The Limitations of English Language Ideology (LI) and Language Policy & Planning (LPP) in South Korea

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Abstract

“English Fever” is an ongoing phenomenon in South Korea that represents the strong obsession for English language proficiency through education. The growing prevalence of a foreign language is surprising considering South Korea’s linguistic history. However, the significance of English bolstered by globalization, has undoubtedly permeated into South Korea’s government, schools, and public language ideologies (LI) and language policy & planning (LPP). This obsession for English proficiency is contradictory to reports of South Korean English language competency levels. Therefore, it is critical to analyze English language practice in South Korea. Examining South Korean youth who are greatly influenced by these surrounding LI and LPP, this thesis argues that there are limitations to South Korea’s “English Fever” or pursuit towards English proficiency. These limitations are found to be the reliance on instrumental motivation, notions of the native speaker, and accessibility of English for all South Korean youth. Limitations hinder English language learning and practice for South Korean youth, which ultimately impact their English competency.

Key words: “English Fever”, English, language ideology, language policy & planning, language practice, motivation, native speaker
The limitations of English LI and LPP in South Korea

Contents

1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 4

2 South Korea: A Historical Overview ....................................................................................... 6

   2.1 Defining Language Ideology (LI), Language Policy & Planning (LPP), and Language Practice ............................................................................................................... 6

   2.2 Linguistic History of Korea ................................................................................................. 11

3 “English Fever” in South Korea ............................................................................................... 13

   3.1 The Government ................................................................................................................. 15

   3.2 The Schools ......................................................................................................................... 18

   3.3 The Public: South Korean Adults ....................................................................................... 22

4 The Usage of English by South Korean Youth: Case Studies ........................................ 27

   4.1 Choi (2016) .......................................................................................................................... 28

   4.2 Bacon & Kim (2018) .......................................................................................................... 31

5 Discussion ................................................................................................................................ 34

   5.1 Motivations for English ....................................................................................................... 36

      5.1.1 Hernández (2006) ......................................................................................................... 37

      5.1.2 Integrative Motivation vs. Instrumental Motivation ....................................................... 39

   5.2 Concepts of the “Native Speaker” ....................................................................................... 42

   5.3 Accessibility of English ....................................................................................................... 45

6 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 48

References .................................................................................................................................... 49
1 Introduction

For a country, it has been previously observed that the adoption of English as an official language (EOL), requires certain conditions such as colonization under English-speaking colonizers (Lahiri 2011) or culturally diverse communities (Tan 2017). Therefore, the debate on adopting EOL in South Korea (Song 2011: 38-40) is unique from other countries. South Korea is a generally homogeneous country with no history of colonization by English-speaking colonizers. Yet, the impact of globalization (Song 2013) pushed South Korea to focus on the English language. The heavy influence of English in South Korea is seen in the education system (Park 2009), the active promotion of “English Villages” (Trottier 2008), and in the entertainment industry (Lee 2004; Lee 2006). South Korea’s ongoing focus on English is comparable to an obsession, which is labeled in Korean as yeongeo yeolpung or “English Fever” (Shim & Park 2008: 137; Park 2009). Sequentially, EOL is debated in South Korea as the next steps to participate in globalization (Yoo 2005: 1). However, Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index (2011-2018) has only rated the English proficiency of South Koreans as “moderate” for the past seven years in comparison to other countries. Why is there a disparity between South Korea’s intensified focus on acquiring English and the observed usage of English in South Korea? Who is involved in South Korea’s “English Fever”?

In this thesis, I closely examine South Korea’s “English Fever” from three categories: Language Ideology (LI), Language Policy & Planning (LPP), and observed language practice. I argue that there are limitations to South Korea’s “English Fever” which hinder the acquisition of the English language for South Korean youth, who largely represent the usage level of English in South Korea (Song
2011). Therefore, integrating EOL will not be effective in the country’s intentions to acquire English. I observe and explain these limitations through case-studies that provide evidence on the perceptions of South Korean youth on LI, LPP, and language practice of English as well as factors supportive of foreign language acquisition (Choi 2016; Bacon & Kim 2018; Hernández 2006). Particularly with Hernández (2006), I will argue that South Korea’s LI and LPP are influenced by instrumental motivation that inhibits the learning of a foreign language for South Korean youth. The purpose of observing these limitations is to argue that adopting EOL may not be the solution to raising a Korean-English bilingual generation in South Korea because the usage of English in South Korea will continue to be limited and compartmentalized by South Korean youth. It is significant to understand the stance of South Korean youth towards “English Fever” in South Korea to comprehend the relationship between LI, LPP, and language practice. In addition, the South Korean youth represent the next generation of South Korea so it is critical to understand their perspective towards English and practice of the English language.

In §2, I define LI, LPP, and language practice, which are important concepts to understanding the “English Fever” in South Korea for this thesis (Ricento & Hornberger 1996; Ricento 2000; Silverstein 1979). Then, I provide a brief overview of Korea’s linguistic history to better understand how South Korea’s past influences its LI and LPP (Cho 2002; Yoo 2005; McPhail 2018). In §3, I deconstruct LI and LPP of the “English Fever” in South Korea by examining three groups: the government, the schools, and the public. As this thesis observes the perceptions and language practice of South Korean youth, I examine the LI of South Korean adults to be representative of the public, such as parents, teachers, and future employers. I
approach this examination to compare and contrast LI between the groups. I also analyze the close relationship between the government and schools regarding LPP. In §4, I analyze 2 case-studies that study South Korean youth and their perspectives on English LI and LPP in South Korea (Choi 2016; Bacon & Kim 2018). In §5, I analyze Hernández (2006) to discuss the limitations of motivation influenced by South Korea’s LI and LPP. Then, I discuss additional limitations mentioned through the case-studies to indicate that there are more than one factors that hinder the adoption of EOL and limit English language learning and practice, such as concepts of a “native speaker” (Rudiger 2014) and accessibility of English education (Choi 2016). This discussion is further inferred in §6.

2 South Korea: A Historical Overview

2.1 Defining Language Ideology (LI), Language Policy & Planning (LPP), and Language Practice

Understanding “English Fever” in South Korea requires an analysis of the following concepts and how they will be used for this thesis: Language Ideology (LI), Language Policy & Planning (LPP), and language practice. What are these concepts and what are their relations to each other? How is language practice influenced by LI and LPP? Language practice is influenced by attitudes toward a particular language and policies that manipulate the usage of the particular language. Therefore, understanding LI and LPP is critical to analyzing how they hinder or promote language practice in South Korea.

Language Ideology (LI) is the values and beliefs toward a specific language by a specific community (Seargeant 2009: 348). For this thesis, investigating the LI of “English Fever” provides a lens in understanding the
attitudes toward English in South Korea. However, it is important to note that LI is not wholly centered around the target language but "the ties between language and other social factors or frameworks (such as gender, class, or nationality)" (Seargeant 2009: 349). This means that there are multiple factors that influence the development of LI towards a target language and that different groups within the same community may have altered versions of LI. These different groups can be the government versus the general public. For example, before English was adopted as an official language in Singapore, there was conflict between the government and the public. The former advocated for the adoption of English into their official language as a means of communication for the ethnically and culturally diverse population in Singapore, while the latter held hostile opinions toward English as the colonizer’s language when Singapore was a colony under Great Britain (Tan 2017). Therefore, when analyzing LI in South Korea, this thesis investigates four different groups within South Korea: the government, the schools, the general public, and the youth. It is important to investigate the different factors that influence the sets of beliefs about language because they are "articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure or use [in the country]" (Silverstein 1979: 193). By understanding LI as the motivator to language practices, the development of LPP to promote language practice should also be examined.

