THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY IN
EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS IN SOUTH KOREA
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MACROACQUISITION OF
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

In 2001, the Korean government launched a new English language education policy called “the 7th national curriculum,” in an attempt to meet the growing public demand for improved communication skills in English. With this policy in mind, the aim of this dissertation is to examine the ways in which the mandatory English language curriculum is implemented and practiced in early elementary school contexts in Korea. The study pays special attention to the third grade, because this is when English language education begins as a compulsory subject under the national education policy. The study adopts an ethnographic case study in one public and one private elementary school in Korea to delve into the interplay between top-down and bottom-up approaches of language policy implementation and its effects in classroom practices through the lens of the macroacquisition model of World English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Drawing on a qualitative research approach, the study consists of three phases starting with policy document analysis. Then a total of 90 hours of classroom observations in 136 visits were conducted by visiting each school to examine the lived realities of policy implementation in classroom settings. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with a total of five teachers, six students, and six parents from the two schools to investigate the multilayered mechanism of the policy implementation. In addition, 31 third grade students from the public and 34 third grade students from the private elementary school participated in the survey with open-ended questions to supplement the field study.

The findings of the study reveal the coexistence of contradictory policies that promote and restrict the spread of English in order to maintain the uniform public provision of schooling proposed by the government. With regards to policy implementation, there was a discrepancy
between the ideal of communicative competence-oriented policy and the reality of classroom practices. At both the public and the private elementary schools, these practices were in partial agreement with the policy, with teachers from respective schools displaying differences in how they implemented policy into practice under diverse teaching contexts and with different obstacles. More importantly, the school principal, who plays the role of a middle-executive between policymakers and teachers, had a prominent role as a major policy implementer who managed and conducted teaching activities, and led efforts to carry out policy delivery at the school level. While parents and teachers agreed that parents take the roles of motivator and considered in charge of children’s education, students were often found to be self-determined learners of English regardless of their parents’ influences. This study suggests that the policy implementation is dynamic such that different members in the speech community are involved in making, evaluating, and (re)shaping content to fit in different education contexts. Furthermore, findings will complement Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) notion of macroacquisition that connects the reality of English use with its speakers in a linguistic space where the second language acquisition by the speech community is realized as a form of social process. It also provides a nuanced image of how this case of Korean macroacquisition behavior serves as a local example of the global spread of English.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Context of the Study

The global spread of English is a topic that has received much attention over the last few decades. As a result of an ongoing endeavor exploring the sociolinguistics of second language research, there have been numerous scholars responsive to this global phenomenon (Blommaert, 2010; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Graddol, 2006; Jenkins, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Pennycook, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). In particular, Crystal (2003) acknowledges that a language can genuinely achieve a global status when it has a “priority in a country’s foreign language teaching, even though this language has no official status” (p. 4). In South Korea (Korea henceforth), a country that belongs to the “expanding circle” in terms of Kachru’s (1982) traditional framework of three concentric circles in World Englishes, English is considered the most indispensable global language learned as a foreign language. Importantly, this is true even when it is not spoken for everyday communication among Koreans, and when it lacks a national or official status.

There has been a growing public awareness that English functions as a requisite communication skill to equip Korean citizens to thrive in today’s competitive global world. More recently, along with the rapid expansion of technological innovations in digital communications, English has crossed national boundaries as a dynamic entity. In response to this social trend, the Korean government and education specialists have suggested radical solutions in order to increase students’ communication skills in English under the new educational policy called “the 7th national curriculum,” which was officially launched in 2001. More specifically, the major
aim of the 7th national curriculum has been to develop a working command of English as a
global language and provide international awareness in the general population.

To increase Korean students’ communicative competence in English as the policy’s main
goal, the 7th national curriculum has adopted content teaching in English (Kang, 2009; Shin
2007) and a massive recruitment of native-speaking teachers to practice co-teaching by working
cooperatively as a team with Korean teachers (Kim, 2010). However, one of the most drastic
changes in English education was a formal introduction of English in elementary schools from
third grade up as a compulsory school subject in order to establish English language programs
from elementary school onward, with a strong emphasis on communicative proficiency. Jung and
Norton (2002) state that the Korean governments’ implementation of English as a mandatory
school subject in elementary schools has brought significant changes in foreign language
education in Korea. These changes have dramatically influenced the local significance of English
by “intensifying even more in the early English education curriculum” (Song, 2009, p. 5).

In this regard, Choi (2008) reports that there has been a growing number of elementary
school students preparing to take high-stakes standardized tests such as TOEIC Bridge (Test of
English for International Communication) or the PELT (Practical English Language Test). Choi
also finds that there have been criticisms, that secondary education puts too much emphasis on
preparation for the college entrance exam. He writes, “cramming is the accepted regimen for
helping students prepare for the college entrance exam even though this undesirable way of
teaching English seriously violates the national curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of
Education, which mandates a communicative integrated skills approach” (p. 41). More
importantly, despite the communicative-based national curriculum, most teachers do not have
adequate English proficiency and lack the pedagogical skills to implement the new policy. Many
education experts are concerned that poor English skills on the part of teachers and inadequate teacher education make it difficult to implement the new policy in classrooms (Chang, 2009; Jung & Norton, 2002; Lee, 2010; Yang, 2009).

Regarding these concerns, the Korean government has put an effort to improve teacher education through diverse language training programs. However, while some Korean teachers hold positive beliefs about communicative-based curriculum, their teaching practices in classrooms are often still based on traditional methods because of constraints in practice (Jeon, 2009). Choi (2008) points out that the Korean college entrance exam does not include speaking and writing components and teachers firmly believe that standardized tests should be used to motivate students to study English and improve their English. There are some practical constraints for stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and policy makers), leading to confusions and creating frustration about the new policy (Jeon & Paek, 2009).

English education in Korea, particularly in early elementary grades, is a contentious topic that has become a national obsession. For the present study, the early elementary grades include first, second, and third grade. This study pays special attention to the third grade, based on the fact that this is when English language education begins as a compulsory subject under the national education policy. There are ambitious parents with a strong belief that the current education system in Korea will not help enhance their children’s English proficiency, because students rarely have real opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. These parents are often motivated by the belief that competence in English can only be learned effectively through exposure to a native English-speaking context during one’s childhood years. Thus, the children of these parents travel to English speaking countries as teenagers or even younger in order to achieve a native-like fluency in English (Kim & Yang, 2010; Ly, 2008). Song (2009)
explains that “this kind of migration is particularly common among middle-class Koreans who rely on transnational education strategies to retain their families’ class or to even gain upward social mobility” (p. 4). However, Ly (2008) reports that while some students demonstrate a good proficiency level after staying aboard for a considerable amount of time, a large number of learners do not achieve high language proficiency in English despite a lengthy stay. To some degree, it appears that a simple exposure to a native speaking environment is not sufficient to improve communication skills in English.

The so called “English divide” (Jeong & Jeon, 2013; Noh & Jeon, 2012; Park, 2014) has become a common concern in Korea. While students from upper-middle class families have supplementary access to learn English outside school, students from lower social class have less privilege and rely on school education as the sole source of English learning. These new social conditions in Korea surrounding English language education have emerged since the 7th national curriculum was implemented in 2001 (Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation, 1997; Korean Educational Development Institute, 2007). Since then, the Korean Ministry of Education has made four additional revised curricula to improve the quality of English curriculum in public education and reduce the English divide, and to provide all students with an equal opportunity to learn English without reliance on supplementary education outside school. The two major goals of policy innovations were: (1) to de-emphasize grammar-translation method and concentrate on the development of communicative competence, and (2) to reduce students’ reliance on private sector education and guaranty education equity to provide all students with equal access to higher education.

By following the policy guidelines that promotes communicative competence, many private elementary schools responded to the government’s active promotion of English by adding
more hours of English, offering English classes to first and second graders, importing foreign
textbooks, and introducing new immersion classes.

In 2013, to mitigate the social pressure imposed by overheated English education in the
eyear early elementary grades, the Korean Ministry of Education banned the instruction of English in
the first and second grade in public education\(^1\), and prohibited the use of imported foreign
textbooks as well as the practice of immersion classes. This top-down policy reform has
provoked disputes among parents whose children are affected by the amendment. Frustrated
parents protested in response to a sudden imposition of sanctions and more than 1000 parents
held a rally in front of the Ministry of Education (Chosun Ilbo, November 12, 2013).

The above issue shows the behavior of these parents who viewed the policy reform
unfavorably, and who resist the imposition of top-down policy. The role of top-down language
policy makers has also been a debated issue within the context of the spread of English. Brutt-
Griffler (2002) emphasizes the agency of non-native speakers of English through the process of
social second language acquisition, also called “macroatquisition.” She asserts that the
dominance of English as a world language is promoted by nonnative speaker’s active agency
through their volitional endeavor to use the language at the speech community level. In essence,
she claimed that speech communities were active agents in the spread and development of
English rather than merely acting as passive beneficiaries of the hegemonic power of English.

\(^1\) In Korea, the uniform national education policy is applied to private and public elementary schools.
Therefore, private elementary schools belong to the public education system in Korea. Private elementary
school in Seoul, which account for approximately 7.2% of total elementary schools across the city, are
run on partial government funding (OECD, 2012, p. 22). Because private elementary schools receive
such funding from the government, they are still required to follow the same curriculum as state-run
public schools (Lee, 2011; Park, 2013).
The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

In a centralized Korean education system, the government has made numerous attempts to implement policy initiatives to bring changes in English education. However, there is a lack of research about the complex process of language policy implementation and practice in classroom practices. Specifically, given the lack of empirical investigations that explore the social reality and its relationship with Korean speech community’s motivation in second language classrooms for early elementary school students, there is a need for further research.

The present study examines the implementation of the English language curriculum in early elementary school contexts in Korea. In particular, this study employs an ethnographic case study in one public and one private elementary school to fill the gap by shifting attention to micro-level language policy implementation and its effects in classroom practices through the lens of macroacquisition (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). The focus of this study is the 7th national curriculum, which has been in place since the Korean government brought radical changes to English language curricular policy in an attempt to meet the growing public demands for improved communicative skills in English. In particular, this study seeks to uncover the factors affecting implementation of policy from the perspective of different members of speech community— in this case, teachers, parents, students, and the Korean government. By identifying these factors, this dissertation helps the government and educators gain a better understanding and knowledge to improve English language learning and teaching, with a view to improving English language education in Korea.
The following lists research questions of the study:

1. What characteristic features can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary schools in terms of the process of policy implementation?
2. How does the spread of English language in early elementary school classrooms in Korea align with the macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of language?
3. How do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms?

**Descriptions of the Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of seven chapters that collectively describe the research conducted. Each chapter contains an introduction that provides an overview of that chapter. Chapter 1 introduces this dissertation, describes an overview of the research, and explains the organization of the dissertation. Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical framework and related concepts that are relevant to the current state of English language education policy and classroom practices in Korea, situated in the context of English as a foreign language. Chapter 3 presents relevant research from policy-related studies to investigate the role of English language education policy highlighting degree to which the sociohistorical background of Korean speech community has influenced the spread of English. Chapter 4 discusses and provides rationale for the methodological procedures used for this dissertation to understand the research context. The chapter provides a detailed account of participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Chapter 5 uses ethnographic classroom observations to investigate how classroom practices align with the institutional guidelines of English language education policy. Chapter 6 uses
ethnographic individual interviews to investigate which factors impact English language education policy to be interpreted and implemented differently in different school classrooms. Chapter 7 presents the conclusion and research implications for policy implementations.
CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED CONCEPTS

Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical framework and related concepts to investigate the current state of English language education policy and classroom practices in Korea, situated in the context of English as a foreign language. For this inquiry, I examine the following concepts: First, I present background knowledge on World English and macroacquisition, then describe concepts of language spread and change, drawn from fields such as second language education research and sociolinguistics. Second, I explore the concept of speech community as a unit of analysis for the process of macroacquisition. Third, I discuss the notion of communicative competence in the context of English teaching and learning in Korea. Last, I examine the concept of language agency and motivation to contextualize the theoretical framework in the Korean sociolinguistic reality.

Language Spread from the Standpoint of Brutt-Griffer’s (2002) World English

Within the context of globalization, the spread of English has been a significant influence on language education policy. From the point of view of second language acquisition, the relations between the spread of language and the development of teaching has been considered more complex than has commonly been presumed (Strevens, 1988). To have a better understanding of language spread in a globalized world, we need to get an overview of how the previous studies on second language acquisition research viewed language spread in our speech community. Social factors, for instance, contribute to the spread of language through migration,
colonization, language planning, as well as international trades (Coulmas, 1992). In defining language spread, Cooper (1982) wrote, “language spread is the process by which languages gain speakers” (p. vii). He discussed this definition in terms of the medium through which language spread occurs. He viewed the spread of language as “cultural diffusion, increase over time, in the proportion of a communication network that adopts a given language or language variety for a given communicative function” (Cooper, 1982, p. 6). Cooper (1982) claimed that spread of language could be explained in terms of the spread of behaviors. He pointed out that “we may distinguish among several classes of criterion variables, ordering them along a scale of behavioral pervasiveness” (p. 11). As shown in figure 2.1, he proposed four stages of language spread, organizing them in a scale of behavioral pervasiveness:

![Figure 2.1. Four stages of language spread (adapted from Cooper, 1982, p. 12).](image)

‘Awareness’ is the first stage of language spread in which the speaker realizes that the new language exists and can be used for a particular communicative function. At this stage, it is not necessary for the speaker to understand the language. The second stage is called ‘Evaluation’, which refers to the speaker’s belief that acquiring the new language for a given function will or will not provide benefits to achieve the speaker’s goal. At this stage, the speaker determines the personal utility of the language for a particular function, apart from personal preference or feelings towards the new language. The third stage, ‘Proficiency’, occurs when the speaker adopts and uses the language for his/her own specific communicative purpose. The proficiency here does not mean grammatical accuracy or even fluency. Rather, it can be defined by norms of
communicative appropriateness to the extent that the speaker can use the language for a given function with the right person at the right time and at the right place. Finally, the last stage is called ‘Usage’. At this final stage, the speaker uses the language for a given function on a regular basis.

The above pervasiveness model refers to the degree to which speakers adopt the new language for a given communicative function. What is spreading are linguistic behaviors. These linguistic behaviors are expressed through form (e.g., what is the form of the language and how is it similar to or different from the other languages in the area?), function (e.g., purpose for which language variety spreads?), and pervasiveness (e.g., degree to which speakers adopt). What is medium of spread? Who is the carrier or the agent? Perhaps, the spread is a metaphor; languages themselves expand, but their body of users also expands, followed by the number of people in contact with the language that expands through ‘awareness’, ‘evaluation’, ‘knowledge’, and ‘usage’. Thus, language spreads through populations or, namely, speech communities.

Brutt-Griffler (2002) envisages and rationalizes the ways that languages spread, asserting that languages do not spread nor acquire speakers; instead, speakers acquire languages through active agency. The major theoretical background of language spread that guides this dissertation is Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) World English, which serves as a comprehensive explanatory framework to provide sociolinguistic perspective on the sociohistorical development of English as a World language. In particular, her work makes a significant contribution to the field of sociolinguistics examining the macroacquisition of a second language by a speech community through the agency of non-native speakers of English. She stressed that “second language acquisition does not take place as an isolated case, but collectively, individuals mutually influence each other” (p.22)
In a broader sense, the term ‘World Englishes’ has been widely used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of approaches that scholars around the globe have used to describe English(es) in transnational spaces. Given that globalization and its connection to World Englishes has been subject of extensive scholarship, Omoniyi and Saxena (2010) wrote that “globalization has had different interpretations in different places [...] so we consider that the cultural and political dynamics involving English language in its multiple locations are varied and yet interconnected” (p. 1). In a similar vein, Crystal (1997) elaborated the social and cultural circumstances that control language status and change in the context of English language use around the world. In this regard, he covered the notion of global language by exploring the historical contexts throughout the world, stressing that English as a world language can be explained in terms of cultural legacy and political developments as the international language of communication.

Along this line of thinking, there are myriad studies concerning this central issue of global language: English as an international language (McKay, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2011), English as a lingua franca (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Gnutzmann 1999; Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer 2011), Global Englishes (Jenkins, 2015; Pennycook, 2007), World English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), and English as a global language (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2003). Some of these conceptual frames have been used in conjunction to Kachru’s (1992) traditional framework of World Englishes’ inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle model. Although all these labels carry varying concepts of English as a lingua franca, there is one common denominator: non-native speakers of English speaking with their own variety of English. In large part, English around the globe is shaped not only by native speakers, but also by non-native speakers. In some cases, English is used among non-native speakers without the presence of any native speakers at all. To further
such an argument, Seildhofer (2005) holds that “there is still a tendency for native speakers to be regarded as custodians over what is acceptable usage. Thus, in order for the concept of English as a lingua franca to gain acceptance alongside English as native language, there have been calls for systematic study of the nature of English as a lingua franca—what it looks and sounds like and how people actually use it and make it work—and a consideration of the implications for the teaching and learning of the language” (p. 340). The role of top-down language policy makers has also been a debated issue within the context of the spread of English. In his much-debated work on the spread of English that spans from colonial to post-colonial period, Phillipson’s (1992) linguistic imperialism thesis proposed that the worldwide spread of the English language through the hegemonic power of the British Empire is still “maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47). For Phillipson, the imposition of one dominant language to another along with its cultural, social and political models is what he describes as a movement from the center (dominant) to the periphery (dominated). The role of former colonizers (British and American) in the spread of English is an issue that has been widely criticized. For instance, such an imperialistic view is challenged by Davies (1996), who contends that Phillipson’s biased imperialistic judgements are firmly situated in the unequal power relations behind the postcolonial English teaching focusing on macro-level practices while overemphasizing hegemonic power of English spread in the periphery (dominated). To begin with, Phillipson (1992) proposes that the norms imposed by the center (dominant) have been internalized by those in power in the periphery (dominated) in order to legitimate exploitation. Emphasizing the spread of English as a product of linguistic imperialism, he documented colonial policies enacted
by Britain and the United States. He postulates five tenets that guide English teaching that mirror the historical development of English from colonial period to present:

Tenet one: English is best taught monolingually.

Tenet two: the ideal teacher of English is a native-speaker.

Tenet three: the earlier English is taught, the better the results.

Tenet four: the more English is taught, the better the results.

Tenets five: if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop

Contrary to Phillipson’s claim about top-down colonial language imposition, Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) approach emphasizes the agency of non-native speakers of English through the process of social second language acquisition, or also called macroacquisition. She postulates that language spread centers on speech community rather than a monolingual individual. As a result, “World English results from the process of language spread as macroacquisition—second language acquisition by speech communities” (p. 17).

**The Concept of Speech Community from the Standpoint of Macroacquisition**

Grounded in historical research, Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) theory emphasizes that the dominance of English as a world language is promoted by nonnative speaker’s active agency through their volitional endeavors to use the language at the speech community level. In her empirical study of language policy in English-speaking former colonies in Asia and Africa, she emphasized that speech communities were active agents in the spread and development of English, rather than merely passive recipients as in Phillipson’s (1992) view.
More importantly, she argued that “English owes its global spread in large part to the struggle against imperialism, and not to imperialism alone…World English is not simply made through speakers of other languages but by them” (p. ix).

Within this line of discussion, Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) macroacquisition provides a new way of conceptualizing second language acquisition based on the speech community, not the individual, as a unit of analysis. The significance of the speech community as a unit of analysis in macroacquisition model is supported by Eastman’s (1983) perspective that, “The real-world context of linguistic communication is the speech community. The term ‘speech community’ refers to the unit of analysis of language in its context; that is, the speech community is the unit of analysis of language in a culture or in society. A speech community is a set of individuals who share knowledge of what is the appropriate conduct and interpretation of speech. These individuals also share the understanding of at least one language so that they may communicate with each other” (p. 1).

In this regard, we can accept that among the members of speech community, there are commonly shared rules and mutually agreed ways of interpreting language through communication. These individual members of speech community can be seen as parts of one large ecological system of language. Haarmann (1986) views that in sociolinguistic research, the following basic relations should be considered a general framework in an ecological system of language:

\[
\text{INDIVIDUAL : GROUP : SOCIETY : STATE}
\]

The above string of concepts suggest that “the most specific (individual) to the most general (state) could be interpreted as a hierarchical structure with different levels of complexity…
study of language contact and bilingualism with reference to a larger society is of a different nature than similar phenomena in the language behavior of an individual speaker, and that the methodologies employed to study them should reflect this difference” (p. 5). His logic situates language education research in its social contexts, which emphasizes different levels of ecological environment in which we live. In other words, this ecological environment is composed of four interrelated layers, starting from the smallest (micro) settings such as home, school, and community, extending to larger social (macro) settings.

In the context of English as a second language in elementary school classrooms, Hawkins (2005) viewed classrooms within the complex ecological systems composed of co-dependent factors that together shape language learning. The following figure 2.2 illustrates a classroom’s ecological systems, representing factors that are constantly shifting to shape and re-shape new landscapes. These co-dependent factors in the complex ecological system include students (represented by “s”) and teachers (represented by “t”), and each one of them are represented by three circles labeled “families”, “communities”, and “cultures”. Thus, “research into English language learning in classrooms must account for not only discrete variables and components of language and language learning, but for ways in which these “pieces” come together to form a whole—an ecology within which it is the dynamics between and among variables that accounts for learning that takes place” (p. 29).
Figure 2.2. Interrelationships between the classroom’s ecological systems (Hawkins, 2005, p. 28).
From the standpoint of micro and macro approaches in social sciences and anthropology, DeWalt and Pelto (1985) suggested that there are three levels of dimensions: space, causality, and time. They wrote, “In all of these dimensions, the concepts “micro” and “macro” cannot be defined as absolutes but have meaning only in terms of the inter-relationships of the units, processes, and time frames under consideration” (p. 2). Applying this conceptual framework, while focusing on speech communities as units of analysis, the current issues related to the spread of English in Korea can be analyzed from the perspective of individual or micro-level or state or macro-level. This multi-level approach takes the present study through a set of hierarchical relationships to reflect the ecological relationship of language.

Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) concept of macroacquisition provides a useful theoretical framework to connect the reality of English use with its users in a linguistic space where the second language acquisition by the speech community is a social process. In this respect, the notion of shared subject knowledge represents the common beliefs and social norms of a given community. She wrote, “The speech community is stronger and more coherent, because it alone facilitates the ready communication of the shared subject knowledge via common language. The speech community thereby constitutes the strong case of community as that type of social grouping in which shared subject knowledge exists and can be linguistically communicated easily and readily among the members of the group” (p. 143).

Brutt-Griffler (2002) posited that there are three underlying explanatory tenets for World English:

Tenet one: That language spread must be understood in the context of language change, in a unified conception of language spread and change.
Tenet two: That the understanding of the development of World English requires a theoretical approach employing a global, rather than a national scope.

Tenet three: That there is a need for a paradigm shift from monolingualism to bilingualism, reflecting an historical shift in language use (pp. 109-110).

Based on these premises, Brutt-Griffler’s macroacquisition model proposed a formation of a bilingual speech community emerging into two types: Type A and Type B macroacquisition. While both Type A and Type B partake “shared subject knowledge” (p. 142) in the context of speech community, they differ in several ways. Type A macroacquisition takes place in a multilingual setting (e.g., India, South Africa, and Singapore) in which the speakers do not share the same subject knowledge due to different mother tongues. English, therefore, is used as a second language functioning as a unifying source of communication (e.g., lingua franca) creating a new speech community. In such settings, a new variety of English is emerging as the lingua franca in speech communities. In contrast, Type B macroacquisition takes place in a predominantly monolingual speech community (e.g., East Asian countries such as Korea and Japan). In this case, this type of monolingual speech community transforms into a bilingual speech community through the macroacquisition process. Thus, we embrace the view that a monolingual Korean speech community underwent Type B macroacquisition of English, transforming from a monolingual into a bilingual speech community along the emergence of New English. For instance, one study conducted in Japan, Hatano (2013) framed Type B macroacquisition of English in Japan as one of the local cases of the World English. In his empirical study, he suggested that the agency of language learners reveals that the educational practice of teaching English as a foreign language plays a crucial role as the primary driving force promoting the spread of English despite the fact that community members from distinct
sectors do not share the same individual value (financial value, emotional value, etc.) regarding English learning and teaching. He also discussed how teachers as primary agents in language spread have more autonomy than institutional language education policies, so that the implementation of such policies in classrooms is driven by local teachers according to their local needs. However, when we think of macroacquisition within the context of Type B case, there has remains a lack of research in this particular speech community.

