23,312	4.0%
7	MEXICO	13,441	2.3%
8	TURKEY	11,242	1.9%
9	THAILAND	10,650	1.8%
10	SAUDI ARABIA	9,345	1.6%
11	HONG KONG	8,384	1.4%
12	BRAZIL	8,216	1.4%
13	INDONESIA	7,841	1.3%
14	KENYA	7,384	1.2%
15	POLAND	7,258	1.2%
16	NEPAL	7,196	1.2%
17	GERMANY	7,102	1.2%
18	COLOMBIA	6,618	1.1%
19	UNITED KINGDOM	6,559	1.1%
20	NIGERIA	5,895	1.0%

The list includes Independent States, Dependencies, and Areas of Special Sovereignty.

These numbers and ranks are quite remarkable, given that Korea's population is less than one twentieth of India's (the second) or China's (the third). As reported in the table above, South Korean students (14.4%) make up more than one third of the students from expanding circle countries (48.2%).

As briefly mentioned in the literature review, the wild goose family has led to several social problems such as the breakup of many families, maladjusted students, and the increasing gap (socio-psychologically and economically) between the rich and the poor. Despite these downsides of going abroad for English learning, the number has been continuously increasing because people believe achieving English fluency is worth the risk, and it can be acquired through studying abroad, not by being educated in Korea.

Next, Korea's English education at the national level, with a focus on the secondary level will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4. ENGLISH IN EDUCATION

This chapter includes a brief description of the changes in the national curriculum since the liberation of Korea in 1945, English textbooks, and the national English teacher qualification exam. That is, this chapter examines what has been planned in the curriculum, explores English textbooks which represent the content of English lessons in Korea, and investigates what qualification is required to teach English at secondary level in public school. Following the discussion on what needs to be improved in each section, the last section is the analysis of the Plan which is the basis of the most recent curriculum of English. By describing the changes in the national curriculum of English, English textbooks of Korea, the national English teacher qualification exam, and the Plan, I expect to diagnose fundamental areas needing improvement for better English education in Korea.

4.1 The Changes of the National Curriculum of English

The first period is called “the Period of the Syllabus” from 1946 to 1954. At that time, the Korean government did not have a unified curriculum due to the politically charged situation and the Korean War (KEM, 2001). Thus, as a temporary expedient, English teaching was performed based on the syllabus,

which consisted of teaching principles, teaching policy, teaching plan, and teaching points. Roughly, 150 hours of lessons were allotted for one high school year (five hours per week for 30 weeks) (KEM, 2001). Teaching content was planned to be mainly translation, grammar, composition, conversation, and pronunciation (KEM, 2001).

The second period is called “the Period of the First National Curriculum of English,” which is from 1954 to1963. The focus of the curriculum of this period was everyday life; yet this was not concretized in the curriculum. English teaching time varied from 105 to 175 hours for one high school year (KEM, 1954). Also, it is noteworthy that it was stated that Standard English was American English for the first time, and the number of vocabulary items was 400 or so for freshmen, 500 or so for sophomores, and 600 or so for seniors (KEM, 1954).

During the third period called “the Period of the Second National Curriculum of English” from 1963 to1974, practical thinking was emphasized in education in general. In line with this trend, the focus of English teaching was on short expressions and systematic teaching (KEM, 1963). Also, teaching content was divided into three categories: listening and speaking, reading, and writing. Interestingly, audio-lingual practice was regarded as most important. The hours of English lessons remained the same (KEM, 1963).

The Period of the Third National Curriculum of English was introduced in 1974, and it was in force until 1981. The main characteristic of the third national curriculum of English was its stress on grammar (KEM, 1974). Though discovery

learning was emphasized during this time, specific grammar rules were introduced, and this led to grammar focused teaching (KEM, 1974). Also, it stated that one sentence should have fewer than 10 words for freshmen, 15 for sophomores and 20 for seniors. The number of hours of English lessons remained the same (KEM, 1974).

In the 1980s, the Korean government started to advocate globalization, and it naturally influenced English education. From 1981, The Period of the Fourth National Curriculum of English was carried out. The focus was on “alive” everyday conversation ability, and class time was extended while the number of vocabulary items was reduced (KEM, 1981). Also, the four skills in English were evenly emphasized, and the hours of English lessons remained the same until 1988 when the Fifth National Curriculum was introduced in 1992 (KEM, 1981).

The goal of the Fifth National Curriculum of English (1998-1992) was to introduce our (Koreans’) culture to foreigners and to embrace other cultures by acquiring communicative competence (KEM, 1988). One of the notable features was the emphasis on spoken English in middle school and high school freshmen classes; written English was the focus of high school sophomore and senior classes (KEM, 1988).

The conspicuous difference between the Fifth and the Sixth National Curriculum of English (1992-1997) was in the syllabus. While grammar had been the focus of syllabus, the notional-functional syllabus was introduced in the sixth curriculum (KEM, 1992). Also, it is interesting that language function was divided

into comprehension and production, not four skills, and it was encouraged to teach comprehension first and then production skills (KEM, 1992).

Next, the most recent curriculum before the current one, “The Period of the Seventh National Curriculum of English” was introduced in 1997 when the author entered a University and continued until 2009. In this period, the goal of curriculum has not been changed much since the Fifth Curriculum (1988-1992): to acquire communicative competence and to be able to introduce our culture and embrace others’ (KEM, 1997). However, the difference lay in teaching method; the four skills of English were taught integratively and task based instruction was encouraged (KEM, 1997).