Language Policy & Planning (LPP) are the actions taken to promote or obstruct language practice of a target language (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 402). By investigating the LPP of "English Fever", this thesis provides insight in how the practice of English is deliberately supported in South Korea. LI is closely
tied to LPP because LI “inform[s] language attitudes toward language, and hence language policies” (Ricento 2000: 205), meaning that understanding LI can assist in identifying the factors motivating LPP that encourage specific language practice. However, it was previously understood that different groups within the same community may have altered versions of LI. In addition, Ricento (2000: 205-206) noted the “connections between ideologies of power in the modern state and development of language policies” have contributed to “sociocultural and econotechnical inequalities”. This means that only certain groups of power within a community have authority over LPP. Therefore, it is critical to understand who controls LPP and how they may approach LPP based on the theoretical framework identified by Ricento & Hornberger (1996: 403). How does LPP promote or obstruct language practice of a target language?

Understanding the frameworks of LPP is critical in understanding the type of LPP in South Korea. Ricento & Hornberger (1996: 403) identified three types of LPP (Type I: status planning, Type II: acquisition planning, and Type III: corpus planning) and two approaches of these types (policy planning and cultivation planning). Policy planning is how the LPP will reach its goal while cultivation planning assesses whether goals were met, meaning each type represents a generalized goal of LPP. The first type of LPP [LPP Type I] is called status planning which focuses on the use of a specific language. The policy planning medium for status planning is the “standardization” of a language and the cultivation planning standards for status planning are “maintenance” and “interlingual communication internationally or intranationally” (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). This means that the goal for LPP Type I is for the
nationwide population to use a target language by changing policies that directly
cchange the status of the language (ex. policy-making that will adopt English as an
official language). The second type of LPP [LPP Type II] is called *acquisition
planning* which focuses on the users of a specific language. The *policy planning*
mediums for *acquisition planning* are the “education and mass media” of a
language and the *cultivation planning standard* for *acquisition planning* is
“foreign language shift” (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). This means that the
goal for LPP Type II is for the acquisition of a language that has significant value
but may not be official, by changing policies on where or how a language is used
(ex. the frequency of English immersion classes that have English-only policies).
The last type of LPP [LPP Type III] is called *corpus planning* which discusses the
linguistic characteristics or varieties of a specific language. The *policy planning*
medium for *corpus planning* is the “standardization” of a language and the
*cultivation planning standard* for *corpus planning* is “renovation” or
“modernization” (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). This is similar to LPP Type I
which has standard language policies as its goal. However, LPP Type III focuses
on standardizing a variation within a specific language that often has or is in the
process of receiving an official status (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 404). This
means that the goal for LPP Type III is for the standardization of a variety within
a language already used by the nationwide population, by reforming the
preexisting language system (ex. giving precedence to the usage of Standard
American English over another dialect of English). Overall, LPP promotes or
obstructs language practice of a target language accordingly using the three types
of LPP. For this thesis, LPP of the English language in South Korea will be
observed through the lens of LPP Type I and II, in consideration of the ongoing debate on adopting EOL and the present status of English as a foreign language (EFL).

Understanding that LPP is the development of policies around language, it may be typically viewed to be part of legislation or generally in the realm of the government. Ricento & Hornberger (1996: 405-406) referred to this as the “rational model”, assuming the government is responsible for choice-making and determining “language plans within the framework of cost/benefit analysis”. This means the LI of the government, in a position of power, determines the LPP of a specific language. However, Ricento (2000: 205) noted that the government isn’t the only one involved in LPP as there are descriptions “of language policies...both in the academic and policymaking arenas”. Considering that language learning or acquisition requires the involvement of schools to teach that language, it is not surprising that the government and the education system need to closely work together in developing LPP. In LPP Type II, education is used to control where language is used through policy changes enacted by the government (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). In other words, LPP of the education system can be observed to reflect the LPP of the government who uses education as a tool or means to act on policies. For example, British colonizers who “intended to use English as a measure of imperial domination” (Lahiri 2008: 15) in India, took to focusing their government policies on India’s education system. By enforcing the compulsory instruction of the English language, the country experienced a linguistic shift where English was then becoming a medium of communication in India (Lahiri 2008). Therefore, both the government
and the education system are involved with LPP. This thesis observed LPP of the government and education system to closely examine how they worked together to promote the English language in South Korea.

Language practice is the actual usage of the target language in a specific community\(^2\). Understanding language practice in relation to LI and LPP, with LI as the motivator of language practice and LPP as the promoter of language practice, I observe how LI and LPP influence or do not influence language practice. To examine language practice, I use any observations and data found through case studies. In addition, I focus on statistical data reflective of language practice in South Korea. As this thesis aims to understand the perspectives of South Korean youth, I observe English language practice of this specific group. Statistical information as well as personal reflections on language usage may provide insight on language practice of a specified language. Altogether, this thesis examines the LI and LPP towards English in South Korea, to develop its argument that there are limitations within LI and LPP which hinder the acquisition of the English language for South Korean youth.

2.2 Linguistic History of Korea

As attitudes persist or change over time, analyzing the linguistic history of a country allows one to develop an understanding of that country's attitude towards a specific language or a country's LI. We have seen earlier of the connection between LI and LPP, where understanding LI can assist in identifying the factors motivating LPP that encourage specific language practice. Therefore, I provide a brief overview of linguistic history in Korea to better understand how

\(^2\) The term "language practice" will be used interchangeably with "the usage of a language" throughout this thesis.
South Korea’s past has influenced its LI and LPP. Before the development of the Korean alphabet, the South Korean language system was largely influenced by the Japanese and Chinese languages (Cho 2002). In resistance, the use of the Hang‘ul or Korean alphabet was a means to preserve the Korean linguistic identity, embodying South Korea’s nationalistic pride in their language.

In the early twentieth century, Korea was colonized under Japanese rule and was pressured under Japanese language imperialism that sought to remove the Korean language and culture (McPhail 2018: 46). As a means to remove Korea’s native language, the Japanese colonial government would pass and enforce linguistic assimilation policies and laws such as “ban[ning] the use of the Korean language in public domains” (Cho 2002: 9). During its colonization, Korea had been forced to adopt the Japanese language which fueled its attitudes of resistance towards foreign languages and incited linguistic nationalism towards the Korean language (Yoo 2005; McPhail 2018; Cho 2002). Additionally, before the linguistic colonization by the Japanese language, the Korean language was influenced by its contact with the Chinese language. While China didn’t colonize Korea, its long-term relation with Korea for varying purposes such as trade (also known as the Sino-Korean relations) had greatly influenced Korean literacy. Korea developed a writing system that favored the use of Chinese characters known as Han-ja, as a result of long-term contact with the Chinese language since 3rd century CE (Yoo 2005: 5). In resistance to the influences of both the Japanese and Chinese languages, Korean patriots “formally inaugurated written literacy in Korea” in the early twentieth century (Cho 2002: 8) by using Hang‘ul (Yoo 2005).
Hang’ul is the Korean alphabet invented in the 15th century by one of Korea’s monarchs, King Sejong. There was a great length of time before Hang’ul’s formal usage because Korea had experienced difficulty breaking away from the usage of Han-ja, the preferred literacy system for Korean nobility at the time (Yoo 2005: 5). However, with Japanese occupation and its linguistic assimilation policies, resistance contributed to the formulation of nationalistic pride in the Korean language. This attitude persisted as South Korea had begun and is continuing to work towards separating the Korean language from the Japanese and Chinese languages. The separation was enforced by removing Japanese vocabulary from its lexicon, removing Chinese characters from publications, and requiring official documents to be written only in Hang’ul (Cho 2002: 11). In conclusion, South Korea’s history with the Japanese and Chinese languages has enforced its supposed linguistic nationalism, an ideology that motivated South Korea to work towards preserving the native language and eliminating foreign linguistic influence. I stress ‘supposed’ as South Korea’s developing LI from its history appears contradictory to the current observation of “English Fever” in South Korea. Why is there an inconsistency between South Korea’s nationalistic attitude towards its own language against the Japanese and Chinese languages, and South Korea’s intense eagerness towards the English language?

