

Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Middle and Secondary Education Dissertations

Department of Middle and Secondary Education

Summer 8-7-2018

FROM ESL LEARNERS TO EFL LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT KOREAN RETURNEES

Ji Hye Shin
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_diss

Recommended Citation

Shin, Ji Hye, "FROM ESL LEARNERS TO EFL LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT KOREAN RETURNEES."
Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2018.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_diss/66

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Middle and Secondary Education at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Middle and Secondary Education Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, FROM ESL LEARNERS TO EFL LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT KOREAN RETURNEES, by JI HYE SHIN, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

Peggy Albers, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Diane Belcher, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Nadia Behizadeh, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Laura May, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Jayoung Choi, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Date

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Chairperson,
Department of Middle and Secondary Education

Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean,
College of Education and Human Development

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education and Human Development's Director of Graduate Studies, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

Ji Hye Shin

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Ji Hye Shin
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Peggy Albers
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Ji Hye Shin

EDUCATION:

| | | |
|-------------------|------|--|
| Ph.D. | 2018 | Georgia State University Middle Secondary Education |
| Master's Degree | 2007 | Korea University English Education |
| Bachelor's Degree | 2004 | Hankuk University of Foreign Studies English Translation and Interpretation |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

| | |
|------------|---|
| 2018 | <i>Provost's dissertation fellowship.</i> Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. |
| 2017 | <i>College of Education and Human Development Scholarship.</i> Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. |
| 2017 | <i>The Language and Literacy Doctoral Fund Award.</i> Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. |
| 2013- 2017 | <i>Dean's Research Doctoral Fellowship.</i> Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. |

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Choi, J., **Shin, J. H.**, & Cho, A. (2016). Review of the book *Maintaining three languages: the teenage years (Parents' and teachers' guides)*. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. DOI:10.1080/14790718.2016.1257538. 1-4.

Albers, P., Angay-Crowder, T., Turnbull, S., Cho, A., **Shin, J. H.**, Pang, M.E., Pace, C.L., Sena, M., Wang, H., & Jung, J. (2016). Learning together in online holistic critical professional development spaces. *Talking Points*, 27(2).

Park, J., Park, M., **Shin, J.**, Li, B., Rolfe, D., Yoo, J., & Dittmore, S. W. (2015). The effect of sports participation on internet addiction mediated by self-control: a case of Korean adolescents. *Global Sport Business Journal*, 3(3), 82.

Shin, J. H. & Albers, P. (2015). An analysis of the effect of a cyber home learning system on Korean secondary school students' English language achievement and attitude. *TESL Canada Journal*. 32(2).

Albers, P., Turnbull, S., Angay-Crowder, T., Cho, A., **Shin, J. H.**, Pace, C., Pang, M.E., Sena, M., & Jung, J. (2015). Questions of matter: Critical conversations in online spaces. *Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy*, 59(2), 171–181.

Albers, P., Cho, A., **Shin, J. H.**, Pang, M., & Angay-Crowder, T., with Jung, J., Pace, C., Sena, M., & Turnbull, S. (2015). Critical spaces for critical times: Global Conversations in Literacy Research as an open professional development and practices resource. *Global Education Review*, 2(3), 14-31.

Scholarly Presentations

Shin, J. H., Cho, A., & Albers, P. (2016, December). *Examining NNES EFL teachers' professional development through online web seminars*. Paper presentation at the annual meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Nashville, TN.

Choi, J., **Shin, J. H.**, Pang, M., & Cho, A. (2016, Oct). *Culturally sustaining pedagogy for content area teacher of English learners*. Paper presentation at the annual meeting of Georgia TESOL (GATESOL), Perimeter, Atlanta, Georgia.

Shin, J. H. (2016, April). *Being an EFL Learner From an ESL Learner: a Case Study of a Young Korean Returnee*. The American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference. Orlando, FL.

Albers, P., **Shin, J. H.**, Turnbull, S., Angay-Crowder, T. Cho, A., Pace, C., Pang, M. E., Sena, M., Hwang, Huan., & Jung, J. K. (2015, December). *Online is new F2F*. Literacy Research Association. Carlsbad, CA.

Shin, J. H., (2015, October). *A story of Korean returnees transforming from ESL learners to EFL learners*. Second Language Research Forum 2015 Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

Shin, J. H., (2015, August). *From ESL learner to EFL learner: Investigating Korean returnees' perceptions on different language learning contexts*. KATE 2015 International Conference, Seoul, Korea.

Albers, P., Pace, C.L., Angay-Crowder, T., **Shin, J. H.**, Cho, A., Pang, M.E., Turnbull, S., & Sena, M. (2015, April). *Online is the new face2face: Critical and global participation in literacy research through web seminars*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Conference, Chicago, IL.

Shin, J. H., Cho, A., & Albers, P. (2015, March) *A case study of two Korean EFL teachers' perceptions of web seminars as a professional development tool*. Presentation at the American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference. Toronto, OR.

Shin, J. H. (2014, March). *Cyber Home Learning Systems as supplemental English-language learning tools*. Presentation at the American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference, Portland, OR.

**FROM ESL LEARNERS TO EFL LEARNERS:
A CASE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT KOREAN RETURNEES**

by

JI HYE SHIN

Under the Direction of Dr. Peggy Albers

ABSTRACT

There are growing populations of Korean parents who wish their children to have study abroad experience in the ESL (English as a second language) context due to their beliefs that early exposure to an English-speaking environment is beneficial for children's English proficiency. However, many children return to South Korea before reaching college age for various reasons, and Korean returnees are concerned on how to maintain (or improve) their children's English proficiency in the EFL (English as a foreign language) context. Although there are some studies related to Korean English language learners' study abroad experiences and second language acquisition, few studies have been conducted to investigate how study abroad experience influences Korean returnees' English language learning experience.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate English language learners who recently returned to South Korea after learning English in the U.S. for more than two years. The research questions were as follows: 1) How do Korean returnees perceive the change of learning status from ESL learners to EFL learners, and 2) What characteristics influence the

extent to which Korean returnees maintain or lose their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea?

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is based on the related literature of second language acquisition (SLA) theories and study abroad (SA) studies. Among second language acquisition studies, second language attrition theories are investigated and specific Korean education backgrounds are introduced. By using a case study method, I provide an extensive and in-depth description of Korean returnees' English language learning experiences. Data were collected through the researcher's field notes and semi-structured interviews with five participants and their mother. By analyzing Korean returnees' perceptions on ESL and EFL learning contexts, this study extends the literature in the field of second language acquisition and contributes knowledge about factors that motivate English language learners to maintain and improve their English proficiency. This study has implications for English language learners within the U.S. and from other countries who struggle to achieve or at least maintain their second language proficiency.

INDEX WORDS: Second language maintenance, Second language attrition, Returnees, ESL and EFL learners. Study abroad, language acquisition

FROM ESL LEARNERS TO EFL LEARNERS:
A CASE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT KOREAN RETURNEES

By

Ji Hye Shin

A dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Teaching and Learning

in

the Department of Middle and Secondary Education

in

the College of Education

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2018

Copyright by
Ji Hye Shin
2018

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving husband, Kyung Don, our lovely daughter, Yuna, and my beloved family. Without your love, support, and prayers, I could not have come this far.

Thank you for having faith in me and telling me “You can do this” every time I had a fear, frustration, and struggle. You gave me strengths to overcome challenges and encouraged me to see things from positive perspectives. I love you all with all my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank God for showing me a way that I never imagined I would be granted with and for guiding me from the beginning to the end. I appreciate all the great things that happened to me during my doctoral journey. I am grateful that I have a family who has been supportive and encouraging ever since I decided to pursue my goal. I would like to thank all my professors and mentors that I studied under or worked with during the PhD program for the last five years.

I want to show appreciation to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Diane Belcher, Dr. Nadia Behizadeh, Dr. Jayoung Choi, and Dr. Laura May. Your deep understanding, expertise and insights guided my dissertation to have richer description and diverse perspectives. Your thoughtful and insightful feedback helped me to have more holistic ideas and make my wisdom appear on paper.

Most of all, I am lucky and grateful that I met Dr. Albers, the chair of dissertation committee. Your dedicated and hard-working attitude inspired me and taught me how to become a devoted scholar in academia. I appreciate all your time, effort, and encouragement that you have given me, and your consistent support and guidance through my doctoral journey. You are an example of a strong scholar, dedicated mentor, and supportive professor. You were not only my advisor but also my mentor and friend. I would never forget the baby shower that you threw for me with colleagues in the Global Conversation Literacy Research team. Having GCLR research team ties at GSU made me feel affiliated, a sense of belonging, and relieved. Sharing friendship with the colleagues is something I appreciate the most through my doctoral journey. All the projects that we have done together helped me greatly to establish myself as a scholar.

I also thank my husband for giving me confidence and enormous support whenever I was at my lowest or highest. To my lovely daughter, Yuna, you were the driving force to finish this dissertation. Your existence itself gave me courage, unending love and everything I need in life. My parents supported me with tears and prayers as I grew to be a stronger person and always showered love and grace upon me. My sister, Inkyoung, was always there for me listening to my emotions and her husband, Dukbum, prayed for me as well. I am thankful to my parents-in-law for loving me, having a faith in me and supporting me with all their heart. I appreciate my sister-in-law, Jane and her husband, Sungjee for their prayers and encouragement in every step of my journey. My dear friends, Hyea and Shieun, I am so lucky to have you both in my life.

Finally, I am grateful for my five participants – Hyun, Brian, Timothy, Sarah and Kayla – who shared their stories and agreed to distribute their experiences through my words and perspectives. Thanks to your voluntary participation in this study I could understand English language learners with diverse backgrounds who provided great inspiration to me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| LIST OF TABLES | vi |
| LIST OF FIGURES | vii |
| Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Rationale for this Study | 1 |
| Purpose of the Study..... | 10 |
| Research Questions..... | 11 |
| Theoretical Perspectives: Social Constructionism and Second Language Acquisition | 12 |
| Overview of the Study..... | 16 |
| Definition of Key Terms..... | 17 |
| Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 19 |
| Second Language Acquisition Theories | 19 |
| Second Language Attrition Theories | 30 |
| Study Abroad Research | 37 |
| English Education in Korea..... | 40 |
| Changes of Motivation in the ESL and the EFL Context..... | 44 |
| Summary..... | 47 |
| Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY..... | 49 |
| Research Questions..... | 49 |
| Theoretical Considerations of Qualitative Research | 50 |
| Role of Researcher..... | 52 |
| Research Design | 53 |
| Data collection..... | 64 |
| Data Analysis..... | 70 |
| Ethical Considerations | 75 |
| Chapter 4 FINDINGS | 77 |
| Overview | 77 |
| Finding 1: Participants’ perceptions of English proficiency after their return to South Korea | 80 |
| Finding 2: Participants’ use of strategies for learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea | 107 |
| Finding 3: Participants’ use of educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency | 121 |
| Finding 4: Parents as a critical resource in participants’ maintaining English proficiency | 139 |
| Summary..... | 152 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 5 DISCUSSION | 155 |
| The Significance of the Study | 156 |
| Self-perceptions of Korean Returnees' English Proficiency are Influential in their Language Learning Experience..... | 157 |
| Flexibility in ESL/EFL Strategy Use is Important in Maintaining English for Korean Returnees | 163 |
| Seeking Out Alternate Resources is Important in Maintaining English Proficiency | 167 |
| Parents were a Critical Resource in Participants' Maintaining English Proficiency. | 170 |
| Implications for Practice..... | 173 |
| Implications for Research..... | 177 |
| Concluding Thoughts | 178 |
| REFERENCES | 180 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1 Van Els taxonomy..... | 6 |
| Table 2 Number and percentage of elementary school students who have study abroad experiences..... | 41 |
| Table 3 Seoul Metropolitan office of education (Retrieved from http://return.sen.go.kr) | 42 |
| Table 4 Characteristics of individual participants..... | 57 |
| Table 5 Researcher field notes example..... | 65 |
| Table 6 Interview and member checks for each participant | 70 |
| Table 7 Example of initial coding..... | 72 |
| Table 8 Example of data analysis chart..... | 73 |
| Table 4 Characteristics of individual participants..... | 80 |
| Table 9 Participants' perceptions of their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea | 81 |
| Table 10 Participants' diverse perceptions of the extent to which they maintained English proficiency after having returned to South Korea and their motivation..... | 105 |
| Table 11 Participants' resources to maintain their English proficiency..... | 121 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1. Number of “early study abroad” students in South Korea | 41 |
| Figure 2. Hyun’s book review with comments from the teacher in the <i>Hakwon</i> | 133 |
| Figure 3. Brian’s texts in English on Google Hangout..... | 138 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study investigated Korean returnees who have had study abroad experiences for more than two years in English-speaking countries. Special focus was centered on their perceptions on different learning contexts - English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL)—and their efforts to maintain or improve English proficiency. I begin this chapter by describing the contextual factors that motivated the study. I then present the study's goals and questions, and briefly overview the study's approach to investigate the research questions, with relevant research literature as well as the research methodology.

Rationale for this Study

This study was motivated by three contextual factors surrounding the problem of Korean returnees who have study abroad experiences and are eager to maintain their English proficiency: the worldwide trend of English learning, the phenomenon of education migration in South Korea, and lack of educational support in South Korea for returnees. Taking these factors into important consideration provides the rationale for this study.

Based on the worldwide trend of English becoming “increasingly favored as a second language” (Crystal, 2012; Duff & Anderson, 2015; Leung, Davidson, & Mohan, 2014; McCargo, 2004), or “linguistic imperialism” (Canagarajah, 1999) a large number of English language learners invest their time, money and efforts to study abroad. Especially, there are growing populations of Korean parents who wish their children to have study abroad experience in English-speaking countries due to their strong beliefs that English pronunciation and intonation can be notably different when their children learn English in an English as a second language (ESL) context at early age (Park & Bae, 2009). However, for economic, social and

environmental reasons, families return to South Korea before reaching children reach college age, and it is not easy for their children to maintain their English proficiency as English as a foreign language (EFL) learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010). This group of young Korean returnees who studied abroad and learned English in ESL contexts now have to adjust to a new learning environment in EFL context and change their learning strategies as EFL learners (Gürsoy, 2010). Thus, it is meaningful to examine young Korean returnees who have recently moved back to South Korea from the U.S., and investigate how they perceive their second language acquisition process in both countries, and the factors that influence their learning status from being ESL learners to EFL learners.

In this study, a traditional distinction between ESL and EFL learning context was based on the idea that in an ESL setting, a second language is learned in countries where the language had an official status and people used it in their everyday lives. In an EFL setting, a foreign language is learned primarily at schools and considered an unofficial language (Mora, 2013). Yet, the complexity of the language learning process and its contexts were also considered and acknowledged as part of this research. According to Mora (2013), a traditional distinction between ESL and EFL was inherited in the field of second language learning and was problematized in many ways. Researchers have questioned the dichotomy and distinction between the concepts of ESL and EFL (Bhatt, 2010; Nayar, 1997). Bhatt (2010) suggested that World Englishes represents “a paradigm of research in the study of English in the global context that focused on English language variation and change over time and space” (p.93). Nayar (1997) insisted that new labels are needed for denoting ESL and EFL and pointed out that

Although there is some sort of vague universal acceptance of the existence of two different entities called ESL and EFL, a great deal of referential fuzziness within

the two and denotative overlap between the two are making the terminological distinctions unclear, impractical, and ineffective or, worse still, in some cases inauspicious and irrelevant. The applied linguistic and pedagogic motivations for these labels and acronyms may well be out of touch with the current complexity of English in the world and of World Englishes (p.10).