Since 1997, English has been taught once a week from the third grade; recently, English instruction has been extended to twice a week, corresponding to strong demand for Early English education. While other subjects are taught by one teacher, English is taught by an English teacher who usually majors in English education. Sometimes, native teachers teach English classes in private elementary schools. At the secondary level, English is taught four to five times a week as a compulsory subject. Besides these hours, many students attend extra curricular lessons offered by schools for a fee. Though the fee is usually cheaper than private lessons’, some students still cannot afford them. The content of the English class is planned by KEM, and English teachers get to choose one textbook among ten textbooks approved by KEM. Thus, it could be considered that the content and materials are standardized.

After more than a decade of the seventh curriculum's application, the eighth curriculum has been instituted as of March, 2009. The specific plan will be explained in detail at the end of this chapter. In the following section, English textbooks will be discussed in order to facilitate understanding the 11specifics of English teaching and learning in Korea.

4.2 English Textbooks

English learning is a result of interaction among learners, teachers and teaching materials. The most important factors that influence the success of English learning can be divided into the human and the non-human elements. The human element refers to English teachers and learners, and the non-human element refers to teaching materials, syllabus and learning hours (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). English textbooks hold a dominant position as the non-human element, consistently and systematically suggesting what and how to teach.

Almost all EFL teachers struggle to decide which book to choose for a new school year. Since a textbook is the largest part of teaching materials, the ability to recognize the right textbook for the students is crucial for all EFL teachers. In many teaching situations, a textbook could be the only material; a textbook plays a role as one of the most important input providers in the EFL situation. Therefore, selecting an optimal textbook is crucial.

Since Shim and Yu wrote their respective articles in 1994 and 1997, there have been several articles about Korean English textbooks. Shim (1999) argues that Koreans learn codified English which hinders understanding and

communicating in American English due to the poor quality of English textbooks. For example, the definition of “growth” in one Korean textbook was plants and trees, and “day by day” was used in the sentence as “I go to school day by day,” which probably meant “I go to school every day.” Also, in 1994, Yu compared grammatical structures in utterances of native speakers of American English and those in EFL textbook dialogues, and he found variation in dialogues among EFL textbooks may cause educational equity concerns and problems in articulation with upper-level education.

In addition to these papers, there are several articles, written by Korean teachers: *A comparative study on elementary English textbooks for public and private education* written by Heyjin Jang in 2005; “A comparative study on middle school English textbooks and ESL textbooks” written by Kyongmi Kwon in 2006; and “The analysis of the Korean and Imported Textbooks for Children's English Education” written by Jeonghui Kim in 2005.

Additionally, In September 2007, a thesis written by an American Korean who was born and lived for 11 years in the US appeared in the newspaper. The title of the article was *“Why can’t we speak English even after 10 years of learning? That’s because the materials are far different from authentic English.”* According to the article (No, 2007), the main reason that Koreans cannot speak and write in English despite intensive and extensive investment of energy and time is the poor quality of English textbooks used in secondary school. It also claims that the expressions appearing in the conversation section of the textbooks display a huge difference from authentic English in the structure of

questions, the choice of vocabulary, and the expressions. The publication of communicative English textbooks with the cooperation from inner circle countries as conducted in Uzbekistan (Hasanova, 2007) would be an effective suggestion to improve Korean English textbooks.

Another work that seems meaningful to the Korean situation is Peacock (1997). He studied the effect of EFL materials on the motivation of EFL learners. This study appears interesting in that it was done by a native English speaking instructor teaching in a Korean university, and the result was also intriguing, as the observed motivation was significantly increased when students studied with authentic materials while students, themselves, reported that authentic materials were less interesting than artificial materials. (Such a negative response is common among students who often find fault in practice when they are learning.)

English textbooks published in expanding circle countries are often pointed out as the main reason for failure or inefficacy in public English education. For example, Akindjo (2000) argues that inappropriate English textbooks resulted in inefficient Togolese English education. As discussed, this is also true in Korea's case. Despite Koreans' intense motivation and endeavors to learn English, their English proficiency is generally low, and people often blame public English education for the lack of English proficiency. Then, since English textbooks are used as the main materials in public English education, one of the solutions or suggestions for better English education could be found in the process of textbook selection.

How, then, are the textbooks selected? There are three kinds of textbook publication systems in Korea (Korea Authorized Textbook Association): first, there are government published textbooks, such as textbooks for Korean grammar, history, and ethics. Another is approved textbooks, such as local history textbooks for children. In this case, the government appoints a publishing company, and the company produces the textbooks. Another is the government-authorized text books, such as English textbooks; several publishing companies apply for authorization and submit their textbooks which need to meet the guidelines of the government. Among them, the government decides which companies will be given authorization. That is, Korean English teachers are allowed to choose an English textbook within limited choices since only government-authorized textbooks as main materials can be taught in classroom. As presumed, many English teachers including this author unfortunately think that English textbooks which the Korean government authorized are somewhat inefficient for English learning.

As mentioned earlier, English is studied by elementary, middle, and high school students who take 4 to 5 English classes per week. In high school, the number and importance of English classes increases since English is a crucial subject for national university entrance exam. The main materials for English class are a textbook, accompanied CD-ROM (which is another version of textbook), a computer, and a projector for the use of the CD-ROM. Since the inauguration of the modern government in 1945, the national educational curriculum has had 8 reforms, meaning 8 textbook changes. Once published, it is

used at least for seven years. Textbook publication is overseen by the government, and English textbooks currently used in secondary school are the government authorized ones. Although several companies applied to publish textbooks, only a few make it. Since permission to publish English textbooks means a huge market, the application process is quite competitive.