3 “English Fever” in South Korea

English is perceived as the global lingua franca, serving as a common language for different native speakers of different languages. This does not mean that every country is proficient in the English language nor that English is commonly used in every country, but the usage of English is certainly becoming increasingly prevalent
around the world. According to Crystal (2012: 6), different countries have English as their first language, second language, or foreign language, making up “a quarter of the world’s population [that] is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing”. The utility of English, as a global language, motivates countries eager to participate in “international academic and business communities” (Crystal, 2012: 13) to incorporate English in their country such as South Korea. McPhail (2018: 47) argued that the status of English as a global language created an exception to South Korea’s nationalistic attitude towards its own language against foreign languages. English was neither viewed as the colonizer’s language nor as a negative influence for the Korean language in South Korea because of its utility.

In South Korea, English’s reputation grew as a crucial component of “national success and economic plenty”, meaning that the acquisition of English was widely perceived “as a means towards greater prosperity” (McPhail 2018: 47). In terms of where both the Korean language and English language stood in relation to each other in South Korea, “the Korean language as emblematic of ethnic and national identity coexists with the strong desire for English as an economic commodity” (Song 2009: 35). The growing presence of English became a prevalent linguistic phenomenon in South Korea, self-evident in its given name, yeongeo yeolpung or “English Fever” (Shim & Park 2008; Park 2009). “English Fever” refers to the strong desire to become proficient in English (Shim & Park 2008: 47) and interests in English as a language of modernity in South Korea. This is observed in English’s heavy involvement in South Korean education system (Park 2009) and its prevalence in South Korean media such as through entertainment like Korean dramas and pop culture (Lee 2004; Lee 2006). However, likening the English boom to a temporary
condition like a fever, gives limited insight to how deeply English has influenced LI, LPP, and language practice in South Korea. As noted in §2, altered versions of LI can develop within the same community whose language attitudes are influenced differently by multiple factors. Understanding LI can assist in identifying the factors motivating LPP that encourage specific language practices (Ricento 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to deconstruct South Korea’s “English Fever” by examining three key groups: the government, the schools, and the public.

3.1 The Government

Globalization is the incentive for the South Korean government to actively promote the English language as a means to participate in “international academic and business communities” (Crystal 2012: 13). Pursuing globalization would mean that South Korea would enter and aim to “establish a competent position within the global market” (Shim & Park 2008: 144) to achieve “national success and economic plenty” (McPhail 2018: 47). The South Korean government’s attitude towards globalization can be observed in its policies from the adoption of segyehwa (also known as globalization) to focus on enhancing “Korea’s global competitiveness” in 1995, to the development of free economic zones in select cities “to attract foreign investors and capital flow” in the 2000s. The policies are intended to “prepare[ing] citizens to participate with confidence in the global market place and increase[ing] the nation’s international competitiveness” (Shim & Park 2008: 144-147). In other words, the South Korean government perceived that they will not only need to develop neoliberal reforms to be a notable competitor in the global market but will primarily need the linguistic competence to participate globally. Therefore, English, both symbolically and practically, has
a critical role in meeting the South Korean government’s goal towards globalization as English serves as a global language to communicate around the world (Crystal 2012: 6). This observation demonstrates the South Korean government’s LI that English is necessary because its acquisition will not only serve “to adapt to the changing economy” but will also make “Korea accessible to the world” (Shim & Park 2008: 46). The South Korean government’s attitude towards the English language is influenced by the connection made between globalization and English, justifying the belief that English is essential for the future of the country. As previously discussed, LI is closely tied to LPP because LI “inform[s] language attitudes toward language, and hence language policies” (Ricento 2000: 205). Understanding that there are three types of LPP (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403), what type of LPP emerged from the South Korean government’s LI?

From the controversial proposal that predicted English would replace Korean as the official language (Bok 1998) to the idea that there is no need to adopt EOL in a monolingual society, there has been an ongoing debate in South Korea for the adoption of EOL since the 1990s (Yoo 2005; Song 2011). In the previous discussion of LPP in §2, the adoption of EOL would be LPP Type I or status planning, which aims to change policies that directly change the status of the language (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). However, with the South Korean government’s debate on adopting EOL at a continued standstill (Yoo 2005), there is more focus on improving English proficiency through education (Song 2011). This is LPP Type II or acquisition planning, which aims to acquire a language that does not carry an official status but is of significance to the country (Ricento
Both LPP Type I and LPP Type II aim for the proficient usage of a target language, reflecting the South Korean government’s agenda to use the English language. However, from here on, this thesis focuses on the South Korean government’s LPP as LPP Type II or *acquisition planning* which are generally called “language education policies” (Chung & Choi 2016: 282).

It is first important to note that this does not mean that the government is using the approach of only one type of LPP. All three types of LPP: Type I (*status planning*), Type II (*acquisition planning*), and Type III (*corpus planning*), can be used in the process of promoting or obstructing language practice of a target language (Ricento & Hornberger 1996). Secondly, the discussion of LI and LPP in this sub-section (*The Government*) and the following sub-section (*The Schools*) are closely linked because policy planning of LPP Type II requires the involvement of education. Education is used to control where language is learned and used through policy changes enacted by the government (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 403). This means that the government and the education system work closely together in developing LPP. In South Korea, the Ministry of Education, which is part of the South Korean government, plays a “central role” in the “frequent and numerous innovations” of South Korea’s English education policies (Chung & Choi 2016: 285). For example, the Ministry of Education sets English education policies in the National Education Curriculum which are enforced at South Korean schools (Chung & Choi 2016), showing how the relationship between the South Korean government and South Korean schools is crucial in developing and enforcing English LPP. Consecutively, as the practice
of LPP regulates LI, the LI of South Korean schools will be comparable to the LI of the South Korean government because schools carry out the policies of the government (Ricento & Hornberger 1996: 201). The South Korean government’s efforts toward English proficiency is discussed in §3.2, which analyzes the close relationship between the government and the schools towards developing LPP around English.

3.2 The Schools

As extensions of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the LI and LPP of South Korean schools cooperate with the South Korean government. However, the attitude of South Korean schools towards English also tend to focus on a smaller, more personal scale than the government’s aim to develop a more globally competent country. Chung & Choi (2016: 284) noted that “personal competence, success, and socioeconomic status” are associated with the proficient usage of English within education because of the perceived prestige of the English language. In correspondence to this notion, Song (2011: 48) agrees that English is perceived as the “ideology of merit” for the individual which extends access to “education and employment to many other social domains” that have connections with social mobility. This is significant because the LI of South Korean schools deviates from a nation-wide goal motivated by globalization. Instead, the LI of South Korean schools are focused towards a more personal purpose of acquiring English proficiency, valuing English as a language necessary to attain social mobility and economic prosperity by securing higher level education and jobs. Social mobility, especially, is most desirable in South Korea because it is difficult to achieve. Song (2011: 43) noted this difficulty, stating “South Korea’s
hierarchical structure of power relations is considerably more rigid and less mutable than those attested in most developed countries”. For example, marriage of individuals with different socio-economic status and education backgrounds is highly disapproved by the South Korean society (Song 2011: 43). Therefore, the perceived attainability of social mobility through English language proficiency makes English more valuable.