Other scholars have addressed the dichotomy and fuzziness of distinction between ESL and EFL as well. As the definition of geography and mobility has changed, the dichotomy has now been largely dismantled, and the boundaries between the ESL and EFL situation has been blurred especially when technology has provided new forms of mobility (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Gilquin and Granger (2011) stated that the dichotomy of ESL and EFL should be viewed as a continuum, not a binary in a variety of learning contexts. For example, a traditional definition of EFL learners can be problematized depending on the amount and the quality of language instruction that focused on form and/or communication, the type and amount of exposure to the target language outside the classroom or in non-language subject classroom, the amount of access to English-speaking media, or the amount of time spent in a country where English is spoken. Instead of using two binary terms, some researchers suggested the idea of replacing these terms such as using English as an additional language (Thorne & Black, 2008), English as a global language (Nunan, 2003) or English as an international language (McKay, 2002; Pennycook, 2017). What these researchers suggested is that relabeling the terms is socio-politically and pedagogically significant for teaching and learning English in the world. While this research discusses English language learners in the ESL and EFL contexts, in this study, the transition process of Korean returnees English learning experiences showed that the participants were on a continuum of both ESL and EFL, not defined by either distinction. As Korean

returnees had long-term study abroad experiences and learned English in South Korea as a foreign language subject, it is difficult to separate English learning/instruction in the two extremes and to explain the differences in English learning environment.

In recent years, a large number of Korean students have enrolled in schools in English-speaking countries such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Park & Bae, 2009). They are accompanied by one or both of their parents, live by themselves in boarding schools, or live with a local guardian. Among Koreans, this phenomenon of education migration is called *jogi yuhak*, which means “early study abroad.” *Jogi yuhak* (Park & Bae, 2009) has become prevalent among Korean middle-class families, and the phenomenon of sending children abroad to get an education in English is not unusual any more (Lee & Koo, 2006). This phenomenon has occurred because South Korea presently faces a number of pressing educational issues such as increased household private tutoring expenses, deteriorating quality of public education, and fierce competition surrounding the Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test (KSAT) (Seth, 2002). The dissatisfaction of Korean students and parents with public English education has led to extreme dependence on expensive private after-school education including short-period study abroad programs (Hwang, Yang & Kim, 2010). This trend toward increased reliance on after-school education reveals a growing gap in access to educational opportunities that threaten the social stability of Korean society.

According to the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), about 30,000 elementary, middle and high school students left South Korea for study abroad in 2006 and in 2008, 22,262 returnees came back to South Korea after short-term or long-term study abroad. In 2016, only about 9,000 students left South Korea due to the reasons such as economy regression and failure of indiscreet *jogi yuhak* precedents, however, there are still a large accumulated

number of Korean returnees. Lee and Koo (2006) claim the dominant reason for *jogi yuhak* is to allow children to learn English in the ESL context and to give them a better education in the advanced Western countries. With the ever-growing globalization and trans-nationalization of the South Korean economy, English has become more important than ever and is perceived as an essential requirement to secure good corporate jobs or professional careers. However, due to the global economic recession and psychological and behavioristic problems that have occurred with *jogi yuhak* children (Lee & Koo, 2006; Park, 2009), a large number of Korean children returned to their home countries and strove to maintain their English proficiency.

The fast-increasing number of young Korean children who are sent abroad by their parents for a study has become a social concern in South Korea (Kim, 2006). Although many experts warn that this early study abroad trend may cause a variety of problems in the children's emotional/psychosocial, linguistic, and academic development (Kim, 2006; Park, 2009), still many Korean parents want to send their children to foreign countries for the acquisition of English. However, even after these children's long-term study abroad experiences and they return to Korean public schools, Korean schools and education policies do not sufficiently support Korean returnees' educational needs.

Second language maintenance and loss after early study abroad are critical areas of study in English language learning. Schmid and Köpke (2011) stated that language attrition can be seen as an individual, psycholinguistic phenomenon resulted from a constant interaction between two languages. Weltens, de Bot, and van Els (1987) divided language attrition into four areas known as the "Van Els taxonomy" depending on what language is lost in which environment. Below is the table that shows how language attrition can be represented in four areas (see Table 1).

Table 1

Van Els taxonomy

| | L1 language environment | L2 language environment |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| First language loss | L1 loss (e.g. aphasia) | L1 loss (e.g. immigrants) |
| Second language loss | L2 loss (e.g. language students) | L2 loss (e.g. older immigrants who revert to their L1) |

These four areas of language attrition include first language (L1) loss in an L1 environment; L1 loss in a second language (L2) environment; L2 loss in an L1 environment; L2 loss in an L2 environment (Wei, 2014). Among these areas, this study focuses on second language loss in an EFL environment, which can be found among those who lose their second language learned at school or those who once lived in an ESL environment and returned to their EFL environment.

While there is some knowledge about second language maintenance and loss in adults, there is limited information about young children (Verdon, McLeod, & Winsler, 2013). Verdon, McLeod and Winsler (2013) collected three waves of data from 4252 young children to identify patterns of language maintenance and loss among those who speak languages other than English for over five years. The languages spoken by the children were Arabic, Vietnamese, Italian, Spanish, and Greek. Overall, 91.5% of children maintained speaking a language other than English. However, children's patterns of longitudinal language acquisition and loss over the first five years of life varied within and between language groups. For example, Arabic-speaking children tended to maintain Arabic throughout early childhood, whereas Italian-speaking children's use of Italian decreased over the first five years of life while the use of English

steadily increased. Environmental and personal factors such as parental language use, the presence of a grandparent in the home, type of early childhood care, first- and second-generation immigrant status, and parental perception of support from the educational environment were related to language maintenance among non-English speaking children.

The gradual loss of a language learned abroad is taken for granted especially for young returnees back in their home countries, and it is critical to examine the nature and extent of second language attrition in various populations. Yoshitomi (1999) studied the loss of English as a second language in four female Japanese returnee children who spent several years during their youth exposed to a second language and acquired English naturally. With a rising need in Japan to develop language maintenance programs for both the first language and second language of such children, his qualitative case study examined the language attrition process in these four participants as well as the factors that affect the process such as differences in personality and aptitude including various developmental, psychological, cognitive, sociological, and sociopsychological variables. He found that the participants showed little language attrition; phonological skills were retained better than verb morphology, articles and lexicon. However, when the returnees produced the language by combining the language subskills, the language attrition was more obvious. They made errors in providing complex structures. He concluded that although regression in the individual subskills of English is not considerable, the small degree of regression in various parts of their linguistic skills has a cumulative effect on the returnees' overall linguistic performance.

Tomiyama (1994) also investigated Japanese returnees and focused on their progression of attrition within the first 16 to 19 months by looking into the areas of lexicon, morphology, and syntax. She discussed code-switching and lexical retrieval difficulty which characterize the

attrition process at this stage. To answer the need for long-term longitudinal attrition studies within individuals, she observed three Japanese returnees, Ken, Eugene and Kelly, and collected data for approximately 16 months. The first sign of attrition for Ken appeared as resisting to switch to English from Japanese at six months after return. At eight months, other participants, Eugene and Kelly, started to make intersentential code switching. In parallel with code switching and lexical retrieval difficulty, there was a change in participants' fluency. Participants' fluency defined by pauses, repetitions and self-repairs progressively deteriorated. In a progression of syntax, she found slight evidence that the use of passives diminished; the active was used instead when the passive was pragmatically more appropriate. The overall progression of attrition for the three subjects was very much alike. The surface realization of their attrition, however, were sometimes different reflecting their personal style.

The motivation for learning English in the ESL and the EFL context also contributes to understanding returnees' continued use of English language. To analyze the level of attrition that happens among individual returnees, it is crucial to acknowledge what motivates returnees to maintain and improve their English proficiency in EFL contexts. Irie and Ryan (2012) emphasized the study abroad experiences of English language learners because going 'abroad' can motivate students, authenticate learning, and legitimize language use. The outlook of being abroad gives a reason why they need to learn English making their language learning more meaningful. Experience of language use in other countries can represent a significant part of individuals' second language identity, how they regard themselves as language learners, and how they approach learning.

When it comes to motivation to learn English as a foreign or second language, many researchers questioned whether motivation differs between learners in a foreign and second

language context (e.g., Au, 1988; Chihara & Oller, 1978; Dörnyei, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Oller, 1978, 1981; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Schmidt, Borai & Kassabgy, 1996). According to Li (2014), the examination of this question has led to the development of a model of second language motivation that is applicable to different language learning contexts and language globalization, which has helped to inform second language motivation theories. For example, Li investigated differences in the motivation of Chinese learners of English in a foreign and second language context using the second language motivational self-system, which is the reconceptualization of integrativeness in Gardner's model (Dörnyei, 2009). Li concluded that English learning experience and promotional instrumentality were two important factors in determining their motivated learning behavior. Yoshitomi (1999) also conducted research on the motivation of Japanese returnees who joined special EFL language courses for returnees upon their return to Japan. He found that they were not motivated because of traditional pedagogical activities with no opportunities for communicative activities.

The two previous studies (Li, 2014; Yoshitomi, 1999) have provided evidence to suggest that second language attrition and motivation are strongly related although they contradict in some ways. Some researchers reported that participants dropped out during the second language attrition study because they were surprised to see the increasing level of attrition during the experiment. This example of participants' reactions and the previous studies show how attrition can influence returnees' perceptions of their attrition process and their motivation to maintain their second language.

This brief presentation of literature makes significant the importance of studying to what extent children who live abroad maintain their English. As shown, there are a number of factors as to why or why not children maintain their English. However, germane to this study,

Korean parents invest much money to provide their children with experiences that will enable them to compete in a highly competitive Korean society. Previous studies related to second language attrition largely focused on its linguistic variables, grammatical performances using various tests excluding extralinguistic variables such as their perceptions and motivations in Korean populations. Thus, this study will extend this literature and use qualitative research methods to examine the motivation of English language learners in the ESL and the EFL contexts, that factors that led to their maintaining English (or not), and the differences and similarities they saw between the ESL and the EFL contexts.

Purpose of the Study

While there are some studies directly related to the phenomenon of South Korea's peculiar English education phenomenon such as *jogi yuhak* (Lee, 2014; Lee, & Koo, 2006; Park, 2009; Song, 2005), these studies have not specifically addressed the issue of Korean returnees who experience dramatic learning environment change and second language attrition (Schmid & Dusseldorp, 2010). The gradual loss of a language learned abroad is taken for granted by returnees, and thus, it is critical to examine the nature and extent of second language attrition in various populations. Further, it is important to study why returnees maintain their English and how they maintain it.

Studies related to the attrition and maintenance of second language knowledge among Korean returnees used empirical or quantitative research methods (Olshtain, 1989; Schmid & Dusseldorp, 2010; Tomiyama, 2000; Verdon, McLeod, & Winsler, 2014; Wei, 2014). There is a severe lack of qualitative research to investigate why there is a loss of English as a second language in Korean returnees, maintenance, or improvement of English proficiency. To analyze the level of English proficiency that is changed among individual returnees, it is crucial to

acknowledge what causes returnees to lose, maintain, and/or improve their English proficiency in EFL contexts. That is, it is important to analyze how Korean returnees are supported to maintain or improve their English proficiency, what types of strategies are used by Korean returnees to continue to learn English in their native land and in different learning contexts, and what motivates them to continue or cease their learning English.

Since I was a returnee myself, I have experienced the struggle and the changes that those whom I recruited for this study may have faced. In this matter, I think of myself both as having an emic, or insider's, perspective and etic, or outsider's, perspective (Pike, 1967). As an insider, I was one of the English language learners who went back to South Korea and, now as a resident alien in the United States, I understand the motivation to maintain my English proficiency. As such, I have a strong interest in knowing how returnees maintain or lose their knowledge of English. When I encounter bilingual students in a Korean language school in the U.S., I understand Korean parents' concern that their children maintain their first language and communicate with them in Korean. At the same time, Korean parents understand that knowing English provides their children with a tool to be successful in school and in life. As an outsider, I am a teacher and researcher. With my strong interest in returnees, this research will contribute to the literature on the extent to which Korean returnees maintain or improve their second language, or the factors that influence why they may be less motivated to maintain their English proficiency. With increasing mobility around the world, this research has strong implications for both research and education.

Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate how Korean returnees perceive their second language acquisition and attrition process, and how they cope with the change of learning status

from ESL learners to EFL learners. Additionally, the study will also examine what types of supports are provided for Korean returnees to maintain or improve their English proficiency.

The questions that guide this study include the following: 1) How do Korean returnees perceive the change of learning status from ESL learners to EFL learners, and 2) What characteristics influence the extent to which Korean returnees maintain or lose their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea?

The previous studies related to second language attrition mainly focused on its linguistic variables by examining Korean returnees' grammatical performances (Tomiyama, 2000; Verdon, McLeod, & Winsler, 2014). The scarcity of qualitative research studies related to Korean returnees' experiences in two different EFL and ESL contexts encouraged the present study. By examining Korean returnees' motivation to maintain their English proficiency in EFL learning environment, research in the fields of ESL and EFL can better articulate the changes of students' learning status of moving from an ESL learner to EFL learner. Further, research in this area has the potential to identify the factors affecting returnees' loss of English in the EFL context. This study may offer critical insights not only for Korean returnees but also English Language Learners (ELLs) from other countries who struggle to achieve or at least maintain their highest peak of English proficiency.

Theoretical Perspectives: Social Constructionism and Second Language Acquisition

Social constructionism theoretically grounds this research. Social constructionism emphasizes language learning through social activities, questioning the concept of language learning as an individual cognitive activity separate from culture and society (Gibbons, 1991; Toohey, 2000). Although constructionism has been built on constructivist ideas that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed by the learner, social constructionism has been defined as a

theory of knowledge that investigates the development of a “socially constructed” understanding of the world (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). This notion has been expanded to the concept in which learning is most effective when people can create meaningful products (Harel & Papert, 1991).