With reference to language change according to Type B macroacquisition, the Korean language has seen a rapid increase in the number of words taken from English, also known as borrowing, which is traditionally described as the adoption and reproduction of patterns previously found in another (Haugen, 1950). In such settings, Brutt-Griffler (2002) explained that language change occurs through code switching, borrowing, and code-mixing into the new varieties known as the new variety of English because language spread occurs due to speakers’ adoption of external language practices into their own language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p. 126)

Such borrowings in the Korean language can be seen as a direct result of its contact with English, especially after the Korean War (Sohn, 2001). From the standpoint of contact linguistics, it is important to note that the Korean language features lexical borrowing, semantic shifts, and phonological influences from English, similar to the situation in Germany of Anglo-American influence (Clyne1995). Myers-Scotton and Okeju (1973) argued that “A language can undergo changes through cultural contact and it causes transference of items and elements that result in neologisms and semantic shifts and that lexical borrowings represent new items to the culture of the borrowing language” (p. 871). Studying lexical borrowings provides an important insight into the history of culture through contact (Hoffer 1996; Sankoff 2001). In particular, globalization and the level of contact between countries have meant that English has spread more
widely than ever before in Korea (Chang, 2009; Jeong, 2004; Lee, 2010). Seen in this way, English enters the local Korean language through popular youth culture, technology, the internet, and countless other sources, leading to the integration of the English language resulting in lexical borrowing from English into Korean (see discussion in Pennycook, 2007).

Weinreich (1968) remarked that when a speaker of a native language uses a form of foreign origin not as an on-the-spot borrowing from the foreign language itself, but rather because of frequent use by others in native utterances, then this borrowed element can be considered to have become a part of the native language. (p. 8). According to Sankoff (2001), the “introduction of a new language to a resident population often leads to the introduction of new lexical items into conversation with fellow bilinguals in their original first language” (p. 642). Along this line of thinking, Fishman’s (1965) analysis suggests that the pattern in language choice found in bilingual settings involving three basic constituents: “group, situation and topic” (p. 68). He argued that group membership in terms of psychological and sociological criteria can bring up the referential group membership. In other words, within a specific group, one can identify oneself with a different group to which one belongs and from which one seeks acceptance. Fishman (1965) raised the possibility that this particular phenomenon in a bilingual situation in which factors as well as topic also regulate language choices in other selective social occasions. To illustrate Fishman’s point, in the medical field in Korea, for instance, abbreviated English medical jargon is used to facilitate communication among those in this setting due to its results in convenience, speed and style in communication.

To connect sub-groups of speakers and the larger community, Myers-Scotton (1988) used code-switching as indexical of social negotiations. She pointed out that speech interactions among community members have a sense of script, which has been routinized due to frequent
verbal exchanges. Myers-Scotton and Okeju (1973) argued that lexical borrowing must take into account the sub-groups of speakers in the speech community, considering their socio-cultural level within the larger community. The borrowing of words for new items is most often done by members of two socio-economical sub-groups that often overlap: one includes those with high educational levels, and the other includes those who have traveled extensively (Myers-Scotton and Okeju 1973, p. 873). In their study on a speech community model of bilingual education, Garcia and Bartlett (2007) hold the view that in the field of bilingual education, second language education is “a social process building on the speech community itself, and not just as the individual psycholinguistics of the speech community model of bilingual education” (p. 1).

In a similar vein, Brutt-Griffler (2002) asked, “what if, on the other hand, this question is referred not to individual speakers but to speech communities?” (p. 129). She further elaborated that “The social…is contextually bounded…there is thereby a conceptual gap between the realms of the linguistic individual and the “extra-linguistic” social” (p. 128). This statement supports the fact that certain borrowed items are becoming a part of the native language because over the course of time, the speech community adopts the borrowed items, turning them to native ones not because one individual speaker has decided to do so. One example can illustrate that the compound Korean word *email juso* (‘email address’) is the only word to express such meaning in Korean and the English word email is now a part of the native Korean lexicon and used in Korean speech community. A few Korean traditionalists still insist on using its literal meaning of *junja wophyon* (‘electronic mail’), yet it is hardly seen or heard anywhere except in a few traditional religion or conservative political journals.

In native Korean discourse, English borrowings have taken on a form of their own. This may mask the original source from English, becoming incomprehensible to a native speaker of
English. In the case of Korean, the Korean speech community adopted loan words to represent concepts and objects that are non-existent within the native language. Haugen (1950) proposed this type of borrowing as one of the variations that do not resemble the original pattern and less similar to the original model itself. He observes that, “it may vary all the way from an imitation satisfactory to a native speaker, to one that the native speaker would not recognize” (p. 212).

However, Brutt-Griffler (2002) argued that this kind of new variety or erroneous form should be treated as a separate linguistic entity. She claims that “there cannot be error as between two separate speech communities but, rather, difference […] when we speak of error, we speak of the individual as opposed to the group, but never one group as opposed to another” (p. 131). In order to explain the unity of varieties of English, she proposes language convergence with the World English model (see Figure 2.3) in which the languages of the speech community around the World create a gravitational pull unifying different varieties of English. (p. 178)

Figure 2.3. Language convergence with World English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p. 178).
Communicative Competence in EFL Contexts

The debate over improving communicative competence has been a core issue in second language acquisition studies. The concept of communicative competence is controversial. For Chomsky (1965), the notion of communicative competence is based on the binary of competence/ performance distinction as linguistic competence. He writes “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions such as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention…in applying his knowledge of language in actual performance” (P. 3). His view of linguistic competence/ performance received much criticism for being too restricted to grammatical competence, as opposed to a broader notion of communicative competence that would include contextual and sociolinguistic knowledge.

In contrast to the Chomskyan approach to the linguistic competence/ performance dichotomy, Hymes (1974) proposed sociolinguistic competence as a functional approach to language, balancing an interest in language performance and actual language use through communicative interaction. He underscores that language study has to look at the use of language in context, both its linguistic context and its situational context. He embraces the view that “language is situated in the flux and pattern of communicative events and we study communicative form and function in integral relation to each other” (p. 5). In further support of Hymes’ view, Collins (2005) maintained that the communicative approach to English language acquisition is “the inseparability of language and culture and, as a corollary of that premise, the necessity of teaching language within a cultural context” (p. 417).
As some researchers (e.g., Saville-Troike, 1982) pointed out, second language learners may be advised to learn language appropriateness and learn sociocultural competence to gain successful communication to satisfy the speakers’ own first language community while seeking acceptance from a second language community. In favor of this stance, Sauvignon (1983) used a framework of viewing communicative competence as a prerequisite to linguistic competence. She describes communicative competence as “what native speakers know which enables them to interact effectively with each other” (p. 6). For instance, the concept of communicative competence means looking at the totality of a communicative situation rather than focusing on structural grammar of linguistic patterns. Here, the notion of communicative competence requires more than knowledge of the linguistic form. We can see that the acquisition of the linguistic form is a part of the acquisition of communicative competence as a whole. Seen in this light, there is a clear functional distinction between language used in interpersonal transaction as opposed to language that focuses strictly on surface features, such as the use of noun, verb, verb conjugation, and all those factors that have traditionally been tested in exams.

Sauvignon (1983) emphasized that language programs need to be placed in the context in which a second language is being learned for communication in real world. She argues:

Students need to improve ways in which programs can be made more responsive to the communicative goals of both learners and instructors. A successful second language program consists of more than a textbook and classroom study. When the goal is communication, a second language program must encourage students to move from the classroom to the second language world beyond and back again to the classroom. They need to provide an ongoing learning environment. Second language skills, like first language skills, are seldom static and can be increased through experience. (p. 11)
A similar approach to communicative competence describes it as “the knowledge underlying a native-speaker’s production and interpretation of a potentially infinite number of syntactically well-formed strings in a given language” (Sidnell, 2001). However, a native speaker’s production and interpretation alone cannot be accounted towards communicative competence in foreign language learning; we could question whether native speakers should be performance models for learners of English. Widdowson (1997) claimed “English teaching which is currently widespread is one which favors authentic use that emphasizes native spoken language. Such an approach presupposes that the purpose for learning is to prepare learners for engagement in social interaction with primary communities in native speaking countries” (p. 145). Widdowson (1994) elaborated his viewpoint on native and nonnative English language users, describing native speakers of English as authentic and the owners of real English language. He recognized that “Standard English promotes the cause of international communication, so we must maintain the central stability of the standard as the common linguistic frame of reference” (p. 379).

It is widely agreed that the concept of nativeness is elusive (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Davies 1991, 2003; Paikeday, 1985; Widdowson, 1994). Among a number of scholars who questioned the validity of the notion of nativeness, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) offered the notion of nativeness as a socially constructed identity in which cultural assumptions conform such factors as national origin without regarding the true function of English as an international language. Davies (2003) has argued out that the “myth” of the native speaker is misleading in the area of second language acquisition. Davies (1991) made another salient point, indicating that with the exception of early childhood exposure, all the other attributes of nativeness are contingent. For Paikeday (1985), the notion of nativeness has strong
political and sociological overtones, which are more prominent than linguistic ones. On the other hand, all of these views attempt more than a description of what lies between standard English and the notion of nativeness. Because the English language serves the communicative and communal needs of different communities, these scholars recognize that the users of English are therefore diverse and the language itself should be dynamic.

In response to increasing criticism that Koreans lack adequate communicative competence in English, the Korean government proposed communicative language teaching-oriented English language curricular policies in 1997 in an attempt to meet the growing demands of globalization (Cho, 2004; Lee, 2010). One of the biggest policy changes was the formal introduction of communicative language teaching-oriented school curriculum (Cho & Lee, 2009; Choi & Son, 2011; Han, 2002; Jeong, 2011). In spite of communicative language teaching-oriented curriculum changes, Korean students in general perform poorly in communicating in English due to an exam-oriented educational system that prevents them from learning English as a tool for communication. (Ban & Seo, 2009; Cheon et al., 2002)

**English Education in Korea: A Historical View**

Such English language education issues can be traced back to the Japanese colonial period from the early twentieth to mid-twentieth century. The history of the English curriculum in Korea evolved in two distinctive stages: the period of Japanese Imperialism and the National Curriculum period (post Japanese Imperialism) (Chang, 2009). Kaplan (2003) provided a thorough overview of history and language policies in Korea with a detailed account of the chronology and the institutional responsibilities in the process of different language policy changes. During Japanese Imperialism (1910-1945), the recognition of any other language as an
official language other than Japanese was prohibited (Kaplan and Baldauf, 2003). However, even after Korea gained independence from Japan in 1945 and the language of curricular instruction had changed from Japanese to Korean, Korean instructors continued to use Japanese curricular materials due to a lack of resources to design their own curriculum (Chang 2002). Kwon (1995) indicated that the Japanese English curriculum emphasized grammar-translation and vocabulary instruction, which were ineffective for the development of communicative competence. The instructional material based on the Japanese curriculum strictly dealt with grammar-translation methods with formulaic structural explanations. Up to today, students memorize pre-formulated grammar rules to apply them to the school exams to earn grades. Many researchers are concerned about the current English education, which emphasizes multiple-choice-based standardized tests that limit students’ improvement on communicative competence (Shin, 2007; Song, 2009; Yang, 2009).

The above issues are not only limited to language learners, but also language educators who are facing difficulties practicing communicative language teaching-oriented curriculum in classrooms. Many English teachers in Korea have criticized the current orientation to English education. As Jung and Norton (2002) argue, the most difficult challenges that teachers face in the classroom implementation of the communicative language teaching-oriented program are: (1) lack of materials development, (2) large class size, and (3) the teacher’s English proficiency (p. 261). Individual differences in teachers’ classroom practices should also be considered as one of the major hindrances to communicative language teaching. For example, Kim (2008) explored how a mandated communicative language teaching-based curriculum, featuring learner-centered and task-based instruction is effectively practiced to enhance learners’ communicative competence. She focused on secondary English teachers’ perceptions and classroom practices, as
well as students’ perspectives of their teachers’ classroom instruction. Her study indicated that while novice teachers sometimes employed communicative activities and held conflicting beliefs about English language learning (e.g., the importance of learning language use and function vs. mastering grammar as a prerequisite for the tests), veteran teachers consistently taught very traditionally by employing repetition drills. Cho (2004) also points out that large class size may be problematic in carrying out a mandated communicative language teaching-based curriculum. It is important to note that the government supports communicative language teaching, but their teaching environment is not conducive to its implementation.

Referring back to Haarmann’s (1986) framework of an ecological system of language and the chain of language spread (i.e., individual, group, society, and state), this study will show that the environment created by the government influences individual learning motives and performances. The government mandated policies and practices in educational system offer how groups or individuals perceive and interpret such policies. However, we should also consider that individual learners or teachers hold a central place in English policy. Nunan (2003) argues that “the government and ministries of education are often framing policies and implementing practices without adequately considering the implications of such policies and practices on the lives of the individuals” (p. 591). Thus, the chain of language spread in the ecological system of language works bi-directionally from the most general (state) to the most specific (individual), and vice versa. Policy makers should consider learners’ perceptions toward second language proficiency; when their notion of good second language proficiency is linked to earning high test scores, communicative competence is unlikely to be achieved because it is not a priority in this educational model. In order to achieve successful communicative language teaching based
Motivation of Agency in EFL Contexts

In general, agency is known as an individual’s aptitude to self-react under certain social circumstances. In linguistic anthropology, Duranti (2004) claims that scholars understand agency as the property of those entities that “(1) have some degree of control over their own behavior, (2) whose actions in the world affect other entities’ (and sometimes their own), and (3) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g., in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome)” (Duranti, 2004, p. 453). He stresses that agents whose actions have consequences for themselves and other people perform these properties of agency. In psychology of education, agency is referred to as an individual capacity for self-determination in learners’ decision-making process and ability to resist and enact (Carson, 2012). Ahearn (2001) defines agency as “the socioculturally mediated human capacity to act” (p. 7). More specifically, agency, is an important aspect of human experience that plays an active role rather that a passive role, and she argues that agency is not synonymous with free will. Instead, learners’ capacity to act is processed through their volitional direction and involvement in learning. Van Lier (2008) argues that in learning contexts, there are three fundamental points of agency relevant to the study of language education: initiative, interdependency, and an awareness of the responsibility for one’s own actions vis-à-vis the environment, including affected others” (p. 172). Throughout the study, this dissertation delves into diverse agencies that are involved in the macroacquisition of English and unravel each one of distinct agencies to determine what is acting as a catalyst and which inhibiting factor affects the overall process of language spread in Korea.
The concept of agency, then, brings to light possible explanations of the ways in which learners take responsibilities to reach educational goals. In this respect, motivation is one of the keys to successful learning. In learning language, some scholars of educational psychology support that motivation is the psychological quality that drives learners to achieve goals, such as gaining basic communication skills or high scores on standardized tests. Motivation is also a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal.

One of the first explorations of learner motivations in a second language involved the macro-social-psychological perspective advocated by Gardner and his colleagues in Canada. Their classification of the notion of integrative and instrumental motivations is widely known in the field of second language acquisition and has contributed significantly in various research fields related to learner attitudes and motivation in multilingual environments. Gardner and Lambert (1972)’s model of instrumental motivation represents a construct made up of the utilitarian value of the language. To second language learners, instrumental motivation is concerned with the practical advantage of learning a new language to gain better opportunities for job promotions, higher standardized exam scores, and so on. In contrast, an integrative orientation to second language learning stresses openness toward another ethno-cultural group which may include a learner’s desire to be accepted as a member of that speech community. Although this model has been developed within the Canadian L2 context, it cannot be assumed that the same model is applicable to learning contexts such as Korea, where learners are limited to interacting in the target language. This may be part of the reason why Yashima (2002) has argued that the integrative approach is not applicable in a Japanese context. Her study showed that Japanese learners showed little interest in integrating into English-speaking cultures. Rather, in most cases, they were inclined to interact with intercultural partners in international affairs as
part of business transactions. In a similar vein, Korean learners of English may initially be motivated to learn English in order to engage in international business because English functions as the language of global networking among the workers in international settings. In this sense, Gardner’s term of instrumental motivation is appropriate in a Korean context as a tool for a global communication.

In another approach in conceptualizing second language research, Dörnyei has outlined that an individual’s personal ‘core’ is an important part of one’s identity (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). He expressed such an assumption through the new construct of self-motivation called ‘L2 (second language) Motivational Self System’, which attempts to broaden the scope of L2 motivational theory to make it applicable in diverse language learning environments. The L2 Motivational Self System, according to Dörnyei (2005), “represents a major reformation of previous motivational thinking by its explicit utilization of psychological theories of the self, yet its roots are firmly set in the L2 field” (p. 9). He argues that the novelty of this new approach lies in its concern of how people conceptualize their unrealized hopes, wishes, and fantasies. Drawing on the motivational psychology notion of L2 Motivational Self System, Higgins (1987) identifies two key components in self theory: the ideal self and ought self. “The ideal self refers to the representation of attributes that one would ideally like to possess (i.e. hopes, aspirations, or wishes), while the ought self refers to the representation of attributes that one feels obligated to possess (i.e. representation of someone else’s sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibilities) and which, therefore, may bear little resemblance to one’s own desires or wishes” (Higgins, 1987, p. 13). As Dörnyei (2005) described, the ideal L2 self is focused on promotion whereas the ought-to L2 self is focused on prevention. He has argued that in the ought-to L2 self, learners may feel pressures to avoid
negative outcomes of not achieving their goals. For instance, in Korea, English is considered as a crucial tool for success and such success is judged by test scores. Based on this, learners believe that they ought to have a decent level of English proficiency or good test taking strategies to avoid failure.

Dörnyei added a third component in the L2 Motivational Self System called L2 Learning Experience which is associated with the motivation inspired by prior experience interacting with the present learning environment. Overall, the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves (Dörnyei, 2005).

To summarize, the L2 Motivational Self System is made up of the following three components (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29):

1. Ideal L2 Self, which is the L2-specific facet of one’s ‘ideal self’: if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the ‘ideal self’ is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

2. Ought-to L2 Self, which is concerned with the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. This dimension corresponds to Higgins’s ought self and thus to the more extrinsic (i.e., less internalized) types of instrumental motives.

3. L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). Dörnyei conceptualized this component on a different
level from the self-guides, and future research could elaborate on the self aspects of this bottom-up process.

Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest another well-known theory of motivation explained in terms intrinsic and extrinsic distinctions (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Dörnyei (2005) explains that extrinsic motivation is related to the extrinsic reward (e.g., good grades) or an avoidance of negative outcome by failing to achieve certain goals. Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that extrinsic motivation can undermine intrinsic motivation. In this view, students may lose their natural intrinsic interest in fulfilling their aspirations if they have to meet some extrinsic requirement. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation rewards operate internally (e.g., the joy of fulfilling one’s dreams and aspirations). Deci and Ryan (1985) write, “Intrinsic motivation is an evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energize their learning. When the educational environment provides optimal challenges, rich sources of stimulation, and a context of autonomy, this motivational wellspring in learning is likely to flourish” (p. 245). Oxford (1994) suggested that internally directed L2 learners who have high needs for growth will be motivated to learn the target language as long as the process of learning involves these enrichment qualities: variety, tasks that the leaners identify them as important, self-direction, and frequent feedback. Thus, the ideal L2 self represents intrinsic personal aspirations, whereas the ought-to L2 self represents extrinsic requirements of the learner’s fear of failure, which reflects social pressure originated from the learning environment (e.g., satisfying parents’ ambitions for academic success).

There have been extensive studies that examine the nature of motivation, with special attention given to the spread of English in the era of globalization (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Ryan, 2006). A number studies (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2009; Kim 2010) have provided the
evidence of second language motivation in adult learners of English in Korea, while accounting for learners’ inside voices and external factors that affect achievement in the target language. In addition to exploring students’ motivation behavior, assessing teachers’ use of motivation strategies, scholars have also studied in secondary schools in Korea language teachers (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Their study indicated that teachers’ motivational practice is linked to increased levels of learners’ motivated learning behavior as well as their motivational state. However, the lack of empirical studies that explore the social reality and its relationship with motivation in second language classroom for young learners calls for further research. This is the contemporary sociolinguistic reality that the present dissertation sets out to examine in Korea.
CHAPTER 3
THE BIRTH OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN EARLY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS IN KOREA

Introduction

This chapter uncovers the sociohistorical uniqueness that influenced development of the English language education policy, leading to refined research questions to be answered in next chapters through ethnographic case study. To provide a solid foundation for understanding the historical development the English language education in Korea, this chapter explores a number of relevant documents and related literatures that delve into past and present language education policies. In particular, this chapter focuses on the role of language education policy and the degree to which this sociohistorical background of Korean speech community has influenced language spread based on macroacquisition of English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) as a theoretical framework.

Sociohistorical Background of Korea

The Korean people have been known to be ethnically and linguistically homogeneous for over a thousand years and the Korean nation maintained its sovereignty before Japanese colonization (1910-1945). After the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japan occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945. The Korean government introduced English language education to the country when it opened an English school for interpreters in 1883 (Kim-Rivera, 2002). The modernization of Korea’s education system began in 1894 during the reform of the country’s political system. During this period, Western style schools were established and all students were
able to receive education. Lee (2015) explains that “The content and methodology of education also changed. Moreover, as the country opened its door to the Western nations such as the U.S. and U.K., the modern education of Western languages including English, German, and French began” (p. 38). Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945 brought a significant change in the Korean education system. Japan promulgated and enforced four educational ordinances in 1911, 1922, 1938, and 1943, and included several amendments emphasizing the Japanese language as a main objective in educational policy. In 1920, English was offered as a required subject in the fifth grade in elementary schools. However, due to the emphasis on Japanese language education, English and other foreign languages held low status in the educational system (Kim-Rivera, 2002).

Following Japan’s defeat in 1945 in World War II, the Korean peninsula became a setting for intense great power competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Stueck (2002) claims that nearly after 35 years of Japanese occupation, Korea lacked independent self-government and the United States and the Soviet Union believed that Korea needed a period of supervision before resuming its status as a sovereign nation. Therefore, North Korea came under the supervision of the Soviet Union and South Korea under the supervision of the United States and an arbitrary line was drawn between them across the 38th parallel.

The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to maintain order in Korea until the circumstances were right for reunification. However, the two powers failed to reach agreement on unification and, in 1948, decided to establish independent governments in the areas under their control. In 1948, South Korea held a general election and Syngman Rhee was elected as the new president of South Korea. At the same time, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea...
was founded and Kim Il Sung was appointed as the general leader of North Korea (Edwards, 2006).

North and South Korea, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain made unsuccessful efforts to negotiate a unification treaty. Stueck (2002) points out that the Soviet Union possessed a direct security threat to the peninsula, whereas the United States, located thousands of miles away, did not. The United States lacked a tradition of direct military involvement on the Asian mainland and eventually the United States reduced its military presence on the peninsula. This reduction of the US presence sped up the creation of an independent government in South Korea. The American withdrawal, combined with the victory of the Communists in the civil war in China, left the area vulnerable to attack by North Korea above the 38th parallel.

After the withdrawal of armed forces of the United States and the Soviet Union from the Korean Peninsula, two separate governments were still under the umbrella of the different political regimes: communist dictatorship in North and capitalist democracy in South. This caused intense tension between them, and eventually resulted in the Korean War when the North Korean People’s Army invaded South Korea in 1950 in an attempt to reunify Korea by military force. North Korea, supported by China and the Soviet Union, was opposed by the United Nations, led by the United States.

After the devastation of the Korean Peninsula, the Armistice Agreement, signed after the Korean War in 1953, left Korea divided and the next six decades saw no progress toward reunification of the two Koreas. This period led to distinct socio-political systems in the North and South. Since then, North Korea has been governed by a communist dictatorship whereas
South Korea has been a capital democracy. In her investigation on the Korean education reform during the American military government from 1945 to 1948, Choe (1986) reveals that the primary goal of the American military government was to “eliminate the Japanese educational system and its effects upon Korean schools, and to replace it with a new democratic educational system” (p. 122). Under the American military government from 1945 to 1948, English became a required subject which would be taught during all six years of the secondary schools except for terminal students (pp. 198-199).

Following the Korean War and a reestablished independent government with a new president in South Korea, the modern national education curriculum was finally born in 1955. Table 3.1 (on the following page) summarizes the development of the national education curriculum in Korea since the Korean War (1953). It should be noted that English was introduced in the school curriculum in 1963 as a non-mandatory school subject starting in middle school. Finally, in 1974, English became an official mandatory subject in middle school and high school. In elementary schools, English was introduced in 1982 as a part of the extracurricular activities in some elementary schools (Pae, 2000). It was not until 1997 that English was taught in elementary schools as a mandatory school subject (Ministry of Education Notice No. 1995-7). This is when the government introduced communicative language teaching-oriented English language policies, to meet the growing demands of globalization. The formal introduction of English as a mandatory school subject in the third grade was driven by the government’s recognition of English as a key to success and upward social mobility in a globalized world (Jeon, 2009).
Table 3.1

*The National education curriculum of Korea from 1955 to present*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st National curriculum</td>
<td>1955-1963</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Ordinance 45, 45, 46, 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd National curriculum</td>
<td>1963-1973</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Ordinance 119, 120, 121 (English is officially introduced as a non-mandatory school subject starting in middle school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd National curriculum</td>
<td>1973-1981</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Ordinance 310, 325, 350 (English was officially introduced in 1974 to curriculum as a mandatory school subject in middle school and high school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th National curriculum</td>
<td>1981-1987</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Notice 442 (English was officially introduced in 1982 as a part of the extracurricular activities in some elementary schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th National curriculum</td>
<td>1997-present</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Notice 1997-15 (English was officially introduced to elementary grade 3 for the first time in 1997 as a mandatory school subject)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Elementary School Classroom Practices Defined by English Education Policy

In Korea’s 130+ years of history of English language teaching, one of the most notable curricular innovations in the English language education was the introduction of English as a mandatory school subject beginning in the third grade in elementary schools in 1997. Up until then, English was taught as an optional extracurricular activity in both public and private elementary schools (Lee, 2016). This new Korean English education policy implemented in 1997, known as the 7th national curriculum, marked a revolution in English language education in Korea with a completely new approach: The policy called for de-emphasizing the grammar-translation method, and focusing more on the development of communicative competence. The 7th national curriculum gives recognition to the wider benefits of communicative approach, both in terms of student-centered instructions as well as in improving their logical thinking skills and autonomous learning skills (The Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation, 1997).