As previously noted, the MOE is a part of the South Korean government. The MOE enacts the government’s desired English LPP towards English proficiency in its English language policies. These English language policies are most observable through the National Educational Curriculum (NEC). The NEC is the manifestation of English education policies practiced at the primary and secondary level, which “are not only results of purely educational concerns but also results of the government’s appraisal of national needs” (Chung & Choi 2016: 290). Through the enforcement of the NEC, the LPP of South Korean schools is observable. LPP around English in South Korea was not spontaneous but developed gradually over a period of time as observed in the brief historical overview of NEC provided by Chung & Choi (2016: 286-290) below:

1\textsuperscript{st} NEC (1952-1963): English education policies adopt American English as their standard form of English.\footnote{The adoption of American English was in allegiance to the United States, which stationed military bases after the Korean War and supported South Korea’s reconstruction from the 1950s.} English was only taught at the secondary level.

2\textsuperscript{nd} & 3\textsuperscript{rd} NEC (1963-1981): English education policies initially focused on English speaking and listening skills. However, with

\footnote{The citations of NEC were adapted from Chung & Choi (2016).}
the government intending to control how students learn English, “the emphasis was switched back to grammar” (Chung & Choi 2016: 287).\footnote{There was continuous debate on only emphasizing English grammar as many argued that it limited the student’s individuality in learning because grammar only focused on the structure of the English language.}

4th & 5th NEC (1982-1994): English education policies permitted English-teaching extracurricular activities in primary schools to introduce young students to English early. Teaching hours of English were increased in middle school. Government control on how students learned English becomes more tolerable as English textbooks by private publishers may be used after government approval. By the 5th NEC, English listening skills were once again emphasized as they are formally included in the South Korean college entrance exam, the suneung\footnote{Incorporating an English section in the suneung was a critical change in South Korean education policy. This is because the nationwide college entrance exam, unlike the U.S. SAT, has higher stakes that determine the college choices available to students which affects future job prospects and income. Students that wish to apply for a prestigious college will have to demonstrate a high level of English proficiency. This also sets expectations that all South Korean youth are expected to demonstrate some English language skills for opportunities in higher education.}.

6th NEC (1995-2000): English education policies emphasized fluency of English over accuracy, meaning English teaching was made to follow a communicative approach that focused on English speaking and listening skills over English grammar. The South Korean government formed the “Globalization Steering Committee” in 1995 to address reforms central to increasing English proficiency (Chung & Choi 2016: 287). Teaching hours of English are increased for secondary level schools. The native...
English speaker program, ‘English Program in Korea’ (EPIK) is initiated.\(^7\)

7\(^{th}\) & \textit{Current NEC} (2000-): English education policies enacted the teaching of English in primary schools, specifically for English to be taught as part of the curriculum at the third-grade level. The first ‘English Village’, an educational camp for student to experience English-only immersion, was developed in 2004 by local governments.\(^8\) The government permitted college admission procedures to adopt a standard which grants automatic admission to students with high English proficiency skills.

As observed through the NEC, the LPP of South Korean schools are in line with the South Korean government. As the government increasingly focused on its goal towards globalization, the MOE continuously made improvements in English education policies within NEC so that government standards for English proficiency and methods of enforcing it towards South Korean youth were met in South Korean schools. The goals of the South Korean government and schools are to increase individual English skills and increase the level of English proficiency nation-wide. These goals developed with the intention of providing means to attain individual social mobility and developing a more globally competent country. However, the South Korean government and schools were both in a position of authority that control LPP and can enforce English language policies

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\(^7\) EPIK recruits native English speakers from foreign countries to teach in South Korean public schools, for the purpose of encouraging everyday conversational English proficiency.

\(^8\) While ‘English Villages’ are not unique to South Korea, it is most prevalent there. The first English Village in South Korea, the Gyeonggi English Village, has infrastructure strongly influenced by classic European style architectural design and is occupied by international native English speakers recruited through the government.
that carry out their LI. How does the LI of the South Korean public compare to the LI of the South Korean government and schools?

3.3 The Public: South Korean Adults

First, the South Korean public consists of a variety of age groups from different socioeconomic statuses. As previously discussed in §2.1, LI is not wholly centered around the target language but “the ties between language and other social factors or frameworks (such as gender, class, or nationality)” (Seargeant 2009: 349). This means that there are multiple social factors that influence the development of LI towards a target language and that different groups within the same community, such as within the general public, may have altered versions of LI. While the LI of the public cannot be generalized, it was also difficult identifying the different groups within the public and their different LI towards English in South Korea considering all social factors. Therefore, this thesis divided two groups within the public based on generational differences: the adults and the youth. This was decided in consideration to the purpose of this thesis, to examine the perception of South Korean youth under the imposition of English LI and LPP. While adults (such as parents, teachers, and future employers) are not in a position of developing English LPP like the government and schools, they have authority over the English education of South Korean youth by imposing their English LIs. Bacon & Kim (2018: 16) observed the influence of adult expectations which develops the youth’s awareness of English and compels the youth to learn English. Consequently, for this thesis, I examine
the LI of South Korean adults, such as parents, teachers, and future employers, to be representative of the South Korean public.\footnote{From here, any use of ‘South Korean public’ will be referring to South Korean adults and not the general public.}

In examining the LI of South Korean parents, I observed kyoyukyeol or ‘Education Fever’ assumed to be one of the origins (like the drive towards globalization) to South Korea’s “English Fever” (Park 2009: 50). South Korean parents have a reputation of heavily obsessing over the education of their children as it is perceived to be a significant determiner of a child’s future prospects such as social class and income (Park 2009; Shim & Park 2008; Park & Abelmann 2004). This is evident from the monetary investment and time-consuming schedules that parents make towards their children’s education outside of school such as cram schools (hagwon) and private tutoring (kwaeo). At these academic extracurriculars, “South Korean students typically leave home before 8 am or even earlier and return home well past midnight, with normal and supplementary school work, and private after-school instruction all packed in between” (Song 2013: 142), reflecting the intensive academic schedule followed by South Korean youth and manipulated by South Korean adults such as parents and teachers. Park (2009: 51) highlighted the extent of how much parents are willing to invest by noting in 2006, 20 trillion won (equivalent to nearly 20 billion U.S. dollars) were spent on education by South Korean parents, which was twice the amount recorded in 2000. This exponential increase in the amount of money spent on education was due to a shift towards yeongeokyoyuk or English education, as more than half of the money was found to have been spent towards extracurricular English education (Park 2009: 51). Despite the prestige associated with English
and the lengths at which the South Korean government debate adopting EOL, English is considered a foreign language. Therefore, English requires years of study and is costly if parents were to choose to support their children’s English education outside of regular schooling (McPhail 2018: 47). With the government changing English language policies such as including an English section into the nationwide college entrance exam (Chung & Choi 2016: 287), parental involvement shifted towards investing in English education. This included English camps (yeongocamp) such as “English Villages” (Chung & Choi 2016: 289), language training abroad (haewoeyonsu) (Park 2009: 51), and early overseas education (jogi yuhak) (Shim & Park 2008: 137). Early overseas education is an intensive practice by South Korean parents who send their children as young as elementary school students, “to English-speaking countries so that they can gain native-speaker-like fluency in the language” (Shim & Park 2008: 137) in order to secure early English education. However, continuous expressions of concern for the psychosocial wellbeing of South Korean children sent abroad during elementary school, deemed early overseas education of elementary school students illegal in South Korea since 2000. Despite this, reports of study abroad from 2000 to 2005 reported that the number of elementary school students sent abroad in 2005 was “11.5 times larger than that for the 2000 school year” (Park 2009: 54). This observation of practice by South Korean parents towards their child’s English education, demonstrates the English LI of parents view English as a paramount language, as much as how education is significant for social mobility and economic prosperity. In short, English is deemed worthy of expending considerable resources and time for.
Teachers enforce policies of the schools and can be perceived as extensions of the South Korean government’s LPP. However, their method of teaching demonstrates their diverse attitudes toward the English language. In Chung & Choi (2016: 291-296), a collection of “teachers’ accounts show that teachers act on their own agenda of significance, which is meeting the needs of the students, whether that is assisting students’ learning the language or passing the college entrance exam”. For example, one teacher stressed the importance of cultivating a student’s interest in the English language while another stayed behind the government’s traditional planning that focused on English skills necessary for the exam (Chung & Choi 2016: 294). The English LI of South Korean teachers value English, but at varying degrees from introducing English to the extent of the students’ interests, to prioritizing English for students to achieve higher education and enter the job market. This is significant because the goals for learning English are different for every teacher and teachers are the individuals who execute the government and schools LPP in the classroom.