A major interest of social constructionism is to discover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the process of constructing their perceived social reality (Boghossian, 2001). It places much importance on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality (Andrew, 2012) by looking at the ways social phenomena are created, known, established, and traditionalized. Social construction of reality is an ongoing, dynamic and recursive process reproduced by humans acting on their interpretations and knowledge. The facets of reality are socially constructed and objects of knowledge are not given by nature; reality must be continuously maintained and reaffirmed in order to persist (Boghossian, 2001). To emphasize human’s social interaction through time, Owen (1995) states that

Apart from the inherited and developmental aspects of humanity, social constructionism hypothesizes that all other aspects of humanity are created, maintained and destroyed in our interactions with others through time. The social practices of all life begin, are recreated in the present and eventually end. (p. 161)

Social constructionism is apt for this study and has three key assumptions: (a) knowledge is a product of human interaction; (b) knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and is influenced by the people and their environment; and (c) learning is a social activity (Kim, 2001). In social constructivism, knowledge is created through human activities within a society or group together, not discovered by individuals. Individuals make meanings when they interact with each other and with the environment by which they are surrounded. In social constructivism, learning

does not take place only within an individual; meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities such as interaction and collaboration. (McMahon, 1997). This study embodied these assumptions in several ways. First, Korean returnees gained knowledge of the language through human interaction in ESL and EFL learning contexts, from teachers, with peers in the classroom peers, in sports, in church, among other interactions. Second, Korean returnees constructed knowledge of the language in a range of social and educational environments, moving between ESL and EFL learning contexts. Third, second language learning was learned through social activities that participants experienced in ESL and EFL contexts.

Krashen's theory of English language learning also informs this study. The path of second language attrition is considered as the mirror image of the path of acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010). Thus, it is important to articulate landmark theories in second language acquisition that emphasize social interaction as well as second language attrition. Stephen Krashen identified important aspects attributed to language acquisition: 1) the affective-filter hypothesis, 2) the input hypothesis, and 3) acculturation theory. The affective-filter hypothesis has its primary focus on how learners make meanings in the community observing the level of anxiety in the learning environment, the level of student motivation and the level of self-confidence and self-esteem (Krashen, 1985). In Krashen's input hypothesis, language acquisition occurs as part of an authentic communicative exchange in what might be considered an ESL context, rather than learning simple grammar exercises which largely comprises the EFL context. Acculturation theory hypothesizes that a target language is acquired in direct proportion to a language learners' sense of community belonging (Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998). Developing this sense of belonging, so-called acculturation, depends on two factors which are used to measure the amount of social distance language learners feel from their target language

community. The first factor in acculturation is social dominance which addresses the balance of power between the two groups involved in language exchange. This factor is also critical to second language attrition as influence from the dominant language is enormous in the case of a classroom between peer-teacher and peer-peer social relationship. The integration pattern is a second factor that considers whether the language learner is part of a group that either assimilates new cultural influences or preserves its culture separately (Long, 2007; Schumann, 1978).

Social constructionism is particularly useful in the field of second language research as it emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997).

Participants in this study interacted with native and non-native English speakers to learn language and to maintain their own language and cultures; maintained an identity as ESL learners in the U.S. and EFL learners in South Korea after their return, and integrated language and culture in a range of different contexts.

This study anticipates that insights gained from these participants will further knowledge about language acquisition (English) and attrition (Korean) in a range of different contexts in which ESL and/or EFL approaches are used flexibly once they returned. These insights may be helpful for teacher educators as they work with newly arrived students from countries who speak languages other than English. This research may also be helpful for parents of returnees who financially invest in supporting their children's English language learning in a range of contexts in which ESL and EFL approaches to language are used. Finally, this research may contribute insights for second language learners who understand and reflect on why maintaining both languages may be important to their future. Previous studies related to the attrition and maintenance of L2 knowledge among Korean returnees conducted empirical or quantitative

research. This study takes a qualitative approach to more richly describe how extralinguistic variables – motivation, self-perception, and attitudes – affect the second language learning in Korean returnees and their maintenance of English proficiency. This research may also provide some insights on second language acquisition and attrition influenced by learners' social interactions of the different learning environment in a range of contexts in which ESL and EFL approaches to language are used.

Overview of the Study

The scarcity of qualitative research studies related to Korean returnees' perceptions and motivation in contexts in which approaches to learning, using, and internalizing language arise from what is considered EFL contexts and those considered ESL contexts prompted the present study. To extend the research in attrition of the second language through previously conducted literature reviews and research, this study employed a case study method that focused on how motivation to maintain English proficiency of Korean returnees was affected by contextual variables especially within learning environments traditionally distinguished as ESL and/or EFL. By examining Korean returnees' perception of different learning contexts and motivation to maintain their English proficiency in what is predominantly an EFL learning environment, this research provides insights into the changes in students' learning status of moving between and among geographic, cultural, social, and linguistic spaces as predominantly an ESL learner and/or EFL learner and the characteristics affecting returnees' loss of English in EFL context.

This study was conducted with five Korean returnees who were between the ages of 4-12 while they were in the U.S. Participants were recruited using the snowball sampling method (Patton, 2002). Using a case study approach, I provide an extensive and in-depth description of Korean returnees' motivations and perceptions to maintaining English proficiency. My research

questions sought to explain present circumstances including why and how questions related to the early study abroad social phenomenon in South Korea.

Definition of Key Terms

EFL learner - An English language learner whose primary language or languages of the home is other than English, and who learns English as a foreign language.

ESL learner – An English language learner whose primary language or languages of the home is other than English, and who lives in a country where English is the main language spoken.

ESL instruction – English teaching strategy in a country where English is the dominant language, and it is similar to communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies that focus on specific, practical need for English outside of the classroom.

EFL instruction – English teaching strategy in a country where English is not the dominant language and it is more focused on grammar rules, syntax structures, and reading comprehension.

Jogi yuhak (early study abroad) – a recent boom in South Korea in which parents send their school-age children to English-speaking countries, particularly the U.S. and Canada, solely for educational purposes (Yi, 2013)

Language attrition - the loss of a first or second language or a portion of that language.

Returnee – someone who returns to a country after being in another country for a certain period

Second language acquisition (SLA) – the process by which people learn and acquire a second language once the mother tongue or first language acquisition is established. It also indicates the theories of SLA.

Study Abroad (SA) – the act of a student pursuing educational opportunities in a country other than one's own. This can include primary, secondary and post-secondary students.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was closely related to how second language acquisition occurred among the Korean population. Thus, second language acquisition theories and its practices helped to understand how English language learners acquire their second language in different learning contexts and build a rationale for this research. Among the recent theories in second language acquisition that were important to this research were study abroad (SA) and second language attrition. In this chapter, I address theories of second language acquisition, related literature and methodological considerations for the current dissertation study. First, I explore traditional theoretical frameworks for second language acquisition and attrition studies. Then, I focus on the study abroad studies that are related to Korean returnees in this study. Since this study focused on a Korean population, my research could not be done without explaining Korea's educational backgrounds and its unique trend called *jogi yuhak*, which means early study abroad. Lastly, I address issues and changes in motivation in learning English as a second language or English as a foreign language that Korean returnees experience in different learning contexts by examining the related literatures.

Second Language Acquisition Theories

English has become the dominant world language (Graddol, 2006). As the world becomes more globalized (Crystal, 1997; Melitz, 2016; Song, 2016), English has been the most commonly used language in business, education, diplomacy, media and science and technology. Thus, the importance of learning English becomes more important in many countries. However, the field of second language acquisition (SLA) is complicated and interdisciplinary due to the complexity of second language (L2) development. Although a number of perspectives and

theories of second language acquisition have been introduced, the English language learning process cannot be explained with a single theory or approach. The combination of those theories and approaches is helpful to understand the entire phenomenon (Gass & Mackey, 2013).

There are a number of perspectives and theories (Chomsky, 1981; Krashen, 1982; Long, 1981; Selinker, 1972) which attempt to explain the processes of how the second language is acquired. In the early second language research period, behaviorists' (Guthrie, 1935; Hull, 1943; Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1938) habit formation theory emphasized repetitions and pattern practices, which were considered effective for language learners especially in lower levels of proficiency. These behaviorist or structural linguists compared first language (L1) and second language (L2) and used a list of differences to predict learning difficulties and facilitate second language teaching (Smith, 2014) called contrastive analysis hypothesis. However, the processes underlying that acquisition are now seen to be more complex than any simple habit formation theory would suggest.

Second language attrition studies have derived from second language acquisition theories. Thus, it is important to know what has been said in second language acquisition theories. While second language acquisition theorists (Corder, 1967; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Richards & Rogers, 1982) paid attention to teaching pedagogy and learners, Selinker (1972) introduced the idea of interlanguage, which focused on the language itself. The term, interlanguage or intermediate language (IL) refers to the language produced by second and foreign language learners in the process of language learning. Language learners develop and "fossilize" their interlanguages as a system which can result from systematic rules and properties. He argued interlanguage is a language with its own rules and patterns, not just irregular byproducts created during the process of learning a second language.

During the same period, the L2 morpheme studies were inspired by Roger Brown (1973) who found a consistent order of grammatical morphemes in the L1 acquisition. The same order was introduced by De Villiers and De Villiers (1973) in their cross-sectional study in the L2 acquisition. The L1 and L2 acquisition patterns have similarities and differences. Goodman and Goodman (1979) argued that learning to read is natural, not innate. In second language acquisition, language is learned from interaction from “personal and social invention” (p. 137). They believed that “children learn to read and write in the same way and for the same reason that they learn to speak and listen. That way is to encounter language in use as a vehicle of communicating meaning” (p. 138).

In the late 1970s, Krashen developed a series of models in second language acquisition. His general theory called the monitor model can be explained within five basic hypotheses: The acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). This current study is related to the core of acquisition-learning hypothesis in which two independent processes exist in language learning: language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen (1982), the language acquisition rules are applied differently for the first language and second language learning. For example, error correction does not have much effect on subconscious acquisition, which usually happens in first language acquisition, but is thought to be useful for conscious learning. Error correction helps second language learners to understand or find out the right form of a rule. However, Krashen (1982) states that some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire while adults can only learn. The acquisition-learning hypothesis claims, however, that adults also acquire and have the ability to "pick-up" languages. Language acquisition does not disappear at puberty. According to Krashen, this does not mean that adults will always be able to

achieve native-like levels in a second language. It does mean that adults can access the same natural "language acquisition device" (Chomsky, 1965) that children use. Acquisition is a very powerful process in adults. Although Krashen's monitor model has a considerable influence on second language acquisition theory, it also has been criticized because the definition of conscious and unconscious learning processes is difficult to verify and distinguish. The natural order hypothesis, which means that there is a certain order to learn the grammar forms. Krashen (1982) stated that the finding that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order was one of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research. The order of acquisition for second language is not the same as the order of acquisition for first language, but there are some similarities (Krashen, 1982). According to Dulay and Burt (1974), young English language learners acquired English in a "natural order" for grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language. They reported that although children's orders of first language acquisition differed, the way that they learning English was very similar to each other.

In sequence, Krashen (1982) proposed the monitor hypothesis, which posits that acquisition and learning are used in particular ways. Usually, acquisition initiates learners' utterances in a second language and is closely related to their fluency. He stated that "Learning has only one function, and that is as a monitor, or editor. Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been "produced" by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write, or after (self-correction)" (p. 15). Monitor hypothesis is about the role of acquired knowledge and learned knowledge. Acquired knowledge is related to initial production and fluency while learned knowledge acts as a monitor. In other words, learners think about how to modify the wrong sentences to fit in learned knowledge to create knowledge. But the actual sentence generation is dependent only on acquired knowledge.

Krashen's input hypothesis (1982) focuses on language acquisition in the classroom. His theory suggests that language learning only occurs under certain conditions, such as when students receive optimal comprehensible and interesting input beyond their present level of competence and not presented in grammatical sequences ($i + 1$). In addition, the input hypothesis says that input must contain $i + 1$ to be useful for language acquisition, but input can provide more than only $i + 1$. Language acquisition takes place as a subconscious learning process which results in real communication skills, rather than actively learning grammar and structural rules of the target language. Therefore, according to Krashen, educators should estimate a precise language level of each student and provide appropriate and comprehensible input.

According to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, affective filters, originally proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), determine how much input a learner can accept sufficiently. Krashen stated that "Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong affective filter- even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device" (p. 31). This hypothesis explains the differences caused by personal factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, or motivation of the learners. Therefore, the classroom environment should be more relaxed, positive and enjoyable for students who are anxious, tense or bored.

In the late 1970s, Schumann (1978) introduced the pidginization/acclturation model. This model is a sociolinguistic approach that compared second language acquisition with other language change processes such as pidginization or creolization. According to Schumann, while examining language learning process of adult immigrants, he found that their early interlanguages were similar with pidgin language, which is simplified trading language that was

characterized as fixed word order and lack of inflection. He argued that his process is related to the degree of acculturation learners are expected to have to be more successful in their language learning if they feel closer to the target language speech community. Schumann's model highlights the sociocultural context of language learning "without neglecting the role of individuals in the language-learning process" (p. 455).

Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis provides another perspective in language acquisition. In response to Krashen (1982)'s hypotheses, Long suggested alternative ideas about the role of environmental language in second language acquisition. He turned attention from comprehensible input to a more interactive aspect of language acquisition. Long stated that language learners need to be active learners and interactive participants when receiving language input. He suggested that only listening to new language structures will not lead to successful language learning. To become an active learner in immediate interaction and communicative patterns with other learners, language learners need modified interaction that is needed for making language comprehensible. Interaction modification makes input comprehensible and this promotes acquisition. In Long's revised version of the interaction hypothesis, the importance of corrective feedback during interaction was more emphasized. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), "When communication is difficult, interlocutors must 'negotiate for meaning', and this negotiation is seen as the opportunity for language development" (p. 43).

Another alternative research to the response of Krashen's input hypothesis was Swain's output hypothesis. Swain (1985) studied French immersion students in Canada, and claimed learners need to produce language in order to process language deeply after receiving sufficient comprehensible input. She stated that "being pushed in output, it seems to me, is a concept parallel to that of the $i+1$ of comprehensible input. Indeed, one might call this the

comprehensible output” (p. 249). In Swain’s comprehensible output hypothesis, she argued that producing output plays an important role in the L2 development and suggested that L2 learners need to be pushed to produce meaningful and comprehensible output within an interaction. In this process, students become aware of the limitations of their interlanguage and find ways to express their meaning to reach mutual comprehension. Lightbown and Spada (2006) stated that, “What learners need is not necessarily a simplification of the linguistic forms but rather an opportunity to interact with other speakers working together to reach mutual comprehension” (p. 43). In later time, Swain’s output hypothesis has been developed into a revised interaction hypothesis (Gass & Mackey, 2012).

In the 1980s, researchers like Suzanne Flynn (1987) and Lydia White (1989) developed a theory from Chomsky (1957)’s generative linguistics and the concept of universal grammar to model learners’ formal language knowledge. In an innate universal grammar hypothesis of attention and input, Chomsky (1957)’s perspective on the language acquisition device (LAD) helps learners analyze L2 input and ensures interlanguage development without conscious awareness on the part of the learner. Chomsky developed the principle and parameter approach. Principles are linguistic universals and common features to all languages and parameters are linguistic options that exist in a variation of language structure. From a universal grammar perspective, how language learners learn grammatical structures of a second language depends on setting the correct parameters. Chomsky’s government and binding theory (1981) identified that a large portion of the grammar of any particular language is applied to all languages, and a particular set of parameters are varied between languages. According to Flynn (1987), this universal principles and parameter model provided amplification and power to the concept of an innate language faculty and its possible role in L2 acquisition.