In 2011, while the 7th national curriculum was still in effect, the Ministry of Education issued a ‘Revised Curriculum’ which more detailed guidance for proficiency-based class through a revised English language curriculum. One of the most important changes in this revised

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<td>7th National curriculum Revised in 2015</td>
<td>Effective from 2018</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Notice 2015-74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
curriculum in 2011 was to increase the number of hours of instruction for third and fourth grade English classes from one to two hours per week, with emphasis on communicative activities. This newly revised curriculum set specific standards for academic achievements by third and fourth grade students, emphasizing communicative competence in English through classroom instructions. For example:

1. Students should be able to distinguish different sounds and understand simple words, conversations, songs, role-plays, and games in English.

2. Students should be able to listen and verbalize simple words or simple sentences in English.

3. Students should be able to recognize different alphabet and develop phonemic awareness in English.

4. Students should be able to verbalize simple words or sentences and understand the meaning of simple phrases in English.

5. Students should be able to write alphabet (upper and lower cases) and be able to write simple words and expressions in English. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011, p. 7)

In addition, Figure 3.1 (on the following page) illustrates fundamental English language education goals for elementary school students in an effort to gain communicative competence.
As shown in Figure 3.1, the policy document states that there are four essential language skills for students to learn in order to gain communicative competence in English through classroom instructions. These four essential language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. More specifically, the revised policy document in 2011 contains detailed learning tenets that
apply to third and fourth grade students as ‘four essential language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to learn’ as the following:

Listening (Receptive skills)

1. Be able to recognize different sounds.
2. Be able to recognize different accents and intonations.
3. Be able to understand the meaning of each word in a sentence.
4. Be able to recognize familiar words and understand their meaning.
5. Be able to understand frequently used daily expressions and understand their meaning.
6. Be able to understand simple expressions in the past.
7. Be able to understand songs and games.
8. Be able to understand directions and act according to those directions.

Speaking (Productive skills)

1. Be able to repeat the sound.
2. Be able to repeat sounds that contain different accents and intonations.
3. Be able to say a word and a sentence.
4. Be able to say word or a sentence after looking at a given picture.
5. Be able to say simple verbal expressions.
6. Be able to question and respond.
7. Be able to introduce her/himself in a sentence.
8. Be able to question and respond about daily life.
9. Be able to participate in a game and speak in English.
10. Be able to sing with the correct accent or intonation.
Reading (Receptive skills)

1. Be able to read the alphabet.
2. Be able to distinguish upper and lower case letters.
3. Be able to understand phonics.
4. Be able to read phonically simple words.
5. Be able to read simple phrases or sentences.
6. Be able to recite simple sentences.
7. Be able to recognize the words in a textbook that match what students hear.
8. Be able to understand the meaning of words that students read.

Writing (Productive skills)

1. Be able to write alphabets.
2. Be able to write upper case and lower case alphabets.
3. Be able to write familiar words that students hear repeatedly.
4. Be able to copy and write words or phrases written in the textbook.
5. Be able to write words or phrases that represent pictures or real-life objects.


Using learning tenets such as those listed above, the Ministry of Education has specified a number of instructional guides in a precisely detailed manner. For instance, the policy document even states the number of words that students need to learn in each grade. All third and fourth grade students, for example, need to learn 120 words in each grade level, and the number of words in an instructed sentence cannot exceed seven excluding conjunctions such as and, but, or, because (e.g., I am going to school tomorrow morning). Similarly, fifth and sixth grade
students need to learn 130 words in each grade level, and the number of words in an instructed sentence cannot exceed more than nine excluding conjunctions such as and, but, or, because (e.g., I am going to school tomorrow with my friends) (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011a, P. 6).

Overall, the revised curriculum issued in 2011 maintains that, in the first semester of the third grade, students should learn English through only listening practices because teaching excessive grammar and vocabulary may discourage students’ interest in learning. Therefore, the alphabet is introduced to students gradually in the second semester of the third grade. Reading and writing are introduced to students in the fourth grade. This is derived from the assumption that English as a foreign language acquisition for young learners can be taught in much the same way that they learned their first language. Therefore, the policy specifies that students learn listening and speaking first, then reading and writing afterwards. In addition, to develop students’ learning interest and maintain their motivation to learn, the policy recommends classroom activities such as singing and role-playing. More importantly, the policy indicates that depending on teaching conditions, English teachers are encouraged to share their ideas through peer-to-peer consultation to improve their pedagogical practices. The policy stresses that a teacher is not an authoritative figure, but a provider who gives a comprehensive language input. The policy also suggests that, depending on the space available at individual schools, classes be divided into different levels to accommodate students’ differing language proficiencies.

While all of the policy guidelines that have been discussed so far have promoted policies that engender the spread of English, it should be noted that there are also policies that restrict certain classroom practices. These include: (1) English language classroom instructions for third grade elementary school students cannot exceed more than two hours per week; (2) English
immersion classes are not allowed as part of regular school subjects; (3) English textbooks need to be government-approved; and (4) first and second graders are not allowed to learn English at school as part of regular school subjects (The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016).

The Emergence of English as a Global Language in Korea

In accordance with an increasing government recognition of the econo-cultural role of English as a global language – the economic dominance of English and its role as a leading intellectual language worldwide (Quirk, 1988) – the period of globalization since the mid-1990s has prompted the Korean government to promote proficiency in English at an accelerated pace in order to prepare the nation to play a more central role in international affairs. Such a socioeconomic trend generated the term *Segyehwa* or ‘globalization’, first introduced and promulgated by Korean president Kim Young Sam (1993-1998) during a speech emphasizing that *Segyehwa* ‘globalization’ is no longer a matter of choice but a dire urgency:

*Fellow citizens: Segyehwa* ‘globalization’ is the shortcut, which will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st century. This is why I revealed my plan for globalization and the government has concentrated all of its energy in forging ahead with it. It is aimed at realizing globalization in all sectors – politics, foreign affairs, economy, society, education, culture and sports. To this end, it is necessary to enhance our viewpoints, way of thinking, system and practices to the world class level…We have no choice other than this. (President Kim Young Sam, January 6, 1995).

As a result of globalization, English has become one of the most essential foreign languages for Koreans to learn. In Korea, social life is highly influenced by education and
competitions in the exams are fierce. Since English is one of the three most important subjects on the college entrance exam, excelling in English is crucial to academic achievement. More importantly, motivated by presidential declaration of the globalization campaign, in 1997, the Korean government brought radical change to English language curricular policy in an attempt to meet the growing public demands for improved communicative skills in English. In this respect, English is closed tied to the economic survival of Korea within the context of globalization (Jeon, 2009). This policy, known as the “7th national curriculum” (1997-present), was implemented to develop a working command of English as a global language and provide international awareness in the general population.

Education experts, however, were skeptical of English skills on the part of teachers because inadequate teacher education would make it difficult to implement the new policy in classrooms (Bae, 2010; Chang, 2009; Jung & Norton, 2002; Lee, 2010; Yang, 2009). Despite harsh criticism of its effectiveness and viability, one of the biggest policy changes was lowering the grade level for beginning compulsory English education from grade seven to grade three. The goal was to establish English programs with a strong emphasis on communicative language use. Such a decision was made on the belief that earlier exposure to English would advance students’ language proficiency (Cheon et al., 2002; Cho, 2004; Choi & Son, 2011; Jung & Norton, 2002). It is noteworthy that several East Asian Macroacquisition Type B countries (e.g., Taiwan and Japan) have also introduced a number of substantial changes in their English language education policies by teaching English as a compulsory subject at the elementary school level (Butler & Iino, 2005; Hu, 2007).

In the years following this globalization campaign, Korea suffered a devastating economic crash during the Asian financial crisis, from 1997 to 2002. During this period,
international economic development transformed Korea from a “closed” to an “open” country (Coe & Kim, 2002; Kim, 2000; Shin, 2011) because foreign powers began pressing their claims that Korea open its traditionally closed markets (Ungson, Steers & Park, 1997. P. ix). During the financial crisis, the Korean government initiated far-reaching neoliberal economic reforms with the support of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, liberalizing the domestic market while privatizing the public sector. Korea finally embraced an open-door policy welcoming foreign investors to bring new business ventures to open their satellite offices in major metropolitan areas in Korea.

Likewise, the government encouraged local universities to develop a more competitive workplace through extensive recruitment of international students in order to position Korea as an attractive global investment hub (Byun et al., 2010; Hong & Lee, 2000). Such a drastic economic reform immediately affected people’s economic welfare, resulting in economic inequality and increasing poverty (Shin, 2011, p. 12). As a national strategy to equip Koreans to gain human potential and invest in human capital, communicative competence in English was critical for the country’s economic rebound. At the same period, many competing Asian countries also promoted English in order to strengthen their economic and political positions in the world (Farr & Song, 2011).

As shown by this sociohistorical context, markedly after the Asian financial crisis, the spread of English was nationwide in Korea. People began to adopt English to find success in a rapidly changing Korean society, rather than as a requisite foreign language to learn under the influence of Segyehwa (‘globalization’). Kim (2010), pointed out that “because of the changed international situation, business and government demanded that Korean workers transform themselves to gain a competitive edge” (p. 310). As the economy started to regain its balance
through economic restructuring, local manufacturing businesses made significant contributions to the recovery. This shifted Korea’s position from a product-import nation to a product-export nation, strengthening its economic influence worldwide (see Hong & Lee, 2000, for discussion).

Consequently, the status of the English language has led to an increasing awareness of the indispensability of English education in Korea not only as a school subject, but also for achieving a native-like fluency in communicating with other English speakers internationally. In accordance with this socioeconomic trend, subsequent Korean governments’ implementation of English as a compulsory school subject in elementary schools from the third grade has brought significant changes in foreign language education in Korea (Jung & Norton, 2002). However, the spread of English in early elementary grade was quite substantial to the extent that a neologism youngeo-gwangpung (‘English frenzy’) has taken hold in popular culture. The phenomenon of English frenzy was manifested in early grades. For instance, many ambitious parents are often motivated by the belief that good competence in English can only be learned effectively through exposure to a native English-speaking context during one’s childhood years (Bae, 2010; Lee, 2010). Thus, the term choki yuhak (‘early-age study abroad’), first appeared in the early 2000s to refer to short-term transnational migration among pre-school to secondary school students for the purpose of learning English in a native environment (Lee, 2010; Ly, 2008; Song, 2009). In such programs, young Korean students typically stay overseas for one to three years, accompanied by their mother while the father stays in Korea to work and provide the financial support for their education and living expenses.

Despite financial difficulties from the Korean economic crisis from 1997 to 2002, Park and Abelmann (2004) reported that, in the midst of the economic crisis 70 percent of elementary school students in Seoul were participating in private sector English afterschool programs, also
known as *hagwon* (‘cram schools’). Seth (2002) reports that only 4% of elementary school students enrolled in English afterschool programs in 1990. The demand for private tutoring and *hagwon* (‘cram schools’) emerged from students’ and parents’ dissatisfaction with the national curriculum and need for better educational opportunities in English. *Hagwon* are privately run for-profit unofficial education institutions in which students attend in addition to attending formal schools during the day. *Hagwon* are the only private institutions in the education system that offer parents a choice; they can choose which *hagwon* their children will attend, to meet their specific needs. This type of supplemental education has been successful because learning outcomes achieved through *hagwon* has been high. Several mathematical models trying to determine the relationship between the effect of *hagwon* and learning outcomes in Korean students provide evidence that “private tutoring is an important determinant of Korea students’ test score results” (Byun et al, 2015). Such private education has faced criticisms that it helps widen both the economic gap and the achievement gap between students from affluent socioeconomic backgrounds and students from disadvantaged backgrounds based on purchasing power (Choi, 2012). The government started imposing restrictions on *hagwon* such as disclosing their tuition rates and reducing their hours of operations to prevent them from running late at night. Despite the government’s effort to impose regulations on *hagwon*, it was difficult for the city councils to enforce the regulations effectively (Shin, 2011).
Active Promotion of English Brings Inequality in Education

In 2015, the Korea Institute of Curriculum Evaluation announced that more than 80 percent of young learners had begun their English education through private sector education before reaching the third grade. Due to this high demand, private elementary schools have become popular among parents who can afford the high tuition fees. Most private elementary schools offer English as a compulsory subject from the first grade in contrast to public elementary schools, where the third grade is the starting point. Many private elementary schools have adopted English immersion programs through a massive recruitment of native speaking English teachers to practice co-teaching by working cooperatively as a team with Korean teachers (Kim, 2010; Shin, 2007). In addition, the way students perform in school can have a great impact on their future life and therefore, wealthy parents are more likely to than economically disadvantaged parents to send their children to private schools. In general, first and second grade parents who send their children to public schools tend to supplement their children’s English education with extracurricular classes through private tutoring or hagwon (‘cram school’) to compensate what public schools cannot supply through their national education curriculum.

Governments in many countries exclude private schools from national school policies. Private schools in the United States, for instance, are committed to providing education with unique educational options; They have more freedom from government regulations while maintaining a school’s identity that reflects its own mission, community, and history (U.S Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Office of Non-Public Education, 2009).
However, in Korea, private schools are required to follow national educational policy. The Korean private school act states, “The term ‘private school’ as used in this act shall be deemed to be equivalent to the provisions applied to public schools” (Korean Private School Act of 2008, §8888-1-2). Likewise, regarding the qualifications of teachers, the same rules apply to public and private schools. Teachers at private schools must also hold certificates issued by the government like public school teachers (Korean Private School Act of 2008, §8888-4-1-52).

In Korea, the differences between public vs. private school involve two main criteria: tuition and student selection. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012) indicated that, on average, the socioeconomic backgrounds of Korean middle and high school students who attend private schools are no more advantageous than those of those students who attend public middle and high schools. This is due to the different admissions policy that Korean private middle and private high schools adopt when selecting students, compared to other countries in which students choose freely what schools to attend while paying high-tuition fees. In Korea, the tuition difference between public and private middle and high schools is minimal, except at a small number of alternative schools, international schools and specialty schools. All prospective private middle and high school students are randomly selected and assigned by the Korean government. Lee (2011) explains that in Korea, “the common schooling system has subsumed the private formal schooling system to remove any notion of choice from the side of parents and students when enrolling in school” (Lee, 2011, p. 16). The same national education policy is applied to private and public middle and high schools.

Similarly, for elementary schools, the same national education policy is applied to private and public schools in Korea. Private elementary schools in Seoul, which account for approximately 7.2% of total elementary schools across the city, are run on partial government
funding (OECD, 2012, p. 22). Because private elementary schools receive such funding from the government, they are still required to follow the same curriculum as state-run public schools (Lee, 2011; Park, 2013).

In terms of student selection and tuition, some exceptions are made for Korean private elementary schools, compared to Korean private middle and high school systems. While public elementary school students are subject to the random assignment of students by the government, prospective private elementary school students who are willing to pay high tuition fees have options to apply to their preferred schools and be selected by the lottery. If the lottery fails to confirm admission, the student must attend a local public school randomly assigned by the government. Hence, students who attend private elementary schools tend to be more socioeconomically affluent than those who attend public elementary schools because the school charges expensive tuition in return for better quality education in a wide range of extracurricular classes. Data from the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (2016) indicates that the tuition from private elementary schools can be up to 14 times the tuition from the public elementary schools. These distinct educational climates in public and private elementary schools can lead to differing sociocultural characteristics among students.

In contrast to the government’s initiation on active promotion of English education by lowering the age of instruction in public elementary schools, the same government took strict measures against elementary school level English education in private elementary schools. In October 2013, concerned with an anomalous increase in the spread of English at the early elementary level, the Korean Ministry of Education banned the instruction of English in the first and second grade in private elementary schools, and blocked the use of imported foreign textbooks across Korea. At the same time, this banning policy applied to distribution of
promotional materials advertising English immersion classes for first and second graders. Under the ban, all elementary schools including both public and private, are required to limit English classes to two hours a week for third and fourth graders, and zero for first and second graders. The government stated that economic stratification can lead to unequal educational opportunities and outcomes, and can weaken social unity (Chosun Ilbo, October, 02, 2013). After the imposition of banning policy, there is a prominent presence of the government (Ministry of Education) in a top-down fashion. This stems from the government’s aim to uphold social equity with a provision of educational opportunities to all students regardless of socioeconomic background while the policy’s main concern was to alleviate academic burden and dependency in supplemental education in young elementary school students. Likewise, to deal with inequality of education and social polarization, the ministry’s new amendment sought to eradicating the national obsession for early English education that produced a burgeoning shadow education market (including private English afterschool programs, particularly hagwon ‘cram schools’), (Jones, 2012). The OECD (2016) report on education policy outlook in Korea expressed concerned about the equity in education. It claimed that, “Because of the strong national importance and emphasis placed on admission to top universities, there is a considerable demand for supplementary private education. This may affect education delivery in the formal education system and hinder student motivation” (p. 4). Additionally, in order to lower the economic burdens for parents’ expenses for hagwon (‘cram schools’), in a 2014 ministerial policy report, former president Park Geon Hye urged the Ministry of Education to take steps toward discouraging students from “over-studying” English. President Park emphasized, “Students have to learn basic skills of English. However, not every student has to learn beyond that unless they want a career requiring professional English proficiency” (Chosun Ilbo, March, 25, 2014). The
new government’s policy for improving English education caused controversies among the policy makers. With doubtful policy planning strategies, students, parents, teachers, and government experienced some confusion and frustration about the new policies. (Jeon & Paek, 2009).

This top-down reform has provoked disputes among parents whose children are affected by the amendment protesting that such practices have not been restricted by law for the last 17 years, thus it must stay unaltered. In November, 2013, in response to a sudden imposition of sanctions, more than 1000 parents held a rally in front of the Ministry of Education (Chosun Ilbo, November 12, 2013). It is crucial to take a closer look at parents’ reactions to this state of affair. In 2014, a group of parents from private elementary schools filed a petition with the Court against the Ministry of Education, demanding that 2013 English ban violated their children’s right to education. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education argued that the restriction was adopted to prevent social problems caused by the “English divide,” including educational conflicts between different socioeconomic groups. Finally, in 2016, the Korean Constitutional Court upheld the constitutionality of the government’s prohibition on English programs for first and second graders in private elementary schools. According to the public notice released by the Korean Ministry of Education (Notice 2012-31), the Korean Constitutional Court stated that autonomous curricula of private elementary schools are allowed only within the guideline of government’s educational policy. This is to prevent parents’ excessive zeal in private education for English, which has led to intense demand for private English education. The Court also emphasized that, “In the South Korean public education system, the first and second grades in elementary school are where students first learn Korean, not English” (p. 1).
Development of Research Questions

Several factors make Korea an interesting case study regarding language spread. First, English language instruction in early elementary school years has been skyrocketing over the past few years. From the standpoint of language spread through the lenses of macroacquisition (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), it is evident that English language spread in Korea has shifted dramatically from the secondary (grade 7) to early elementary school level (grade 3). Second, alongside this new educational trend, ungovernable English language education in the private sector has expanded as a market response to the demand for English language instruction that is not satisfied by the uniform public provision of schooling proposed by the government. The policy of the Korean government has been to ensure that English language learners have equal access to high quality instructions regardless of learners’ socioeconomic backgrounds. In this regard, there is a need to consider the amount of expenditure spent by parents on private sector English language education. These costs have escalated despite government efforts to ban such practices. Thus, this state of affairs provides an opportunity for scholars to investigate a dynamic relationship among four contrasting actors: the institutional policies, parents, students, and teachers involved in the English language spread in early elementary school years.

To understand the essential driving forces behind the spread of English in Korea, it is important to understand these four actors that drive language spread. While the interconnection between human capacity to act and sociocultural context has long been a focal concern in educational research, Van Lier (2008) points out that agency plays crucial roles in language learning. He asserts that “learning depends on the activity and the initiative of the learner” (p. 163). Likewise, Ahearn (2001) claims that a concept of agency is the socioculturally mediated human capacity to act. Agency is one important aspect of human experience that plays an active
role rather that a passive role, and Ahearn argues that agency is not synonymous with free will. Instead, language learners’ capacities to act are processed through "how people’s actions influence, and are influenced by, larger social and political structures” (p. 7). Furthermore, this dissertation delves into diverse agencies that are involved in this macroacquisition case and unravels each of them. The goal of this process is to determine what is acting as a catalyst and which inhibiting factors affect the overall process of language spread.

According to Ricento (2006), language policy evolved through studies drawn from sociolinguistics during the 1950s and 1960s in the scholarly literature by Haugen’s language standardization in Norway. In the beginning, scholars referred to language policy as classic language planning largely focused on the top-down, macro-level approaches (Cooper, 1983, 1989; Eastman, 1983; Fishman, 1972, Haugen, 1972; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Defining the concept of language planning, Eastman (1983) described it as “the process of decision-making that goes into determining what language use is appropriate in particular speech communities[...] and how can be conducted and interpreted successfully in a speech community, given that language goals of that community” (Eastman, 1983, p. 2).

Subsequently, the 1980s-1990s, critical scholars raised questions about the idea that powerful institutions can plan and regulate a speech community’s language while influencing the ways that people practice language. The major contribution of critical linguists was to make efforts to “emphasize the relationships among language, power, and inequality, which are held to be central concepts for understanding language and society” (Tollefson, 2002, p. 4). As a novel approach, scholars’ interest in language planning has shifted to a new area of research known as language policy (Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 2006) that recognizes dynamic forces such as language ideology, attitudes towards language, and agency,
which together influence behavior towards language. Another distinct term has appeared, recognized as language policy and planning (Hornberger & Ricento, 1996) in schools. This underscores how values and beliefs of human agency towards language influence policy-making processes and planning for language instruction.

The purpose and role of English language education depend on a society’s economic and social needs. While the goals and purpose for learning English language may differ from individuals to individuals, a society’s goals and purposes for English language education are shaped by language education policies. Tollefson (1991) emphasized that “school-based language learning is a worldwide phenomenon, and so language policy plays an important role in the structure of power and inequality in countries throughout the world” (p. 6). Tollefson (2002) was concerned about the formation of inequalities among language learners when language policies marginalize some students while benefit others. He found that critical linguistics and language policy have merged to give rise to the study of language policies in education. In addition, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) argued that language-in-education planning is different from language planning in that it focuses on functional factors from the perspective of government. By contrast, language-in-education planning focuses solely on language education. That is, language-in-education has a clear goal of making curriculum, materials, assessment, and language teaching. Eastman (1983) states that “the implementation of language policy is the procedure used to bring about the change in language that allows the policy objectives to be realized. Implementation refers to how a plan is put into operation to achieve a stated goal. (p. 8).

In context of schools, speech communities practice language policies in education, aiming to implement them in classrooms. In this respect, Shohamy (2006) viewed that the policy implementation process highlights dynamic mechanisms such as regulations, language tests,
language in the public space and propaganda. These dynamic mechanisms involve a wide range of individuals involved in the creation and implementation of the policy implementation process. While exploring the negotiation of language-in-education planning in classrooms, Menken and Garcia (2010) emphasized that educators are the core of this dynamic process, using their agency to change the various language education policies they must apply into actual practice. They noted, “regardless of the type of polices or the educational context in which a policy text comes to life in the classroom, there is typically space for policy negotiation in classroom practice, as it is ultimately educators…who are the final arbiters of language policy implementation” (p. 1).

Based on archival data and related literatures, this dissertation’s research questions draw on the sociohistorical context in which English language has spread, with the goal of answering how Korean speech communities have embraced and responded to such dramatic changes in English language education policies in early elementary schools over the last two decades:

1. What characteristic features can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary schools in terms of the process of policy implementation?
2. How does the spread of English in early elementary school classrooms in Korea align with macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of language?
3. How do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms?

Following Menken and Garcia’s (2010) argument that “new wave of language education policy research that focuses on agency in implementation” (p. 2), this dissertation concentrates on the dynamism that indicates human agency in the policy-making and policy-implementation process. Because there are many members of a speech community in its development and
implementation, language policy is dynamic and multilayered. Thus, language education policy research needs to shift focus from top-down to bottom-up structures to “local school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members” (Menken and Garcia, 2010, pp. 2-3). Adopting bottom-up approach, this dissertation focuses on the human agents affected by top-down education language policies.