The strengths and weaknesses of the Korean English textbooks are as follows. First, the price is around 4 dollars. Compared to the price of imported American or British textbooks, maybe ranging 30 to 40 dollars, it is a good deal. However, since almost all students buy the associated reference book and work book, which cost around thirty dollars, the cost of materials is almost the same. The second strength is its accommodation for Korean learners and teachers since it is written by Korean writers. However, they were mostly not ESL experts; rather, they are English literature or linguistics professionals. Currently, the trend is to replace them with ESL experts. The third strength is that the textbooks are accompanied by a CD-ROM, which is very convenient to use.

For the weaknesses, in addition to authors with less expertise in ESL, dull contents and visuals lower the students' motivation. Texts are also problematic since they do not provide enough language input. Regarding the estrangement from practical application, many people believe the contents of Korean English textbooks are somewhat different from authentic language, and this has been considered the main reason for Koreans' codified English, so called "Konglish."

The organization of the textbooks is the same since it is required to follow the KEM's principles in order to be approved for publication. Generally, 12

chapters are included for one book, which is used for one school year. Each chapter has one big topic, and it shows communicative functions to be achieved. For example, the topic of lesson 1 of *Middle School English 3* by Hyundai English is one's view of life, and the communicative functions are "to be sure", "to give orders", and "to make a suggestion." The order of content is as follows; after a warm up listening activity, more listening activities are included with a warm-up speaking activity. Reading comprehension follows, and speaking and writing activities are presented. Also, major grammar points and integrative exercises come at the end. Some books introduce English songs or cartoons about American culture.

As in the case of countries where private and public secondary education systems coexist, there is a tendency for private schools to adopt American or British English textbooks and use them with the government-produced or authorized textbooks. This freedom of choice in adopting various authentic materials as supplementary materials needs to be allowed in the public sector, too.

Except for those who attend private schools, it can be said that Korean students receive standardized lessons since they use English textbooks of similar quality and structure. There is one more factor that support this claim; that is, the national qualification exam for English teachers. English teachers have to pass the exam to be able to teach in a public school. In the next section, the national qualification exam will be discussed to explore what criteria are set for teaching English in public schools of Korea.

4.3 The National Qualification Exam of English Teachers

The English teacher qualification exam at a national level in Korea can be largely divided into three parts; the first is a theoretical exam in multiple choice format; the second is an English writing test, and third is a performative exam (KEMS, 2009). The theoretical exam is composed of 20 points for pedagogy, which includes 40 multiple-choice questions, and 80 points of content knowledge, including teaching theories, linguistic knowledge and general English competence (KEMS, 2009). Some of the questions in the content knowledge part require writing in English. Those who pass the first test get to take the second and third exams. The writing test focuses on the theories of language teaching (KEMS, 2009). Test-takers have to write on 4 questions (KEMS, 2009). The performative exam includes an English interview and the composition of a lesson plan and its demonstration. The English interview and teaching demonstration make up 40% each (KEMS, 2009). Applicants can get additional points depending on their computer skills and TSE, TOEFL or TOEIC scores (KEMS, 2009).

From this author's own experience and observation, the applicants must have a good knowledge of language teaching theories and pedagogy to be an English teacher in Korea. Since there are always more than 10 applicants for one opening, these two factors evaluated in the first exam are essential to pass the qualification exam. Once an applicant passes the first exam, it gets much easier to get a job since they are narrowed down to 200 percent of the quota. That is, those two factors practically determine whether one is qualified as an English

teacher. The goal in English Education at the secondary level is clearly stipulated in the curriculum as developing a basic communicative ability to understand and use English for daily life. However, it appears that the core of the matter—the ability to teach students how to communicate in English for daily life—is not a priority. This is assumed to be one of the reasons for ineffective English education. In fact, due to this concern, the test format is a result of continuous modification. For example, when this author took the test in 2002 (KEMI, 2002), the first and the second exams were combined, and interview was carried out in both English and Korean. Also, 1.2 times the quota could take the second exam, which conveys the significance of the theoretical exam. However, the impact of a practical exam was comparatively increased in the current version by letting double the quota take the second exam and 1.5 times the quota finally take the performative exam. However, it still seems that more emphasis needs to be put on the practical communicative skills of the test-takers. In that way, the incongruity between the goal in English education and the English teachers' qualification exam in Korea can be somewhat reduced.

4.4 The Analysis of the Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, Koreans' strong desire for English learning have often led to changes in language planning and policy toward English. In this section, *The Plan for Effective English Education in the Public Sector (The Plan)* is reviewed in detail. As the KEM plans to implement a new

curriculum based on The Plan as of 2009, it would be a thumbnail sketch of the current situation in English education of South Korea since the 7th curriculum.

The Plan contains three parts: goals, strategic objectives, and concrete plans (KEM, 2008). The goals state that all high school graduates should be able to use basic English for daily life, and they should be able to be admitted to universities without getting private English lessons. It is written in astoundingly practical language, and it appears to be compatible with the current situation. That is, it presupposes that people cannot function at a basic level of English after high school graduation and the need private English lessons for college admission. In other words, it expresses prevalent doubts about public English education. It is interesting that they set seemingly very practical goals, yet it is intriguing that English is seen as the index of division between the poor and the rich.