In the 20th century, sociocultural theory emphasized the roles of social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience. Sociocultural theory is similar to sociolinguistics due to the emphasis on the social aspect of learning. However, sociolinguistics focuses more on the language aspect of these interactions while sociocultural theory focuses more on the broader concept of culture and language (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Additionally, the sociocultural perspective refers to a group of perspectives that includes sociolinguistics, pragmatism, and second-generation cognitive science grounded in Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory. Those perspectives suggest that the mind emerges from social interaction with other minds, that activities of the mind are mediated by tools and symbol systems (language), and that to understand a mental function, one must understand the roots and processes contributing to that function's development (Alvermann, Unrau & Ruddell, 2013).

Vygotsky believed that social learning precedes children's cultural development. According to Vygotsky (1978), "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (p. 57). He insisted that people develop physical and cognitive tools to make use of the world around them and called the cognitive tools signs. The sign system, especially culture's language, connects people to transform their behavior and consciousness. He also believed that learning takes place when children develop at their own pace, regardless of external instruction and curricula, within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as: "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The ZPD means the difference between a

student's ability to solve the problem alone and a student's ability to perform a task with help of a more capable person such as adult guidance or peer collaboration. Learning happens in this ZPD as children internalize culturally appropriate knowledge and behavior. The ZPD, in comparison to the transmissionist or instructionist model which is prevalent in urban schools, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory encourages a child's active role in learning and urges the shift of teachers and students' roles in the classroom. Teachers should collaborate with their students to facilitate meaning construction in students.

Lantolf (2000) integrated and expanded Vygotsky's sociocultural theory into the aspect of second language acquisition. They suggested the way to regulate people's mental functioning is through private speech. They stated, "Language is the most pervasive and powerful cultural artifact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves" (p. 201). They insisted that the success of second language learning depends on the learners' autonomy emphasizing internalization, self-regulation connected to the mediation of artifacts and interaction within social and material environments, and the genetic method. They also emphasized the role of imitation, which is "the human capacity to imitate the intentional activity of other humans (p. 203)" in second language learning and development. They also redefined the ZPD as "the difference between the level of development already obtained and the cognitive functions comprising the proximal next stage of development that may be visible through participation in collaborative activity" (p. 216). They addressed evidence on how sociocultural theory is applied in the second language acquisition field such as how autonomous L2 learners represented their linguistic input from their social relationships and the qualities of higher-order mental activity mediated by social interaction.

Swain (2000) refined Vygotsky's sociocultural theory by introducing collaborative dialogue which is "knowledge-building dialogue" (p. 97) that supports the construction of linguistic knowledge through social interaction. She insisted that collaborative dialogue allows a learner to accelerate her/his performance and competence performing social (context) and cognitive (problem-solving) activities. Knowledge building that second language learners collectively accomplished can be a tool for their further individual use of their second language. Swain also suggested that verbalization is initiated and mediated through social interaction and dialogue mediates second language learners' co-construction of the strategic process and of linguistic knowledge. Through such collaborative dialogue, second language learners "engage in problem solving and knowledge building" (p. 109). Swain and Lapkin (2002) also documented how classroom learners of second languages, including immersion learners, push linguistic development forward by talking, either in the L1 or L2, about features of the new language (Swain, 2000, in press; Swain & Lapkin, 2002).

Besides sociocultural theories, Norton (2006) proposed five beliefs about identity underlying most identity-focused SLA research: (a) Identity is dynamic and constantly changing across time and place; (b) Identity is "complex, contradictory and multifaceted"; (c) Language is both a product of and a tool for identity construction; (d) Identity can only be understood in the context of relationships and power; and (e) Much identity-focused SLA research makes connections to classroom practice (p. 502). According to Norton (2006), depending on the social context, second language learners tend to position themselves in different ways. They may find that certain identity positions conflict with one another.

Norton (2000) introduced the notion of investment by stating that "when language learners speak, not only are they exchanging information with target language speakers, but they

are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (p. 444). She emphasized that investment plays an important role in language learning theory for representing the relationship between language learner identity and learning commitment. Norton also insisted learners’ investment in language learning enable them to acquire diverse symbolic and material resources and, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital and social power (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Norton conducted a longitudinal study of immigrant language learners from various immigrant families and examined the process of how subtractive bilingualism and additive bilingualism took place associated with the development of second language learning and the loss of mother tongue. In this study, she pointed out the theoretical gap and tension between theories of acculturation in SLA and theories of bilingualism, and insisted that motivation theories do not fully understand and explain the complex relationship in bilingualism. She suggested that “such theories (acculturation theories) need to recognize that attitudes and motivation are not inherent properties of language learners but are constructed within the context of specific social relationships at a given time and place” (p. 459).

In the side of sociolinguistics, Blommaert (2003) constructed sociolinguistic globalization theory considering the transformations of changing language in a changing society. When he stated that “what is globalized is not an abstract language, but specific speech forms, genres, styles, and forms of literacy practice” (p. 608), he insisted that we need to move to superdiversity of language which contains locality, repertoires, competence, history and sociolinguistic inequality. He described globalization as a sociolinguistic subject matter, and argued that “a sociolinguistics of globalization will need holistic and a world-systemic view in

which the world system with its structural inequalities is a necessary context in which language occurs and operates” (p. 612).

This study is closely related to how young English language learners acquired English as a second language and maintained their English after returned to their home countries. Thus, readings about second language acquisition theories and its practices helped me understand the history of SLA study developments and enabled me to build a background knowledge for second language attrition studies reviewed in the following section.

Second Language Attrition Theories

There are a number of theories that address how individuals lose language, a process called second language attrition. Language attrition is often a result of one’s lack of use or exposure to a language over time. The severity of attrition depends on a variety of factors including level of proficiency, age, social factors, and motivation at the time of acquisition. Although the gradual loss of a language learned abroad is taken for granted, it is critical to examine the nature and extent of second language attrition process. According to Schmid and Köpke (2011), language attrition can be seen as an individual, psycholinguistic phenomenon that is the outcome of “the coexistence and constant interaction of the two languages” (Grosjean, 1989, p. 6). Depending on what language is lost in which environment, language attrition can be divided into four areas known as the “van Els taxonomy” (Weltens, de Bot, & Van Els, 1987). These four areas are: first language (L1) loss in an L1 environment; L1 loss in a second language (L2) environment; L2 loss in an L1 environment; L2 loss in an L2 environment. Among these areas, L2 loss in an L1 environment can be found among those who lose their L2 learned at school or those who once lived in an L2 environment and returned to their L1 environment; L2

loss in an L2 environment is usually observed within the aging immigrant community. L2 loss in both L1 and L2 environment can be considered as second language attrition (Wei, 2014).

Second language attrition is more difficult to distinguish than first language attrition because it is related to the age of the learners, the length of time without input, and motivation for language maintenance. These factors come into play in the elaboration of a theoretical model of language attrition and are relevant for the design of materials for language maintenance (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010). According to Schmid and Köpke (2011), second language acquisition and attrition studies can not only profit from the application of theories and principles of bilingual development but also serve to validate them to some extent. They stated, “The question how ‘deep’ attrition can affect this knowledge therefore has different implications for different linguistic frameworks: for example, traditions which assume the presence of some kind of innate faculty for the acquisition of grammar will come to different predictions on language loss (assuming it to be constrained by underlying and universal principles) than researchers who see acquisition (and thus attrition) as usage-based” (p. 186). For example, Korean people tend to lose singular/plural forms in English comparing to English language learners from other countries who also use singular/plural forms in their language because singular/plural forms in Korean are less developed than English. Thus, implying the second language attrition process for different linguistic groups should be considered.

Some second language attrition theories and hypotheses attempted to discover and elaborate linguistic or grammatical features that are subject to loss or attrition. Among these hypotheses and theories, regression hypothesis is closely related to this current study.

Regression Hypothesis

The regression hypothesis (last in, first out) is the most widespread discussion, and which predicts attrition as the mirror image of acquisition or learning (Cohen, 1975; Hansen, 1999; Hayashi, 1999; Hedgcock, 1991). In the 1880s, the regression hypothesis was first formed by Ribot (1881) and developed by Freud in connection with aphasia. Later, Roman Jakobson (1941) applied the notion of regression to linguistic frameworks to uncover the principles between different language systems. In his book, *Child Languages Aphasia and Phonological Universals*, Jakobson compared language between the early stage of child language acquisition and the sequences in pathological language loss in aphasia. He found unidirectional hierarchies called “irreversible laws of solidarity” (p. 64). The basic tenet of the regression hypothesis is that language attrition follows the opposite path of language acquisition. Jakobson’s assumption is that features that are acquired late in childhood tend to be lost early. He wrote,

...the pattern of language dissolution in aphasics is similar, but in reverse order, to the pattern of language acquisition in children. Those aspects of language competence acquired last, or, more precisely, those that are most dependent on other linguistic developments, are likely to be the first to be disrupted consequent to brain damage; those aspects of language competence that are acquired earliest and are thus “independent” of later developments are likely to be most resistant to effects of brain damages (Caramazza & Zurif, 1978, p. 145).

Jakobson’s (1968) formulation of the regression hypothesis is closely related to markedness theory. Markedness is a linguistic concept that distinguishes the marked form and unmarked form. A marked form is a non-basic or less natural form (Eckman, 1977). The markedness theory was originated and refined by the Prague school of structuralism. The scholars in this school stated that the marked form contains at least one more feature than the

unmarked one. In addition, the unmarked (neutral) form has a wider range of distribution than the marked one. When the first or second language attrition occurs, marked linguistic elements tend to be more attrited than unmarked forms (Anderson, 1982; Gürel, 2004; Hansen & Chen, 2001). For example, a German speaker will experience difficulties in producing marked voiced forms in final position while English speakers will experience relatively less difficulty in learning to ignore the marked forms and to use the unmarked forms exclusively in syllable-final position (Celse-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996).

Regression hypothesis that compares child language acquisitions and attrition has extended to other studies. For example, Hansen (1999) and Hayashi (1999) used the regression hypothesis to assess L2 Japanese in two different learner populations - adult missionaries and children who attended Japanese schools during the Japanese occupation of Micronesia. The results showed both populations lost adjectives in the greatest degree compared to other grammatical features supporting the regression hypothesis. The critical threshold hypothesis (best learned, last out) claims that there are levels of attainment and relatively well-structured linguistic knowledge that are immune to attrition. Although it is difficult to observe what is best learned in second language acquisition (SLA) research, a variation on the critical threshold hypothesis is known as “the more you know, the less you lose” (Hansen, 1999, p. 151).

Although there are some studies (Kim, 2006; Verdon, McLeod & Winsler, 2014; Yoshitomi, 1999) that investigated second language attrition in an EFL context, most of the L2 attrition studies focused on addressing linguistic skills, and provided a general description of L2 attrition such as lexicon, morphology, and syntax. Some attrition studies (Kim, 2006; Yoshitomi, 1999) focus on a comparison between knowledge at peak attainment and knowledge during or after a loss. For example, Kim (2006) conducted a study on the Korean returnees of middle

school students who had lived abroad for more than two years. Students were divided into groups according to the length of their stay in foreign countries, the year that they returned to South Korea, gender, and the amount of self-study of English. The results showed that the returnees scored higher on a grammar test but lower on the vocabulary test. The researcher implied that the reason may be because of grammar-focused English education in South Korea. To investigate the second language attrition process in the EFL context, Yoshitomi (1999) studied the loss of English as a second language of Japanese returnee children. This group of young children spent several years exposed to a second language in which they acquired English naturally. In Japan, he stated, there is a rising need to develop language maintenance programs for both the first language and second language of such children. Thus, this qualitative case study examined the language attrition process as well as the factors that affected the process, focused especially on linguistic and sociopsychological variables. Within the first year of incubating Japanese returnees in the language maintenance program, Yoshitomi found the language attrition level of this group of returnees' languages was maintained. This study was in accord with claims that comprehension skills (listening and reading skills) are maintained better than production skills (speaking and writing skills).

Verdon, McLeod and Winsler (2014) conducted a study to examine language maintenance and loss in a population of 4,252 young Australian children. The first part of data collection and management was handled by a social marketing research agency and the second part was done by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Their longitudinal investigation studied the first five years of this group of children to identify patterns of language maintenance and loss among those who spoke languages other than English. Parents of these children completed a comprehensive questionnaire about their child and their family situations. Researchers concluded

that environmental and personal factors such as parental language use, presence of a grandparent in the home, type of early childhood care, first- and second-generation immigrants' status, and parental perception of support from the educational environment were related to language maintenance among non-English speaking children.

Kim (2006) analyzed the attrition of English, particularly the syntactic errors, in two groups of elementary 4th - 6th graders, short-term overseas life (six months) and long-term overseas life (more than two years), who had returned home within the one year of living overseas in English-speaking countries. Kim found that the long overseas life group showed fewer errors in every area (infinitives, pronouns, prepositions, particles, etc.). Both groups made more errors in having command of prepositions and relative pronouns than other syntactic parts. An interesting part was that those children who returned home more recently had fewer syntactic errors than the long-term group. Kim concluded that the longer a child was exposed to their mother tongue or the Korean language, he/she would lose his/her secondary language or English more. She also found that their syntactic errors had been caused by inter-lingual interventions or intra-lingual over-generalization in both groups. Errors of adding or omitting prepositions were deemed attributable to the transition into the Korean grammar. Namely, while the children were exposed gradually to Korean grammar, they tended more to apply Korean grammar to English, initiating such syntactic errors.

Reetz-Kurashige (1999) studied Japanese returnees, identified as interlanguage speakers, and found common characteristics in their use of language, especially in the use of verb forms. Reetz-Kurashige assessed 18 Japanese returnees' competence for 12-18 months using verbs in storytelling. Use of verb forms was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Reetz-Kurashige measured the counts and ratio of vocabulary diversity and target-like usage assessment of

accuracy in morphology. From the quantitative analysis and qualitative comparison of each participant, Reetz-Kurashige found that all returnees demonstrated several common changes and shifts in their language patterns. Reetz-Kurashige claimed that use of the verb stem was a particularly prevalent feature of attrition for low-retention speakers. This researcher concluded that Japanese returnees as interlanguage speakers showed instability in their use of tense and morphemes, and used simpler forms.

In a two-year study, Tomiyama (2009) investigated the degree to which second language (English) attrition influenced two Japanese siblings' grammatical and lexical complexity, analyzing their storytelling data collected over 31 months. The siblings were 7 years old and 10 years old, and the researcher assumed the age 7 is more vulnerable to language attrition than age 10. This researcher found that participants had similar second language proficiency, including literacy, but differed because of their age. Tomiyama suggested that these siblings showed similar attrition patterns: they attained a high proficiency level including the acquisition of literacy skills and was found to be an important factor in their English maintenance. However, after the second year, participants' grammatical accuracy differed. This researcher concluded that the period of disuse was differentially affected according to their ages. Tomiyama found that younger siblings' maturational factors may play a role in handling grammatical complexity and accuracy successfully and simultaneously.