More importantly, based on Brutt Griffler’s (2002) World English theory, the spread of English language was not simply a unidirectional, top-down process. Rather, speech communities have significantly shaped the process of English spread. However, most previous studies on language policies in Korea examined historical development (Chang, 2009; Choe, 1986; Chung, 2017; Kim-Rivera, 2002; Lee, 2015; Pae, 2000; Park, 2013) and macro-level top-down policies (Byun et al., 2010; Jeon & Paek, 2009; Lee, 2011, Lee, 2007). Today there is a need to fill the gap by shifting attention to micro-level language policies and their effects in actual classroom practices. Therefore, using ethnographic methods including classroom observations, interviews, and surveys, this dissertation seeks to uncover how the Korean speech communities responds to the recent government’s top-down policy.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Based on the theoretical concepts of macroacquisition of English discussed in previous chapters, this chapter will begin by describing the rationale for the methodological procedures used in this study to understand the research context. To uncover how Korea’s English language education policy is implemented and practiced in early elementary grades, this study employs research that uses qualitative ethnographic case study approach to obtain an in-depth view of the classroom realities. The specifics of the unit of analysis, research design, participants, research sites, data collection, and data analysis are discussed in the follow section.

Rationalizing the Unit of Analysis

When examining language education policy in Korea, it is helpful to specify the unit of analysis by rationalizing research participants of this study within the World English framework, juxtaposing the Macro/Micro framework as shown in figure 4.1 on the following page:
Figure 4.1. Macro/Micro linkages framework for rationalizing the unit of analysis

To investigate language spread in students’ early elementary school years in Korea, research subjects are selected as a unit of analysis representing one particular speech community in Korea. To be more specific, the above Figure 4.1 illustrates hierarchical levels of speech communities that are involved in the spread of English language in early elementary grades. DeWalt and Pelto (1985) asserted that Macro/Micro framework defines the ecological relationship between interdependent dimensions of space, causality, and time. They added, “Processes are components of larger systems, and contain smaller subprocesses” (p. 2). Their framework illustrates the linkages between a smaller unit (e.g., third grade elementary school
classrooms) and a larger unit (e.g., world). These two connections suggest that when we focus on any particular unit of analysis, we also study causality that leads to particular results over a specific timeframe in a given geographical location. These connections also suggest that units of analysis are composed of smaller units and are themselves part of larger units.

Taken from this viewpoint, this study focuses on Korean local communities, ordered hierarchically from world (Macro) to a third grade local elementary school classroom (Micro) context as shown in Figure 4.1. To reiterate, Korea is a Type B macroacquisition speech community according to Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) World English theory. Type B macroacquisition takes place in a predominantly monolingual Korean speech community, transforming to a bilingual speech community of Korean and English. As one of only two East Asian OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) participant countries along with Japan, Korea acts a model East Asian country committed to democracy and promote cooperative domestic and international policies. Seoul is the capital and largest metropolis of Korea surrounded by a greater Seoul metropolitan area including Gyeonggi province and the Incheon metropolis. According to the Korean Statistical Information Service (2016), up to half of Korean population lives in greater Seoul metropolitan area, which serves as a leading center of finance, culture, and education. In particular, the number of elementary schools in Seoul metropolitan area is nearly 45% of the entire number of elementary schools in Korea (Korea Education and Research Information Service, 2017). Elementary schools, then, can be classified into a public and a private elementary school, based on divergent socioeconomic backgrounds in the formation of students in each setting. More importantly, the study sought research sites from both private and public elementary schools because the study assumes that although language policies and government regulations are applied equally in both school settings, further research
is needed to investigate whether these policies are equally practiced in actual classrooms with real students and teachers. From the third grade onward, elementary students learn English for the first time as a school subject under the national education policy. Thus, third grade local elementary school classrooms are linked with a regional center (Seoul) that is one of a number of such centers making up regional provinces, which in turn, comprise a nation. Then, Korea is a component of Type B macroacquisition, which in turn, it is aggregated to World English.

**Research Design**

The public and private elementary schools in which the data was collected are located in a middle-class residential area in the north of Seoul. The research activities that I conducted in those two schools included: classroom observations, researcher’s field notes, semi-structured individual interviews, survey questionnaires, and analysis of artifacts. This ethnographic case study consists of three distinct participant populations: students, teachers, and parents.

First, 51 third grade students from a Korean public elementary school and 48 third grade students from a private Korean elementary school participated in the study through classroom observations during English class and three students from each school participated in semi-structured interviews. In addition, 31 third grade students from a public elementary school and 34 third grade students from a private elementary school participated in the survey. The rationale for selecting this particular age group was that the proposed study aims to discover students’ perceptions and attitudes of learning English as the youngest learners under the influence of English language education policy. Second, two English class teachers from a public and six English class teachers from a private elementary school participated in the study through classroom observations and two English class teachers from a public and three teachers from a
private elementary school participated in semi-structured interviews. These individual teachers provided useful information regarding their English language teaching practices, personal experiences, and beliefs in the school program. Third, three mothers from public and three mothers from private elementary school participated in semi-structured interviews.

The following table describes an overview of the research design that provides a summary of the methodological approaches that have been employed to answer the research questions.

Table 4.1
An overview of the research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Rationale/ Objectives</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What characteristic features can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary schools in terms of the process of policy implementation?</td>
<td>To conduct a reality check on the policy implementation in classroom setting</td>
<td>Classroom observations, Individual interviews, Field notes, Policy documents</td>
<td>Teachers, Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the spread of English in early elementary school classrooms in Korea align with macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of language?</td>
<td>To learn how teachers follow the policy guidelines in actual classroom settings and investigate their perceptions and beliefs related to their teaching practices</td>
<td>Classroom observations, Individual interviews, Field notes, Policy documents</td>
<td>Teachers, Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To investigate the multilayered mechanism on the policy implementation</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
<th>Student survey questionnaires</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Methodological Overview**

Drawing on a qualitative research approach, this study consists of a three-stage research process to fulfill the purpose of the study.

*Figure 4.2. An overview of research findings and discussions of this study*
Stage 1. Document Analysis Based on Grounded Theory to Discover Sociohistorical Uniqueness Pertaining to the English Education Policy in Early Elementary School Years in Korea

In this stage, I adopted inductive strategies based on grounded theory (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to capture how the phenomenon of macroacquisition in Korea has evolved over the past twenty years. Grounded theory is a methodology for developing a theory that is grounded in data, collected, and analyzed in a systematic way. This stage began with reviews of newspaper articles, language policy-related documents and government publications, and scholarly journals. Then, I analyzed the collected data through an elaborate set of coding process (Boyatzis, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data collection and analysis were performed recursively until reaching theoretical saturation. Subsequently, I looked for relevant themes pertinent to my research interests to emerge from the data. In this regard, grounded theory facilitated the process of achieving a higher level of abstraction through an in-depth examination of data (Strauss, 1987).

To this end, I remained focused on the data to develop the final product: a set of research questions. Throughout this stage, I concentrated on finding prevailing themes in Korea over the past two decades such as the fever for English education in the early elementary school years, parental involvement in language education, language policy revisions in elementary schools, growing private sector English education market, and so on. As I categorized and integrated these themes, more refined mechanisms and interactions among the agents of language emerged. As a result, the phenomenon of English language growth in early elementary grades through macroacquisition has emerged as the research topic of this study, and as the basis for my
research questions. This topic continued to evolve in stage 2 and 3 through constant interaction between data collection and data analysis.

Stage 2. Ethnographic Case Study in One Public Elementary School and One Private Elementary School through Classroom Observations for a Reality Check on the Policy Implementation in Classroom Settings

Taking into account the development of research questions from stage 1, in stage 2, I performed an in-depth study on the macroacquisition of English by adopting an ethnographic case study approach through classroom observations for a reality check on the policy implementations. In the typical sense, ethnography focuses on small bounded units (e.g., a classroom) within broader social units (Harklau, 2011). In doing so, “although not all case studies are ethnographic or even qualitative, all ethnographic research involves case study” (Brewer, 2000, p. 77). My rationale for adopting case study method through multiple ethnographic discourses is closely aligned with Baily’s (2010) perspective of “whether researchers design single or multi-case studies, explore relationships among cases, or analyze cases to gain insight into broader phenomena, the basic building block of case research is rigorous attention to the complexities of the specific case under study” (pp. 130). He maintains that, unlike other research designs that require large samples, a single case is sufficient enough to be used as long as the case is well established.

Creswell (1998) notes, “A case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). Indeed, case study is a widely used research method among educational researchers, and encompasses the complexities of multiple variables
by using different approaches and resources to select a few easily researchable examples (Yin, 2009). Yin’s perspectives on case study are mirrored as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Using case studies as contextual forms of research, Stake (2000) differentiates between three types of case studies: the intrinsic, the instrumental, and the collective. The intrinsic type provides a case study targeting a specific individual case whereas the instrumental type involves studying one particular case that “provides an insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (p. 437). For the purpose of this study, I adopted his approach to the collective case study as a research method that allows the investigator to look at several cases comparatively. This approach allows the researcher to redraw a generalization and ultimately, “investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (p. 437). Moreover, since macroacquisition assumes a particular speech community as a unit of analysis, my case study for Korean speech community as a unit of analysis is appropriate for the study of Type B macroacquisition that reflects the emerging phenomenon of the spread of English in early elementary school years.

Because I have been an outsider for classroom practices about elementary school since graduation, I needed to become an insider to gain better understanding of the current Korean classroom practices. Salzman (2001) and Harklau (2011) rationalize that in ethnographic approach, the researcher is immersed in classroom settings interacting with subjects through classroom observations, field notes, and interviews to find their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. More importantly, the researcher is engaged in communication with people, immersed in contexts of situations, and trying to uncover “beliefs, social institutions and forms, roles and personalities, history and ecology of community” (Hymes, 1974, p. 5). In this sense, Canagarajah
(2005) points out that “while language policy and planning largely works in a top-down fashion to shape the linguistic behavior of the community according to the imperatives of policy-makers, ethnography develops grounded theories about language as it is practiced in localized contexts” (p. 153). To understand practice in a local context, I immersed myself into the classroom. This enabled me to become an ethnographic researcher whose approach delves into a bottom-up fashion, or what Canagarajah (2005) calls “micro-level” approach.

In a similar vein, Malinowski (1921) notes that the final goal of ethnography is “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of the world” (pp. 24-25). He makes a clear distinction between inferences and observation, which follows the distinction in natural science between the subjective views of the researcher and objective facts. At the same time, he maintains that the fieldworker does not come with a hypothesis to test. Rather, ethnography is an inductive scientific methodology in which fieldworkers play the objectified role of data collector.

To this end, I used the following argument for the sample selection: What characteristics will need to be reflected in the sample population to address the research questions accordingly? In order to achieve that aim, I employed purposive sampling based on demographic characteristics that may be relevant in addressing the research questions. While quantitative methods account for “probability and convenience sampling” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 70), qualitative research selects “purposeful sampling” or “criterion-based selection” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 69). According to Maxwell (1996), purposeful sampling is “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 70). The study begins with the fact that Korean English language education as a compulsory subject begins in the third grade,
and assumes that comparing students’ initial English proficiencies in that age group from different socio-economic backgrounds would yield meaningful results. Thus, third grade students were core participants in this study, in addition to teachers, and parents.

Non-participant observation was applied as a data collection method in this ethnographic case study, including a combination of audio or video recordings of classroom interactions and writing field notes. The observational data was intended to document normal classroom practices in each classroom context. I attended to grasp features of the broad classroom context but focused mainly on the interactions between the teacher and the students.

In general, observational classroom field work through participant observation provides richer sources of information through examination of classroom interactions and the participants’ behaviors. As Spradley (1980) explains, the participant observer has two purposes when entering a social situation: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation, and (2) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. Glesne (2006) suggests that participant observation ranges across a continuum from observation to participation. That is, the observer role may fall at any point along this continuum depending on the stage of data collection. Therefore, one possibility is that the research could be carried out entirely at the non-participant observer end of the continuum. In this case, the researcher has minimal interaction with those being studied. Observer as a participant is the next point on the continuum. Here, the researcher remains primarily an observer but also interacts with study participants. Participant as an observer is the next point. Here, interacts extensively with subjects. It may develop a situation in which the researcher becomes more of a participant and less of an observer. Participant observer is the last point on the continuum. Here, the researcher is fully exposed to be involved in the routine activities with study participants. Glensne (2006) adds that “the more you function as a
member of the everyday world of the researched, the more you risk losing the eye of uninvolved outsider; yet, the more you participate, the greater your opportunity to learn” (Glesne, 2006, p. 50). As observations reveal a “firsthand encounter with the phenomena of interest” (Merriam, 1998, p. 94), I remained primarily as a non-participant observer, but I occasionally interacted with study participants if needed. Classroom observations were conducted by visiting each school according to the schedules outlined as listed in table 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2

An overview of weekly classroom observations in Iksun public elementary school over the period of 17 weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homeroom #1</th>
<th>Homeroom #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Total: 24 students)</td>
<td>(Total: 24 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 males</td>
<td>12 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 females</td>
<td>12 females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only one level</td>
<td>40 min x 2 visits</td>
<td>40 min x 2 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Beginner and intermediate levels)</td>
<td>(Instructors: Sooyoung and Peter)</td>
<td>(Instructors: Sooyoung and Peter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>80 min x 2 visits</td>
<td>80 min x 2 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>(160 minutes x 4 visits) x 17 = 2720 minutes in 68 visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3

An overview of bi-weekly classroom observations in Sokyeok private elementary school over the period of 17 weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Language Art Class</th>
<th>Conversation Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (Beginner)</td>
<td>40 minutes x 2 visits</td>
<td>40 minutes x 2 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total: 14 students)</td>
<td>(Instructor: Laura)</td>
<td>(Instructor: Joseph)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 (Intermediate)</td>
<td>40 minutes x 1 visit</td>
<td>40 minutes x 1 visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total: 12 students)</td>
<td>(Instructor: John)</td>
<td>(Instructor: Lilly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 (Advanced)</td>
<td>40 minutes x 1 visit</td>
<td>40 minutes x 1 visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total: 14 students)</td>
<td>(Instructor: Linda)</td>
<td>(Instructor: Jasper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>160 minutes x 4 visits</td>
<td>160 minutes x 4 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>(320 minutes x 8 visits) x 8.5 = 2720 minutes in 68 visits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detailed descriptions are discussed in subsequent sections, in connection with relevant field data including research sites, classroom settings, participants, and data analysis.

**Research Sites.** Iksun public elementary school (pseudonym) and Sokyeok private elementary school (pseudonym) are located in a middle-class residential area in the north of Seoul. The school system in Korea follows 6-3-3 pattern which consists of elementary school (six years: 1st to 6th grades), secondary school (three years: 7th to 9th grades), and high school (three years: 10th to 12th grades). Recent data released by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (2016) indicates that an average class size of elementary schools in Seoul is 23.4 students, and the
average number of homerooms is 5.2. Although the number of homerooms and size of class may vary even within the same school district, both public and private elementary schools in this study have four homerooms per grades respectively with an average of 25 students per classroom.

**Classroom Settings.**

Table 4.4

*A sample of weekly schedule of third grade students taken from homeroom #1 in Iksun public elementary school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:10-09:50</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>Social science</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40-12:20</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Special activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Social science</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afterschool</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:50-14:30</td>
<td>Extracurricular activity</td>
<td>Extracurricular activity</td>
<td>Extracurricular activity</td>
<td>Special activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 (on the previous page) illustrates a weekly schedule of third grade students from homeroom #1 in Iksun public elementary school. Although one period lasts for 40 minutes, the Ministry of Education counts one period as one hour. As shown in the weekly schedule, all third grade students in Iksun public elementary school take two hours of English per week. After fifth period when regular school hours end, students have the option to participate in extracurricular activities such as Korean folk dance, ballet, painting, music, and taekwondo during afterschool sessions. It is important to note that English is not offered as extracurricular activity in this school and it is only taught during regular school hours as a mandatory school subject. There are 24 students in one English language classroom with mixed proficiency groups of students. English language classes are not offered to first and second grade students in Iksun public elementary school.

Table 4.5 (on the following page) illustrates a weekly schedule of third grade students taken from homeroom #1 in Sokyeok private elementary school. Regular school hours start from first period and they end after fifth period. It is noteworthy that, Sokyeok private elementary school has longer school hours than Iksun public elementary school, due to added afterschool hours and an early morning period called “zero period” before the first period, acting as an extra school hour. Although not required, all students attend English classes offered in afterschool and zero period classes. Overall, third grade students in Sokyeok private elementary school learn two hours of English language classes during regular class schedule, and six hours during afterschool hours and zero period. In addition, all students take two hours of English immersion classes (health and ethics) in zero period. Taken all together, all third grade students in Sokyeok private elementary school take ten hours of English per week.
Table 4.5
A sample of weekly schedule of third grade students taken from homeroom #1 in Sokyeok private elementary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero period</td>
<td>Extra curricular immersion class (Health)</td>
<td>Extra curricular English (Language Arts)</td>
<td>Extra curricular immersion class (Ethics)</td>
<td>Extra curricular English (Conversation)</td>
<td>Extra curricular English (Language Arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:20-09:00</td>
<td>09:00-09:50</td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First period</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>English (Language Arts)</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>English (Conversation)</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00-09:50</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second period</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third period</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Special activity</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth period</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Special activity</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth period</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00-10:40</td>
<td>10:50-11:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:55</td>
<td>13:00-13:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Conversation)</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Conversation)</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Language Art)</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Language Art)</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Language Art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45-14:25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school</td>
<td>Extracurricular immersion class (Geography)</td>
<td>Extracurricular immersion class (Social science)</td>
<td>Extracurricular immersion class (History)</td>
<td>Extracurricular immersion class (Social science)</td>
<td>Extracurricular English (Language Art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30-15:10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school</td>
<td>Miscellaneous extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Miscellaneous extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Miscellaneous extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Miscellaneous extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Miscellaneous extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15-15:55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike Iksun public elementary school where there is only one type of English class, Sokyeok private elementary school offers two types of English language classes: language arts and conversation. Language arts focuses on reading and writing whereas conversation focuses on speaking and listening skills. Apart from English language classes, the school also provides an extracurricular English immersion program offering content subjects such as science, health, ethics, geography and history for advanced level students during afterschool hours. While the focus of the immersion program is to develop students’ academic and communicative abilities, by offering immersion program, this school is more attractive to prospective applicants.

It is also important to note that while Iksun public elementary school holds 24 students with mixed proficiency groups of learners in an all-in-one class, Sokyeok private elementary school has adopted a more complex way of categorizing class types according to learners’ proficiency levels. As a result, in Sokyeok private elementary school, students are divided into five different proficiency groups, depending on their placement test results for both regular and extracurricular English classes: (1) beginner (called ‘Jupiter’), (2) intermediate (called ‘Venus’), (3) intermediate (called ‘Mercury’), (4) intermediate (called ‘Mars’), and (5) advanced (called ‘Saturn’). Then, these classes are further divided into two types of instructions: language arts and conversation. Consequently, there are ten different third grade English classes in this private school: (1) beginner language arts (called ‘Jupiter-language arts’); (2) beginner conversation (called ‘Jupiter-conversation’); (3) intermediate language arts (called ‘Venus-language arts’); (4) intermediate conversation (called ‘Venus-conversation’); (5) intermediate language arts (called ‘Mercury-language arts’); (6) intermediate conversation (called ‘Mercury-conversation’); (7) intermediate language arts (called ‘Mars-language arts’); (8), intermediate conversation (called ‘Mars-conversation’); (9) advanced language arts (called ‘Saturn-language arts’); and (10)
advanced conversation (called ‘Saturn-conversation’). The school assigns classroom names that conceal proficiency levels (e.g., beginning, intermediate, advanced) to empower students to position them as equal members in this school community.

**Teacher Participants.** According to the 7th national curriculum, although it is not explicitly stated, a school is a site in which various agents practice top-down policy. These agents are school administrators and teachers serve as core policy practitioners. Recipients or beneficiaries of this top-down policy are students and parents who act according to the directions guided by the school. Following this set of assumptions, the revised curriculum in 2011 has resulted in the following ways to improve educational aim for teachers: (1) expanding the number of native English speaker teachers at schools; (2) intensifying in-service English teacher training; (3) developing internet-based English language teaching materials; (4) improving English teacher education courses at the university level; and (5) developing multimedia English teaching-learning materials (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011b).

More fundamentally, in 2005, the Ministry of Education proposed a ‘Five Year Plan for English Education Revitalization’ to prioritize improving students’ communicative competence in English by introducing English-only classes in all schools. To reach this goal, the Ministry of Education launched an ambitious program called ‘Teaching English Through English’ (TETE) recommending all Korean NNESTs (Non Native English Speaking Teacher) to use English as a medium of instruction in English language classes by 2011. Nonetheless, such unrealistic recommendations were problematic, as Korean NNESTs were not trained to teach English-only classes due to a lack of teacher preparation. To mitigate this conflict, the government hired English conversation instructors in every elementary school and promoted a ‘one NEST (Native English Speaking Teacher) per school policy’ at elementary and secondary schools (Jeon & Lee,
2006). NESTs were hired as mediators to enhance cross-cultural understanding, and use of Standard English grammar and accents. Currently, in most Korean public elementary schools, a Korean NNEST and a NEST teach English in a team-teaching system.

Table 4.6

*Information about third grade English teachers who participated in classroom observations at Iksun public elementary school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Prior teaching experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sooyoung</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>B.A. (English) M.A. (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)</td>
<td>2 years (elementary school) 1 year (hagwon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Korean NNEST)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>B.A. (Psychology)</td>
<td>2 years (elementary school) 1 semester (hagwon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NEST)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Iksun public elementary school, there is one Korean NNEST and one NEST working as a team responsible to teach third and fourth grade students. The above Table 4.6 displays information about third grade English teachers who participated in classroom observations at Iksun public elementary school. Sooyoung is a Korean NNEST who obtained a bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s degree in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) to meet the teacher requirements of the Ministry of Education. Sooyoung was hired last year as a full-time English language teacher at this public elementary school to teach third and fourth grade students. Peter is a NEST who is also responsible for teaching third and fourth grade students as an assistant teacher in Sooyoung’s classes. Peter is from the United States, where he received a bachelor’s degree in psychology. He has two years of experience of teaching third and fourth grade elementary school students in Korea as a NEST. He was hired through the Korean
government’s EPIK (English Program in Korea) program. Sooyoung and Peter co-teach eight different classes (four third grade and four fourth grade classes) in total of sixteen hours per week. They are also required to work 24 additional hours per week doing administrative work.

Generally, NESTs in public elementary schools are hired through the Korean government’s EPIK (English Program in Korea) project. Since 1995, EPIK has been a government-run program to hire NESTs to teach English in Korean elementary and secondary schools in collaboration with Korean NNESTs. This program was introduced in Korea following the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program initiated in 1987 to improve English learners’ foreign language proficiency and promote international awareness in Japan (JET Program USA, 2014). The main purposes of recruiting NESTs through EPIK program are to: (1) enhance English leaners’ communicative competence in English language in the age of information and globalization; (2) promote intercultural awareness; (3) improve local English language teaching textbooks and materials; (4) improve English conversation training of English teachers at public schools; and (5) enhance Korea’s image abroad (EPIK, 2017). To be eligible to work as a NEST through EPIK program, the applicant must hold an E2 visa, a type of visa issued exclusively for teaching foreign language in Korea. To be qualified to apply for an E2 visa, applicants must hold a citizenship where English is the primary language. These countries include Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, and South Africa. The E2 visa eligibility regulation states that prospective EPIK instructors need to hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university from one of these seven designated countries listed above. In addition, the recruitment office looks favorably on those applicants who have a teaching license, majored in education, TESOL, or foreign language-related studies. The EPIK policy guideline states that all of the above rules are enforced under the Korean government’s E2 visa
eligibility law.

Table 4.7 (on the following page) shows information about third grade English teachers who participated in classroom observations at Sokyeok private elementary school. Out of eight NESTs and two Korean NNESTs who teach third grade English classes in this private elementary school, five NESTs and one Korean NEST participated in classroom observations for this study. Unlike Iksun public elementary school in which two teachers co-teach as a team, only one teacher teaches a class at this private school.
### Table 4.7

*Information about third grade English teachers who participated in classroom observations at Sokyeok private elementary school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Prior teaching experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph (NEST)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>B.A. (Nutritional science) M.A. (Sociology)</td>
<td>2 years (elementary school) 1 year (hagwon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>Beginner-conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura (Korean NNEST)</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>B.A. (English) M.A. (TESOL)</td>
<td>2 years (elementary school) 1 year (hagwon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>Beginner-language arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly (NEST)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>B.A. (History)</td>
<td>1 year (elementary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate-conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (NEST)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>B.A. (Geography)</td>
<td>2 years (elementary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate-language arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper (NEST)</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>B.A. (Film studies)</td>
<td>1 year (elementary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Advanced-conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda (NEST)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>B.A. (Religious studies)</td>
<td>3 years (elementary school) 1 year (hagwon) 3 years (private elementary school in the U.S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Advanced-language arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

83
The recruitment process of Korean NNESTs at private elementary schools depends on the authorities of each school administration following the national guidelines directed by the Korean Private School Association. In general, NESTs in private elementary schools are not hired through the EPIK program. Instead, they are recruited through job advertisement websites such as TESOL’s online career center (http://careers.tesol.org/jobs), Dave’s ESL café (http://eslcafe.com), or private educational recruiting agencies. Although the process of NEST recruitment in private elementary schools may differ from public elementary schools, similar hiring criteria applies to NESTs in private schools because they are also required to obtain an E2 visa to work as foreign language teachers in Korea. In this respect, the eligibility criteria for the private elementary school in this study is strict regarding applicants’ nationality and university education requirement. Thus, successful candidates’ overall academic qualifications and prior teaching experiences are comparable to those at public elementary schools.