The strategic objectives for the goal are as follows:

- Provision of fundamental reformation for improving quality of English teachers, curriculum, and teaching environment
- Approaching gradually the problem of balancing the goals and the realities of schools and teachers
- Narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor due to unequal opportunities for English learning
- Promoting The Plan as a national task which will cost up five billion dollars

The objectives show what imminent issues Koreans think should be improved. First of all, it is assumed that several factors, such as English teachers, curriculum, and teaching environment in the public sector, fail to meet expectations from the public, so they need to be reformed. Also, it implies that the reality of English teachers, administrators, and curriculum planners should be taken into consideration in order to avoid a state of confusion and disorder. In addition, it explicitly states that English plays a role in dividing social classes and that access for learning English should be equally given. Lastly, it shows that improving English education is an important issue that should be planned and implemented at the national level with a huge budget. From the objectives, it is inferred how much importance English has for South Koreans and what English stands for in the society.

The third part includes specific plans to reach the goals and objectives. Interestingly, the plans focus on English teachers, curriculum, and an English-friendly environment which are mentioned in the first objective. It seems that the designers of The Plan think that once the first objective is achieved with the second objective, the third objective would be naturally obtained. Also, the fourth objective would be the measure that makes the plans work. The particular steps for the plans are described in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Specific plans and measures for The Plan for Effective English Education in the Public Sector

Plans	Measures
I. Increasing English teachers who can teach English through English	1. Hiring 23,000 new English teachers by 2013 (An Estimated budget is $1.7 billion) 2. Training current English teachers (3,000 teachers per year with an estimated budget of $ 4.8 million) 3. Improving teachers' college environment by hiring native speaking instructors and increasing the portion of English speaking and writing in the English teacher qualification exam 4. Hiring English sub-teachers who are good at English (with an estimated budget of $3.4 million).

II. Reforming English curriculum	1. Expansion of English classes at the elementary level 2. Putting more emphasis on English speaking and writing at the secondary level 3. Less regulation of English textbook selection 4. Provision of the national English proficiency test
III. Provision of English-friendly environment	1. Building Children's English libraries 2. Supporting English-only classrooms and English centers 3. Supporting extracurricular activities 4. Providing free quality English lessons through the internet and educational TV programs

The Plan shown above has several positive measures, such as an emphasis on practical English skills and supporting English-friendly learning contexts. Particularly, reformation of curriculum and less regulation on English textbook selection are substantial changes. However, there is still a lot of room for discussion and improvement, especially with regard to hiring new English teachers.

For example, the government plans to increase the number of English teachers who can teach English in English. This is considered a desirable

direction, yet the measures seem too drastic. What is planned is to hire new English teachers who are good at English, particularly oral English, since the point of hiring new teachers is improving the English speaking proficiency of learners. Also, a more problematic aspect of this measure is the fact that the government is trying to hire anyone who can speak English no matter what other qualifications he or she has. The candidates sought by the government are students who are studying abroad and have good English proficiency and those who have M.A. from an American university regardless of the area of study.

This is an extreme example of “opportunism” that risks a huge educational malfunction for the sake of oral English proficiency. Also, this desperate measure may be a good prescription for now, but it worsens the chasm between the rich, who can afford studying abroad, and the poor who can’t, let alone the effect of teachers who did not have any educational preparation.

In addition to hiring new teachers, measures for improving teachers’ college environment appear superficial in that they lack fundamental changes in the curriculum. Just as new teachers are planned to be thrown into English classrooms, imported native English speaking instructors are supposed to be hired for better education for future English teachers. However, this is not enough to ameliorate the situation in teachers’ colleges. That is, more drastic and essential reform in the curriculum needs to be carried out.

In the next chapter, changes for better English education will be proposed based on the discussion so far.

CHAPTER 5. THE NEED FOR A REFORMED CURRICULUM AND A NEW MINDSET

In this chapter, two issues that are considered most essential and urgent in regard to English education in South Korea are discussed, based on the profile and The Plan: one is the lack of quality of English teacher training programs, and the other is the need to change Koreans' attitudes on English and English learning.

As shown in Table 4.1, one of the foci of the Plan is hiring and educating English teachers who can teach English in English. The critique of poor quality English teachers has become serious since the 7th curriculum, with its focus on English speaking proficiency. When the Korean government declared the implementation of English education in English in secondary schools in 2001 without any preparation for English proficiency for Korean English teachers, the responses of the teachers involved reflected resentfulness and helplessness. As the emphasis of English teaching was switched to English speaking ability without systematic English teacher training, it was often observed that English teachers failed to meet expectations of English learners.

Then, how can they teach English speaking and writing skills when they have not learned those skills, even at the university? Park (1992) suggests that English education reform in Korea needs to be initiated at the college level rather

than at the secondary level. Thus, the policy that English teachers should teach English in English can never be realized unless someone actually teaches English teachers. It is so simple: teachers should learn first in order to teach English in English in expanding circle countries. The fundamental fact, that teacher should learn first in order to teach, needs to be understood by the general public, including parents and students, the government, and English teachers themselves.

Thus, it is worth investigating what English education majors learn in current curriculum. In order to do so, the author looked at the curriculum of two major universities: Seoul National University (SNU) and Korea University (KU). The former is a public university, and the latter is a private university. These universities have Education departments and English education programs. Graduates from these programs receive a certificate for English teaching at the secondary level, yet in order to teach at a public school, they have to pass the national exam described above.