So far, we have covered the LI of parents and teachers, which are observed to be comparable to the LI of the government and schools. Why does the LI of the South Korean public, mirror that of the South Korean government and South Korean schools? The government and “increasing influence of communicative teaching methods in academia” influence English LI and social practices of the public by manipulating areas of English that are vital to success (Park 2009: 52). The role of the government is critical in influencing the LI of other groups because its policies manipulate the goals of language education by shifting the requirements of opportunities which students prepare for in their
education such as applying for higher education or jobs. This means that enforced language policies make “English proficiency an essential requirement for entering schools, and securing and maintaining jobs” (Chung & Choi 2016: 284). Therefore, the South Korean government and schools set language goals that define social mobility and economic prosperity which influence the LI of the public. As large job-holding corporations similarly view the importance of English proficiency, their policies are influenced by imposing “insistence on English competence in the workplace – in conjunction with the promise of better pay and promotion- is [as] a continuation of the reward system that gives advantages to those with ‘good education’ [English proficiency] over those without” (Song 2011: 47). The once renowned conglomerate, Daewoo Group, was one such example of a large job-holding corporation that required English skills as its catchphrase, segye gyeongyeong (also known as global management) reflected the South Korean government’s new policy that values English proficiency (Shim & Park 2008: 145). This presents the significance of English competence in influencing access to the job market. The ambitions that influence the policies of the government affect standards of corporations that are potential future employees of South Korean youth. In response, schools that prepare students for those jobs would stress acquiring English proficiency in their curriculum. This demonstrates the “connections between ideologies of power in the modern state and development of language policies” (Ricento 2000: 205) where the government, in a position of power that controls LPP, influences LI of the public such as the values of parents and job-holding corporations.
The Usage of English by South Korean Youth: Case Studies

As I analyzed South Korea’s “English Fever” by examining the LI and LPP of the South Korea government, schools, and public, a common incentive towards learning the English language was the positive attainments associated with English such as social mobility and economic prosperity for both the individual and the country. In other words, “English is a fundamental survival tool for living and success” in South Korea (Song 2009: 37). In order to acquire English proficiency and increase the usage of English, a great deal of investment is made by the government, schools, and public such as monetary resources, time towards policy making, and training of critical groups such as teachers who will enforce English language policies (McPhail 2018; Shim & Park 2008; Chung & Choi 2016; Park 2009). However, despite these hefty investments, South Koreans’ English proficiency has only been “moderate” in comparison to other countries for the past seven years (2011-2018), according to Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index. In addition, South Korea’s average score on the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL)\(^{10}\) had only ranked 93rd out of the 147 other countries that took the standardized English proficiency test in 2004 and 2005 (Park 2009: 51). Although the LI and LPP of the South Korean government, schools, and public reflect an obsession with the English language that even considers adoption of EOL (Song 2011), the outcome reveals that the level of English competency in South Korea is only average. As Chung & Choi (2016: 284) had noted, the results in English proficiency “do not seem to reflect the amount of interest and investment Korea puts into English education”. Why does South Korea’s English competency level contrast greatly with their English LI and LPP? To closely

\(^{10}\) TOEFL is a standardized test measuring English language proficiency. The test is taken by non-native speakers of English from around the world, who wish to enroll in English-speaking universities and colleges.
observe English language practice, I examine South Korean youth as they largely represent the usage level of English in South Korea (Song 2011) and are direct recipients of the English education policies as students. I argue that there are limitations to South Korea’s “English Fever” which hinder the acquisition of the English language for South Korean youth. I observe and explain these limitations through two case-studies that provide evidence on the perceptions of South Korean youth towards LI and LPP (Choi 2016; Bacon & Kim 2018). Most importantly, they gathered student reports of English language practice to observe how youth were influenced by government, schools, and public LI and LPP.

4.1 Choi (2016)

This case-study collected ethnographic data through interviews with South Korean youth, as the informants, and observations of English LPP at a South Korean university. The university adopted EOL, meaning three English language policies were enforced at the university: 1) the official language of instruction is in English, also known as English-mediated instruction (EMI) 2) English is used in official documents 3) the usage of English-only in designated ‘English zones’ (Choi 2016: 785). The university was made up of both Korean students (96% of the student population) and international students (4% of the student population) (Choi 2016: 784). The English LI of the university was clearly stated in its campaign that proclaimed English “is the key to the global science community in science and technology research…a liberating device that launched them [the undergraduate students] into a global career” (Choi 2016: 786), viewing English as the key to creating a globalized Korean society. This is reflective of the government’s English LI that aims to “prepare[ing] citizens to participate with
confidence in the global market place and increase[ing] the nation’s international competitiveness” (Shim & Park 2008: 144-147). The perceived benefits of adopting EOL at the university were the development of confidence in English language use through continuous exposure and English language practice of communicative aspects of English such as listening and speaking. However, there were also perceived limitations to the LI and LPP of the university. Observing how South Korean youth followed the language policies of the university, this case-study reported its findings regarding the English language practice and perspectives of the youth toward the university’s English language policy.

First, while the university enforced an English-only policy, the informants of the case-study perceived this policy to be “space-specific because English use was limited to classrooms” (Choi 2016: 786). This means that students compartmentalized when English should be used, specifically when it was made compulsory by the university. Outside of the classroom, such as in student dormitories, students opted to not use English with neither their Korean peers nor international students because it felt “unnatural” and the dormitory was viewed as a space separate from “more work” (Choi 2016: 789-790). Although the university designated additional “English zones” for students to speak English-only, it was “difficult to enforce this rule” with the students; for similar reasons to the scarce usage of English in student dormitories (Choi 2016: 785). This observation found that despite aims of English language policy to make English available for all students by adopting EOL, South Korean youth deliberately limited English language practice to particular contexts for a specific purpose based on their own English LI. There is a lack of motivation to further pursue
English language practice apart from the curriculum that aims to enforce the English language as a “tool” to successfully enter “the global scientific community” (Choi 2016: 787). Chung & Choi (2016: 294-295) mentioned the constraints of English-mediated instruction (EMI) can set “unreasonable expectations” for English language learning and do not account for the interests of the students that can motivate them. This reflects a limitation to English LI and LPP that forces English-mediated policies on South Korean youth without accounting for their personal interests in the language, ultimately affecting engagement in English language practice.

Second, in the South Korean government’s English language policies and the language policy of the university, there is an emphasis on speaking English naturally that “has led to and was supported by the growing importance of English in higher education and the job market” (Shim & Park 2008: 146). While speaking naturally can be perceived as having “everyday conversational English proficiency” (Chung & Choi 2016: 289), the informants of the case-study associated naturally speaking English as “real English” while the English that they speak is “unnatural” because “nobody understands each other” (Choi 2016: 789-790). Even when a space is offered for students to practice English, there is reservation towards practicing English because they perceive each other as “bad speakers of English” (Choi 2016: 790). From this, it can be assumed that South Korean youth are diffident towards their use of the English language. The youth associated “real English” with native English speakers11, aiming for the potential academic achievements made by successfully approaching “native language

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11 American-English is used as the standard for native English as formally declared in the 1st NEC (1953-1963).
competence [which] is achieved only if they imitate native speakers” (Choi 2016: 787-790). This observation sheds light on the South Korean youth’s preference for “real English” only spoken by native English speakers, which limits their acquisition of the English language as they are motivated to imitate and not learn the English language.