Stage 3. Ethnographic Interviews with Individual Agents to Investigate the Multilayered Mechanism of the Policy Implementation

To supplement the ethnographic field study of classroom observation, I collected a small number of survey questionnaires involving written responses to open-ended questions, to facilitate triangulation of data. Canagarajah (2005) emphasizes that when collecting data for ethnographic methods in language policy, it is crucial to consider gathering all possible sources because, “the multiplicity in the means and types of data gathered is important, as it permits them to cross-check (i.e., triangulate) their findings by playing off one kind of data against the other” (p. 156). Following appropriate ethical procedures provided by the institutional review board (IRB), I distributed survey questionnaires with written instructions about administration to English teachers. These questionnaires were administered in class for a duration of less than 15
minutes, because the respondents’ attention spans are relatively short due to their young age. The allocated time for completing questionnaires authorized by the school administration was also limited. The purpose of the survey was to identify students’ prior experience and motivation toward learning English inside and outside of the classroom. The survey questions consisted of asking any prior experiences in English before third grade, and what factors influence students’ motivation to learn English.

The complex experiences and perspectives of students learning English as a foreign language cannot be captured adequately solely based on survey questionnaires. Instead, much more explicit and vivid descriptions of intimate interview data serve as an appropriate approach for examining the experiences of the participants. Thus, the initial email invitation to participate in research was sent to potential participants that they should contact me in order to discuss participation for more detail. Once this contact has been made, I established mutually convenient times for two or three 30-minute semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews. I met the interviewee on the agreed-upon date and time. I started the interview by explaining what the interviewee can expect during the interview and explain that the conversation is being audio recorded.

The interview data was triangulated by the following components: (1) participants’ artifacts (textbooks, classroom materials, student work, and lesson plans), (2) classroom observation field notes, (3) survey questionnaires, and (4) resources including language policy-related materials and publications. Since all interview sessions were conducted in Korean, they were transcribed first in Korean, then translated into English (see Duff, 2008, for examples).
The data was based on individual interviews employing Seidman’s (1991) in-depth phenomenological interviewing technique which comprises the following three steps with different purposes. The first step established the context of the participant’s past language learning experiences. For the purpose of this study, it involved asking questions about the participants’ experiences in school, perspectives about the class curriculum, and any other related aspects regarding their learning experiences. This first interview provided only basic information because not all participants provided complete details concerning their personal thoughts. I considered this first interview as a way for participants to become comfortable with the researcher.

The second step granted participants to reconstruct the details of their actual experience within the topic area of English teaching and learning. Thus, I asked questions to obtain the details of participants’ experiences, along with their personal reflections related to those experiences.

Last, the third step encouraged participants to reflect on the meaning their experiences hold for them. Hence, in this last step, I asked participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences mentioned in the previous steps. Under the assumption that the participants came from various educational and socio-economic backgrounds, the contents of interview remained as general as possible.

As Seidman (1991) describes, the in-depth phenomenological based interviewing approach usually uses open-ended questions. Similarly, Gass and Mackey (2007) emphasize that while closed ended-questions require a specific answer from a participant, open-ended questions allow respondents to answer as they see fit, leading them to express their own thoughts and ideas.
in their own way, and thus potentially yielding less predictable but more insightful data. They further point out that open-ended questions “typically involve uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability in terms of data. They also lead to answers that can be easily quantified and analyzed” (p. 195). I adopted two types of open-ended questions that Seidman has proposed: (1) a grand tour question, in which the interviewer asks participants to reconstruct a significant segment of an experience, and (2) a mini-tour question, in which the interviewer asks participants to reconstruct the details of a more particular part of the experience.

The interview method of research has the following strengths: it provides a valuable source of information on past educational experiences, family, and thoughts and feelings toward experiences learning English as a foreign language. As Glesne (1999) puts it, “interview respondents answer questions in the context of disposition (motives, values, concerns, and needs) that researchers need to unravel in order to make sense out of the words that their questions generate” (p. 79). It is also important to note that interview data allows researchers to elicit in-depth thoughts regarding learners’ inner voices.

The type of interview method used in this ethnographic case study adheres to the attitudinal interview method described by Gass and Mackey (2007) as a primary means of data gathering. This methodology fits well within the definition of the case study because this framework, according to Gass and Mackey, allows the researcher to interpret participants’ attitudes, beliefs, opinions, interests, and values and the ways these shape the multifaceted complexity of their perceptions of language teaching and learning. By using this methodology, I was able to capture each participant’s views about language teaching and learning as the data emerged from their own words.
The following outlines the interview participants with pseudonyms assigned to each individual:

Table 4.8

*Information about interview participants from Iksun public elementary school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third grade students</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yonghyun</td>
<td>He is an outgoing student who is popular among his friends due to his charisma. Although his English is very limited, he is confident when interacting in class with his native speaking English teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yongjin</td>
<td>He is a quite student who rarely speaks except when playing games with his best friends during breaks. His mother plans to transfer him next year to a private elementary school. He likes to sing and he studies violin after school. His dream is to become a music teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinjoo</td>
<td>She grew up with her grandparents after her parents divorced when she was three years old. For Chinjoo, learning English is a significant challenge, because this is her first time learning another language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Prior teaching experiences in Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sooyoung (Korean NNEST) | Korea       | B.A. (English) M.A. (TESOL) | 2 years (elementary school)  
1 year (hagwon)  
After receiving her master’s degree in TESOL in Korea, she began tutoring middle school students in a private after-school learning center in Seoul. She was hired last year as a full-time English teacher at this school |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents (mothers)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sungho</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>A.A. (Tourism management)</td>
<td>Full-time homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Her elder daughter is nine years old and the younger one is four years old. Her husband works in fashion manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinjoo</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>B.A. (Fashion design)</td>
<td>Part-time hair accessory maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A mother of a nine-year-old son. Her husband is a manager at a local supermarket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sohyun</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>B.A. (Korean art)</td>
<td>Full-time homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A mother of a nine-year-old son and two-year-old daughter. Her husband works in transportation industry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.9

**Information about interview participants from Sokyeok private elementary school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third grade students</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathan (Byongjoon)</td>
<td>Nathan transferred from another private elementary school because his mother was dissatisfied with the quality of after-school programs and inconvenient commuting routes. He spent two months during the summer break in Australia to stay with relatives while attending a private English language academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick (Bumsoo)</td>
<td>He has been enrolled in this school since first grade. He likes to play and chat with his teacher, a native speaker of English, during the lunch break. Although he has never been outside of Korea, he has no difficulty communicating with his native speaking English teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy (Jeehyun)</td>
<td>Amy has been in this school since first grade. However, she is not confident when speaking in English with her native speaking English teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Prior teaching experience in Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Joseph (NEST)       | England     | B.A. (Nutritional science)  
M.A. (Sociology)   | 2 years (elementary school)  
1 year (hagwon)  
This is his second year teaching English in this school |
| Laura (Korean NNEST) | Korea      | B.A. (English)  
M.A. (TESOL)     | 2 years (elementary school)  
1 year (hagwon)  
This is her second year teaching English in this school |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linda (NEST)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>B.A. (Religious studies)</td>
<td>This is her third year teaching English in this school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents (mothers)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harim</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M.A. (Art history)</td>
<td>Full-time homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A mother of a nine-year-old son. Her family owns a small business in the wealthy Gangnam area and her husband is a dentist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyowon</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>B.A. (Graphic design)</td>
<td>Part-time web developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She is a mother of a nine-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son. Her husband works in a large multinational corporation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heesun</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>B.A. (Korean literature)</td>
<td>Full-time homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She keeps herself busy taking care of her son’s daily activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

I continued to adopt ethnographic collective case study approaches to collect diverse cases through the following: semi-structured interviews, researcher’s field notes, artifacts, survey questionnaires, classroom observations, and analysis of language policy-related materials such as statistical records released by the government and professional publications that evaluate language policy or discuss relevant sociohistorical issues in Korea.

Data analysis was an ongoing process and began immediately after the first interview and classroom observation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009). This recursive process continued throughout the study to ensure that no information was overlooked. According to Merriam (1998), “this way of doing analysis helps the researchers to focus and shape the study as it proceeds” (p. 162). Specific techniques in this study included searching for patterns and themes based on analytical memos (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and creating flow charts or other displays to use Boyatzis’s (1998) procedure for data analysis:

1. A label of the themes
2. A definition of what the themes concerns
3. A description of how to know when the themes occurs
4. A description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme
5. A listing of examples, positive and negative, to eliminate confusion.

To analyze the interview data, I referred to Seidman’s (1991) thematic connections approach, and identified emergent categories based on the data analysis. I played the audio and video file recursively in order to identify emergent categories, both to make appropriate links in events and interpretations and to eliminate any possible overgeneralizations from an outsider’s
point of view. In this stage I also used the ethnographic analysis from Emerson’s (1995) technique on extracting primary themes and patterns from documents, researcher’s field notes, and transcribed interviews. In addition to verbal discourse, I analyzed government-issued language policy documents, official brochures released by the government, textbooks, and classroom materials in answering research questions. To minimize researcher’s bias, I consulted with another experienced researcher before fully developing my coding and interpretations.
CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS PART 1

TWO FACES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY:
PROMOTING AND RESTRICTING THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH

Introduction

While language education policy operates at the macro-level of government institutions, ethnography focuses on “the micro-level of interpersonal relationships, conversation, and everyday life” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 153).

![Figure 5.1](image)

*Figure 5.1. An overview of research findings and discussions of this study*

As shown in Figure 5.1, by undertaking an ethnographic case study through classroom observations, this chapter reveals how actual classroom practices align with institutional
guidelines of English language education policy in early elementary grades. The ethnographic data presented in this chapter identify schools’ educational aims and compare English classes in public and private elementary schools. In doing so, the chapter explores the coexistence of language education policies that promote and restrict the spread of English in early elementary school years, and analyze how these policies are interpreted and modified to fit in public and private elementary school classrooms.

Classroom Observation Result Part 1: Iksun Public Elementary School

The classroom observations at Iksun Public elementary school revealed that Sooyoung and Peter understood the promotion policy. Despite their efforts to adhere to the policy objectives, they struggled when trying to adhere to the promotion policy, which emphasizes student-centered communicative-oriented approaches in their classroom teaching. On the other hand, they were not knowledgeable about the restriction policy. They claimed that they did not have any prior information about the policy amendment that restricts certain classroom practices in private elementary schools. I observed that both teachers had difficulty applying the mandated policy guidelines due to large class sizes with limited teaching hours and a lack of teaching materials to apply the promotion policy as intended by policymakers. Typically, the school radio station broadcasts English songs such as “ABC song” once a day during breaks and English cartoon movies once a week through the school TV broadcasting system. Sooyoung plans interactive games or singing activities, often accompanied by a CD-ROM, repeating words and short sentences to encourage her students to practice English. A scene between two American children filled the screen. Students watch attentively and after the scene, they follow Sooyoung’s instruction: “Repeat after me”, “Look”, “Here”, “Let’s take a look.” Translation practice is common in her classroom activities. Peter is responsible for speaking English words or sentences
with his American accent while Sooyoung engages her students in pattern drill practice to check if they understood the words. In her lessons, she uses familiar topics in young students’ lives such as friendship, food, animals, sports, travel, weather, family, and so on. She asks students to listen to a sentence or a word first and pay attention to its meaning in Korean. Then, Peter repeats the sentence in English and checks to ensure that everyone has listened to what he just said. Many of the students are at the very beginning stage of learning. I observed that students have short attention spans and become distracted easily. Some students learn quickly, but forget quickly as well. Due to large classroom size, her classroom management is not flexible. She wished to have separate classes for students from different levels,

모든 애들한테는 기본적인 것들을 가르치고 더 보충이 필요한애들한테는 더 추가적으로 따로 해주면 됩데. 그런데 상황이 제가 그렇게 할 수 있는 자유권이 없기 때문에. (Sooyoung-ik-3-90-91)

I can teach a basic lesson for everyone. Then, I could teach additional classes for those who need supplementary lessons. But as you know, these circumstances don’t let me choose what I can do. (Sooyoung-ik-3-90-91)

Sooyoung typically asks students to recite texts from memorization. However, she allows those students who are unable to remember the text to read instead. She often played an interactive CD-ROM on a big screen and let students listen and repeat what they hear. Then, Peter repeats the words that seem important for students to learn. Sooyoung plays the same lesson repeatedly until everyone is comfortable repeating after what they have just heard. She
believed that this kind of practice is not student-centered activities as the promotion policy’s goals. She commented,

이건 학생들이 수업에 참여할 수 있는 학생중심의 수업방식이 아니예요. 그냥 앉아서 듣고 따라하는거지. (Sooyoung-ik-3-54-57)

This is not a practical way of making students participate in activities. They are just sitting there listening and repeating. (Sooyoung-ik-3-54-57)

In a similar way, Peter commented,

There is a lot of teacher talk and more Korean is used than what was recommended. Besides, we have very limited teaching periods. The class size is too large. We need to save time and check to see if everyone understood what was being taught to them. So we need to use Korean to save time. Translation and repetition. (Peter-ik-1-32-37)

Sooyoung and Peter recognized that the promotion policy is not fully implemented in their classrooms. Their interviews indicated that the classroom realities limited their ability to apply student-centered practices on students. Their desired teaching approach was not feasible in practice.

Textbooks are a central part of the curriculum, and teachers use them to deliver core components of government policy to students. In Korea, all elementary schools, including both public and private, must use a government-approved English textbook as instructional material in classrooms. This means that the use of published English textbooks other than government-approved types is strictly prohibited in all classrooms. Currently, there are five kinds of government-approved English textbooks in Korea, and individual schools decide which kind of
government-approved textbooks to use. In Iksun public elementary school, Sooyoung and Peter’s sole source of teaching material is the government-approved textbook. Overall, the classroom observation indicated that Sooyoung and Peter’s teaching focused teaching in accordance with the textbook assigned to them, with the CD-ROM that came with the textbook. In rare cases, they provide printed handouts that contain games and singing activities as supplementary teaching materials. All learning content in general, is drawn directly from the government-approved textbook.

In an effort to get a better understanding of classroom practices and their alignment with the English language education policy, a number of excerpts from Iksun public elementary school are provided as follows:

Excerpt 5.1: Iksun public elementary school (Third grade-Homeroom #1)

Today’s activity: Learning to use a noun ‘ball’ in short sentences “pick up the ball” and “let’s pick up the ball”

01 Peter: pick up the ball (1.0) pick up (1.5) the ball
02 pick up (1.0) ((holding a ball)) the BALL
03 Sooyoung: 공을 들자 >pick up< 너네들 픽업 알지?
04 let’s pick up the ball pick up you know what pick up is?
05 S1: =아:: 픽업
06 ah pick up
07 S2: ((laugh)) [픽업트럭?]
08 a pickup truck?
S3: ((loudly)) [야그만해]

hey stop

S4: >픽업트럭픽업트럭< ((looks at S3))

pickup truck pickup truck

Sooyoung: 선생님이 pick up the ball 하시잖아 (0.1) 다같이 따라 해보자

your teacher is saying pick up the ball let’s all repeat after him

Peter: pick up the ball

((some students are just staring at Sooyoung))

Peter: okay ((picking up a ball from the ground)) pick up ((holding the
the ball)) (2.5) let’s pick up the ball (0.5) pick up the ball=

Sooyoung: = pick up the ball (1.0) 자 우리 다 같이 따라 해보자

pick up the ball let’s all together repeat

Ss: ((unintelligible conversation))

Ss: pick up (0.5) pick up

The above excerpt 5.1 illustrates a typical third grade classroom activity at Iksun public
elementary school. There are 26 students attending this class, 13 male and 13 female students. In
this outdoor classroom activity, students play a ball game as part of an active spoken language
practicum in which a NEST and a Korean NNEST co-teach to elicit two types of sentences
containing the noun ‘ball’. The first attempted elicited sentence is “pick up the ball”, and the
second attempted elicited sentence is “let’s pick up the ball”. This is an example of learning
spoken language skills consisting of listening and speaking. The above activity seems to fulfill the policy documents guideline of listening skills that states, “Student needs to be able to recognize familiar words and understand their meaning for listening comprehension.” At the same time, this interaction also seems to fulfill the policy guideline of speaking skills by “participating in a game and talk in English for their speaking.” At first, Peter initiates the ball game by repeatedly saying “pick up the ball.” Then, Sooyoung translates Peter’s previous statement into Korean. More specifically, Sooyoung translates word-for-word from English to Korean to ensure that every student understands the meaning of ‘ball’ and ‘pick up’. A number of students react to this by making jokes about the verb clause ‘pick up’ because of its phonetic resemblance of a nativized Korean word for a ‘pickup truck’. Other classmates react to this student’s joke, however only a few students seem to be engaged in both teachers’ verbalizations. Due to the large class size, instructors constantly need to speak loudly and many students are distracted by the surrounding environment of the playground. Peter tries to stimulate students to speak by initiating a recitation of the sentence “pick up the ball” and “let’s pick up the ball” repeatedly. However, without a microphone, Peter’s voice becomes weaker after repeating the sentences a few times. Soon, he seems frustrated when he finds some distracted students chatting to each other in Korean. Likewise, the voice of Sooyoung becomes weaker and her verbal accuracy becomes less accurate as she repeats English sentences and switches to Korean to translate those sentences and words into Korean.

Throughout the class, Sooyoung gives frequent breaks to quiet a noisy class by saying “Attention, class” or “Be quiet”, but her efforts are short lived. Only 5 out of 24 students engaged in this outdoor activity who seem to have more advanced knowledge of English. However, none of them has any kind of verbal exchange with either of teachers. They are merely
repeating the English sentences after them, following their direction. A couple of male students make gestures of kicking the balls into the air and a number of female students are engaged in an inaudible conversation in Korean. Nearly half of the class is attentive to teachers’ elicitation. However, of the students paying attention, none is making any kind of verbalizations, despite the hopes and plans of the teachers. The teachers dominated the classroom situation, with minimal interaction with students.

For a more elaborated speaking exercise, Sooyoung had students memorize the following role-play script (shown in excerpt 5.2) to introduce student-centered speaking practices through student-student interactions in class. Students were given two weeks to memorize the script as shown in excerpt 5.2 and perform a role-play in a group.

Excerpt 5.2: A sample script to memorize for role-play activity at Iksun public elementary school

01 Stepsister 1: I am hungry. What time is it?
02 Stepsister 2: It is twelve ten. It is time for lunch.
03 Stepmother: Make some sandwiches, Cinderella.
04 Cinderella: Okay.

In the following interview, Sooyoung pointed out the advantage of doing role-play in team teaching with a NEST partner (in this case, Peter). Elaborating on possible reasons behind such classroom practices, Sooyoung added,

아무래도 학생 수가 많다보니 스피킹시키는것도 쉽지 않고. 그래서 이렇게라도 해야 한 단어라도 더 아이들이 스피킹을 할 수 있으니까 그래서 좋은 것 같아요.
I think due to the large class size, it is not easy to teach speaking skills...So, this exercise, even if you get them to speak just only one word, you can have more number of students to speak English in class...I think this is a good approach and perhaps the only way. I think this is also a good opportunity for students to receive a 1:1 native teacher guidance. Since we need to put student-centered classroom activities in our teaching plan, role-play activities are very useful. (Sooyoung-ik-1-43-48)

For Sooyoung, the presence of a NEST makes her teaching easier, and it allows students to learn English from a native speaker. She understands that the aim of teaching English at the elementary level is to give individual students to get a chance to engage in speaking and listening during the class. However, the class size, in her opinion, is obstacle to carrying out student-centered activities recommended by the policy. Sooyoung further added to express her concern about her speaking skills in English,

As you know, my English pronunciation is not very good...It would be much better...
for students to learn from a native speaker of English, our American instructor, because he teaches with a native accent. And, this is the reason why he is here with us in our class. (Sooyoung-ik-1-108-111)

She was concerned about her lack of verbal competence in English to run an activity-centered classroom as recommended by the government policy. In particular, she felt overwhelmed trying to follow the government’s ‘Teaching English Through English’ (TETE) project because she must interpret the NEST’s verbal statements into Korean at all times, to act as a mediator between students and the NEST.

Excerpt 5.3: Iksun public elementary school

Today’s activity: Cinderella role-play

01 Sooyoung: 시작하자(3.0) 잘 다 와왔지?

02 let’s begin you memorized all right?

03 Peter: now (0.5) we have a stepsister 1(0.5) stepsister 2 (0.5)

04 stepmother over here (1.0) and Cinderella over here

05 Ss: ((unintelligible conversations))

06 Sooyoung: 태유부터 시작하자 (0.5) 스텝시스터 1

07 let’s start from Taeyoo stepsister 1

08 Ss: ((unintelligible conversations and laughs))

09 Peter: stepsister 1 says (0.5) I am hungry (0.5) what time is it?

10 Taeyoo: I ((staring at Sooyoung checking her reaction)) (0.5)

11 am hung (0.1) hungry (0.5) what time:: is it

12 Sooyoung: 그래 (0.5) 태유 아주 잘했어 I am hungry what time is it
good Taeyoo very good job I am hungry what time is it

다음 스텝 sist 2 누구야 영선이?

next stepsister 2 who Youngsun?

Ss: ((unintelligible conversations))

Peter: stepsister 2 (2.0) says (0.2) it is twelve ten (0.5) it is time for lunch=

Sooyoung: =얘들아 우리 조용히 하자 선생님 말씀 안 들리잖아

guys let’s be quiet we can’t hear him

Ss: ((unintelligible conversations become quieter))

Sooyoung: 영선이 스텝 sist 2

Youngsun stepsister 2

Youngsun: It is >twelveten< it is time for lunch

Sooyoung: 너무 빨리 했어 영선아 it is twelve ten (0.5) it is time for lunch

you said it too fast Youngsun it is twelve ten it is time for lunch

Peter: all right (1.0) stepmother (0.5) says make some sandwiches (0.1)

Cinderella

Sooyoung: (1.0) 선희 네 차례야 (0.2) stepmother

Sunhee it is your turn stepmother

Sunhee: (2.0) make sandwich Cinderella ((looking at Sooyoung))

Sooyoung: 다음은 신데렐라 정희

next is Cinderella Jeonghee
Peter: Cinderella says okay

Jeonghee: okay (0.5) okay?=

Sooyoung: 잘했어 자 (0.2) 이제 다음팀은 누구지? 너희는 들어가고

nice job now whose team is next? you guys can go take a seat

This classroom practice is designed to fulfill the policy guideline that, “Students need to be able to participate in easy role-plays and talk in English.” Four students are standing in front of the class and the NEST, Peter, read each script aloud to demonstrate how each script should sound when spoken by a native speaker. This classroom activity is a combination of memorization of texts and verbal elicitation of phonetic accuracy demonstrated by an American NEST. It is notable that this kind of student-student interaction seems to revolve around the government policy’s aim on fun and interactive classes. However, this role-play made the task rather unnatural and dull because when students were reciting their lines, more than a half of the class waiting for their turn was not paying any attention to the role-play activity that was taking place in front of the class. There was interaction among students, but it was staged and unnatural. The teachers dominated classroom situations without providing any contextualization of what students learned through these activities. In addition, teachers had full control of who would speak, as well as when and how.

Classroom Observation Result Part 2: Sokyeok Private Elementary School

The classroom observations at Sokyeok private elementary school found that all teachers understood both the promotion policy and the restriction policy. Teachers stated that they were informed about the policy amendment that restricts certain classroom practices in private
elementary schools. I observed that teachers followed the recommended policy guidelines that promote student-centered communicative-oriented approaches in classroom instruction. For instance, Lilly said that the school principal mandated oral evaluations for all students in order to increase students’ listening and speaking fluency. She emphasized that all teachers prepared one-on-one oral tasks regularly throughout the semester by working extra hours after school, and had freedom to make decisions regarding oral evaluations. In this case, Lilly required her students to participate in one-on-one dialogue with her. During her oral evaluation sessions, she spent approximately two minutes with each student. She encouraged her students to re-do the oral dialogue if they wished to improve their speaking. Lilly evaluated her students while observing how they work together when working in small group activities. Her objective was not only to evaluate their language abilities, but also their attitude and level of participation. Lilly commented that many teachers in Sokyeok were working beyond their paid responsibilities. She added,

Many of us are willing to endure special circumstances of having to overcome the burden of making our own teaching materials. (Lilly-so-1-43-45)

In Jasper’s classroom, he assigned students in pairs working on asking questions about favorite snacks. Four pairs of students were working together cooperatively to come up with their favorite snacks and desserts. After their discussion, all four pairs of students were asked to present their discussions to the class. During my observations of Jasper’s class, he rarely engaged his students in repetition of words or sentences. His teaching practices were in line with the promotion policy of student-centered communication-oriented approach.