The aforementioned studies are limited. Researchers investigated only linguistic variables, such as fluency, communicative competence, register, and compensatory strategies, among returnees. Not included was the impact of learners' ethnicity, cultural and sociocultural background in their first language. Additionally, nearly all studies related to the attrition and maintenance of L2 knowledge among Korean returnees used quantitative research methods.

There was a lack of qualitative research approaches to investigate the affects second language loss in Korean returnees' English maintenance, or improvement of English proficiency.

Study Abroad Research

According to Magnan and Lafford's (2012) study abroad (SA) research, they claimed that immersion in the target community was considered the ideal context for second language learning. Throughout SA experience, learners receive authentic input and interact with native speakers and the SA research contextualizes how input and interaction informs language learning in different learning contexts. The SA research is well-suited for investigating different learning contexts and comparing SA experience with learning in foreign language classrooms or in immersion programs in the native countries. In complement to interactionist theories of language learning, early study abroad research (Dyson, 1988; Freed, 1995; Opper, Teichler, & Carlson, 1990) focused on linguistic features to address the advantage of the abroad immersion setting for language acquisition. The SA research primarily used quantitative methods to analyze language gain and effect on learners' behaviors before the mid-1990s. Afterwards, SA research was influenced by sociocultural perspectives and investigated social factors and issues of identity, gender and the effect of social networks on second language acquisition (Block, 2007).

Parental beliefs are intensely related to children's early study abroad experiences because parents are the decision makers for their children to study in what are traditionally considered ESL or EFL contexts. Song (2003) considered parents' position as "the most important influence and the most powerful decision maker in children's early years" (p. 4). While parents are considered to have stable and static beliefs on early study abroad, Song's research showed learners' dynamic and variable beliefs in learning English in English-speaking countries.

Amuzie and Winke (2009) studied the effects of study abroad on learners' beliefs with 70 English language learners while studying abroad in the United States. The study revealed that learners experienced changes in their beliefs on learner autonomy and the role of the teacher. Amuzie and Winke concluded that learners who spent more time studying abroad had significantly more changes in their belief systems. These researchers concluded that learning context and length of context exposure influenced a change learners' beliefs on learning English.

Seo and Kim (2015) investigated how early study abroad (ESA) English language training can be effective on Korean students' attitude and motivations in elementary, middle, and high school levels. Based on analysis of a questionnaire targeting 508 students, which addressed English learning attitudes, motivation, and ESA experience, results indicated that the attitudes and motivations were significantly different between students who experienced learning English in the English-speaking countries and those who did not have such experiences. Elementary school students who had study abroad experience appeared to have positive attitudes toward native English speakers, the target culture, and positive learning attitudes while the middle school students did not show any significant difference.

Knoch, Rouhshad, Oon, and Storch (2015) studied ESL students' writing after three years of study abroad experience. They examined 31 undergraduate students' L2 (ESL) writing proficiency following a three-year degree study in an Australian university. The study used a quantitative research method which required participants to write a 30-minute argumentative essay on the same topic at the beginning and at the end of their degree program. After a test-retest research design, students were interviewed about their writing experiences at the English-medium University. Knoch et al. (2015) found that students' writing improved after three years in a degree program in English. Participants' English fluency was improved; however, their

accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity, as well as global scores of writing were not improved. In the interviews, students explained that they were not required to write in English during the degree program. They concluded that three years of study abroad experience did not improve students' L2 writing skills in the natural setting, although their English proficiency and confidence were elevated.

In SA research, age at the time of presence in English speaking country and the length of stay in the English-speaking country are important factors in learning languages. Brecht (1993) conducted a large-scale statistical study to examine which predictors influenced language learning during study abroad of American college and graduate students in the Soviet Union. The predictors focused primarily on student characteristics including age, gender, and other second language training and experience. Brecht found that student characteristics were predictive of language gains abroad, including gender, experience in learning other foreign languages, and command of grammar and reading skills.

Park and Bae (2009) investigated language ideologies in educational migration among Korean *jogi yuhak* families in Singapore. This study explored how the cultural and linguistic diversity of Singaporean society interacts with language ideologies that drive *jogi yuhak*. Through an analysis of the families' accounts of their linguistic investments, the study demonstrated how the material constraints surrounding the lives of the families and their lived experiences contributed to a negotiation of imagined geographies that connect language, place, and social space.

Kanno (2003) investigated four young Japanese returnees who spent their adolescent years in Canada and then returned to Japan before reaching college age. As a previous teacher of these subjects, Kanno collected data through interviews, letters, e-mails, journals and telephone

conversations and was able to observe their development over 10 years. From these data, she analyzed the subjects' academic performances, personality characteristics, feelings regarding living abroad and their home country, and their attitudes towards English. Kanno suggested that "as they grew older, they became better at striking a balance between two languages and cultures, and that this change was accompanied by their increasingly sophisticated skill at participating in multiple communities" (p. xi). As these participants struggled to adjust to living in Japan after their return from Canada, she observed that "Once they moved from the pressure to assimilate, they had the freedom to fit into their narrative those aspects of their identities (such as their individualistic streak) that were not compatible with the past story line" (p. 121).

English Education in Korea

South Korea presently faces a number of pressing educational issues such as increased household private tutoring expenses, deteriorating quality of public education, and fierce competition surrounding the Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test (KSAT) (Seth, 2002; Shin & Albers, 2015). The dissatisfaction of students and parents with public English education in South Korea has led to extreme dependence on expensive private after-school education including short-period study abroad programs (Hwang et al., 2010). According to the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), 29,511 students left South Korea in 2006, more than a two-fold increase since 2004 (Cho, 2007). Although a dramatic decrease occurred since 2009 due to the global economic recession, there are still an accumulated number of Korean returnees who strive to maintain their English proficiency (KEDI, 2012). The increase is particularly explosive among elementary school children, whose numbers have multiplied nearly twice over the past few years (see Figure 1) (Kim, Chang & Kim, 2007).



Figure 1. Number of “early study abroad” students in South Korea

In Figure 1, the green bar represents the number of *jogi yuhak* students, and the orange line represents the number of *jogi yuhak* students per 10,000 students. Table 2 indicates the number and percentage of elementary school students who have had study abroad experiences increased annually except in 2010. Students who had study abroad experiences increased more than twice as much (13,901) as students who studied overseas in 2005 (7,309).

Table 2

Number and percentage of elementary school students who have had study abroad experiences

| | 2005 | | 2006 | | 2007 | | 2008 | | 2009 | | 2010 | |
|---------|-------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 0-2 yrs | 5,360 | 73.3 | 7,688 | 73 | 9,679 | 75.7 | 10,058 | 72.6 | 9,094 | 65.4 | 8,116 | 65.4 |
| 2-3 yrs | 938 | 12.8 | 1,307 | 12.4 | 1,406 | 11 | 1,896 | 13.7 | 2,126 | 15.3 | 1,820 | 14.7 |
| 3-5 yrs | 624 | 8.5 | 892 | 8.5 | 955 | 7.5 | 1,072 | 7.7 | 1,616 | 11.6 | 1,464 | 11.8 |
| 5-yrs | 387 | 5.3 | 649 | 6.2 | 749 | 5.9 | 819 | 5.9 | 1,065 | 7.7 | 1,012 | 8.2 |
| Total | 7,309 | 100 | 10,536 | 100 | 12,789 | 100 | 13,845 | 100 | 13,901 | 100 | 12,412 | 100 |

Lee and Koo (2006) claimed the dominant reason for *jogi yuhak*, or study abroad, is to allow children to learn English at an early age and to give them a better education in the advanced Western countries. They stated that South Korea's active implementation of the globalization policy, in conjunction with its admission to membership of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1996, has become a driving force behind this outward orientation of educational zeal among Korean parents.

Although there are some studies directly related to the phenomenon of South Korea's peculiar English education phenomenon such as *jogi yuhak* (Park & Bae, 2009), they still do not specifically address the issue of Korean returnees who experience dramatic learning environment changes. Thus, this current study might be critical not only for Korean returnees but also ELLs from other countries who struggle to achieve or at least maintain their highest peak of English proficiency.

According to Seoul Metropolitan office of education, there are seventeen elementary schools and three middle schools that operate classes for Korean returnees separately as of 2012 nationwide, and two elementary schools and one middle school in Sejong city have established classes for Korean returnees in 2016 shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Seoul Metropolitan office of education (Retrieved from <http://return.sen.go.kr>)

| Elementary school/ Middle school | Region | Name of the schools |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--|
| Elementary school | Seoul | Seoul University college of education elementary school Seoul national university of education elementary school Seoul sincheon elementary school Seoul mokwon elementary school Seoul danghyung elementary school |
| | Kyungki | Kumkei elementary school Howon elementary school |

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---|
| | | Sangdo elementary school |
| | Daejeon | Daeduk elementary school Jeonmin elementary school Jawun elementary school Hukryong elementary school |
| | Pusan | Wosuk elementary school Kwangnam elementary school Kumyang elementary school Nakdong elementary school Yangjung elementary school |
| Middle school | Seoul | Unju middle school Duksu middle school |
| | Daejeon | Daeduk Middle school |

The criteria that define who Korean returnees vary by the schools. For example, Seoul University College of Education Elementary school defines Korean returnees as those who lived abroad more than two years and those who had returned within a one-year period. In contrast, Seoul National University of Education Elementary School defines Korean returnees as those who lived abroad more than three years.

South Korea returnees bring diversity into an EFL classroom and co-create or co-construct educational spaces with teachers and non-returnee groups in an EFL classroom. According to Song (2016), Korean students who study abroad tend to participate more actively in the U.S. classroom. In a number of U.S. public schools, teachers encourage a more student-centered approach to learning. That is, students engage in classroom activities and create open environments in which students ask questions, state their opinions, and have some input into what and how they learn (Song, 2016). However, once they return, Korean returnees experience a different approach to learning. The Korean classrooms are often considered restricted, teacher-centered, and passive with limited student participation in classroom activities (Mitchell & Lee, 2003; Song, 2016). The traditional Korean classroom hierarchy places the teacher at the top and

teacher-centered classrooms are central to learning. Korean students who have not experienced *jogi yuhak* become used to this type of teaching style, while Korean returnees, as students in the U.S., became more used to active class participation and learning, and often share some responsibility in their own learning and development with their teachers.

Changes of Motivation in the ESL and the EFL Context

Attrition studies (Dörnyei,1990; Ellis,1994; Oller,1978) track changes of learners' performance over time, expecting a loss in language. To analyze the level of attrition that happens among individual returnees, it is crucial to acknowledge what motivates returnees to maintain, and improve their English proficiency in EFL contexts. According to Irie and Ryan (2012), going 'abroad' can motivate students, authenticate learning, and legitimize language use. The prospect of going abroad may give focus to or energize their language learning, making it more meaningful. Experience of language use abroad can represent a significant part of individuals' second language self-concept, how they regard themselves as language learners/users and how they approach learning.

When it comes to motivation to learn English as a foreign or second language, many researchers questioned whether motivation differs between learners in a foreign and second language context. (e.g., Au, 1988; Chihara & Oller,1978; Dörnyei,1990; Ellis,1994; Oller,1978, 1981; Oxford,1996; Oxford & Shearin,1994; Schmidt, Borai, & Kassabgy, 1996). According to Li (2014), the examination of this question has led to a model of second language motivation that is applicable to different language learning contexts and language globalization, which has helped to inform second language motivation theories. For example, Li (2014) investigated differences in the motivation of 254 Chinese learners of English in a foreign and second language context using the second language motivational self-system, which is the

reconceptualization of integrativeness in Gardner's model (Dörnyei, 2009). Li concluded that the motivation between Chinese EFL and ESL learners were notably different. Li found that ESL learners are more motivated in learning English than EFL learners. While the ESL learners attempted to expend more effort to learn English and developed stronger idealized self-images as competent users of English, the EFL learners' motivation to learn English was to meet their parents' expectations or for their academic success. Thus, ESL learners had more favorable attitudes toward learning English than the EFL learners. However, In the case of these Chinese learners, English learning experience and promotional instrumentality were two important factors in determining their motivated learning behavior. Li stated that comparing motivation in foreign and second language learning environments did impact Chinese English language learners' motivation.

Yoshitomi (1999) also conducted research on the motivation of Japanese returnees who joined special EFL language courses for returnees upon their return to Japan. Yoshitomi collected five tasks - free speech samples, story description, listening comprehension, interview and questionnaires - from four female Japanese returnees who stayed in the U.S. for more than three years at age twelve. Although participants wanted to maintain their English skills, they self-evaluated loss especially in their vocabulary. Yoshitomi concluded that language attrition initially occurred as accumulative effects decreased in the returnees' linguistic knowledge. The returnees' phonological skills were maintained but their ability to produce linguistic knowledge such as verb morphology, articles, and lexicons decreased. It was evident that language attrition is related to the returnees' ability to combine the language subskills.

The major frameworks in the field of motivation research are (a) extrinsic motivation, which is rooted in a desire for an external reward, and (b) intrinsic motivation, which promotes

learning for personal goals (Harmer, 1991). The dichotomy between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, however, is not simple. These two types of motivation facilitate interactively and separately especially in a range of contexts which ESL and EFL approaches are used.

According to Krieger (1996), intrinsic motivation is lower in an EFL setting because using English is unnecessary in their daily lives. In most cases, English language learners in EFL contexts tend to study English for a test or as a part of the school curriculum (Brown, 2001). In addition, the EFL classroom often consists of large classes with limited contact hours and makes learning English an apparently insurmountable challenge (Rose, 1999).

In contrast, students in an ESL learning context are subject to higher intrinsic motivation because they recognize English is relevant to their everyday lives (Brown, 2001). Belonging in an English-speaking community, English language learners have more opportunity to speak English and experience immediate results from their own practice in ESL setting. Krieger (1996) stated that the typical students in the ESL classes wanted to learn English for personal reasons, such as to communicate with a variety of people from other countries, or they wanted to learn the language for professional reasons, raise chances to get a better job. In contrast, many of the EFL students do not have enough opportunities to experience English in their daily lives. Although they want to learn English for the same reasons as those of ESL students, their motivation level can suffer when application in daily life is limited and not accessible.

Scholars like Irie (2003) distinguish between ESL and EFL settings. In the traditional ESL setting, Irie suggested, students desire to improve their English in order to function in their daily lives in the English-speaking country. Irie (2003) stated that those in a traditional ESL setting tend to have a higher integrative motivation, which means “a desire to assimilate into the target language community” (p.88). He also stated that many of these students have the

instrumental motivation that stems from a desire to gain benefits, such as getting a better job or passing an exam.

In terms of ESL and EFL learners' English learning strategies, researchers shifted their focus on linguistic factors that facilitate second language acquisition to characteristics of language and teaching pedagogies (Riley & Harsc, 1999). Particularly, amongst various trends in the EFL teaching practice at large, Griffiee (1997) reports that most research in English learning strategies acknowledges the learner as an individual. Across many researchers, to support students to become better language learners, teacher educators and researchers should realize the significance of learner autonomy and boost students to grow their responsibility in shaping how to learn a language (Lee, 1998; Little & Dam, 1998). Learners should be able to make informed and appropriate choices about their own learning (Holec, 1981).