In Choi (2016), South Korean youth are observed to practice a reserved usage of the English language, limited to specific contexts that require them to use English. Reported lack of interest in the language outside of the classroom and perceptions of naturally speaking English are viewed as factors that influence the limited English language practice which ultimately hinder English language learning. To further investigate these limitations, I analyzed another case-study that observed the English LI and concepts of native English defined by South Korean youth. Choi (2016) observed informants from a research university focused on globalization, science, and engineering, which could have potentially influenced the motives of its students. How may the observation of English LI of South Korean youth in another case-study, compare to the informants of Choi (2016)? What motivates South Korean youth to learn English? As Choi (2016) observed college students, I chose Bacon & Kim (2018) to extend analysis of South Korean youth to students who receive early English education in elementary and middle school.

4.2 Bacon & Kim (2018)

This case-study explored the LI of South Korean youth in a South Korean after-school English academy. The after-school English academy served students in elementary and middle school and held English-only immersion classes in the
evening. The 27 South Korean youth who participated in the study were from higher-level English courses for students who have “demonstrated “near-native” English proficiency based on the academy’s speaking, reading, writing, and listening exams modeled after the international TOEFL exam” (Bacon & Kim 2018: 14). The English LI of the schools, public, and the youth are defined as *neoliberal language ideologies*, LI that value the target language as a tool “used to access educational prestige, desirable employment, and social mobility... for economic competition in a capitalist system” (Bacon & Kim 2018: 11). This is similar to Song (2011: 48), who agrees that English is perceived as the “ideology of merit” for personal goals that aim for access to “education and employment to many other social domains” which influence socioeconomic prosperity. Through interview, questionnaires, and observations, the case-study examined English LI and language practice of South Korean youth influenced by surrounding English LI and LPP of the government, schools, and public.

First, informants of the case-study reported the connection between English and globalization, observing the English language as a tool to make the country more globally competent and attain more economic and social advantages (Bacon & Kim 2018: 15). While noting the government’s agenda towards English education policies, the South Korean youth did not empathize with the government’s perspective. Instead, South Korean youth were opposed to the role of English in South Korean national policy as a symbolic representation of globalization. This highlights that South Korean youths did not share the same LI with the South Korean government and schools. From this case study, the informants “generally deferred to parent and teacher preferences around the
prioritization of English” (Bacon & Kim 2018:18), which were neoliberal language ideologies. High regard for the English language defined by the neoliberal perspective associated English proficiency with personal merits such as “perceived intellectual and professional desirability”, “high quality life”, and “respect among peers” (Bacon & Kim 2018: 16-17). Similarly observed in Choi (2016), the focus on learning English to gain personal merits such as social, economic, and academic advantages, demonstrated the motivation of South Korean youth for English language practice. For example, an informant in Choi (2016: 787) valued English as a means to “make science and engineering achievements”. Such motivations can influence the extent at which South Korean youth pursue English language practice beyond the test scores of exams that measure perceived English abilities. In other words, personal ambitions that value the English language as a means to attain something, detaches interest towards learning about the language itself.

Second, as previously seen in Choi (2016), South Korean youth idealize the native English speaker. This is similarly observed in Bacon & Kim (2018: 17) as informants shared their English language goals to sound more like a native English speaker, to the extent that “being mistaken for a ‘foreigner’ [a native English speaker] is a positive result of linguistic performance”. Perceptively, the informants identified the idealization of native English speakers was influenced by the South Korean government which enforced speaking English naturally in its language policies (Shim & Park 2008: 146). While both case-studies do not imply any of the teachers in the educational settings to be native speakers, the South Korean government has taken action to expose their youth to native speakers. For
example, “the South Korean government started to seek native-speaking English teachers from foreign countries by starting the ‘English Program in Korea’ (EPIK)” (Chung & Choi 2016: 289). English LPP affects how South Korean youth associate English proficiency to native English speakers of American English. However, as observed in Choi (2016), the main issue with this language goal is that South Korean youth view their own use of the English language as incompetent if they are not at the “natural” or “native” speaking level. The idealization of native English and the native English speaker, “affects the way student perceive themselves in relation to the language”, which hinders language learning (Bacon & Kim 2018: 18). For example, students may experience “severe academic anxiety” at the primary and middle school level learning to perform speaking “native-like” instead of learning the English language (Bacon & Kim 2018: 17). The concept of the English native speaker in English LPP is a limitation to the acquisition of the English language for South Korean youth.

5 Discussion

In understanding the perceptions of South Korean youth towards surrounding English LI and LPP, two significant limitations were observed. First, English LI of South Korean youth emphasized the association of English proficiency with personal success and achievements. However, there was a lack of English language practice by South Korean youth outside of its usage as a tool. Choi (2016: 787) summarized this idea in the following observation: “English is simply imposed as a norm rather than a tool to communicate…this language ideology leads speakers to use English limitedly”. Second, the concept of “naturally speaking” English or native English by English LPP was ingrained in the English LI of South Korean youth, who perceived
their usage of English as “unnatural” and pursued “real English” (Choi 2016: 790). Consequently, observations on the idealization of native English examined its association with English language practice that was apprehensive of using English not on par with native English (Choi 2016; Bacon & Kim 2018). The attitude towards the utility of English and concepts of the native English speaker, limits English language practice for South Korean youth. Revisiting §2.3, which had discussed the cost of English education and the extent at which South Korean youth were placed in English language learning programs outside of school, another limitation is further discussed. This limitation is the socially stratifying features of English (McPhail 2018; Park 2009; Yoo 2005). Competition in English language education and enforcement of English proficiency in language policies are favorable for select South Korea youth with the resources to access extracurriculars for English language learning (McPhail 2018). This means that English language standards set by the South Korean government and schools, can be unfavorable for South Korean youth who cannot attain additional resources. As English is considered a foreign language in South Korea, the socially discriminate availability of resources to English language learning outside of the mainstream curriculum is inevitable. For example, in Singapore where English is one of the official languages, youth will easily find resources or opportunities to develop their proficiency in English outside of the curriculum. Therefore, the performance of English proficiency in Singapore ranks relatively higher than the performance of English proficiency in South Korea (Chung & Choi 2016: 289)\textsuperscript{12}. How is English LI of South Korean youth, which was observed to be influenced by surrounding English LPP and LI, hindering English language practice?

\textsuperscript{12} Chung & Choi (2016) analyzed rankings of English proficiency of the two countries based on Education First (2013) and performance on TOEFL tests by the Education Testing Service (2012).
How has the English LPP and LI of the government, schools, and the public, limited English language practice for South Korean youth?

5.1 Motivations for English

To better understand the lack of English language practice by South Korean youth, I investigate motivation in language learning and practice. In §2, we covered LI is the motivator for language practice because values and beliefs instigate actions, such as the South Korean government enforcing LPP reflective of their LI. An individual’s attitude towards a language rationalizes how they use the language (Silverstein 1979: 193), meaning that LI as motivation influences language practice. Motivation is critical from a pedagogical framework that aims to engage students in language learning. Oxford & Shearin (1994: 12) had observed the significance of motivation in second language and foreign language learning:

Research shows that motivation directly influences how often students use L2 learning strategies, how much students interact with native speakers, how much input they receive in the language being learned (the target language), how well they do on curriculum-related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency level becomes, and how long they persevere and maintain L2 skills after language study is over.