Jasper also added,
We all have a positive attitude toward our mission because of positive outcomes that we could bring to education, especially in early elementary grades (Jasper-so-1-77-80)

In Sokyeok private elementary school, the government-approved textbook is seldom used as the primary source of teaching material. Instead, this government-approved textbook is only used as a reference book to develop more customized lesson plans to meet students’ needs. To be more specific, all English teachers in Sokyeok private elementary school are responsible for creating their own classroom materials following the government’s guidelines that aim to improve students’ communicative competence. Therefore, although students bring their government-approved textbooks to class, printed handouts containing more rigorously developed learning materials are distributed to students in each class session. It is important to note that such practices are legitimate according to the government’s banning policy that restricts the use of non-government-approved published materials because the policy does not consider these class handouts as preexisting published textbooks. John claimed that for teachers, it is difficult to manage heavy workloads of making the required teaching materials every week.

I have to prepare my classes, put more task-based stuff, group work, cooperative discussion activities, and so on. It is too much. (John-so-1-29-33)

The policy amendment that restricts the use of unauthorized textbooks frustrated many teachers including John. However, his autonomy in interpreting and adapting the policy according to his needs enabled him to become more empowered instructor. While the reactions of teachers to the restriction policy varies, the overall positive reactions of teachers to the policy implementation reveals that the policy empowers teachers as key agents in policy implementation. John added,
At first, I was a bit frustrated and upset by the decisions sent from the government. But now, I think I am making my classroom more fun and interesting, for my students, because I have my power to design my lessons. (John-so-1-54-58)

All English teachers from Sokyeok private elementary school were aware of the government’s academic achievement goals. With these policy goals in mind, teachers in this school are required to create new handouts every week to incorporate student-centered approaches that generate classroom activities such as small group works, games resembling real-world tasks, and learning cultures of English speaking peoples around the world. Jasper said,

Every Friday, all English language teachers have a weekly meeting to improve their pedagogical practices and evaluate teaching materials by exchanging feedback for further revisions before distributing these materials to students the following week. (Jasper-so-1-20-27)

He described how he often downloads some materials from the internet, mostly to get richer sources of visual materials to facilitate classroom activities. For instance, in his group activity called “mystery game,” he asked students to work in pairs and fill up the blanks with nouns and verbs based on the given instructions of the activity sheet. Students were in a competitive mode, so they worked hard to win the game. They were active participants making suggestions and sometime fought hard to win the game. The following excerpt 5.4 illustrates a beginner conversation class in Sokyeok private elementary school. Joseph’s lesson plan is to teach different color terms using power point slides. There are 11 students attending this class, 5 male and 6 female students. To increase student-teacher interactions and improve listening-speaking skills, Joseph focuses on asking each student questions to reassure that student that he or she is
on the right track. Since the class size is relatively small compared to public school, he manages to have more teacher-student interactions in class. As the observation excerpt indicates, there are active exchange of verbal communication between students and the teacher.

Excerpt 5.4: Sokyeok private elementary school beginners’ conversation class

Today’s activity: learning different color terms

01 Joseph: I hear a lot of Korean=

02 S1: =야:: 너 조용히해 선생님이 한국말 하지 마라고 하잖아

03 hey you be quiet teacher says not to speak Korean

04 S2: [뭐 내가 뭐 했는데

05 what what did I do

06 Joseph: ((loudly)) [speak in English please=

07 S3: =shssss ((making silence gesture))

08 Joseph: everyone be quiet (3.0) Sophia (0.5) what COLOR is your pencil?

09 Sophia: (2.0) uhhh=

10 Joseph: =what color ((indicating red colored block shown on the monitor)) 11 is your pencil?

12 Sophia: ah (3.0) >red red<

13 Joseph: very GOOD (0.5) Sophia’s pencil is RED (1.0) a RED pencil=

14 Sophia: ((smiles))

15 George: =my color red ((showing his pencil))

16 Joseph: EXCELLENT George (0.5) yours is red too (0.5) let’s see (1.0)

17 Patrick (1.5) what color is your pencil?
Joseph: Patrick (1.0) what COLOR (0.5) is your pencil?

Patrick: (2.0) color (4.0) blue

Joseph: very GOOD (0.5) ((pointing to blue colored block shown on the monitor))

Patrick has a BLUE pencil ((pointing to blue colored block on the monitor))

Ss: ((unintelligible conversation))

S1: (laugh) no (0.5) >green green<

S2: 초록색도 [있잖아

it has green too

Joseph: [In ENGLISH please=

S2: =green ((pointing at Patrick’s pencil))

Patrick: ((he turns his pencil around and finds out that there are green lines painted across the pencil))

Joseph: ((approaches to Patrick and sees that the pencil has green lines))

>you are right< (0.5) we have green lines too

you have very good vision ((laughs))

In addition to active student-teacher verbal interactions during the activity, there is a clear indication that students are focused on participating in class as they interact with each other while discussing relevant topics. For example, from line 20 to 24, two students initiate verbal interactions with Joseph by pointing out that Patrick’s pencil is not only blue, but it also has green lines. This example demonstrates that they paid attention to Joseph and Patrick’s previous
verbal interaction and that these two students took an active role in initiating student-student-teacher communication. Similarly, in line 15, George attempts to initiate verbal interaction with Joseph, revisiting the dialogue from line 13 to mention that his pencil is red like Sophia’s pencil. As shown on lines 2 to 7, students clearly understand that speaking Korean during the class is against the intentions of the exercise. However, because the only easy way of communicating among themselves is in Korean, they use it sporadically. Teachers maintaining the government’s recommendation on ‘Teaching English Through English’ (TETE), even in a Korean NNEST classroom, as shown in excerpt 5.5.

Excerpt 5.5: Sokyeok private elementary school beginners’ language arts class

Today’s activity: fruits

01 Laura: strawberry (0.5) see? (0.1) strawberry?

02 S1: 배고프다

03 I am hungry

04 Laura: in English please=

05 S2: 선생님 재 배고프대요 ((looking at S1))

06 Miss he is hungry

07 Laura: I hear KOREAN ((staring at S1 and S2))

08 Ss: ((unintelligible conversations in Korean))

09 S3: teacher, um:: (2.0) what this ((pointing out at the raspberries on the board))

11 Laura: ((to S3)) They are raspberries (0.5) raspberries
The above excerpt displays how Korean students interact with a Korean NNEST in her beginners’ language arts class. Similar to Joseph’s beginner’s conversation class, Korean is not allowed to be spoken during the class. Knowing that Laura is fluent in Korean, S2 in line 5 attempts to speak to her in Korean. However, she ignores S2’s verbalization in Korean, and instead, reminds him that Korean is not tolerated in this classroom. It is noteworthy that S3 in line 9 makes his best efforts to communicate with Laura in English.

Excerpt 5.6: Sokyeok private elementary school advanced level conversation class

Today’s activity: what is your favorite food?

01 Jasper: so (0.5) we have chicken here ((writes chicken on the board))
02 (1.0) and what
03 S1: sauce [sauce
04 S2: ((to S1)) [not sauce (0.1) go with French fries and ketchup
05 Jasper: you wanna add French fries and ketchup? ((to S2))
06 S3: hot sauce with fried chicken and French fries with ketchup
07 S1: ((to S3)) no (0.1) no (0.1) I want garlic sauce=
08 S4: =teacher ((pointing out to the board)) you wrote chicken wrong (0.2)
09 I mean spelling (0.1) it’s supposed to be=
10 Jasper: ((turning around to the board)) =oh you’re right (0.1) I made a
11 mistake (0.2) ((erasing and rewriting)) it should be chicken with e=
12 Ss: ((laughing))
13 S5: =>teacher teacher< (0.2) I made fried chicken with mom
14 Jasper: ((to S5)) you DID?
15 Ss: ((unintelligible conversations))
16 Jasper: Does anyone cook at home?
17 Ss: me (0.1) me (0.1) me (0.1) [me (0.1) ((students raising hands))
18 S4: [I made chocolate chip cookies
19 Jasper: wow (0.2) that sounds yummy=
20 S6: =I made ttuck
21 Jasper: what is that? (0.1) ttuck?= 
22 S5: oh (0.1) that’s Korean rice cake=
23 S6: =no (0.1) no cake (0.1) it’s rice (0.1) ummm:: it’s like=
24 S4: =no (0.1) it’s like cookie dough (0.1) but rice
25 Jasper: it sounds like rice dough
26 S4: >yeah yeah< rice dough

Excerpt 5.6 displays classroom observation data from advanced conversation class in Sokyeok private elementary school. There is active communication between students and teacher as the conversation progresses and the communicative tasks involve fluid communication between students and teacher. This is a good example of learning spoken language skills composed of listening and speaking recommended by the policy guidelines that promotes communicative competence-oriented classes. The verbal communication in this activity does not originate from memorization of texts, but from knowledge gained from contextualizing ideas and meanings. Students enrolled in this advanced-level conversation class have demonstrated that their proficiency is far more advanced compared to students from lower level classes. For example, line 8 indicates that this student is able to identify and point out that the teacher made a spelling error on the board. This student also verbalized the irregular past tense verb ‘write’. Line 13, 18,
20 also indicate that students in this advance class are able to use the irregular past tense of the
verb ‘to make’. It seems apparent that students are dominating the classroom situation while the
teacher assumes his role as a mediator and supervises the learning process rather than controlling
students’ activities. From line 20 to 26, without having sufficient linguistic knowledge to fully
explain the meaning of Korean food ‘ttuck’, students work cooperatively to come up with an
agreeable meaning in English. Then, the teacher, as indicated in line 26, puts further effort into
the word to make the meaning more acceptable to students. The teacher also designed this
activity, taking into account leaners’ interests to ensure that the class meets leaners’ needs and
does not become dull.

Conclusions Top-down Policies are Not Fully Implemented in Classrooms

Table 5.1 summarizes the key data from the classroom observation at Iksun public
elementary school and Sokyeok private elementary school. The findings touch upon the two
most crucial policy aspects that teachers were required to implement: promotion and restriction
policies.
Table 5.1

_Evaluating the implementation of the promotion policy through classroom observations_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key teaching criteria of the promotion policy</th>
<th>Iksun public elementary school</th>
<th>Sokyeok private elementary school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are encouraged to share ideas through peer to peer consultations</td>
<td>They rarely perform peer to peer consultations to share ideas</td>
<td>They share ideas on a regular basis to improve their teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is not an authoritative figure, but a provider of comprehensive input</td>
<td>More teacher talk and less student talk</td>
<td>Balanced communications between teacher and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English learning should be fun: singing, role-playing, to maximize students’ opportunities to communicate in English</td>
<td>Attempted, but difficult to apply due to: students' poor English proficiency, large class size, and limited teaching time</td>
<td>Always in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes may be divided into different levels to accommodate students differing proficiencies</td>
<td>Unable to accommodate students differing proficiencies</td>
<td>Always in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English in teaching</td>
<td>Rarely in practice</td>
<td>Always in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of Korean used in teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Korean in not allowed to be spoken during class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the observation of five key aspects of classroom practices as shown in table 5.1, findings indicated that the implementation of the promotion policy is successfully in Sokyeok private elementary school, whereas in Iksun public elementary school, the promotion policy is only partially implemented.

Table 5.2 below shows that during regular school hours, the restriction policy seems to be successfully implemented in both schools. However, in reality, the restriction policy is fully implemented in Iksuk public elementary school, but only partially implemented in Sokyeok private elementary school.
Table 5.2

*Evaluating the implementation of the restriction policy through classroom observations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key teaching criteria of the restriction policy</th>
<th>Iksun public elementary school</th>
<th>Sokyeok private elementary school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English is taught from grade 3 during regular school hours</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is taught from grade 1 during non-regular school hours</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English textbook must be government-approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (but, rarely used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unofficial handouts are provided</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Yes (the primary source of instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English classes cannot exceed 2 periods per week</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional English classes are offered during non-regular school hours up to 8-12 periods a week</td>
<td>No additional English classes are offered during non-regular school hours</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English immersion classes are not allowed as part of regular school subjects</td>
<td>Not offered</td>
<td>Not offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English immersion classes are offered as part of non-regular school subjects</td>
<td>Not offered</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the past two decades, the Korean government has made substantial efforts to move away from a traditional grammar-translation method to communicative competence-oriented approach of English language teaching through several policy reform initiatives. In particular, to promote communicative competence, the policy focused on improving teaching methods, English curriculum, and recruitment of NESTs for co-teaching with Korean NNESTs. The policy documents repeatedly emphasize that the main aim of English teaching is to develop communicative competence. However, the policy’s concept of communicative competence is vague and perplexing. Because improvement in communicative competence in English is the policy’s primary objective, the use of role-playing activities, games, and songs is strongly
recommended in classroom teaching guidelines. However, the policy does not provide detailed guidance on how these classroom activities serve their aim of communicative competence. In other words, it is unclear what aspects of communicate competence they are aiming to attain. One could interpret the policy’s notion of communicative competence as stressing achieving fluency in oral communication because classroom observations showed that speaking and listening have higher priority than reading and writing. In addition, the policy guidelines on developing communicative competence to improve accurate oral fluency remains unclear and ambiguous. Although the policy document sees English as a neutral language without any affiliations with particular countries, in practice, however, native speakers with North American accents feature in interactive computer programs used in classrooms. Thus, the accurate oral fluency guided by the policy assumes the American variety of English as the standard variety of English.

The findings presented so far examined a context of policy implementation as demonstrated by a case of two elementary schools in Korea; third grade public and private elementary school English classrooms. The binary of top-down policy that promotes and restricts the spread of English was intended to be implemented and put into effect in all including both public and private elementary schools. At the surface level, both schools complied with the policy guidelines in their classroom practices. Nevertheless, in-depth analysis of classroom observations indicated that there is a gap between the ideal of communicative competence-oriented policy and the reality of the actual classroom practices. Sokyeok private elementary school has been unsuccessful in complying with the restriction policy but has complied with the promotion policy. While Iksun public elementary school aptly followed the restriction policy guidelines of two hours of English classes per week, Sokyeok private elementary school
managed to add extra hours of English classes in afterschool sessions and the zero period, elevating the total hours of English classes far beyond the policy guideline of two hours per week to avoid violating the restriction policy. However, adding more hours of instruction to increase exposure to English enabled students to improve communicative competence as envisioned by the promotion policy. Again, immersion classes were offered to students outside of regular school hours and first and second grade English classes were assigned in after-school sessions in avoidance of the restriction policy. Such practices also had the overall goal of achieving improved communicative competence in English. Another important aspect of complying with policy was seen in the use of government-approved textbooks. The classroom observations found that Sokyoek private elementary school prepared its own English class teaching materials to suit students’ English proficiencies instead of teaching classes solely based on government-approved textbook. Seen in this light, teachers interpreted the policy and adapted into their teaching practices based on the student English proficiencies and school policies.

Paradoxically, resisting the restriction policy enabled Sokyeok private elementary school teachers to improve their teaching practices more effectively, and to deliver policy recommendations by promoting communicative-oriented instructions to students. In this respect, Sokyeok private elementary school had to be unsuccessful in complying with the restriction policy in order to comply with the policy that promotes the spread of English. The policy that constrains the promotion of English made it difficult for Sokyeok private elementary school to customize to its own situation. Thus, its teachers had to seek the flexibility to tailor teaching content and learning environment to suit leaners’ needs.

In contrast, no deliberate efforts to avoid restriction policy were seen in Iksun public elementary school. This public elementary school aptly complied with the restriction policy as
the following: (1) Students were taught two hours of English per week only during regular school hours; (2) First and second graders were not offered any kind of English language related activities at school including both regular and after-school hours; (3) Teachers faithfully followed government-approved textbooks as the sole source of teaching, with no other additional learning materials developed by individual teachers; and (4) Immersion classes were not offered at this public school.

Unlike Sokyeok private elementary school, Iksun public elementary school has been unsuccessful in complying with the promotion policy that supports the spread of English. Classroom practices in Iksun public elementary school did not align with the guidelines as suggested on the policy documents, with appropriate teaching recommendations shaped by school situation. Since the class size was large in comparison to the class size at the private school, teachers had difficulties managing active teacher-student interactions in class. They were predominantly focusing on text memorization and imitation of native speaker’s accents under teacher-controlled guidance. Such results stem from inhibiting factors such as diverse proficiency levels all placed in one large classroom. In addition, Iksun public elementary school’s classes operated under a team teaching system in which a Korean NNEST taught classes with a NEST. Classroom observation indicated that their teaching sounded unnatural, with frequent communication breakdowns and constant interpretation of English words into Korean. The students repeated words after the NEST for pronunciation, immediately followed by a Korean NNEST’s interpretation in Korean. Clearly, there was a lack of communication between students and teachers due to the language barrier between two teachers and students. It is doubtful that this public school would successfully implement the promotion policy into practice even if it violated the restriction policy, as seen in the case of Sokyeok private elementary school.
The ethnographic data from the classroom practice from both the public and the private elementary schools were in partial alignment with the policy, with teachers from respective schools displaying differences in how they implemented policy into practice. In other words, the government policy is not fully implemented as intended in early elementary school years. This is in line with Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) notion of agency in language policy in which she argues that language policy is a two-sided process involving top-down and bottom-up approaches. These are not unidirectional and instead are the result of interplay between speech communities and the government in their social environment.

In summary, I can answer the first two research questions as follows:

1. What characteristic features can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary school in terms of the process of policy implementation?
   - Classroom practices in Iksun public elementary school did not align with the guidelines of promotion policy due to poor school environments, but the restriction policy was fully implemented without any alterations.
   - In Sokyeok private elementary school, the promotion policy was fully implemented, but the restriction policy was not implemented as intended by the policymakers.
   - Paradoxically, resisting the restriction policy enabled teachers from Sokyeok private elementary school to improve their teaching more effectively and deliver the promotion policy to students as intended by the policymakers.
   - Sokyeok private elementary school had to be unsuccessful in complying with the restriction policy in order to comply with the promotion policy.
2. How does the spread of English in early elementary school classrooms in Korea align with macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of English?

- Top-down policy in early elementary school tends to be actively interpreted, resisted, and reshaped by the speech community, trying to tailor the policy to bring the best realistic outcome.

- This is in line with Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) notion of agency that language policy is a two-sided process involving top-down and bottom-up approaches.

- These are not unidirectional but the result of interplay between speech communities and the government in their social environment.

The ethnographic data in Chapter 6 will suggest that there are a different number of factors from members of speech community to re-shape the policy to implement in classrooms. Therefore, mapping the factors that influence the success or failure of policy implementation will be the goal of next chapter. It will analyze the ethnographic data from the individual interviews to investigate how each individual agent contributes to shaping the process and outcome of policy implementation. To deepen our understanding on how each individual agent takes policy into their exiting beliefs, resulting in unique teaching practices, the next chapter examines how different individuals hold their interests and motivations to process policy implementation. By investigating the complex and dynamic nature of individual agents’ perceptions and opinions, Chapter 6 will complement the examination of policy implementation in both public and private elementary schools.
CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS PART 2

MULTIFACETED FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY IN CLASSROOMS:

PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS FROM INDIVIDUAL AGENTS

Introduction

Using ethnographic one-on-one interviews, this chapter investigates which factors cause national policies to be interpreted and implemented differently in public and private elementary school classrooms, as a result of interplay between speech communities and the government in a social environment. As shown in Figure 6.1, this chapter presents research findings and discussions narrowing down the scope of investigation from the national level to the classroom level, and finally, to the individual level.

![Figure 6.1. An overview of research findings and discussions of this study](image)

Figure 6.1. An overview of research findings and discussions of this study
Following this line of thinking, this chapter reports how individual perceptions align with the institutional guidelines of English language education policy, and how such perceptions and opinions shed light on specific factors that influence the implementation of policy in actual classroom setting. Consequently, it will answer the last research question of this dissertation:

3. How do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms?

In Chapter 5, the findings from classroom observations from Sokyeok private elementary school and Iksun public elementary school indicated that there is a gap between the ideals of policy guidelines and the implementation of policy and its effects on classroom practices due to different school environments and people in day-to-day decisions. The classroom observation also revealed that while top-down communicative competence-oriented English language education policy is consistently implemented at Sokyeok private elementary school, the same policy is not fully implemented at Iksun public elementary school. In essence, the observation data suggest that an inadequate classroom environment has hindered policy implementation at Iksun public elementary school in the following ways: (1) larger classroom size in comparison to the class size at the Sokyeok private elementary school; (2) mixed proficiency levels all placed together; (3) the use of government-approved textbooks as the sole source of teaching; and (4) two hours of English per week compared to ten hours of English per week in Sokyeok private elementary school. There is a need to investigate why these obstacles have emerged only in Iksun public elementary school. Along the same line, while the language restriction policy is consistently implemented at Iksun public elementary school, the same policy is not consistently implemented at Sokyeok private elementary school. The restriction policy includes: (1) no more than two hours of English per week; (2) only textbooks approved by
government is allowed; (3) first and second graders are not allowed to learn English during regular school hours; (4) immersion classes are not allowed during regular school hours. To this end, this section explores perceptions and opinions of individual agent to address why the causes and effects of policy implementation are not aligned in respective schools.

A Brief Summary of Interview Participants

In order to further our understanding of the ethnographic data obtained through classroom observations in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the findings and discussions of the individual interviews consisted of three populations: (1) two English teachers from Iksun public elementary school and three English teachers from Sokyeok private elementary school, (2) three parents from Iksun public school and three parents from Sokyeok elementary school, (3) three students from Iksun public elementary school and three students from Sokyeok private elementary school.

Interview Result Part 1: Frustrated English Teachers as Policy Implementers at the Classroom Level

Teachers are the key agent in the macroacquisition process of English in Korea. The interview data indicated that they play a crucial role interpreting and implementing English language education policy in day-to-day classroom practices. More importantly, teachers from both Iksun public and Sokyeok private elementary schools modified policy according to their unique classroom environments. They translated their educational vision into their teaching practices to get desired realistic outcomes. There was an iterative process between policies and agents who implement the policies. As Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) argued, teachers are constantly maneuvering policy by adapting and modifying policy to negotiate policy constrains.
The interview data suggest that teachers are the primary agent to implement the policies; they are highly motivated to teach English, with goals to help students master communicative skills in English. However, their distinctive school environments discouraged their motivation to teach, with variations in their practices caused by an array of challenges. The following interview data from Iksun public elementary school imply that, among a number of challenges that teachers encounter, they have particularly pointed out that the most difficult aspect of teaching English is instructing in overcrowded classroom with mixed proficiency levels all placed together.

Because there are about 30 students in one classroom in the public school, you handle the mixed groups with different levels. If you want to teach "How are you," you know all children's levels are different anyway, so you just have to tell them to memorize the sentence and turn it into a game. I do activities to make children memorize as much as they can. It is really bad. (Sooyoung-ik-1-167-173)

In the quote above, Sooyoung, a NNEST from Iksun public elementary school, expressed her concerns about the large number of students and their mixed levels of proficiency, placed in a single classroom. She complained that in this kind of unmanageable classroom setting, she can
only make students memorize a sentence instead of implementing her ideal way of teaching English. She argued that the policy’s focus on fun is the largest part of her lesson and believes that this practice does not necessarily improve communicative skills. She felt worried all that she could do is to make them memorize a sentence by running an activity without actually helping students gain any knowledge. Moreover, Peter, a NEST from Iksun public elementary school, discussed a similar problem that Sooyoung had to endure in her class:

I think there are too many students in one large classroom with different levels. It is really difficult to accommodate everyone’s needs. Many of them are low level kids so as you will see, they don’t understand what I say. Some of them are better than other ones. I think these differences come from what parents do with their children. I really would like to interact with each student as much as I can, but it is impossible as you know. (Peter-ik-2-103-110)

Peter elaborated his eagerness to teach to accommodate everyone’s needs while hoping to increase his interactions with students. However, he is frustrated by this type of classroom environment where there are too many students with mixed proficiencies. There seem to be no opportunities for him to interact verbally with students. He also described his concerns about the way this poor classroom setting led to problems with disciplines and classroom management:

For example, Yeonhee is good but has a hard time understanding some English. Yoojeong seems to follow the classes but often time gets distracted during the class when he loses this focus. I mean some of these kids need to focus and pay more attention if they were to really improve their learning, but this is best we can do in our school setting. (Peter-ik-1-180-187)
Both teachers from Iksun public elementary school viewed communicative-oriented policy unfavorably. They were not able to incorporate the curriculum in classrooms. Sooyoung pointed out that current government textbook needs to be improved because it is mostly composed of pictures, and thus obscures what is important to learn. She said:

There is nothing but pictures in the textbook. There are a lot of games. I like that part, but I feel the textbook needs a lot of improvement. So I have to organize my lessons very well, to manage all these students in my classroom. I'd rather like to use foreign textbooks. The government textbook makes me think, “why do they make you use such garbage?” Because of the bureaucrats? It would be really good if you can get the authoritative advice from the English-speaking country and get help. Now, these government textbooks have a lot of co-authors, mostly domestic people. These textbooks
are made carelessly, no dedication. I think they only cared about putting a lot of pictures. They could’ve put more effort making a textbook with nice contents rather than nice pictures. (Sooyoung-ik-3-46- 58)

Sooyoung suggested that the government needs to dedicate more efforts to making better quality textbooks. She suspected that the textbook writing committee’s goal is just to get the textbook out rather than to write content that might help students improve their English. For example, she indicated that the government-approved textbook contains hardly any exercises that truly helps students develop communication skills. She even expressed her desire to use imported textbooks from English-speaking countries, arguing that it might be a better choice for her and for students. She lamented that the restriction policy bars the use of unauthorized textbooks.
Figure 6.2. Third grade English classroom material from Iksun public elementary school
### Phonics: ou, ow, all, aw

**Directions:** Write the correct phonics sound in the correct box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ou</th>
<th>ow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>out</td>
<td>loud</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shout</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blow</td>
<td>cloud</td>
<td>mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ou**
- out, shout, loud
- cloud, mouth

**ow**
- slow, yellow, low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>call</th>
<th>yawn</th>
<th>claw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wall</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>draw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>tall</td>
<td>hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**all**
- call, wall, small
  - tall, hall

**aw**
- yawn, saw, claw
draw

Make a sentence with one of the words.