The curriculum of SNU has four categories: second language teaching and learning theories, linguistics, English literature, and English skills. The English Education program at SNU's website says that freshmen and sophomores study basic theories of English education, linguistics, English literature, and English skills. Based on the basic knowledge, juniors and seniors learn about advanced theories and take applied courses, such as teaching practica offered for them. Table 5.1 shows the courses offered over four years.

Table 5.1 The Curriculum of the English Education Program of Seoul National University (From the website of English education at SNU)

	Spring Semester	Fall Semester	Note
1	700.111 Foundations of English Language, Literature and Education		Exploration of Majors
2	707.201 English Converstion1 707.204*Applied English Phonetics 707.207 Introduction to English Literature 707.214 English composition1 707.301*Introduction to linguistics	707.205 English Conversation 2 707.212A*Understanding British Literature and Culture 1 707.213* Theories in Teaching English as a foreign language 707.215* English composition 2 707.208 Readings in American Fiction (open biannually) 707.311 Readings in English Novels (open biannually)	Class Observation-1 credit
3	707.317 Readings in British and American Poetry 707.319A*Understanding British Literature and Culture 2 707.321* English Conversation 3 707.324* English Grammar	707.308 Historical Survey of the English Language 707.309A Understanding American Literature and Culture 707.313* Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign	

		Language 707.322 British and American Drama 707.323 English Syntax 707.415A Multimedia and English Education	
4	707.402 Applied Linguistics 707.404* Teaching Materials in English Language Education 707.410A Understanding British and American Literary Theory and Its Application (open biannually) 707.417 Topics in British and American Literature (open biannually) 707.420 British and American Culture (open biannually)	707.305 Applied English Grammar 707.405A Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis 707.418 English Phonology	Teaching Practicum in May

Note: Language courses are highlighted.

KU's curriculum is not much different from SNU's; English education majors learn four types of knowledge such as English skills, second language

teaching and learning theories, linguistics, and English literature. Table 5.2 shows the details.

Table 5.2 The Curriculum of English Education Program of Korea University (From the website of English education of KU)

		English Skills (Taught by NS)	Applied Linguistics	English Teaching Theories	English Literature
1st	Spring		Introduction to Linguistics		
	Fall	English Listening & Conversation			British and American Literature
2nd	Spring	English Listening & Conversation2 English Reading and Composition	English Phonetics	Understanding American Culture	Reading British and American Children's Literature
	Fall	Advanced English Reading	English Grammar	Theories of Teaching English Reading	Understanding and Teaching British and American Poetry
3rd	Spring	English Presentation and Everyday English	History of English and English in the world	Theories of English Teaching	Understanding British and American Novels

	Fall	English Listening & Conversation3	English Syntax	Theories and Practice of English Teaching Theories of Teaching English Composition	Reading British and American Play
4th	Spring		Teaching English Grammar	Multimedia and English Education Second Language Acquisition Materials and curriculum of Secondary Education	Reading British and American Drama Reading British and American Poetry and Teaching Practice
	Fall	Advanced English Composition	English Semantics Applied Linguistics	Assessment In Secondary Education	Reading British and American Novels
		7	8	9	8

From a close examination of these curricula, one interesting fact draws the author's attention. That is, the number of courses related to basic English skills is not sufficient. At both universities, only seven courses for those skills are provided. Furthermore, the courses are spread over four years, which means English education majors only have one to two courses on basic English skills per year. This is too limited. It is too ambitious to anticipate mastering a language with three to six hours a week of training. Since only a few such courses are offered by the program, what happens in reality is that most of English education

majors rely on private institutes to improve English skills and study abroad on their parents' money.

In addition to courses on English teaching and learning theories which are critical for English teacher training, linguistics and literature all take up an equal number of courses. However, this does not appear to be appropriate considering the requirement to teaching English in English and the goals of English education in the 7th curriculum. The goal of English education is clearly stipulated in the 7th curriculum as to develop a basic communicative ability to understand and use English for daily life.

What seems to be noteworthy here is that the common element of the requirement and the goal of the national curriculum is to have basic communicative ability; it is important for teachers because they need to teach English in English, and it is also significant for students in that the end product of more than a decade English learning is to acquire basic English skills for daily life. Then, is the current curriculum for prospective English teachers constructed for them to be able to meet the requirement and to teach students to achieve this goal? The author's answer is "no" based on personal experience as an English education major and English teacher.

Then, what changes need be made? The answer is rather simple: allot more time for basic English skills courses. However, the procedure for the change is not as simple as answering the question. Since there is a limit in course openings, some courses would need to be replaced; in other words, closed. Then, what courses should be sacrificed? Though every course is worth

taking, the most convincing candidates are those in linguistics and literature. Why linguistics and literature? It is not because they are useless or meaningless to prospective English teachers, but because they are less critical than basic English skills and English teaching and learning theories.

A look at the linguistics courses offered at SNU and KU is informative: Introduction to linguistics, English syntax, English Phonetics, English Phonology, History of English, English Semantics, Applied Linguistics, and English Grammar. Again, understanding and studying the structure of English is valuable, yet this is not vital for prospective English teachers; the knowledge of English as a language is critical for linguists, but not as much for English teachers. Essential knowledge of linguistics is able to be learned from the course “Introduction to linguistics,” and the rest of the courses should be optional for those who want to deepen their knowledge.