Gardner & Lambert (1959) identified two types of language learning motivation: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation is the practical interests in the language as a means to attain personal gains, such as more job opportunities. On the other end, integrative motivation is the interest in the language itself including the people who speak the language and the culture
associated with the language. While both types of motivation influence language learning and practice, Oxford & Shearin (1994: 15) noted that each differently influence the level of achievement in language learning. To better understand this difference and its association to the observed lack of English language practice by South Korean youth (Choi 2016), I examine a case-study that investigated the ability of instrumental motivation and integrative motivation within a second language classroom.

5.1.1 Hernández (2006)

This case-study took place at a university in the U.S., selecting participants from a second language Spanish course to investigate the influence of different variables of motivation in language learning. As Oxford & Shearin (1994: 24) identified language requirement as another motivator for language learning, Hernández (2006) integrated this additional variable in their study. Hernández (2006: 606) examined instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, and language requirement as potential variables that predict oral language proficiency and continued interest in learning the language. The 14-item questionnaire used for this study measured different motivators through a 4-point Likert scale, where students rated the level of importance each motivator item had towards their Spanish language learning (e.g. “I am interested in Hispanic culture, history, or literature).

13 The study measured oral language proficiency through a simulated oral proficiency interview (SOP), where speech samples are collected and proficiency is determined by the criteria of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1999).
Through their findings, the study found that “integrative motivation and the foreign language requirement were identified as significant predictors of students’ decisions to continue taking Spanish” (Hernández 2006: 611). Further investigating, the study found a positive relationship between integrative motivation and the students’ desire to continue studying Spanish (Hernández 2006: 611). This means that students with higher levels of rated importance towards integrative motivation, also had higher levels of expressed interest in continuing to study Spanish. In addition, the study found a negative relationship between language requirement and the students’ desire to continue studying Spanish (Hernández 2006: 611). This means that students with higher levels of rated importance towards the language requirement, had lower levels of expressed interest in continuing to study Spanish.

Regarding oral language proficiency, Hernández (2006: 610) found a significant relationship between integrative motivation and oral language proficiency ($B=0.041, p<0.001^{14}$). This means that students with higher levels of rated importance towards integrative motivation had higher scores of oral language proficiency. Hernández (2006: 610) found no significant relationship between instrumental motivation and oral language proficiency ($B=0.013, p=0.589$), and between foreign language requirement and oral language proficiency ($B=-0.048, p=0.121$). This means that instrumental motivation and language requirement did not predict level of oral language proficiency.

\(^{14}\text{P-values determine the statistical significance of a relationship between two variables. The smaller the p-value (typically from the value of } p=0.05\text{), the stronger the significance of the relationship.}\)
Hernández (2006: 611) found that integrative motivation was a significant predictor for oral language proficiency and continued interest in learning the language. This means that integrative motivation was found to be more meaningful for increased language achievement and continued language study, than instrumental motivation and language requirement. Hernández (2006: 611-612) suggested the significance of this finding should encourage efficient and engaging language instruction by enhancing integrative motivation to “increase students’ oral proficiency and stimulate their interest in further studies in the language”. Motivation is integral for language learning and practice.

5.1.2 Integrative Motivation vs. Instrumental Motivation

Although Hernández (2006) used “second language” and “foreign language” interchangeably, it is important to note a crucial difference between the two terms. “Second language” is a language that is “learned in a location where that language is typically used” and the learner is “surrounded by stimulation” (Oxford & Shearin 1994: 14). An example of a second language is English in India where the language holds an official status with the country’s native languages, meaning that the usage of English is commonplace outside of the academic environment (Lahiri 2008). On the other hand, “foreign language” is a language that “is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as the medium of ordinary communication” and where learners “have to go out of their way to find stimulation and input” (Oxford & Shearin 1994: 14). An example of foreign language is English in South Korea. Despite the observed
“English Fever” and debate on adopting EOL in South Korea, English continues to maintain its status as a foreign language in South Korea (Park 2009; McPhail 2018). This difference is crucial because Oxford & Shearin (1994: 15) identified foreign language learners had more instrumental goals than second language learners because of lack of experience with the target language community. They argued that instrumental motivation influences language achievement at a certain extent, but integrative motivation would be necessary to move beyond intermediate proficiency (Oxford & Shearin 1994: 15). Motivation for foreign language learning is critical in differentiating; to better understand motivation in English as a foreign language for South Korean youth.

Categorizing the English LI reported by South Korean youth in Choi (2016) and Bacon & Kim (2018), English language learning and practice is influenced by instrumental motivation. To reexamine, the English LI of the schools, public, and the youth are defined as neoliberal language ideologies, LI that value the target language as a tool “used to access educational prestige, desirable employment, and social mobility...for economic competition in a capitalist system” (Bacon & Kim 2018: 11). This is relevant to the limited language practice reported by South Korean youth in Choi (2016) and Bacon & Kim (2018), because incentives for learning the English language is largely for practical purposes with little interest in the language itself. This is observed in Choi (2016: 790) when students shared reluctance in practicing English unless it was compulsory because usage of English in other respects would just be
“more work”. The South Korean youth were less inclined to use English for communicative purposes apart from its perceived instrumental purpose:

Participants overall discussion of English usage demonstrated their awareness that learning the language had little to do with actual communication. Instead, they discussed the ways in which their English test scores and perceived abilities could be leveraged for social, educational, and peer advantage, or as a functional prerequisite for educational and employment opportunities. Participants further demonstrated full recognition that English itself would likely be irrelevant for communicative purposes in most of these contexts. (Bacon & Kim 2018: 18)

In other words, instrumental motivation towards English language learning and practice is associated with the observed English LI of South Korean youth. LI of South Korean youth is imposed by the “dynamics of power” such as the government which has authority over LPP (Bacon & Kim 2018: 19). The government and “increasing influence of communicative teaching methods in academia” influence English LI and social practices of the South Korean youth by manipulating goals of English language practice (Park 2009: 52). For example, the government permitted college admission procedures to adopt a standard which grants automatic admission to students with high English proficiency skills (Chung & Choi 2016: 290). In another example, job-holding corporations value “English competence as an important criterion in job application and
performance evaluation, [where] employers may reserve the option of invoking English competence as a reason for hiring or firing as well as for (not) promoting employees” (Song 2013: 142). Such examples of favoritism towards the usage of English, enforce attitudes that view English as a means to an end and motivate South Korean youth to learn and practice English for those benefits. However, there is an extent to which language learners can acquire language proficiency and language interest with instrumental motivation as observed in Hernández (2006), where instrumental motivation and language requirement did not predict “higher” level of oral language proficiency. This observation presents a limitation in English LI and LPP of South Korea which only support instrumental motivation. As Oxford & Shearin (1994: 15) suggested, “integrative motivation might be necessary to go beyond the intermediate level in foreign language learning”. If the South Korean English LI and LPP shift emphasis away from instrumental motivation to integrative motivation, then English language learning and practice will enhance for South Korean youth.

5.2 Concepts of the “Native Speaker”

In the South Korean government’s English language policies and the language policy at the university (Choi 2016), there is an emphasis on speaking English naturally that “has led to and was supported by the growing importance of English in higher education and the job market” (Shim & Park 2008: 146). Consequently, South Korean youth have developed a desire to speak English naturally or native-
like\textsuperscript{15}. This is observed in the informants of Choi (2016) and Bacon & Kim (2018), who pursue “real English” and the ideal native English speaker.