Example: The cloud is white.

Banana is yellow

---

*Figure 6.3. Third grade English classroom material from Sokyeok private elementary school*
Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show classroom materials extracted from the third grade government-approved English textbooks from Iksun public elementary school (top) and teacher-made printed handouts from Sokyeok private elementary school (bottom). While both materials presented here are designed to do phonics exercises, content from Iksun public elementary school textbook in Figure 5.3 has instructions written in Korean, with more pictures and fewer target words. In this government-approved textbook, students are instructed to find corresponding morphemes provided in the bottom (e.g., -ook, -ay, -all, -ay) to complete target words ‘tall’, ‘notebook’, ‘look’, and ‘small’. Although this exercise only requires two morphemic inventories (e.g., -ook, -all), the textbook made this task even more confusing by adding unnecessary morphemes twice (e.g., -ay). Without fully memorizing each target word, it is challenging for students to complete the exercise.

Similar to the exercise described in Figure 6.2, Figure 6.3 illustrates a printed handout made by a teacher from Sokyeok private elementary school after thorough member check processes and peer-to-peer feedback. With instructions written in English rather than in Korean, it contains 18 target words without any pictures. However, it displays more carefully designed tasks with straightforward words than the morpheme inventory system to help students to complete the exercise.

Linda, who is a NEST from Sokyeok private elementary school, indicated that her classroom environment facilitates engagement by teachers and students. This results in a much more fulfilling learning experience than Sooyoung’s case in Iksun public elementary school.
We have five different levels of classes. There are four homerooms each grades and two homerooms are coupled together to form a one single level of class. You know students are highly motivated when they go into next level. They like learning new things, new challenging things in English. We use the same teaching materials that are used in the U.S and they know they are walking the same path as the U.S students, so they feel proud of themselves. (Linda-so-1-139-147)

Linda acknowledged that the classroom environment in Sokyeok private elementary school is an ideal place where students and teachers could be engaged and motivated toward learning goals. This is the benefit of small class sizes with students with similar proficiency levels. However, she also complained about the challenges that she has encountered because the government textbook is unusable to implement communicative-oriented curriculum. She indicated that textbooks play an important role as they dictate what needs to be taught. She notes:

I have to design my own material. But I re-use. This is from last year, and this one is from one of the old teachers who made. This book making thing is so unfortunate. I don’t like their government textbooks. They don’t have much reading comprehension tasks. I have never used government textbooks. This (the government textbook) is (She flips pages and goes) too easy for this class. This would seem appropriate for first and second graders. (Linda-so-1-151-158)

Linda explained that the use of published English textbooks other than government-approved types was banned because of the policy regulations. She elaborated her concerns regarding the policy restrictions:
I had to teach a class this semester with students not having the textbook. I have to teach this book (imported textbook) but they can’t have the book. In the first week, we had inspections, so I heard this one private elementary school got fined because they refused. And so, the first two weeks of this semester, they told us, “Please tell them to bring their Korean English textbook to school”. The textbook, I looked at it, there is 80% Korean text, and like 20% English text in boxes. You are not going to learn anything from this Korean textbook. (Linda-so-2-68-76)

Linda has specifically mentioned the government inspections and described how other private elementary school with similar textbook issues were fined for violating the policy. She pointed out the dilemma of developing her own teaching materials:

This is a private school, but it is not fully private, the government has some control. They have been changing. Every year we have some changes. Now we can’t use any foreign textbooks. We can’t use Korean textbook because it is so difficult for us to use it. Because it is written in Korean. Our program is all in English. We have to battle. I use a lot of internet resources, worksheets. They have to bring their notebooks to take notes. This year is a challenge. Each student had textbooks. Open your textbook blah. We could read together, easily. You read the sentence. But now we have to bring a printed page, or have it on the screen. Sitting arrangement is tricky. Students with eye problems, fighting, not paying attentions. Staring at the screen they get bored. Doing something else. (Linda-so-2-99-120)

She claimed that the government-approved textbook is too easy for students, but too difficult for non-native Korean teachers to use, because it is written in Korean. She argued that she created
her own English teaching materials because the Korean government prohibits the use any
textbooks other than the one approved by the government. Therefore, she needed to add more
duties to her workload; with the objective of enhancing her students’ communicative skills, she
create her own materials that would help students become more competent in writing, reading,
speaking, and listening. Linda was not the only person experiencing difficulties related to
textbooks. In the same manner, Joseph, a NEST from Sokyeok private elementary school, noted
that the government-approved textbook was incompatible with his lesson plans because it did not
provide sufficient language input to learners. He said:

English textbook from the Korean government? I thought it was a Korean Language
textbook. Or like a math textbook. I noticed that it wouldn’t give them inputs to think.
The government textbook is too easy, too easy for them. I can’t use it if it is in Korean
because I don’t read Korean. Some of the exercises are writing letters. My students saw
the books, like, “circle the capital letter”, “which is the lowercase letter?” We learn that
in the kindergarten. I made this bounded up material with these sentences and exercises.
(Joseph-so-1-130-139)

In addition to the burdens of preparing teaching materials to compensate for the absence of the
lack of proper English textbooks, Joseph and Laura, a NNET from Sokyeok private elementary
school, agreed that the government’s effort to promote communication-oriented teaching
involves self-contradicting policy. On the one hand, the government implement the restriction
policy that prohibits the use of foreign textbooks. However, they are also inviting NESTs to
teach English in Korea. Then, unless the NEST is bilingual, he or she is unable to use the
government-approved English textbook because it is written in Korean. The two NESTs
criticized the inconvenience of having to re-structure hours of instructions and development of
new teaching materials to comply with the restriction policy. Laura stated that students are required to bring the government-approved textbook to school and leave other non-authorized English learning books at home. In the following interview data, Linda also expressed that first and second graders are not allowed to have a regular English class because of the restriction policy. Linda explained:

First and second grades are not supposed to have a lot of English now because of the government regulations. So they cut more hours. In the U.S, fully private, all the support came from school. Follow the guidelines on what students learn. The way we did it was our own way. Every state they have own guidelines. That state will publish their own guidelines. With the same values, educational contents, rather than bureaucratic issues.

(Linda-so-2-78-83)

In the above interview data, Linda raised concerns regarding the opposite side of the same policy that restricts the promotion of English. Linda, who formerly taught in a private elementary school in the U.S, criticized the current Korean situation by comparing it to the U.S private school system. She argued that U.S private schools can manage the curriculum with more autonomy to meet policy goals. In Korea, because private schools are subject to the government regulations on the condition that financial subsidies would be provided to school, they do not have autonomy to improve the quality of education. Within this line of discussion, Peter criticized that the government for not making tangible changes to improve the quality of public education. He argued, “The government wanted private schools and public schools to make them more equal. At least give the public schools some sort of help in getting them foreign textbooks, help them get better. But now they are regressing” (Peter-ik-2-90-97). Despite their frustration, by applying a modified policy to fit in classroom situations, Sokyeok private elementary school
teachers are trying to do as much promotion of policy-oriented instructions as possible. As a result, there is a remarkable difference in students’ communicative ability from the viewpoint of the language spread compared to Iksun public elementary school.

**Interview Result Part 2: Demanding Parents as Influencers and Decision Makers of their Children’s Education**

As discussed previously, Sokyeok private elementary school is not in full compliance with restriction policy. The following interview data suggest that it is closely related to parental involvement in school coupled with their motivation to reach their desired goals. Teachers indicated that parents take the roles of motivator and play a major role in children’s English learning at school. The fact that parents send their children to a private school suggests that they have higher motivations to provide their children with better English education.

The children have not much choice. But parents, they choose the school, the area where they live in. They always have a huge impact on children. I am amazed by how moms are so involved in education. They withdraw them from hagwon because of bad grades. And a lot of them are experts. They tell you how to teach. They were delighted to have their children speak in English. It depends on parents, but the influence, absolutely. They literally take their children in and out of the hagwons. If they hear the next trendy hagwon, keep switching them. I think they have too much time on their hands. They just spend too much time keep looking for different hagwons. Most of them housewives. They seem to almost enjoying shopping for different hagwons. It’s easier when you are 6 years old than 14 when you practice, trying to learn English. They push their children too hard. (Joseph-so-1-129-141)
Joseph claimed that parents have the most power when making educational decisions choosing the school or hagwon for their children. He argued that in Korean culture, the parents control what children do in terms of their education. He believed that parents choose to send their children to Sokyeok private elementary school because of the quality of English curriculum. He noticed great enthusiasm and interest in English education from the parents in Sokyeok private elementary school. Laura has also stated that parents play a vital role in how teachers comply with parents’ constant demands because they have high expectations for solutions tailored to their children’s needs. Laura explained:

High level students, parents contact the school to see how their children are doing. They check the homework and make sure that the homework is done. Generally, lower level students, they don’t do homework. Their parents don’t seem to really care, no response. Confidence comes from, and is reinforced by parents’ involvement. (Laura-so-1-47-61)

Laura asserted that she can distinguish between good and bad students from the level of involvement of their parents. For instance, students from higher level classes commonly have parents whose English is decent and who care about their children’s academic performances. They help with homework and study at home with more attention. On the other hand, students from lower level classes often come from families with low parental involvement in school who are not as knowledgeable as parents of students in advanced classes. It is noteworthy that Joseph has also observed that parents are the primary factor contributed to students’ English education due to competitive parenting. He said:
They try to show off, yes my child can speak like this, and other parent will go like, oh I want to do it. I know parents are absolutely like this. In Korea, not just English, anything about fashion, any trends, they spread so fast. Everyone wants the same, you get the idea. (Joseph-so-1-117-121)

Along the same lines, interviews with six mothers, Sungho, Shinjoo and Sohyun from Iksun public elementary school, and Harim, Heesun and Hyowon from Sokyeok private elementary school confirmed that Korean parents are competitive. This is especially true when it comes to children’s education particularly in English education:

가족 모임 그런곳에서 자기 자식자랑을 하는데 꼭된다면 기분이 상하니가요. 특히 영어를 잘 해야 기가 산다고 해야하나. (Shinjoo-ik-1-88-94)

I think in Korea, education is about parents gaining confidence when their children are successful. They take pride in their children when they can show off at meetings where mothers gather. Especially when their children’s English is good. (Shinjoo-ik-1-88-94)

Shinjoo, a parent from Iksun public elementary school, indicated that in Korea, children’s education plays an important role in parents gaining confidence that stems from the identity derived from the peer membership, which is often supported by the performance of their own children. She asserts that parents are constantly comparing and competing with each other.

여자의 적은 여자예요. 지금 이런 교육이 바뀔려면 엄마들이 바뀌어야요. (Sungho-ik-1-64-67)
Women are their own worst enemies. To change this kind of education trend, mothers need to change. (Sungho-ik-1-64-67)

In a similar way, Sungho, a parent from Iksun public elementary school, argued that excessive competitions between parents may be detrimental to children’s education resulting in harsh demands on the young leaners. She indicated that some parents are following ambitions of their own and placing an enormous emphasis on winning. Another viewpoint that Sohyun, a parent from Iksun public elementary school, presents is related to parents’ competitions driven by vicarious satisfaction.

우리나라 부모들은 “다너잘되라고 하는거야”라고 하는데, 솔직히 자식한테 이만큼 했으니까 이만큼 보상받는다는 그런 심리가 있을거예요. 내가 너한테 이만큼 해줬으니까 너도 이정도는 해줘야한다는 생각. 자식을 통해서 자신들의 체면과 자존심도 지키고. 부모들 스스로가 못다산 인생을 자식들에게 지속적으로 투영하는 그런거요. 대리만족이라고 할까요. (Sohyun-ik-1-102-107)

Korean parents say, "Whatever we are doing is because we want you to be successful.” But frankly, it is like we have done this much for our child, so that's how much we want to get rewarded. Like “We think you should do this because we've done this much for you.” Parents keep their dignity and self-esteem through their children. Parents themselves constantly project lives they could have lived through their children. Let's call it vicarious satisfaction. (Sohyun-ik-1-102-107)
Sohyun suggests that parents may feel pride and confidence through vicarious satisfaction when their children are performing better than others. At the same time, parents may gain a sense of reward because they consider children’s English is some kind of investment. She suggests that it could make parents feel empowered to achieve their own ambition through their children’s fluent foreign language skills.

우리나라에서 영어는 성공의 다른 이름같은것 같아요. 좋은학교 가고, 좋은직장으로 이어지고, 상류층으로 편입될 수 있는 그런거요. 우리같은 부모들은 살아오면서 이게 보이지 않는 권력처럼 보이는 것 같아요. 이 영어라는 권력이 얼마나 강하고 갖기 어려운건지 경험 한거같아요. (Heesun-so-1-40-46)

I think English is another name for success in Korea. English gives you the chance to go to a good school, get a good job, and accepted into the upper social class. Parents like us have already experienced this kind of invisible power. We all have experienced how strong and difficult it is to obtain the power that comes from English. (Heesun-so-1-40-46)

Another viewpoint that Heesun, a parent from Sokyeok private elementary school, presents is related to fulfilling personal aspirations through the success of their children. She expresses that her ambition originated in her own personal experience that English serves as a form of capital (Bourdieu, 1984) that could produce upward social mobility. She believes that knowledge in English could serve as a useful tool to obtain cultural capital in the form of prestigious jobs and reputable credentials. Through her children, she intends to achieve the dream when she missed
out on in her own childhood. Her commitment to educate her children also projects her identity onto her children, to fulfill her ambitions. By doing so, she hopes to achieve her unrealized dream of becoming fluent in English, which she was unable to attain in her youth.

요즘에는 영어는 유치원 들어가기 전부터 가르치고요. 영어는 초등학교 3학년 이전에 미리 해놓는게 지금 트랜드에요. 요즘같은 시대에 경쟁하려면 초등학교졸업 전에 영어는 이미 떼야해야요. 그래야 중학교부터 다른 과목에 집중 할 수 있으면요. (Harim-so-1-44-48)

It is the norm to teach English before entering kindergarten in these days. It is the trend now to do English before the third grade. To compete in these days, English has to be mastered before graduating from elementary school. That way you can concentrate on other subjects for middle school. (Harim-so-1-44-48)

In terms of competition among parents and their obsession with English, Harim, a parent from Sokyeok private elementary school, explains that learning English is similar to competing in a foot race. She added that “even if you think you started earlier than everyone else, there will always be someone else who has started even earlier than you.” (Harim-so-1-53-55). For Harim, English seems like one of a set of results-oriented school subjects. Yongjin, a student from Sokyeok private elementary school, also believed that English needs to be mastered in elementary school. He emphasized that “I used to focus on English when I was younger. Now I can’t study as much as used to because I need to put more focus on math.” (Yongjin-so-2-49-51)
Hyowon, a parent from Sokyeok private elementary school, implied that individuals who are from the middle or upper class are more likely to get a better education because they are able to afford to enroll their children in different hagwons for high-stakes standardized tests.

You should finish off English while you are in elementary school. Physics, chemistry, English, mathematics, all of these subjects have to be taken separately at hagwon, but if you don't prepare English in advance, you don't have time to do other things. My child is in the third grade elementary school, but because he is preparing for prep-schools, he is studying materials that are taught for ninth graders. Everything is so abnormal. The cost of education expense is a problem. The cost of hagwon is huge. Thousands of dollars just disappear easily. (Hyowon-so-1-89-95)

In accordance with Harim’s perspective on English as a foot race, Hyowon also agrees that students must master English when they are still in elementary school because they need to concentrate on studying other subjects to prepare for prep-schools to enter elite universities. For Hyowon, English is one of many other subjects that her children need to take in preparation for high-stakes standardized tests.
Laura stated that most hagwon focus on grammars and test-taking strategies whereas in Sokyeok private elementary school, teachers try to teach and improve student’s communicative skills in English (Laura-so-2-40-45). Linda recounted that “One of the top students in fourth grade, her mom called and said she feels satisfied that her daughter’s speaking is improving dramatically, so now she will go send her child to hagwon to improve grammar for TOEFL” (Linda-so-2-18-23). Joseph feared that when students go to middle school, they will lose what they have learned at Sokyeok private elementary school because he realized that middle school English classes focus heavily on grammar and test-taking strategies. He said, “When they move on to middle school, their ability to have a conversation, it will decrease” (Joseph-so-1-221-230). He believed that students can learn grammatical rules through their speaking first. Nevertheless, some parents withdrew students from afterschool English programs and sent them to hagwon because they thought they were not learning skills for the tests. However, some of these students left hagwon and returned because they preferred the classes at Sokyeok private elementary school. He asserted, “In Korea, the goal is to take the tests and parents have power. If they want TOEFL style classes, they will make it happen” (Joseph-so-1-221-230). Sooyoung, the English teacher at Iksun public elementary school, indicated that even in a public elementary school like Iksun, parental involvement makes an enormous impact on children’s English. She explained it as follows:

영어공부는 부모님한테 달려있지요. 부모가 신경을 쓰지 않으면 배울수없는게 영어니까요. 영어는 부모의 결정권, 스타트는 부모의 힘이에요. 그래서 어렸을때
Studying English is up to your parents. You cannot learn unless your parents care. Learning English all depends on parents’ decision. So the gap between the children who studied English early or not is too big. Learning ahead is the key. Those children who studied English when they were young do much better than me. (Sooyoung-ik-2-34-42)

Sooyoung explained that, unlike Sokyeok private school where parents are constantly demanding feedback on students’ progress, she does receive any feedback from parents because they realize that there is little that school can do to improve the quality of English classes. However, she agreed that learning English depends on parents’ decision and level of involvement. She admitted that parents who send their children to a private school want superior English education. Supporting Sooyoung’s argument, Hyowon, a mother from Sokyeok private elementary school added:

(Johnso-1-133-141)
The Korean government believe that English education is just good enough to start from the third grade. But right now, you can't have a good quality English education in public education. That's why some parents send their children to hagwon to compensate the lack of English education at school. At least private schools are reliable because they have superior quality English classes. Why do private schools break the rules and increase English classes? It's because many parents want it. (Hyowon-so-1-133-141)

Hyowon’s viewpoint echoes the argument that Sokyeok private elementary school has been unsuccessful in complying with the restriction policy but has fulfilled the promotion policy. In addition to their motivation for sending their children to a private school, parents have high expectations about the quality of English education at school. Having high parental expectations, teachers respond to parents’ demands by showing their efforts to improve student achievement and increase parental satisfaction. When parents demand that students perform to high standards and that the teachers maintain an optimum climate for learning English, the English learning environment in Sokyeok private elementary school provides an advantage over Iksun public elementary school.

Sungho expressed frustration regarding the debate over the banning policy. She argued:

공립학교 학부모 입장에서 사립학교 1, 2 학년 영어교육 금지같은 소식이 들릴 때마다 바보가 되는 기분이에요. 공립에선 영어 수업시수를 지키는데 사립에서는 어기고 더 많이 시키면, 제대로 지킨 공립 애들만 경쟁에서 뒤처지는거 같고. 이건 불공정해요. 그래서 학교 정규 수업만으로는 부족하니까 학원에 보낼 수밖에
As a parent from public elementary school, I feel like a fool whenever I hear about the news about the ban on the instruction of English in the first and second grades in private elementary schools. I think the public schools are compliant to government regulations on English classes. But when the private schools break the rules, I think only the public children who follow suit will be left behind in the competition. This is not fair. I have no choice but to send my child to hagwon since regular school classes are not enough. Everyone sends them to hagwon because the kind of English education that schools provide is not enough. I know hagwons are not so much focused on speaking, but on preparing for middle school. (Sungho-ik-1-105-113)

Sungho understands that the government is trying to properly manage the demand for learning English at schools, especially in early elementary school grades to prevent unequal access to education. She points out that if the government allow teaching English in private elementary schools from the first grade, anxious parents like Sungho, may seek private sector English education before elementary school even begins and her financial burden will worsen. Conversely, if the government ignores violations of the restriction policy, the educational gap between the private and the public will widen due to unequal access to education, and private sector English education will dominate.
On the other hand, Harim expressed her resentment that the government is lowering the standard of education for the sake of equal access to education.

I think it is nice to equalize for the sake of those who are not performing well. But, it is unfair for the ones that are performing well. Everyone has to study up to one’s level.

Laura argued that the standard of the private school needs to be maintained because students from privileged social classes deserve to get benefit from easier access of education. She claimed, “If you live in a capitalist society, you can’t make things equal. Poorest people in any society have the same issue. Richest people have more options, go to private schools. They can increase the standards of the public schools, but they don’t need to decrease the standard of the private school” (Laura-so-2-60-69).

Interview Result Part 3: Students as Self-Determined Learners of English

Teachers and parents indicated that parental involvement plays a major role in students’ English because they do not have much choice but to follow parental guidance. In particular, the early elementary school years are a period when young learners are influenced by parents’ educational decisions. However, interview data indicated that parents are not the only main driving force behind students’ motivation to learn English. Rather, early elementary students are
also self-motivated by their own willingness to learn English and do not just passively following
their parents’ instructions.

The key data from the students’ interviews generated two emergent themes: learning
English to become global citizens, and to thrive in a competitive world. Each of these themes
touched on two aspects of policy implementation: learning to do well on high-stakes
standardized tests, and learning to improve communicative skills in English.

Jeehyun from Iksun public elementary school indicated that her older sister is her role
model because she received a perfect score on English test. She believes that her sister’s English
is good because her test result reflects her proficiency in English. She also believed that her sister
has benefitted from attending hagwon, and that this helped her achieve a perfect score. In the
long term, she thinks that her sister will excel on college entrance exams and become a
competitive candidate in the job market. Seen this way, Jeehyun’s L2 motivation is expressed
through her sister, who reflects Jeehyun’s desire to excel on the tests and find a secure job.

언니가 옛날에 100 점 맞았어요. 옛날에요. 언니가 영어 잘 하는거 같아요. 언니가
d학원 다녀서 그런거죠. 언니는 나중에 좋은대학 들어가고 직장도 좋은곳으로
갈거예요(Jeehyun-ik-2-35-38)

My sister got a perfect score (100 points) on the English exam while ago. I think my
sister’s English is good. And I think she will be going to a prestigious university and get
a good job in the future. (Jeehyun-ik-2-35-38)
The above interview data suggest that she believes a good English proficiency means a good test score. However, Jeehyun’s goal have also evolved under various circumstances. The following data indicate that she has broadened her sense of English proficiency by associating it with strong oral fluency. She recalled her experience doing role-play in her English class. For Jeehyun, witnessing her sister getting a perfect score on English test, her role-playing experience, and her aspirations to communicate with native speakers of English are all an integral part of L2 motivation.

영어 잘하는 사람은 미국 사람들이나 영국 사람들에게 말할 수 있어요. 영어를 쉽게 롤플레이로 놀아 할 수 있어요. (Jeehyun-ik-2-39-41)

If you are fluent in English, you can talk to American or to British people. You can also do role-play in English. (Jeehyun-ik-2-39-41)

Similarly, Byongjoon recalled his experience of role-playing at school and believed that being able to naturally speak English entails being fluent in English. His learning experience played an important role in maintaining his motivation, which reflects his goal of being able to do role-playing without reading a script.

영어 잘하는 사람은 롤플레이 할 때 영어 대본을 안 봐도 잘 해요. (Byongjoon-ik-2-46-48)

Byongjoon: People who are good in English do not need to see an English script when role-playing. (Byongjoon-ik-2-46-48)
Likewise, Bumsoo expressed his desire to communicate fluently in English with his NNEST. His future self-image is grounded in his aspiration of becoming more fluent in English and being able to use the language in a practical sense.

외국인 선생님이 무슨말 하는지 모르겠어요. 그래서 더 영어 배우고 싶어요.

나중에 선생님이랑 막 말 하고 싶어요. (Bumsoo-ik-2-35-37)

I have no idea what the foreign teacher is talking about. That’s why I want to learn English even more. Then I could communicate with him more easily. (Bumsoo-ik-2-35-37)

Chinjoo held his belief in effective communicative skills as a critical component of being fluent in English rather than a good test score. For Chinjoo, the notion of satisfactory English proficiency is associated with the ability to use the language.

영어 잘 하는거는 말은 알아듣게 하는 사람. 시험 잘 보고 그러는거보다 말 하는 사람이다. (Chinjoo-so-2-65-68)

Someone who is fluent in English can make him/herself understood in English. Not a good test taker. (Chinjoo-so-2-65-68)

Students described the goal of learning English in two different ways: (1) to improve communication skills in English; and (2) to do well on high-stakes standardized tests. More specifically, their goal is focused on better oral competence in English to such an extent that their English could be used in more practical contexts where the language can be spoken to express
one’s thoughts and ideas in global contexts. Likewise, they held the belief that studying for English grammar for test preparation is also practical, to the extent that English serves an important subject for college entrance exams and proficiency allow one to become a competitive candidate in the job market.