Also, both universities show that literature courses account for more than 25% of the entire courses. Taking literature courses is meaningful to prospective English teachers in that it helps them to understand American and British culture in a broad sense. However, some adjustment could be made to develop a more effective program. First, the course material should be contemporary and practical. Traditionally, the course content of literature classes is usually classics. What should be noted is the literature courses are offered in the pursuit of understanding American and British culture, and this is believed to affect English learning positively. Thus, in order to utilize the knowledge from literature courses, the course materials should represent contemporary American or British culture

and be interesting for students in secondary school. In this sense, the course offered at KU, “Reading British and American Children’s Literature,” looks very appropriate. Another suggestion for the modification of literature courses is the mode: content-based instruction. Still, basic English skills are important, and this could be incorporated into the literature courses. In this way, literature courses could be transformed into more pragmatic and useful courses for prospective English teachers and their future students.

Even though the basic English four skills are emphasized, still linguistics and literature still take up 50% of the whole curriculum. Also, it is observed that most of the courses for those skills are planned in the early years such as the first year and the second year, and more interesting fact is that most of the courses are taught by native or nonnative instructors while linguistics and literature courses are usually taught by professors.

Why is this? Various explanations could be offered for this phenomenon, yet the author’s main assumption is that there is a lack of experts in teaching basic English skills. Most of the English education programs at Korean universities have a very short history. For example, SNU began its program in 1982, and KU started its program in 1981. And the author’s alma mater did so in 1983. When these programs opened, it was obvious that most of the faculty were linguistics and literature majors who had studied abroad before 1980s. Considering the short history of TESOL or SLA, it seems natural that there were not many Korean experts in the field of English education. Therefore, what happened since then was that those who studied linguistics or literature in

America or Britain became faculty and have taught what they had learned: linguistics and literature. Accordingly, English teachers who learned from them taught English in the way that they had learned: the Grammar Translation Method.

However, things have changed. Due to wide spread media coverage, more and more people have recognized the ineffectiveness of English education and the difference between knowing the grammatical rules of English and being able to use English. Also, more and more people majoring in language teaching continued to study abroad. Therefore, now, the composition of faculty in the English education program looks quite different than it was before; usually around fifty percent of them are English education majors. However, still, linguistics and literature are powerful influences in English education programs at several universities in Korea.

As the author studied this topic with the idea that there should be a big reformation in English education majors' curriculum, she encountered an interesting article that offers a possible solution (See Table 5.3 and 5.4). Jeong (2004), who is working in the private sector in English education, introduced the curriculum (p.40-46) of the institute, the International Graduate School of English (IGSE). He provides two kinds of curriculum for graduate students who are assumed to be English teachers or English education majors: one is for training English teachers, and the other is for training experts in English teaching materials.

Table 5.3 Curriculum of the Department of English Language Teaching

	First semester	Second semester
First year	Core courses	Core courses
	Introduction to Structures of English (3 credits)	English Grammar for Teachers (3 credits)
	English phonetics for Teachers (3 credits)	Methods of English language teaching (3 credits)
	Introduction to ELT Materials (3 credits)	Listening and Speaking II (2 credits)
	Fundamentals of English Language Teaching (3 credits)	Writing II (1 credit)
	Listening and Speaking I (2 credits)	Electives
	Writing I (1 credit)	British and American Culture (3 credits)
	Total (15 credits)	Second Language Acquisition (3 credits)
		Fundamentals of Statistics for Teachers (3 credits)
		One of the Courses of the Department of ELT Materials Development (3 credits)
		Total (15 credits)
Second year	Core courses	Core courses
	Testing (3 credits)	Practice Teaching (3 credits)
	Listening and Speaking III (2 credits)	Listening and Speaking IV (2 credits)
	Writing III (1 credit)	Writing IV (1 credit)
	Electives	Electives
	Research and Experiment (3 credits)	Contrastive Analysis (3 credits)
	Computer-Assisted Language Teaching (3 credits)	Internet and English Teaching (3 credits)
	Teaching Listening and Speaking (3 credits)	Teaching Reading and Writing (3 credits)
	One of the Courses of the Department of ELT Materials Development (3 credits)	Study on English Classroom (3 credits)
		One of the Courses of the Department of ELT Materials Development (3 credits)
	Thesis plan Thesis Writing (3 credits)	*Thesis plan* Thesis Writing (3 credits)
	Total (12 credits)	*Total* (9 credits)

Note: From A Chapter of English Teaching in Korea (Jeong, 2004, p.44)

Table 5.4 Curriculum of the Department of ELT Materials Development

	First semester	Second semester
First year	Core courses	Core courses
	Introduction to Structures of English	English Grammar for Teachers
	English Phonetics for Teachers	Analysis and Development of ELT Materials 1
	Introduction to ELT materials	Designing Instructional Materials
	Fundamentals of English Language Teaching	Listening and Speaking II
	Listening and Speaking I	Writing II
	Writing I	
		Electives
		Manipulation of Authoring Tools
Second year	Core courses	Core courses
	Testing	Listening and Speaking IV
	Listening and Speaking III	Writing IV
	Writing III	
	Electives	Electives
	Desktop Publishing and Computer Graphics	Production of Instructional Television and Video Materials
	Basics of Programming	Seminar: Development of Internet Contents
	Designing of Educational Multimedia	Development and Use of Dictionaries
	Analysis and Development of ELT Materials II	
	Thesis plan Thesis Writing	*Thesis plan* Thesis Writing
	Non-thesis plan Practicum: Development of Teaching Materials	*Non-thesis plan* Practicum: Development of Teaching Materials

Note: From A Chapter on *English Teaching in Korea* (Jeong, 2004, p.45)

As seen in the tables 5.3 and 5.4, most of the curriculum consists of lessons on English teaching and basic English skills. It is interesting that IGSE was founded by Yun, the CEO of Hyundai Yong-O Sa, a famous private English Academy, and most of the students are public school English teachers. Also, it

seems more systematic and constructive compared to The Plan which proposes hiring more NS instructors at teachers' colleges and increasing the importance of English speaking and writing skills in the English teacher qualification exam, which still put the most of the burden on the shoulders of English teachers and do not provide fundamental solutions and systematic preparation.