‘Naturally speaking’ or ‘the native speaker’ sets expectations towards a “perfect” standard (Butcher 2005: 15) where any deviation is “deemed erroneous”. This perspective of linguistic myopia has limited insight into the possibility of variations in the English language other than the native English speaker. In addition, this can set limitations on language learning because it juxtaposes the superior usage of a language from an inferior usage of a language. This is observed in Choi (2016: 790), as South Korean youth showed reserved English language practice because they perceive each other as “bad speakers of English” unlike the “real English” used by native English speakers. South Korean youth perceive an “ideology of self-deprecation” where they believe in a consistent “lack of competence” in their own English language abilities (Song 2011: 41). This is generalizable to all native Koreans speakers using English. I. Kym & M. H. Kym (2014: 55-56) surveyed South Korean youth and their overall satisfaction according to their English instructor’s background as a native English speaker or non-native English speaker, and their instructor’s nationality. The survey found significantly higher ratings of satisfaction for English instructors who were native English speakers and American. In contrast, instructors who were non-native English speakers and Korean received the lowest ratings of satisfaction by South Korean youth regardless of their competency to teach the English language. This shows that South Korean youth are more biased towards native English speakers and reflects the “ideology of self-deprecation” that perceives native Korean

\textsuperscript{15} Again, American-English is the set standard for native English speakers.
speakers as incompetent speakers of English (Song 2011:41). The idealized native speaker sets “perceptions of the English language as one [that can only be] “owned” by native English speakers” (Bacon & Kim 2018: 18), which distances perceived capabilities of acquiring a language and lowers confidence for South Korean youth.

Concepts of the “native speaker” and standards of speaking like a native speaker are purely idealistic for any language. Butcher (2005: 15) clarified that “being a ‘native speaker’ is not good enough to make one a good teacher of the English language” examining linguistic errors made even by presidents of the United States such as George W. Bush. The selection of who is the “native speaker” is based on perceived “dynamics of power” by the country, such as how the informants of Bacon & Kim (2018: 15) attested the influence of the ideal native English speaker to the global influences of “Anglo-American economic power”. In other words, concepts of the “native speaker” set unrealistic expectations that only develop apprehension of speaking English for South Korean youth (McPhail 2018: 47). These unrealistic expectations can additionally hinder English language learning because naturally speaking English can be linguistically challenging for native Korean speakers. South Korean youth not only have to memorize a new English alphabet and lexicon, but also need to discern the different syntactical rules of English (Rüdiger 2014). For example, a systematic usage of definite articles in combination with proper nouns (e.g. ‘a lot of people are complaining about different meaning of the Konglish’) is a common error by native Korean speakers learning English (Rüdiger 2014: 13). This highlights an additional hindrance by the concept of “native speaker” perceived
by South Korean youth as a result of enforced English LI and LPP by the government and schools. Idealizations of the native speaker in English LI and LPP discourage English language practice and sets unrealistic expectations of English proficiency for South Korean youth.

In response to the limitations to English language learning and practice brought by the concept of “native speaker”, Butcher (2005: 20-22) suggested a “more neutral” stance that is accepting of variations such as “Korean English”. There are numerous variations to English as a global language (Crystal 2012: 13) resulting from long-term contact between English and the native language of a country such as Indian English (Lahiri 2008) and Singapore English (Tan 2017). By holding a neutral stance rather than a stance of linguistic myopia towards the English language, language learners can view variations of English from the “native speaker” as evolutions to the English language rather than distortions (Butcher 2005). However, presently English LI and LPP in South Korea limit English language learning and practice by promoting idealization of the native speaker, such as by seeking native English speakers internationally to come teach English in South Korean public schools (Chung & Choi 2016: 289). Popularizing a neutral stance that is accepting of variations to English will require more advocacy for native Korean speakers to teach English as a model for the youth.

5.3 Accessibility of English

With the ongoing “English Fever”, there is strong competition to attain English language proficiency with the best resources. For example, parents religiously send their children to English cram schools (hagwon), private tutoring (kwaoe), English camps (yeongocamp) such as “English Villages” (Chung & Choi
2016: 289), language training abroad (haewoeyonsu) (Park 2009: 51), or early overseas education (jogi yuhak) (Shim & Park 2008: 137). These practices reflect the willingness to invest in English language learning which inevitably manifest social stratification where South Korean youth of higher socioeconomic status have more available resources to English language learning. Park & Abelmann (2004) observed these qualities of social stratification through accounts of South Korean mothers who invested in English language education for their children. While a working-class mother could afford after-school English language learning programs, she recognized that they weren’t “the best available” compared to the English schools and abroad programs affordable for middle-class and upper middle-class mothers (Park & Abelmann 2004: 653-665). The best education offered is commonly sought after in South Korea because social mobility is believed to be sustained by the medium of education or cohun hakpel ‘good education’” (Song 2011: 44). Consequently, standards for English competence in South Korean schools and employment are raised to meet the standards of ‘good education’ or the level of English learned and practiced by South Korean youth from wealthy families (Song 2011: 143). This division places South Korean youth from less-privileged socioeconomic class at a disadvantage because students who already have limited access to additional English language learning, will not be able to cope with the high English language standards now set by South Korean schools and employment. This is a limitation to English LI and LPP which are not inclusive of all South Korean youth’s accessibility to English language learning and practice.
Competition in English language education and enforcement of English proficiency in language policies are favorable for select South Korea youth from socioeconomic backgrounds that provide more opportunities such as private tutoring of the English language. This presents an issue with English education because gaps between socioeconomic status are further augmented as South Korean youth of middle-class backgrounds achieve higher education and job opportunities, more so than their peers of working-class background. Song (2013: 141-142) labeled these class connotations as the ‘English Divide’ which is “the schism between the privileged and the other social class, accentuated or reinforced by the ability to have access to English-language education outside the national education system”. English language learning enforced by English LI and LPP in South Korea is promoting the divide in different socioeconomic classes “as one of the mechanisms for maintaining or sustaining inequality as it is already structured in South Korea” (Song 2011: 42-43). ‘English Divide’ has been a continuous issue in South Korea that the South Korean government had intervened with alternatives to academic English language extracurriculars. The development of ‘English Villages’, an educational camp for South Korean youth to experience English-only immersion, is how the government faces the “growing English divide within society” (Trottier 2008: 72). Costs to attend ‘English Villages’ are subsidized so that the English-immersion camp would be available to even South Korean youth from working-class families. However, ‘English Villages’ have yet to establish its legitimacy in the English language learning and teaching community, as policies of reform are planning to make ‘English Villages’ operate at a larger-scale and for longer-term (Trottier 2008: 85). As the
‘English Divide’, developed from English LPP in South Korea, promotes social inequalities of access to English language education (Song 2011), the accessibility of English limits English language learning and practice for South Korean youth with minimal resources.

6 Conclusion

“English Fever” represents the substantial value of English proficiency as a means for national and personal upward mobility in South Korea. By analyzing English LI, LPP, and language practice in South Korea, an understanding is developed that the position of English is beyond just a ‘foreign language’. Labeling English as a foreign language indicates it as an option and doesn’t reflect the increasing desirability for English and investments made towards English proficiency in South Korea. Therefore, EOL has been an ongoing debate by the South Korean government for more than 20 years. However, it is clear that present English LI shared by the government, schools, and the public, and English LPP enforced by the government and schools restrict English language practice of South Korean youth. It is critical to recognize these limitations in the process of addressing LPP to improve English proficiency for South Korean youth. Promotion of instrumental motivation, limited notions of English “native speakers”, and social stratification in accessing English education can be addressed by incorporating opportunities to learn about and develop interest on the people and culture associated with English in the curriculum, advocating for Korean native speakers to teach English and model Korean-English, and increasing access for English language practice through opportunities like ‘English Villages’. Further research will be needed to measure English language practice of South Korean youth without the limitations of present English LI and LPP.
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