To support the findings from interview data discussed above, a selective portion of relevant survey data collected from students at Iksun public elementary school and Sokyeok private elementary school is presented below.

The survey data indicates that a nearly equal percentage of students (87% from Iksun public elementary school and 88.2% from Sokyeok private elementary school) learned English before entering elementary school. Surprisingly, 83.8% of students from Iksun public elementary school are currently learning English outside of school whereas only 70.5% of students from Sokyeok private elementary school are learning English outside of school. These results suggest more students from Iksun public elementary school are seeking supplementary help outside of school than students from Sokyeok elementary school. When students were asked to answer whether their parents require that they study English, 22.5% of students from Iksun public elementary school responded “Yes, all the time,” 19.3% responded “No, but sometimes,” and 58% responded “No, I study because I want to.” For the same question, 20.5% of students from Sokyeok private elementary school responded “Yes, all the time,” 20.5% responded “No, sometimes,” and 58.8% responded “No, I study because I want to.” This result suggests that more than three-quarters of the respondents study English on their own free will rather than as a result of pressure from their parents.
The survey data also indicate that a nearly equal percentage of students (87% from Iksun public elementary school and 88.2% from Sokyeok private elementary school) enjoy learning English. Only 3.2% of respondents from Iksun public elementary school and 2.9% from Sokyeok private elementary school responded that they disliked learning English. When students were asked to answer whether they would take English classes at school if they were elective, 68.1% of students from Iksun public elementary school agreed to take English as electives. Similarly, 70.2% students from Sokyeok private elementary school agreed to take English as an elective course. These results suggest that a high number of students enjoy learning English and are willing to take English classes even if they were electives.

The survey also supports our interview findings that that students have two major goals: (1) learning English for communicative purposes; and (2) learning English for high-stakes standardized tests.

When asked to describe the goal of learning English in elementary school in Korea, 50% of students from Iksun public elementary school responded “to be able to communicate with foreigners,” 22% responded “to get a good job,” 12% responded “to get accepted to a prestigious university,” 11% responded “to be able to communicate when traveling in foreign countries,” and 5% responded “to avoid being bullied.” Similarly, when answering the goal of learning English in elementary school in Korea, 38% of students from Sokyeok private elementary school students responded “to be able to communicate with foreigners,” 26% responded “to get accepted to a prestigious university,” 18% responded “to get a good job,” 7% responded “to be able to communicate with traveling foreign countries,” 6% responded “to avoid being bullied,” and 5% responded “learning English makes you smarter.”
The data suggest that students from both schools are self-motivated active agents who are spreading English language through their human agency. Hence, the students’ motivation and will are not the primary factor that affects the difference in English proficiency between Sokyeok private elementary school and Iksun public elementary school.

**Interview Result Part 4: The School Principal as a Prime Policy Implementer at the School Level**

It is important to consider that not all private elementary schools provide a positive climate to learn communicative-oriented English. Especially at the early elementary school level, one key factor of a successful implementation of policy that promotes communicative-oriented learning is the role of the school principal. In Korean elementary schools where top-down government policies are applied equally without distinction between private and public, the school principal, who plays the role of a middle-executive, has a prominent role as an agent who implements the policy. In the case of Iksun public elementary school, the principal had no desire to implement communicative-oriented English language policy because the classroom environment was not capable of implementing the policy. Sooyoung claimed:

국가의 제 7차 영어교육정책은 자세히 잘 몰라요. 그냥 대부분 교장선생님 지침대로 하고 있어요. 초등학교 영어는 아이들이 흥미를 가질 수 있게 재미있고 놀이 위주로 많이 하라는 그런거요. 교장 선생님은 “여기서 한마디 들고가면 그냥 되는거야” 이렇게 말씀 하시더라구요. 솔직히 이런식의 정규 수업만으로는 아이의 영어 실력을 향상시키는 것이 힘들어요. (Sooyoung-ik-3-87-94)

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I don’t know much about the nation’s 7th English education policy in detail. I'm just following the instructions of the principal. Most English teachers just follow the principal's instructions. The principal says that elementary school English must be fun for children to be interested in and it is like playing a lot. She said, "If they hear an English word in your class, that’s enough.” To be honest, it's hard to improve your child’s English just by doing this kind of regular classroom instructions. (Sooyoung-ik-3-87-94)

Sooyoung’s remark indicates that the principal plays an important role in early elementary school English education in Korea. The principal is a major policy implementer who manages and conducts teaching activities using the leadership to carry out policy delivery at the school level. Sooyoung asserted that teachers have less autonomy and they are expected to adhere to the guidelines handed down by the principal. Peter supported this assertion by adding that the principal would tell him not to worry too much about teaching them textbook materials because it is nearly impossible to pay attention to every student (Peter-ik-2-43-54). He added that he would have made more of an effort to improve his classroom learning environment if the principal had not set teaching boundaries (Peter-ik-3-57-68).

Surprisingly, teachers from Sokyeok private elementary school provided additional evidence regarding the importance of principal’s role in English curriculum implementation. Joseph, who has been teaching at this school for nearly three years recounted that students from lower grade levels are performing much better than fifth and sixth graders because his new principal has brought a new way of teaching English into this school. The new principal, who assumed her position two years ago, changed the entire English program to improve students’ communicative skills as written on the government policy. He added:
Fifth and sixth graders are from old principal so their English is not good. You know, the younger you are the better you learn. They were third and fourth graders when our new principal came. It was a bit too late for them to catch up with new program. Before the new program, we were only seven foreign teachers, and five Korean English teachers who were not required to teach in English and they could use Korean. The students only got two hours of English a week. And the book was not for children to advance their English. As a teacher, I had to come up with something because all levels were reading the same books and we had to jump over. It was just two levels before. With new principal, she immediate started adding more English, got rid of old books, introduced new books. The kids started getting language arts and conversation classes. With a combination of all of these, the curriculum, you can really tell the difference in the students’ abilities. (Joseph-so-2-107-139)

According to Joseph, with the old principal, the learning climate of Sokyeok private elementary school seems no better than at Iksun public elementary school; students were taught only two hours of English, like Iksun public elementary school, using the same textbook for all students. Joseph explained that the highest level students from grade four to grade six perform no better than third graders who have received three years of intensive English with their new principal. He indicated that there are still some students in the lower level fifth grade classes who cannot distinguish basic sounds. He emphasized that the new curriculum has made a large difference in students’ communicative abilities. He recounts, “The new principal has stressed a lot on critical thinking, being able to communicate their thoughts, not just stand there to memorize vocabulary or memorize sentences.” (Joseph-so-2-140-143)
Joseph provided another example on how his new principal played a vital role in improving the standard of the curriculum. He said:

The first thing they learn is phonics. From phonics, they can start to blend words and grow their vocabulary. If they start in second grade, they don’t get that, no phonics, not to the same level as first graders who have from A to Z. Last year, we had a wonderful success, thanks to our new principal. Jennifer had a third grade student, who had just transferred to this school at the end of the second year, and he had no English from his previous school. She realized, this boy cannot follow even the lowest level in third grade because he doesn’t understand any of the letters, not the words, the letters. So she thought we need to do something. She asked permission to get him to learn phonics with first graders. He came three classes and he learned a lot. He was speaking well. We saw a big improvement where he was sounding out the words and reading sentences. (so-1-191-203)

The new principal was instrumental in providing customized alternatives to help an underachieving student learn English in her own creative way. In this case, the principal’s leadership was influential when it came to student achievement. Linda explained that she is aware of what her principal expects because according to Linda, “Our principal always says we need to bring our new creativity and stick to it as much as you can” (Linda-so-1-175-180). She continued to emphasize that their focus is on language as a tool for communication while providing a solid foundation for speaking in early the elementary grades.

Teachers from Sokyeok private school indicated that the new school principal brought an innovative way of teaching English, with a clear vision and teaching principles. The new
principal emphasized that the learner-centered approach needs to be implemented in all classrooms, regardless of their level of study. Additionally, she advocated using various classroom activities that encourage students to participate in classroom activities and gain interest and confidence learning English. By endorsing this type of learner-centered approach, the conventional way of lecturing English (grammar translation method, repeating vocabularies etc.) was no longer a part of instruction. Her teaching principles were in agreement with the government’s communicative-oriented teaching policy and parents’ demands by getting around the restricting policy and taking advantage of private school environments.

Conclusion: Multifaceted Factors Influencing the Implementation of Policy

Based on the latest press release from the Korean Ministry of Education, the Korean government’s top-down approach to enacting these contradicting policies remains unchanged. The Minister of Education Kim Sang Gon (Ministry of Education, 2018, January 16) announced, “We will solve the problems caused by early elementary school year English education such as private sector English education. And we are hoping to come up with comprehensive measures to improve the quality of overall English education at schools to ensure proper child education and human rights for young learners as they are still developing as a human being.” He emphasized that “We will immediately reflect the public’s demand. We need to overcome excessive private sector English education and avoid illegal practices to enable a proper education.” This official statement from the Ministry of Education indicates that the Korean government is concerned about the growing public demand for equity in elementary school education. In fact, the public interest in education is being destroyed by advanced learning and the gap in English education caused by private academies, namely hagwon. In this regard, the Ministry of Education states that “We should provide students with an equal opportunity from
the starting point. By accepting people's opinions, we need to improve excessive illegal English tutoring practices for children. We need to improve it by reflecting opinions of various people. There is a need for more social consensus on English education in general” (Ministry of Education, 2018, January 16). The Ministry of Education believes that teaching English from the first grade or increasing the number of hours only increases the academic burden on students and reduces the effectiveness of learning. The government is making efforts to give all students a strong start. However, as the findings of this chapter indicate, there have been challenges implementing proposed policy in actual classroom practices. The discrepancies between the top-down policy and practice from bottom-up were complex due to several aspects. In the Korean context, top-down policy in early elementary school tends to be actively interpreted, resisted, and reshaped by the speech community, including teachers, principal, parents, and students, each trying to tailor the policy to bring the best realistic outcome. Thus, as discussed in the macroacquisition of English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), language spread is not simply imposed by external influences, but rather, through the speech community’s will and self-determination. In Korea, the process of English language acquisition in early elementary school in takes place at the speech community level acquired through their active agency. In the end, if communicative-oriented policies are to be successfully implemented, the right education environment must be supported and the motivation of individual agents must be consistent with the policy goals. In particular, the role of the principal as a policy enforcer is essential for the policy to be implemented effectively throughout the school. In Sokyeok private elementary school, by following the principal’s leadership, teachers gained autonomy over their classrooms and continued to successfully implement the policy according to the classroom’s needs. In summary, I can answer the last research question of this dissertation as follows:
3. How do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms?

- In Korea, top-down policy is actively interpreted, resisted, and reshaped by the speech community, including teachers, parents, and students, each trying to tailor the policy to bring the best realistic outcome.

- Macroacquisition (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) is not simply imposed by external influences, but through the speech community’s self-determination.

- For a successful policy implementation, the right education environment must be supported and the motivation of individual agents must be consistent with the policy goals.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the meaning of this ethnographic case study and make recommendations based on its findings. The aim of this research was to examine the complex and evolving process of English language policy implementation in early elementary school contexts in Korea. By conducting an ethnographic case study in one public and one private elementary school, this research focused on the interplay between top-down and bottom-up approaches of language policy implementation and its effects in classroom practices from the standpoint of the macroacquisition model of World English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002).

To gain an in-depth understanding of the diverse factors affecting policy implementation from the perspective of different members of the speech community – teachers, parents, students, and the Korean government – the research examined the following research questions: (1) what characteristic features can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary schools in terms of the process of policy implementation, (2) how does the spread of English language in early elementary school classrooms in Korea align with the macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of language, and (3) how do the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms.
**Research Question 1: Human Agency Resisting a Top-down Policy Implementation**

The first research question attempted to investigate different characteristic features that can we identify when comparing English classes in public and private elementary school in terms of the process of policy implementation.

This ethnographic case study revealed that there have been an array of challenges implementing the proposed policy in classroom practices. The examination of language policy implementation observed in third grade public and private elementary school English classes revealed that there is a disjunction between the policy goals and the implementation of policy in classrooms. This is due to different learning environments and people that are involved in the decision-making process. In case of Iksun public elementary school, instructional practices were inconsistent with the principles mandated by the communicative-oriented policy that proposed learner-centered and task-based communicative activities in English. These discrepancies were common in the teachers’ traditional way of teaching (e.g., grammar-translation method, teacher-centered approach, etc.), the institutional constraints such as large class sizes with mixed proficiency levels all placed together, the use of government-approved textbooks as the sole source of instruction, and the limit of no more than two hours of English per week. This demonstrates that although the government prepared a policy design aiming to achieve communicative-oriented teaching, the teaching environment at Iksun public elementary school was not conducive to its implementation. In other words, the government overlooked the feasibility of policy environment that facilitates an effective implementation.
Research Question 2: Human Agency Shaping a Top-down Policy Implementation

The second research question attempted to investigate the extent to which the spread of English in early elementary school classrooms align with macroacquisition model of World English, in the context of the coexistence of contradictory language policies that both promote and restrict the spread of English. As Hawkins (2005) suggested, within the classroom, there was a complex ecological system of co-dependent factors – in this case, teachers, parents, principal, students, and the government’s policy – that together shape the language learning. These co-dependent factors were pieces that come together to form a complete and unique ecological system that embraces a particular group within a speech community in education contexts. Connecting to this study, the policy implementation is dynamic such that different members in the speech community are involved in making, evaluating, and reshaping content to fit in different education contexts. Seen this way, this study complements Brutt-Griffler’s (2002) notion of macroacquisition that connects the reality of English use with its speakers in a linguistic space where the second language acquisition by the speech community is realized as a form of social process.

Research Question 3: Human Agency Reshaping a Top-down Policy Implementation

The third research question attempted to investigate how the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and students influence the ways that the policy is implemented in classrooms. It has been widely presumed that, at the national level, English language policy has always encouraged putting forward different approaches to improve learners’ competence. However, it was not until former President Park Geon Hye urged the Ministry of Education to discourage students from over-studying English. The president’s interest was focused on the public demand
for equity in elementary school education, with an emphasis on reducing the English divide between different socioeconomic classes. Since then, the public started to notice the words such as “constrain” and “restrict” in English language policy even while words such as “promotion” and “enhance” continued to be used.

As discussed in previous chapters, the flip side of the policy that promotes and restricts the English language education provoked disputes among parents whose children are affected by practices that may cause regression in English learning instead of improvement. In other words, these parents reacted to policy that hindered children’s opportunity to learn English. Teachers from both Iksun public elementary school and Sokyeok private elementary school agreed that parents take the roles of motivator and play a crucial role in students’ English education. They believed that parents act as the prime forces that drive students to learn English. Likewise, some parents claimed that through children’s English, they gain vicarious satisfaction while considering English as an investment for the future. Some other parents claimed that parents are result-oriented, obsessed with English driven by peer competition. The fact that they sent their children to a private school implies that parents from Sokyeok private elementary school were more motivated to push their children learn to English. Contrary to the beliefs of teachers and parents, students were self-motivated by their own willingness to learn, not just passively following their parents’ orders.

One of the most unexpected and exciting research findings in this study was the role of the principal as a policy implementer at the school level. The new principal at Sokyeok private elementary school, acted as an administrator and implemented policy while modifying it to fit in school situations. Within this educational context, teachers were the classroom practitioners that carried out policy into practice, receiving direct orders from the school principal. In this case, the
principal did not simply give them policy guidelines to apply in their lessons. Rather, the principal was an engaging supervisor who spread her education philosophy with clear a vision to influence teachers to activate their agency in classroom practices. The role of the school principal as a policy implementer has demonstrated that it is important to understand how a principal envisions her overall teaching philosophy while fulfilling her role as a school leader.

**Implications for Education Policy in Early Elementary School Contexts**

The findings from this ethnographic case study provide insights into the dynamic and interactive nature of policymaking and implementation in diverse educational contexts. The findings in this study will bridge the gap between research and practice and help policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents, and students to gain knowledge of the complex nature of policy as a dynamic entity in classrooms. The local context of Korean English classrooms must be given critical consideration when planning and implementing future reform. In other words, within the context of language learning and teaching in Korea, a high-level strategy for developing communicative competence is not sufficient. Rather, policy makers need to understand a complex nature of policy implementation at the classroom level.

Korea’s English system is centralized and hierarchical. The Ministry of Education has an enormous influence on curriculum implementation. In particular, time allocation for English classes, decisions about the appropriate age to learn, and rules on textbook uses are set by policymakers through official policy documents with frequent amendments imposing restrictions on certain practices that promote competence in English. Nunan (2003) asserts that “the government and ministries of education are often framing policies and implementing practices without adequately considering the implications of such policies and practices on the lives of the
individuals” (p. 591). Seen this way, frequent policy revisions by the Ministry of Education may create fatigue especially for teachers in Sokyeok private elementary school who are under constant pressure to follow newly updated policy amendments. As the findings suggested, the most effective model for applying the policy in the present Korean situation is the case presented by the new principal of Sokyeok private elementary school. The new principal has demonstrated how an active agency can bring a drastic change in education. Her leadership with a clear vision and teaching principles made important decisions to violate restriction policy in order to provide customized curriculum to implement communicative-based promotion policy at the school level. It is important to increase the number of English teachers and to develop improved textbooks. However, it also is important to motivate the community, especially to educate the principals of each school and to give sufficient amount and motivation to those who assume the role of policy implementer at the school level. It would be necessary for the Korean government to recognize that a top-down imposition of policy is not always effective and feasible in all contexts.

This research contributes to the language education policy by providing a closer perspective on policy implementation and practice in classrooms using an ethnographic field study. This research approach yielded a data about the perceptions of individual agents’ classroom practice. By conducting simultaneous ethnographic field studies in public and private schools, the study shed light on individual’s capacity to react against different policy guidelines.

The results of the analyses obtained in this study will establish an improved standard research of the English education system in Korea and shed light on the country’s education policy. The proposed analysis will be further extended to analyze the wide-ranging views of this phenomenon in various domains in second language education.
Limitations

As this ethnographic case study represents only two cases at elementary schools in Seoul, the generalization of the findings is limited. This study is also limited in that it does not include the perspectives of several key individuals involved in policy development and implementation. The school principals in each of the two schools and the government officers in the Ministry of Education declined to participate in interviews. It was crucial to consider that the employment position of these participants made them easily identifiable and there was difficulty in maintaining participant confidentiality for participants drawn from a small population. The school principal from Iksun public elementary school claimed that contextual identifiers in individual’s personal details could become identifiable despite disguising his or her identity. The government official argued that, as a subordinate in the workplace, he or she might face negative consequences if the personal identity was revealed. The school principal from Sokyeok private elementary school also indicated that a major deterrent to participation was the time commitment and the formalized consent process required in her or his institution. Gaining these individuals’ perspectives may have provided richer sources of information about policy implementation in these two learning contexts.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Students

1. What grade are you in?

2. Where did you grow up and go to school?

3. What is your favorite subject in school?

4. When and where did you first learn English?

5. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country?
   If so, where and for how long?

6. Does anyone in your family know English?
   Who (parents, sibling, cousin)?
   In your opinion, how fluent are they?

7. How can you tell if someone’s English is good?

8. Are you taking any English classes in a hagwon (cram school) or with a private tutor?
   If so, was it your decision to attend those classes?
   How many hours per week?
   Describe your typical English class in those settings.
   What differences are there compared to English classes taught at school?

9. Suppose that you are not taking any English classes outside of your school.
   Then, your parents gave you the choice to take English classes outside of your school.
   What would be your choice?
   Why?

10. Do you read English books or watch English programs outside of school?
    If so, are they for tests or for homework?
11. How would you feel if English were no longer a part of mandatory school subject?

Would you take English classes if they were electives?

12. What are advantages and disadvantages of learning English?
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Which grade level of English classes are you teaching?

2. Where did you grow up and go to school?

3. Native language(s)?

4. Have you ever lived abroad? (location, length, purpose)

5. What is your educational background?

   You could list your degrees and majors, type of schools that you attended (e.g., public, private, religious school, and so on).

6. Please describe your previous experiences as an English language teacher.

   What differences have you noted in terms of teaching practices and classroom environments compared to your previous teaching experiences?

7. How many students do you usually have in a class?

8. Please describe a typical English class you teach.

9. What do students expect out of your English classes.

   Please describe the ways that you have tried to meet the needs of your students.

10. What do parents expect out of your English classes.

    Please describe the ways that you have tried to meet the needs of parents.

11. What does your school principal expects out of your English classes.

    Please describe the ways that you have tried to meet the needs of the school principal.

12. What do you think is the purpose of learning English in Korea, especially in early ages (Kindergarten to third grade)?

13. Please describe an ideal English teaching environment (e.g., you can discuss about teaching materials, instructional practices, students, teachers, parents, national policies, and so on).
14. What changes have occurred over the last few years in the curriculum and classroom practices?
   If yes, how do you feel about those changes?

15. What difficulties have you experienced in implementing those changes?

16. How do you feel about your students learning English outside of school?

17. When we speak of parents, who is most involved in your students’ academic performance?
   (e.g., mother, father, grandparents, and so forth)

18. The Korean Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation states that the current national curriculum emphasizes spoken language communicative activities to improve students’ communicative competence in English.
   What do “communicative activities” mean for you?

19. In your opinion, who has the most influence in spreading English language in early ages (kindergarten to third grade) in Korea?

20. In 2013, the Korean Ministry of Education banned on the instruction of English in the first and second grade in private elementary schools and on the use of imported textbooks across Korea.
   Do you have any comments regarding this situation?
Appendix C: Interview Questions for Parents

1. What is your birthplace?
2. Where did you grow up and go to school?
3. Native language(s)?
4. When did you first learn English?
5. Sojourn in foreign countries (locations/length/purpose).
6. Do you do anything to practice your English? If so, why?
7. What are your weaknesses out of these categories?
   Writing / Speaking / Listening / Reading / Other: ________________
8. How do you rate your English fluency?
   Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Other: ________________
9. Is your child learning English at school?
   If so, how many hours per week?
10. Is it a private or a public school?
    What grade?
11. Is your child taking any English classes in a hagwon (cram school) or with a private tutor?
    If so, whose decision was it?
    What are the main reasons?
    How would you feel if your child refused to learn English outside of school?
    How many hours per week?
    How do you think these lessons influence their leaning?
12. What do you do to help your child learn English outside of school (not for tests or homework)?
13. In terms of financing your child’s English education, is it affordable to you?

14. How does your child think about English? Does (s)he like learning English?

15. How can you tell if someone’s English is good?

16. What kind of speaker would you like your child to be?

17. Do you feel satisfaction through your child’s English proficiency?

18. How would you feel if your child’s school removed English classes from the curriculum and made it no longer mandatory?

   Would you take any action to remedy this kind of situation?

19. How do you feel about the current national policy banning English language instruction in first and second grade in private elementary schools?

20. Have you given any feedback to English teachers regarding their teaching?

21. What do you think is the purpose of learning English in Korea, especially in early ages (Kindergarten to third grade)?

22. I believe the goal of my child’s English class at school should be…

23. I wish my child’s English teacher would teach more…

24. In your opinion, who has the most influence in spreading English language in Korea?
Appendix D: Document Analysis Guide

1. Title of document:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. Date of document:

___________________________________________________________________________

3. Author(s) of document:

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___________________________________________________________________________
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4. Position or title of the author(s), if available:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. Identify type of document:

Newspaper, Letter, Advertisement, Census Report, Press Release, Public Announcement,
Others:

___________________________________________________________________________
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6. For what audience is the document created?

___________________________________________________________________________

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7. For what purpose?

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8. Summarize what the author said that you think is important in three bullet points:

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Appendix E: Survey Questionnaire for Students

1. Did you study English before entering elementary school? Circle one.
   
   YES / NO
   
   If your answer is YES, where did you first learn English?
   
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Do you learn English outside of your school? Circle one.
   
   YES / NO
   
   If your answer is YES, where do you learn English and how much per week?
   
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Do you have any travel experiences outside of Korea? Circle one.
   
   YES / NO
   
   If your answer is YES, which countries?
   
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Do you like learning English? Circle one.
   
   YES / NEUTRAL / NO

5. Would you take English classes at school if they were elective? Circle one.
   
   YES / NEUTRAL / NO
6. Do you get to use English in your daily life except for school or private language classes?

   Circle one. YES / NO

   If you answered YES, please provide an example

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

7. Do your parents make you study English? Circle one.

   A. Yes, all the time
   B. Yes, sometimes
   C. No, I study because I want to

8. What do you think is the goal of learning English in elementary school in Korea?

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________
Appendix F: Transcription Conventions adapted from Jefferson (2004)

S  Student

Ss  Multiple students

?  Rising intonation

[word]  Overlapping talk

(0.0) Approximate length of silence in tenth of a second

*italics* Translation

WORD Louder than the surrounding talk

:: Prolongation of the preceding sound

(word) Unintelligible talk to transcriber

((double parentheses)) Transcriber’s description of events and bodily movements

>word< Speech delivery that is quicker than the surrounding talk

= Contiguous utterances, no gap between two turns