Considering the current teacher's college curriculum, whose main focus is on linguistic studies of English and literature, leaving teaching basic English skills in the hands of NS instructors who are usually contracted for a short period of time—this often led to inefficacy and inconsistency in English education at college level. Therefore, it is imperative to reform the curricula of English teachers' colleges in order to meet future English teachers' and learners' needs.

In addition to the reformation of English training curricula, there is one more issue to be examined. That is the need to change Koreans' negative attitudes on English and English ability. This negative results are attributed to so-called "빨리빨리/pali-pali/" culture. "빨리빨리" means "quickly" in English, and it reflects for Koreans' short temper (the author's own view). Since the Korean War in 1950, Korean people have established striking economic development for a few decades. South Korean became a member of G-20 (the Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors) after being one of the poorest countries in the world. Meanwhile, Koreans are accustomed to seeing visible results quickly after investment, and this tendency is not an exception in the field of education, especially English education.

However, language acquisition is not a process that can be carried out in one day. As is known, in order for a baby to be able to speak her first word, it takes about a year of her mother continuously talking to her, tuning to the baby's cognitive level. If a baby who learns everything like a sponge needs such a long time with constant exposure and comprehensible input, it is natural that those who already passed the critical period need much more time to gain satisfying achievement.

Nonetheless, some policies, for example, the implementation of English as a medium of instruction at several universities, are implemented without any preparation, and it is obvious that the results are not successful. According to the Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins & Swain, 1986), bilinguals must achieve minimum levels or thresholds of proficiency in both languages before the benefits of bilingualism can be observed. However, based on the sociolinguistic profile of South Korea, it is assumed that English learners in South Korea have not reached a certain threshold level for English medium instruction. That is, it is hardly the case that Korean learners can benefit from the sudden influx of English medium instruction without systematic preparation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the failure of a few hasty policies arises from the lack of understanding of second language acquisition.

Again, it is not that Korean English learners are particularly poor at language acquisition and neither are Korean English teachers. In other words, it is natural that Koreans' English learning has been not that impressive, considering the short history of English contact and the context of English

learning as one of the Expanding circle countries. However, the general public's negative attitudes toward the public English education result in merciless disapproval and ridicule in public of English education and English teachers. Along with this, the Korean media play a leading role in this harsh critique. It is always better to discuss something rather than not to do it. However, it creates too much negative influence, such as groundless distrust of public English education and the low morale of English teachers, through lopsided reports which only highlight ineffective aspects or destructive criticism which does not propose any constructive suggestions.

Then, what should be done now is to have a close look at the current English education system from bottom to top and to take realistic and feasible action. As discussed above, many policies and plans have been proposed and applied, yet most of them were neither fundamental nor feasible. However, The Plan seems to be going in the right direction since it includes the improvement of teachers' colleges and teacher on-the-job training, which will take a tremendous budget and a long time. Though it still has some controversial elements, such as hiring new English teachers based only on English fluency without checking up on their educational qualifications, it appears that Korea's English education is slowing evolving with trials and errors.

Where is Koreans' English placed in terms of function and in relation to other Expanding Circle countries? On the basis of the research reviewed in chapter 2, it appears that there might be a certain flow or order of English spread. That is, in most of the Expanding Circle countries, English started to spread in

the creative function first, which includes English uses in borrowings, nativization, literary works, and media, like music, movies, and TV. It can be said that English is currently used for the creative function in almost all the expanding circle countries.

In addition to this prevalent English use in the creative function, another feature shared by all the countries is that English is taught as a required subject in secondary education. Yet, what seems interesting is that those Expanding Circle countries can be categorized into two groups: one is countries where English is used in the educational system as a medium of instruction, and the other is countries where English is not used as medium of instruction. Some examples of countries where English is used in the educational system are Denmark (Phillipson, 2001), Germany (Hilgendorf, 2007), and Egypt (Schaub, 2000). Also, many countries such as Turkey (Dogancy and Kiziltepe, 2005), Russia (Ustinova, 2005), and Mongolia (Roger, 2005) are trying to implement English in the higher education domain. Considering that English spread is occurring function by function, the second stage of English spread appears to take place in instrumental function. In line with this, what is commonly observed among the expanding circle countries is to experimentation with English as a medium in educational contexts and the extension of English education down to elementary education. Based on this, it can be presumed that more expanding circle countries will adopt English as the medium of English, and then it would lead to intranational use of English in the interpersonal function. Since the regulative function, use in legal and administrative contexts, is the most

conservative area, it would be the final domain of English spread as mentioned before. Of course, this would be overlapping and occurring on a continuum, but the overall flow which the author proposes is anticipated as in Figure 5.1.