Summary

Theory and research on second language acquisition and attrition studies have been synthesized to derive implications for second language learners in a range of ESL and EFL contexts. In doing so, the primary goal of this review process was to understand the second language learners' acquisition and attrition process in different learning environments, and to provide a theoretical account of how they are related. With a review of current approaches, changes in learners' motivation and learning strategies in traditionally defined ESL and EFL settings are often a means in which to achieve the goals of learning English.

Korean returnees may have returned from a study abroad experience that provided a context in which learning English is student-centered and social. They may experience an empowering sense of achievement and, yet, upon return to their native country, there are few supports that encourage maintenance of English. They often must seek out supports available in

contexts that promote a more ESL-like approach to learning English. Returning to a more teacher-centered approach to language learning may manifest in Korean returnees' frustration or disenchantment with the English education system in the EFL context. As a result, Korean returnees may constantly look back to the study abroad experience. It is easy for educators to have the misconception that returnees who have achieved a successful academic performance in the ESL context will continue or even more greatly accomplish their academic goals. However, it is imminent to remain aware of the constant interaction between learners and the learning context and how these interactions affect approaches to learning.

In this chapter, second language acquisition theories and second language attrition researches were reviewed. In line with this current research inquiry, study abroad studies and Korean education backgrounds were also examined. Based on the research in this chapter, my theoretical consideration of the methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Built upon the idea of second language acquisition theories, study abroad approaches and specific Korean education background of early study abroad phenomenon, this study generated the issue of Korean returnees who experienced dramatic learning environment change and second language attrition (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Chang & Kim, 2007; Hwang et al., 2010; Kim, Cho, 2007; Knoch et al., 2015; Lee & Koo, 2006; Park & Bae, 2009; Schmid, & Dusseldorp, 2010; Seo & Kim, 2015). The review of the literature showed that previous studies focused on the linguistic, grammatical, and phonological features that occurred in Korean returnees' second language attrition process. Whereas previously conducted quantitative research studies investigated the returnees excluding learners' ethnicity, cultural and sociocultural background the influence of first language, the scarcity of qualitative research studies related to Korean returnees' motivation in a range of EFL and ESL learning contexts encouraged the present study.

This qualitative study focused on five multiple cases as I sought to understand Korean returnees' perceptions on their second language attrition, maintenance, or improvement and factors that influenced them, and how they perceived their change of learning status from an ESL learner to an EFL learner.

Research Questions

- How do Korean returnees perceive the change of learning status from ESL learners to EFL learners?
- What characteristics influence the extent to which Korean returnees maintain or lose their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea?

In this chapter, I describe the qualitative research methods around which this study was collected. First, I explain epistemological paradigms that are congruent with my understanding of knowledge and case study method (Creswell, 2003). I discuss the ways in which this theoretical consideration informs and influence the methodological orientation, strategy of inquiry, underlying assumptions, and purposes of this study. This is followed by how the research was conducted including research principles, procedures, methods of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Theoretical Considerations of Qualitative Research

Using a qualitative research method for my study provided useful perspectives for understanding Korean returnees' experiences and how they explored, discovered, and constructed meanings around their experiences (Creswell, 2014). While education research studies related to Korean returnees focused more on its numerical data excluding learners' ethnicity, personality, and sociocultural background, I sought to investigate Korean returnees' perceptions on their change of learning status from learners in the U.S. where ESL approaches were used to learners in South Korea where the EFL approaches prevailed. By working with qualitative research methods, I was able to "highly develop interpersonal, emotional, ethical, and political sensitivity" (Belcher & Herverla, 2005, p. 189). That is, qualitative research methodology guided me through the journey as a researcher to understand Korean returnees and the framework within which they interpreted their thoughts, feelings, and social interactions in traditionally known as ESL and EFL learning contexts.

My epistemological stance for this study was based on constructivism. It is important to understand what epistemological assumptions means in the education research. Epistemology is

a way of understanding and explaining “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 2013, p. 8) that is embedded in the theoretical perspective and methodology. According to Crotty (2013), there are mainly three epistemologies: objectivism, constructivism, and subjectivism. For this study, I was drawn to constructivism in which “meaning is not discovered, but constructed.” While realism believes that there is a single truth, social constructivism believes there is no single objective truth. From social constructivists’ perspective, the truth is socially and culturally constructed as individuals construct the world of experience through social interactions. Constructivism is an epistemology that qualitative researchers tend to invoke rather than objectivism or subjectivism. Objectivism discussed in the context of positivism and post-positivism and subjectivism is the structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist forms of thoughts, that represent meaning as an interplay between the subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject. For me, constructionism enabled me to understand how Korean English language learners perceived and experienced their language learning. Each of these epistemological stances implies a profound difference in how researchers conduct research and how they present our research findings, yet, constructivism aligns best with my epistemological beliefs on this study.

Qualitative research methodology allowed me to understand the change of environmental surroundings and the phenomenon of *jogi yuhak* described from participants’ own words, perspectives, and pictures that they had in mind, which could not be described from objectivists or positivists’ approaches. Quantitative researchers primarily use statistical data or conduct experiments within a controlled setting to predict the effectiveness of a treatment or to identify a cause and effect relationship. They emphasize neutrality, objectivity, and generalization attempting not to attach emotionally and involve the participants of the study (Given, 2008). In contrast, Creswell (1994) stated that “A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of

understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 15).

This study used qualitative methods to study the research questions. This allowed me as a researcher to collect several types of data and triangulate these data to understand their lived experiences as Korean returnees. Qualitative research is useful for exploring, discovering, and constructing human’s experiences and meanings around those experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Writing a qualitative research study is a complex process because of the characteristics of the research paradigm. Belcher and Hirvela (2005) stated that the qualitative research can pose some unique challenges to English as second language writers in particular. They pointed to challenges such as self-reflexivity, rhetorical complexity, and generically unstable research report mode poses might interrupt second language writers to use qualitative research methods in their dissertation. As an English as a second language writer, I felt less confident and uncertain about my writing in English than writing in Korean. However, when reading other qualitative research studies, I found myself emotionally engaged with the researcher and/or participants. Those were times that I realized the power of qualitative research to gather an in-depth understanding about participants and I was drawn to qualitative research methods. As Belcher and Herverla (2005) state, doctoral students need “the determination, mental discipline, and love of learning” (p. 201) to survive as a good writer and researcher in this “fuzzy genre” (p. 189). It is from my determination, discipline and love of learning that I investigated this study.

Role of Researcher

The role of researcher in qualitative research is considered an instrument of data collection and that data are mediated through this human instrument. Lincoln & Guba described a researcher’s position as “the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the

‘human as instrument’” (p.183). Merriam (2009) pointed out that the researcher’s observer activities should be subordinate to the researcher role as a participant, and the researcher should balance between the depth of the information revealed to the researcher and the level of confidentiality promised to the group to obtain the information. Thus, I, as a qualitative researcher, needed to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify my ability to conduct the research.

Since I am a returnee myself, I have experienced the struggle and the changes that many Korean returnees face, and also issues of authority when conducting research. Many researchers, including Lichtman (2012), have noted the importance of the researcher’s role in a case study; the researcher is the main tool in the qualitative study. As a researcher, with a strong quantitative research base, I was not familiar with the notion of the authority that researchers as they represent the identities of the research participants in their written accounts. In addition, I am from a country in which research usually does not open people’s personal lives for research analysis but focuses more on the result or findings from identifiable numbers. Even though the debate over science-based educational research has been raised intermittently in the U.S., the majority of researchers in South Korea are quantitatively-oriented and quantitative research is prevalent (Kim, 2006). According to Pavlenko (2007), qualitative research has evolved more as a Western narrative construction such as autobiography, biography, and memoir, and may not exist as common genres in non-Western cultures or may exist differently from temporally-structured Western narratives.

Research Design

Multiple case study method

For this study, I used a multiple case study method to answer my research questions. Yin (2014) defined a case study as “An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Merriam (2009) defines “a case study [as] an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit. Conveying an understanding of the case is the paramount consideration in analyzing the data” (p. 203). Within the case study method, multiple case studies can be employed, and comprise a stronger single-case design. Contrasting “companion” case studies may strengthen a single case study and more richly describe information generated by the first case. Yin (2014) stated that the advantage of using multiple case study design is that “In a multiple-case study, one goal is to build a general explanation that fits each individual case, even though the cases will vary in their details. The objective is analogous to creating an overall explanation, for the findings from multiple experiments” (p. 148).

The goal of most case studies, as Yin (2014) and Merriam (2009) suggest, is not to generalize but rather to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of some aspect of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases. In statistical generalization, an inference is made about a population (or universe) on the basis of empirical data collected from a sample of that universe (Yin, 2014). However, analytic generalization goes beyond the setting for the specific case or specific experiment that has been studied. The intent for this case study is not to generalize nor can it be extrapolated to fit an entire question as it addresses one particular case. However, a case study provides more authentic and case study generated interpretative responses from the case than administering a purely statistical survey (Noor, 2008; Shuttleworth, 2008). One advantage of the case study research design is that the researcher can focus on

specific and interesting cases. From my perspective, it was important to plan and design how to address the study and collect relevant data. Since there is no strict set of rules, the most important part would be making sure that the study is focused and concise. Studying the cases of five Korean returnees provided data which I could “cross-fertilize and cross-validate” (Yin, 2014). In this sense, investigating my research inquiry on Korean returnees’ perceptions on different learning contexts was a means of understanding a real-world case and making sense of contextual conditions around Korean returnees’ early study abroad experiences. Thus, the case study research approach proved apt for my research design.

Within my research, a multiple case study of Korean returnees, English language learners who have had more than two years of study abroad experience, offered deep insights into how each of the participants perceived traditionally known as ESL and EFL learning contexts differently. I interviewed and observed participants who had varied study abroad experiences and experienced different English learning processes. Since age at the time of presence and length of stay in English-speaking countries are important factors in learning languages (Brecht, 1993), participants who had different study abroad experiences at a different age and the length of stay offered interesting insights into the study’s research questions and implications for research and practice.

Case study as the qualitative research method for this study is well-suited because it can flexibly describe each individual Korean returnee’s experience. Well-designed case study research has the power to resonate with people inductively, and can capture the emic, or insider’s perspectives, of lived experience that is reflected in a case study’s language, thoughts, and behaviors. The case study can be appealing due to “its seeming simplicity and singularity” (Duff, 2013, p. 1) to understand in a more holistic way the intricacies and inner workings of Korean

returnees, systems around them, and policies. The advantage of the case study research design is that I was able to focus on specific and interesting cases. Using case study methodology, I was able (a) to pay attention to interpretive as well as realist perspectives; (b) to incorporate multiple sources of evidence; (c) to use inductive approaches in analysis; (d) to develop analytic generalizations; and (e) to focus on various audiences (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Thus, it is important to plan and design how to address the study and collect relevant data.

Since case studies have more potential audiences than other types of research (Yin, 2014), it is important to identify the features of the case study report in accordance with the audiences. According to (Yin, 2014), the alternative audiences for this case study are “academic colleagues, policy makers, practitioners, community leaders, and other professionals who do not specialize in case study or other social science research, special groups such as a dissertation or thesis committee and funders of research” (p. 180). Alternative audiences for my case study are policy makers in South Korea or practitioners who are interested in teaching English to English language learners. Policy makers in education field include experts and non-experts. Especially for non-specialists, I utilized the narrative forms and descriptive elements to portray realistic situations. For academic colleagues, I focused this report to show the relationship among the case study, its findings, and theories. It was difficult to serve all the audiences with the same report, because “each audience has different needs, and no single report will serve all audiences simultaneously” (Yin, 2014, p. 180). However, I kept in mind that various audiences are out there and consider their needs in possible ways.

Participants

This study focused on how Korean returnees perceived change in their learning status from being ESL learners to EFL learners. Thus, the inclusion criteria for this study were as

follows: (a) those who had a study abroad experience of more than two years during their elementary or middle school years in the U.S.; (b) those who had returned to their home countries at the peak of their English proficiency; (c) those who had returned and stayed in South Korea within a two-year period; and (4) those who studied English as a foreign language prior to their study abroad experience.

Five Korean returnees who matched the above criteria were recruited for this study – Hyun, Brian, Timothy, Kayla and Sarah. Table 4 below shows the characteristics of individual participants.

Table 4

Characteristics of individual participants

| Participants | Hyun | Brian | Timothy | Sarah | Kayla |
|---|----------------------|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Gender | Male | Male | Male | Female | Female |
| Age at the time of arrival in the U.S. | 7 yrs. old | 12 yrs. old | 9 yrs. old | 7 yrs. old | 4 ½ yrs. old |
| Time of stay in the U.S. | 2 yrs. | 4 yrs. | 4 yrs. | 4 ½ yrs. | 5 ½ yrs. |
| Age at the time of return to South Korea | 9 yrs. old | 16 yrs. old | 13 yrs. old | 11 yrs. old | 10 yrs. old |
| Age at time of initial interview after returning to South Korea | 11 yrs. old | 17 yrs. old | 14 yrs. old | 13 yrs. old | 12 yrs. old |
| Siblings | Min, younger brother | Timothy, Katie and Jason, younger siblings | Brian, older brother; Katie and Jason, younger siblings | Chris, younger brother | Ethan, younger brother |
| Mothers | Eun | Jihee | Jihee | Sunyoung | Jungmin |

Participant selection and recruitment

Initially, I recruited as many possible participants as I could. This allowed for attrition of participants for this study who decided not to participate because of time differences and geographical limitation. Once a pool of five participants had been generated, I stopped the recruitment. I then used inclusion criteria to determine which participants suited the goals of this study. I used pseudonyms when describing all participants. Yin (2014) pointed out that anonymity is necessary and serves as a protection for the real case and its real participants.

Once IRB approval had been given, I began recruiting participants using the snowball sampling method (Patton, 2002). Patton describes this process as “an approach for locating information-rich key participants or critical cases” (p. 237). First, researchers ask people if they know possible and potential participants. In most cases, a few key people will be mentioned repeatedly. Then, the chain of recommended participants will be contacted by the researcher. As the snowball gets bigger, the researcher accumulates new information-rich cases by asking a number of people around the researcher. Based on this snowball sampling process, I reached out to an adult Korean ESL study group that I once belonged to in the U.S. I asked if there was anyone who planned to return to South Korea. I found one potential participant’s mother from this population. Therefore, I asked this participant’s mother if she had friends or acquaintances who might fit this one inclusion criteria. She introduced me to another potential participant who had study abroad experiences and went back to their home countries. Therefore, I contacted this potential participant’s parents and I sent informed consent forms. This participant was Hyun and his mother, Eun.

I also contacted the private English institution called *Hakwon* to look for possible participants for my study, as *Hakwon* specifically serves returnees. Korean returnees tend to rely

on private English institutions such as *Hakwon* as a second option if there is no public school that operates English classes specifically for Korean returnees. One of the most popular private institutions for Korean returnees is the *Roy Hakwon*. I contacted one of their campuses in the middle province of South Korea and asked if there were potential participants who might participate in this study. I sent them a recruitment letter that included the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, voluntary participants and withdrawals, confidentiality, and contact information. I received a response from the institution, and recruited two participants, Kayla and Sarah.

I met the other two participants, Brian and Timothy, by coincidence at a church in South Korea. The pastor who used to serve at my church recently returned to South Korea from the U.S. with his family of four children. I contacted the pastor and asked if his children would participate in my study. Among his four children, Brian and Timothy fit the inclusion criteria.

Once IRB approval had been given, I contacted the five participants, sent them Informed Consents, and the study commenced.

Participants' characteristics

Five participants agreed to participate in this study: Hyun, Brian, Timothy, Kayla and Sarah. All participants were elementary or middle grades students at the time they lived in the U.S., and all returned to South Korea after living abroad for more than two years. All names are pseudonyms.

Hyun. Hyun was an eleven-year old boy who had lived in a Southeastern city in the U.S. for one and a half years and in a Midwestern city in the U.S. for six months. He was born and raised in South Korea until his father decided to pursue MA program in the U.S. One of the reasons that his father decided to study in the U.S. was to provide English education for Hyun

and his younger brother, Min. As an international student, Hyun entered elementary school as a first grader and continued to the third grade until the family went back to South Korea. As the time of this writing, Hyun's father continues to pursue a PhD degree in the U.S. while his mother, Eun, had to return to South Korea because she had only a two-year child-care leave from her work. Since Hyun and Min had only three months left in the school year and Eun had to return to work, Hyun's grandmother took care of Hyun and Min in the U.S. for three months so the brothers could finish their school year. Hyun's parents had thought about letting their children stay longer with Hyun's father and grandmother; however, they were not satisfied with this idea. Although Hyun's parents were certain that Hyun and Min would be more fluent in English if they stay longer in the U.S., Hyun's father, who was a hardworking doctoral student, and his grandmother, who could not speak English, could not handle the demands for Hyun and his younger brother, Min. Therefore, the family decided that Hyun and Min would go back to South Korea and stay with his mother until his father finished his PhD degree.

When Hyun came to the U.S., his parents said he barely spoke or wrote English. However, by the time he went back to South Korea, he was confident in communicating with his friends and teachers in English and gained an ability to write both in English and Korean. He remained at the high level of academic performance at his U.S. school and had many English-speaking friends.

Brian and Timothy. Brian and Timothy are brothers. Brian was 17 years old and Timothy was 14 years old at the time they were interviewed. They were born and raised in South Korea and went to the U.S. in January, 2012 and lived in a western city in the U.S. for more than 4 years. Their father was a pastor in South Korea and their mother was a housewife. They have an 11-year-old younger sister, Katie, and an 8-year-old younger brother, Jason. The children

talked to their parents in Korean. The youngest brother, Jason, spoke English to his siblings while the other three brothers and sisters used both Korean and English interchangeably with each other. According to their mother, Jason was 3 years old when he went to the U.S. and was able to speak only Korean at that time. Before returning to South Korea, Jason spoke only English to his parents and siblings, although he understood Korean.

Brian and Timothy's father worked as a full-time pastor in South Korea until 2011 when he decided to earn a Master's degree in theology in the U.S. As such, the whole family moved to the U.S. At the time that they went to the U.S., Brian was 12 years old, had finished his fifth grade and would have gone into the sixth grade in South Korea. Timothy was 9 years old and finished his second grade. Since there is a six month-difference in South Korea and the U.S. school entrance period (e.g. Korean public schools start a new academic year every March), Brian's parents decided to let Brian enter the fifth grade in the U.S., which is one semester earlier than in South Korea. On the other hand, Timothy skipped one semester and started as a third grader in the U.S. The neighborhood where their family resided had a large Korean population, and helped Brian and Timothy to adapt to their schools. In the first year, Brian attended ESL classes during his language art class while Timothy did not. Both attended public school for one and a half years, and then transferred to a homeschooling-specified academy, Athena Academy (pseudonym), in the western city in which they lived. This academy was a private school that pursues Christ-centered, Classical Education for grades K-12 using a homeschooling and onsite schooling hybrid model. Brian, Timothy, Katie and Jason went to this school three days a week and were homeschooled by their mother for the other two days.

After their father earned his Master's degree, the family decided to return to South Korea because their father could not find a job in the U.S. At the time of the initial interview with

Brian, Timothy, and their mother, they had been in South Korea for about six months. They were in the transitional stage of adapting to living in South Korea. They lived temporarily in their grandparents' apartment because their father did not have a full-time job and they were not sure where they would settle down. By the time of the second interview, which was after five months after the initial interview, the family moved into their own house where their father got a job in a city located in the middle of South Korea. Instead of going to public high school, the parents decided that the mother would homeschool all their children.

Kayla. Kayla was a 12-year-old girl who loves to chat with her parents and friends. Kayla's mother was a violinist and went to the U.S. to earn her doctoral degree in a city in the Midwest of the U.S. After two years, they moved to another city and returned to South Korea three years later after Kayla's mother earned her doctoral degree. During that time, Kayla's father went back and forth from South Korea to the U.S. to visit his family. Kayla's mother, Kayla and her brother stayed in the U.S. for five years. At the time that Kayla went to the U.S., she was about 4 1/2 years old and returned to South Korea when she was 10 years old. Kayla said she knew the alphabet but that was only because of the English alphabet songs that she knew. She attended ESL class for one year during her preschool year. When she entered the elementary school, she attended English language arts classes. Her younger brother was three years old when they went to the U.S., but attended an ESL class until the second grade. While in the U.S., Kayla learned to read and write in Korean through an online website called "Junior Naver" which targets Korean elementary school and middle school students. She also went to a Korean language school on Saturday for two years. Kayla thought she had acquired English and Korean at the same time. Her family tried to use English at home, especially when her brother

insisted that they use only English at home. At the time of the initial interview, Kayla had been in South Korea for one and a half years.

Sarah. Sarah was a thirteen-year-old girl who loved reading fantasy novels and playing drum. When she was seven years old, Sarah's father was transferred to an office in the Southwest U.S. as a temporary employee. Sarah's family moved to the U.S. and stayed for three years. When her father was transferred back to South Korea, Sarah's mother decided to stay with her children in the U.S. a little longer because she wanted the children to have more time to learn English in the U.S. To legally stay one more year in the U.S., Sarah's mother registered their children at an English language school that offered student visas. When Sarah returned to South Korea, she was eleven years old. At the time of the initial interview, Sarah had been in South Korea for nearly two years.

Study Procedures

Once IRB was approved, the study commenced. First, I contacted the participants and their parents and invited them to participate in the study. I explained the study to them in Korean as they better understood the purpose of the study in their native language. Second, I asked the child participants to sign an Assent Form, and their parents signed the Informed Consent letter. After receiving these letters, I began to schedule interviews and observations. I interviewed all participants initially, and then focused on five who best represented the inclusion criteria and worked with these participants as my case study.

Setting for the Study

To research the participants' perceptions of the change in their learning status from ESL learners to EFL learners, detailed information and descriptions about their home, school, communities were required. To understand how Korean returnees navigate their educational and

social spaces after having returned to South Korea, the participants' educational settings, family's participations and relationship with peers were informative variables. Knowledge of the milieu in which participants were involved was essential to investigate research questions. In my written account of this study, I kept these details to a minimum so as to protect the identity of my participants.

Data collection

I collected data primarily from researcher fieldnotes and semi-structured interviews with participants and their mothers. The multiple case study method favors the collection of data in natural settings. These data were collected via electronic means while participants were in their homes in South Korea.

Researcher field notes

Across this research, I kept researcher field notes during data collection, especially during participant interviews and observations. According to Creswell (2007), by taking field notes, a researcher can record the participants' verbal and nonverbal behaviors and the context in which these behaviors take place during the interview or observation. Field notes, Creswell notes, can provide rich and in-depth descriptions of data about the situation and the participants. Since interview data were collected via Skype, I listened to participants' verbal statements and studied the nonverbal behaviors that I could see while talking with participants. During the interviews, I tried to be reflective and used myself as a filter to describe my own thoughts, feelings, impressions, and insights as reactions to participants' interview data. After each interview, I recorded these fieldnotes and reflected on what participants said and what I thought they meant between interviews. I also reflected on my process of interviewing, recording what I should have done in an interview or what I would do in future interviews. Based on Creswell (2007)'s

Observation Protocol Example (p. 137), I organized my researcher field notes by creating a chart as follows:

Table 5

Researcher field notes example

| Date/ time/ | Settings | Descriptive notes | Reflective notes |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| 12/6 Initial interview | Skype interview | <p>- Can you tell me how you learned English in the U.S. in the first place? How did you feel about learning English in South Korea?</p> <p>- In the U.S., they do not translate like you. But here in South Korea, English speaking teacher and Korean teacher enter together in the classroom. So, they do some Korean translation because students cannot understand English well. In the U.S., there is no blackboard or textbook. But here we must bring textbooks and teachers always write down something on the board. Here they write it down in Korean. It makes me feel easier.</p> | <p><i>- I should have asked him about what he meant by saying “translation” which occurred in the classroom. I knew what he meant by it at the time of the interview, but I should have asked him exactly what it meant for clarification. What Hyun was recognized as translation is different from the official definition and it contains certain features that Hyun might think it is a translation. Asking an interviewee to explain something would be helpful for him to clear up ambiguous concepts.</i></p> <p><i>It was interesting that he acknowledged that there were no textbooks in the U.S. It could be because teachers used various sources such as books, media, or charts to teach children at school.</i></p> <p><i>Since Hyun did not reach the native level of English proficiency in the U.S. for staying there for two years, it was still comfortable for him to be provided Korean translation in English classroom in South Korea.</i></p> |

Semi-structured interviews

Interview is a valuable data source in qualitative research methods. I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each participant and her/his mother. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to capture fresh responses about the participant's experiences concerning their change of learning status in traditional ESL and EFL contexts. Patton (1990) emphasized the significance of the interview as a source of data:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing is to allow and enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2003), there are three distinct characteristics of semi-structured interviews. First, the interviewer and the respondents engage in a formal interview. Second, the interviewer develops and uses an interview guide. This is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order. Third, the interviewer follows the guide, but is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when he or she feels this is appropriate. Semi-structured interviews are especially useful because questions can be prepared ahead of time. This allows the interviewer to be prepared for the interview. It allows participants the freedom to express their views in their own terms providing reliable, comparable qualitative data.

Gomm (2004) describes the collaboration of interviewer and interviewee as a “fact-producing interaction” (p. 230). Based on the assumptions of constructivism, the meaning is socially constructed and interviewers and interviewees make meaning together during their interview process (Newton, 2010), and researchers can help the interviewee make meaning from what s/he has said.

The semi-structured interview is similar to one among Patton (2002)’s four types of interviews – informal conversational interview, interview guide approach, standardized open-ended interview, and closed, fixed-response interview – the interview guide approach, in which “topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview” (p. 349). Although the interviewer has prepared an interview guide with main themes, issues, and questions, the interview questions can be reordered, deleted, changed, and added depending on how interviewer and interviewees interact. Other researchers, like Corbetta (2003), also contribute ideas regarding the process of conducting semi-structured interviews:

The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer’s discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary, and to establish his own style of conversation (p. 270).

In this multiple-case study approach, I followed the advice of scholars, and used conversation, discussion, and questions for each informant based on the interview guide

(Appendix A). And, as these scholars suggest, I attended to the responses of my participants and followed the direction of the interviewee to order, add, and/or delete questions as appropriate.

Procedures for Interviews.

Prior to the initial interview, I introduced this study to the participants. Before the interview began, I asked the participants which language – Korean or English - he/she would like to use for the interview. All participants chose to interview in Korean as I had anticipated that participants might feel more comfortable interviewing in Korean due to the reason that the first language of both the researcher and participants is Korean. Each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and was audio-recorded. The initial interview with participants was conducted in December 2016 and the second interviews were conducted between January and April of 2017 and organized to accommodate participants' schedules. The length of time between each interview enabled me to transcribe the initial interview, study their responses to the questions, and prepare follow-up questions for the second interview.

After transcribing and translating the interview data, I asked participants to respond to my interpretation of their responses to ensure that I captured the ideas and/or details as accurately as possible. Scholars refer to this as member checking, informant feedback, or respondent validation (Barbour, 2001; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dates and locations for interviews were scheduled at the participant's convenience. Once I received an email with a participant's consent, I scheduled an electronic interview with her or him. Participants chose how the interview would be conducted. As I was in the U.S. and the participants were in Korea, the interviews were conducted via Skype, Google Hangout, and/or FaceTime. All interviews were audio- and/or video-recorded. As scholars suggest for semi-structured interviews, I prepared a set of questions to ask each participant. During the interviews,

I cross-checked my interpretations with a participant to ensure that they understood my questions. I also asked questions in several different ways. For example, I asked one participant, “What was your purpose in learning English in the U.S. and in Korea?” and later I asked again, “Why do you think you learned English in the U.S. and in Korea?” These questions were purposefully designed to check for consistency in participants’ responses, and to draw out slightly different responses from the participant.

Hyun. I interviewed Hyun twice by FaceTime in December 2016 and February 2017. Hyun’s initial interview occurred approximately 18 months after he returned to South Korea. I interviewed Hyun in his mother’s presence, and then I interviewed his mother in Hyun’s presence, based on what Hyun said during his interview. When Hyun did not fully understand my questions or he could not find some answers he was looking for, his mother helped remind him by saying, “Don’t you remember your ESL teacher? Talk about her,” etc.

Timothy. I interviewed Timothy twice by Google Hangout in December 2016 and April 2017 in his mother’s presence and then interviewed his mother based on what Timothy said during the interview.

Sarah. I interviewed Sarah twice by Skype in December 2016 and January 2017. The teacher who introduced me to Sarah proudly mentioned that Sarah was a talented student who won prizes several times in the English debate competitions.

Kayla. I interviewed Kayla twice by Skype in December 2016 and February 2017.

Brian. I interviewed Brian twice by Google Hangout in December 2016 and April 2017 in his mother’s presence and then interviewed his mother based on what Brian said during the interview.

After each interview, I transcribed the audio-recordings and started to analyze the data. Transcribed audio recordings provided me a means to understand the moment when the participant acknowledged her/his perceptions across English language learning experiences. A follow-up interview was conducted with each participant. I asked additional questions about the initial interview. Table 6 is a summary of participant interviews and member checks.