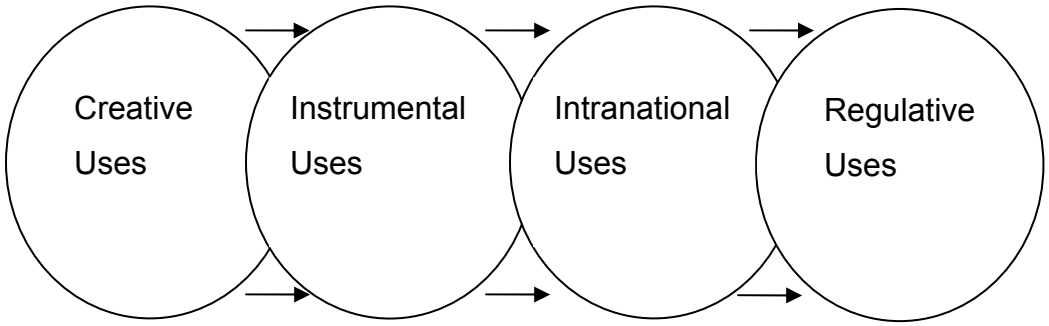

Figure 5.1 A Model of English Spread in the Expanding Circle Countries

In relation to the flow, Korea appears to be in a transformative state. So far, English use in the creative function has been very popular in the various forms as explained in the uses of English. In addition, in the last few years, the introduction of English as a medium of instruction has been promoted by several universities. This affects not only students who have to take those classes, but also professors who must teach their classes in English. These days, the ability to lecture in English is a golden ticket for faculty positions, which means there are not yet many candidates fully prepared for this situation. Once students and professors are accustomed to the use of English as a medium of instruction, intranational use of English is expected to naturally follow in the future.

In this critical state of transformation, what Koreans need is a change in debilitative attitudes and an understanding of second language acquisition. Though Korean people think that public English education is so poor that it deserves severe admonishment from media, it is often observed that several expanding circle countries share common problems, such as a lack of quality English teachers, ineffective English textbooks, thriving private markets for English learning, and frequent curricular reforms. Provided that such problems and frustrations are not exclusive to Koreans, there should be a change in Korean's mindset which debilitates the English learning process along with the reformation of the curricula of English teachers' colleges.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Since there is no panacea for all the contexts of teaching and learning; it is important to understand a teaching context before making any pedagogical suggestions. In other words, no matter how profound and abstruse a theory is, the theory is not helpful and, more harshly speaking, useless if it does not fit into a certain context. In this sense, it is meaningful to take a close look at Korea's unique situation and describe it for appropriate context-fitting suggestions.

English is a compulsory subject in public schools in Korea as in many other expanding circle countries, yet it has a greater affect than a school subject because of its influence on Korean society. For example, native-like English fluency could reflect an affluent childhood, or an excellent command of English could mean a high-profile job. For such reasons, Koreans are eager to learn English as a means to climb the social ladder or to live a better life. However, this zeal for English learning sometimes has led to unexpected social problems such as maladjustment of young students who are studying abroad, the break-up of wild goose families, indiscriminate hiring of native speakers, hasty education policies, and so on.

Due to those complications, Koreans' attitudes toward English and English learning is ambivalent; they love to learn and to be good at it, yet soon they feel

bitter because it is truly difficult to achieve desirable results, and sometimes it requires a great deal of sacrifice, such as separation from one's family, first language, and self-esteem. Meanwhile, the KEM has continuously made efforts to improve the English learning context no matter what the public's evaluation is since the 1940's. Though its curriculum has never been perfect nor satisfied the public, it appears it has slowly evolved for better English education of Korea. Currently, Korea is in a transformative state in terms of English spread as mentioned in the previous chapter.

When beginning to write this thesis, the author aimed to propose achievable realistic goals based on a reality check of English education. These proposals should be made on the basis of learners' need for language, communicative competence, and level of intelligibility, as addressed by Berns (1990). Then, what suggestions can be made based on the current situation of English education? In author's view, two recommendations can be made: one is applicable to many expanding circle countries, and the other is specific to the Korean situation. Namely, they are the reformation of English teachers' colleges curricula and a change of attitude toward English learning. As addressed in chapter 5, systematic and practical English teacher training program with an emphasis on English communicative competence should be provided. In addition, Koreans' attitudes toward English learning should be changed through an understanding of second language acquisition and other expanding circle countries' situations. Both changes are things that need a long time to happen, yet this is also the nature of second language teaching and learning.

Therefore, the common proposal for both questions would be "gradualism," meaning that the public needs to understand that the English learning process occurs in small stages over a long period of time. Again, considering the lack of functional complementarity and the necessary resources in Korea, it is natural to encounter trials and errors in the process of English teaching and learning, and desirable results are not achieved quickly. Also, the development and the provision of systematic quality teacher training courses takes long time, yet this is a precondition for Korean English education.

In relation to English and diversity, Korean society is going through a change. The population of foreigners makes up 2% of the whole population according to Ministry of Public Administration and Security (2008), and English is spreading rapidly in various sectors. That is, the sociolinguistic profile of English is slowly changing with time. However, curriculum designers, educators, parents, and students want to achieve an unrealistic goal in a short time regardless of Korea's own situation. This is why Kachru's (1982a, p.66) poly-model approach based upon pragmatism and functional realism has significant meaning for the current situation in Korea though it appears to be too early to select a model and develop local varieties, considering the short period of English contact and exposure.

With gradualism and quality English teaching, it is expected that public English education in South Korea can progress to the next level of English learning in the future.

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