Table 6

Interview and member checks for each participant

| | Initial interview | Follow-up interview | Member checks |
|----------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Interview time | 30-60 min (participant) 30-60 min (parent) | 30-60 min (participant) 30-60 min (parent) | Less than two hours |
| Hyun | December 2016 | February 2017 | October 2017 |
| Sarah | December 2016 | January 2017 | October 2017 |
| Kayla | December 2016 | February 2017 | October 2017 |
| Timothy | December 2016 | April 2017 | October 2017; March 2018 |
| Brian | December 2016 | April 2017 | October 2017; March 2018 |

Interview transcripts were translated from Korean into English by the researcher. Because of the possibility of misinterpretation between Korean and English, I asked a third person, native to Korea, to review and check the transcripts for misinterpretations and/or accuracy of the translation. I tried to self-reflect and reduce researcher bias by reading and re-reading interview transcripts for accuracy and interpretation, and reading across interviews to ensure the accuracy of my process of translating interviews.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) provided concrete guidance for researchers and describes data analysis as “the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen

and read – it is the process of making meaning” (p. 193). Consolidation, reduction and interpretation helped me have a clear and concrete analytic process rather than just analyzing data with impression and intuition. Merriam also explained the importance of simultaneous data collection and analysis. That is, while a researcher collects data, s/he also analyzes what the data mean. In addition, she mentions that data analysis is a recursive and dynamic process and “is not to say that the analysis is finished when all the data have been collected. Quite the opposite. Analysis becomes more intensive as the study progresses, and once all the data are in” (Merriam, 2009, p. 169). In this study, as I collected interview data, I asked participants to confirm or extend my analysis of what they said during the interview. I also wrote researcher notes on what participants said during the interview. After I had transcribed the interview data, I wrote more substantive researcher notes (see Table 5 presented earlier in this chapter).

The findings of this study were generated from data using qualitative data analysis. Patton (2002) stated there is no one way to analyze textual data, saying that “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when—and if—arrived at” (p. 432). Thus, qualitative data analysis enabled me to generate unique and transferrable findings. As a Korean-English bilingual researcher and to provide rich contextualization and a thick description (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010), I translated Korean interview transcripts into English, coded the participant’s semi-structured interviews data sets, generated themes and identified understandings.

In the initial coding, I broke down my interview data into discrete parts and examined them more closely by comparing them for similarities and differences. For example, when one participant mentioned something about their ESL classroom in the U.S., I blocked the section

and marked it with “ESL classroom/US” This process was an opportunity to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of my data and to begin taking ownership of them. Since I took an open-ended approach to code the data, I tried to “digest and reflect” (Clarke, 2005, p. 84) before starting initial coding and to explore further wonderings on how my data analysis took me into a certain direction. While reading interview transcripts, I wrote codes on the side and subcoded them with specific referents. (e.g. institution, friends support, setting the bar high, etc.). I also highlighted some words or sentences that seem important and more related to labels.

Table 7

Example of initial coding

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>R: Can you tell me how you learned English in the US in the first place? How did you feel differently in learning English in Korea? 맨 처음에 미국에서 영어를 어떤 식으로 배웠는지 얘기해 줄래? 한국에서 배웠던 거랑 어떻게 달랐는지, 어떻게 느꼈는지 얘기해 줄래?</p> <p>Q: In the US, they do not translate like you. But here in Korea, English speaking teacher and Korean teacher enter together in the classroom. So, they do some Korean translation because students cannot understand English well. In the US, there is no blackboard or textbook. But here we must bring textbooks and teachers always write down something on the board. Here they write it down in Korean. It makes me feel easier.</p> <p>미국에서는 이렇게 한국말로 안 통역해 주잖아요. 그런데 여기는 영어 선생님 한명 한국 선생님 한 명이 같이 오거든요. 한국말도 조금 통역을 해 줘요. 애들이 잘 모르니까. 그리고 거기에서는 (미국) 칠판이나 책 같은 거 없이 하거든요. 그런데 여기에서는 영어 책이나 그런 걸 다 챙겨오고, 거기에서 영어 배울 때는 선생님이 칠판에 영어 써줘요. 여기에서는 한국말로 써주거든요. 그런데 여기가 조금 더 쉬운 것 같아요.</p> | <p>English learning in Korea</p> | <p><i>Perception of the difference of public school classroom in Korea and in the U.S.</i></p> <p><i>Emotional support from English-Korean translating teachers</i></p> <p><i>Use of school supplies</i></p> <p><i>Use of textbooks</i></p> |
|--|----------------------------------|---|

After the initial coding, I used holistic coding which tries “to grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than by analyzing them line by line” (Dey, 1992, p. 104). For example, I chunked the data into broad topic areas, for example, motivation to

maintain English proficiency, parents' involvement in decision making, peer-effect which represented descriptive themes or issues. According to Saldaña (2015), holistic coding is appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers in order to learn how to code data, and to study a wide variety of data forms such as interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. Holistic coding is more like a preparatory groundwork for more detailed coding of the data. Therefore, in the first a few pages, I tested holistic coding method to assess its possibilities.

To analyze the data, I created a coding chart (Table 8) after I had coded the transcripts. The chart helped me organize the codes across transcripts. I designed the chart to organize my coding. On the top row, I placed similar referents that emerged from the holistic coding and filled the chart with participants' interview statements. For example, I generated referents like "ESL classroom in the U.S." and inserted each participant's interview statements related to ESL classroom experience. I also highlighted some words or sentences that I thought relevant and important.

Table 8

Example of data analysis chart

| | Hyun | Brian | Timothy | Sarah | Kayla |
|---------------|--|--|---------|---|---|
| ESL classroom | [line 126] R: Did you have an ESL teacher at school? MA: Yes, there was. All the international students are assigned in the ESL classes. They have one hour class almost everyday. Hyun, do you | [line 170] R: what did you learn in the ESL classroom? B: mostly reading. In language art classroom, you should read and understand well to participate in the discussion. I am not sure what it was... but I wrote something on handouts. I | | [line 72] The school did not have separate ESL classes, I thought. However, I was in an ESL class the whole day so I did not know the class that I belonged to was an ESL class. There were a lot of Indians. My teacher told me | [line 56] No, I just knew English alphabet song, abcdefg... [sings alphabet song]. I didn't even know it was English, and I guess it was just a song. But I was in the ESL class for a year when I went to the |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>remember your teacher with gray hair?</p> <p>[line 138] R: Then, ESL teacher took care of your homework like a tutor? H: We just did some reading together and my mom took care of Math homework. R: Then, what did you do during the ESL classes? A: She taught me some vocabulary or readings. (Interview, December, 2016)</p> | <p>think the ESL teacher tried to help me with understanding and comprehension. (Interview, December, 2016)</p> | | <p>to make “V” if I would like to go to restroom; there were some kids who did the same thing. (Interview, December, 2016)</p> | <p>U.S. and it was okay. (Interview, December, 2016)</p> |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|

Member checking

Across data sources, I conducted member checks with each participant to receive informant feedback and/or participant validation (Barbour, 2001; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking is one of the most important tools for establishing validity and credibility in qualitative research. In this process, the researcher verifies information with participants and can be provided with corrective feedback on researchers’ interpretation (Creswell, 2014). According to Stake (2005), participants need to “play a major role in directing as well as acting in case study research. They should be asked to examine rough drafts of the researcher's work and to provide alternative language, critical observations or interpretations” (p.

115). Member checks were conducted in October 2017 for all participants and I received additional information from Brian and Timothy in March 2018. Member checks took approximately two hours (see Table 6). I asked participants to respond to their actual statements and my interpretations of their statements. Since the study involved children and teen-agers, I asked parents/guardians to be present with their children during the process of member checking to confirm my interpretation of data.

Ethical Considerations

Many researchers, including Lichtman (2012), have noted the importance of the researcher's role in a case study; consequently, the researcher is the main tool in the qualitative study. As Yin (2014) stated, "Specific ethical considerations arise for all research involving human subjects" (p. 77). Therefore, to avoid any ethical issues, I carefully planned to ensure that study the participants' identities were protected. As a researcher, I understood that I might have influenced participant selection through snowball-sampling as I was familiar with participants' personalities and educational histories. Two participants were children of the pastor of the church I attended in Korea. One participant was my previous classmate's child in the adult ESL classroom and the other two participants were introduced by the teacher in *Hakwon*. Since interviews were conducted in Korean, the first language of both the participant and the researcher and translated by the researcher afterwards for analysis, I conducted member checks with participants in the presence of their mothers. Throughout this process, I self-reflected by checking each interview for the accuracy of my translation and interpretation.

One critical ethical issue in my case study design was that the participants were children and non-native English speakers. Yet, I considered how to ethically address this issue. First, to avoid difficulty in speaking or having the potential to feel upset, nervous, or embarrassed in

using English, I asked participants to identify which language was more comfortable for them while I interviewed them. Second, I provided them with positive encouragement to continue to practice English. Third, participants' mothers were present to support their children in the interviews, and to support their recollections and reflections on learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea. Fourth, if participants felt uncomfortable and did not want to continue to participate in the study, I ensured them that they were free to stop at any time. Fifth, I conducted the important step of interpreting data through member-checks to ensure the quality and accuracy of the participants' perceptions, interpretations, and descriptions. This process eventually increased the construct validity, which identified correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. This process reduced the possibility that I reported falsely and/or misrepresented the participants' perspectives, as Maxwell (2008) explained, "[Member checking] is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed" (p. 111). Merriam (2009) also pointed out that member checking is helpful to strengthen internal validity and credibility, and a way to recognize misinterpretation and fine-tune ambiguous wordings.

In summary, depending on the type of research, ethical considerations arise while conducting research such as privacy concerns or voluntary participation perhaps because researchers themselves are the human instrument in conducting a study (Merriam, 2009). Thus, this study's findings and reports cannot be neutral as I interpreted data through my own experiences and beliefs about being a Korean returnee. As a qualitative researcher, I had the responsibility to maintain ethical standards while conducting studies, and I hope this is evident to the reader of this dissertation in how I analyzed and reported data.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how Korean returnees perceived their second language acquisition and attrition process when they returned to their home country after living in the U.S. This study also investigated their transition between traditionally known as ESL and EFL contexts, and the strategies they used in educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency or why there was an attrition of their English proficiency after returning to South Korea. Specifically, this study set out to investigate how and in what ways study participants were supported to maintain or improve their English proficiency at home, school, and out-of-school contexts. The five participants of this study (all pseudonyms)—Hyun, Brian, Timothy, Sarah, and Kayla—had lived in the U.S. for more than two years and returned to South Korea because of their parents' jobs or the change of their residential status in the U.S. (e.g., expiration of working visa, etc.). In South Korea, these returnees faced a high-pressure learning environment that demanded they should make extra efforts to maintain or improve their English proficiency. In this chapter, I present findings for this study guided by the following research questions: 1) What are the perceptions of five Korean returnees as ESL learners in the U.S. and as EFL learners in South Korea? 2) What characteristics influenced the extent to which Korean returnees maintain or lose their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea?

Overview

In this study, four key findings emerged:

1. Participants' perceptions of English proficiency after their return to South Korea

- a. Participants perceived their level of English proficiency in different ways after returned to South Korea.
 - b. Influence of educational spaces and learning status impacted motivation to maintain English.
2. Participants' use of strategies for learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea
- a. Teaching styles and the assessment systems in the U.S. influenced Korean returnees' language learning strategies.
 - b. First language experiences helped Korean returnees maintain their English proficiency.
3. Participants' use of educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency
- a. Reading printed materials
 - b. Conversations within family
 - c. *Hakwon* as an educational resource
 - d. Personal/electronic social networks
4. Parents as a critical resource in participants' maintaining English proficiency

Within these findings, I present the individual cases as they were analyzed from data collected from participant and parent interviews, written documents produced by the participants, and observation of participants.

Data were analyzed to understand participants' perceptions of themselves when they were considered ESL learners in the U.S. and their English proficiency after they left the U.S.

and returned to their home country. English proficiency was determined by each participant's assessment of her/his own levels of language use in the range of social and cultural contexts in which they used and/or learned English. Research has defined "proficiency" as the participants' knowledge of linguistic skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. For example, Takahashi (2009) defined language proficiency as "a person's general level of ability in the target language" (p. 39). While there are a number of assessments that identify levels of English proficiency, this study did not use these assessments to measure a participant's actual English ability. Rather, this study investigated participants' perceptions of their English competence after returning to South Korea for two reasons. First, self-perception focuses more on participants' understanding of their change in their English proficiency, not the ability of English practice assessed through different English tests (e.g., the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA)). Second, participants' overall English proficiency was difficult to assess or measure based on one particular model of language proficiency test as I did not administer any English proficiency test nor did I collect test data regarding participants' proficiency from their schools. A number of tests have been developed to assess English proficiency like the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) which measures comprehension and communication in English or the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) which assesses the construct of academic English. Identifying participants' English proficiency was not the focus, but participants' perceptions of their proficiency.

Table of Participant Characteristics

Table 4, presented earlier in Chapter 3 and shown for convenience here, identifies characteristics of individual participants including gender, age at the time of arrival in the U.S.,

time of stay in the U.S., age at the time of return to South Korea, age at time of initial interview after returning to South Korea, and family members such as siblings and parents.

Table 4

Characteristics of individual participants

| Participants | Hyun | Brian | Timothy | Sarah | Kayla |
|---|----------------------|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Gender | Male | Male | Male | Female | Female |
| Age at the time of arrival in the U.S. | 7 yrs. old | 12 yrs. old | 9 yrs. old | 7 yrs. old | 4 ½ yrs. old |
| Time of stay in the U.S. | 2 yrs. | 4 yrs. | 4 yrs. | 4 ½ yrs. | 5 ½ yrs. |
| Age at the time of return to South Korea | 9 yrs. old | 16 yrs. old | 13 yrs. old | 11 yrs. old | 10 yrs. old |
| Age at the time of initial interview after returning to South Korea | 11 yrs. old | 17 yrs. old | 14 yrs. old | 13 yrs. old | 12 yrs. old |
| Siblings | Min, younger brother | Timothy, Katie and Jason, younger siblings | Brian, older brother; Katie and Jason, younger siblings | Chris, younger brother | Ethan, younger brother |
| Mothers | Eun | Jihee | Jihee | Sunyoung | Jungmin |

Findings

Finding 1: Participants' perceptions of English proficiency after their return to South Korea

Participants explained the degree to which their English proficiency had increased, decreased and/or remained the same. How participants used English in their social (family, friends) and education spaces emerged as significant characteristics in the extent to which they were motivated (or not) to maintain (or not) their English proficiency. Table 9 below indicates how participants identified the extent to which they maintained their English proficiency.

Table 9

Participants' perceptions of their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea

| Perception of English Proficiency | Hyun | Kayla | Timothy | Brian | Sarah |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| Increased | | | | | x |
| Decreased | x | x | | | |
| Remained same | | | x | x | |

According to the second language attrition hypothesis, the second language decreases when the learner uses the second language to an insufficient degree due to environmental changes (Bahrck, 1984; De Bot & Weltens, 1995; Weltens, Van Els & Schils, 1989). Thus, it is assumed that returnees will lose their English proficiency after leaving the U.S. However, in contrast to the findings of these scholars, one participant in this study perceived that her English actually increased, two thought their English had remained the same. The other two were in step with the aforementioned research and perceived their English proficiency had decreased.

Subfinding a. Participants perceived their level of English proficiency in different ways after returned to South Korea.

During the initial interview with each participant, all five participants—Hyun, Kayla, Brian, Timothy, and Sarah—articulated their perceptions of their levels of English proficiency after returning to South Korea and why they perceived themselves in that way. They reported their perceptions of the extent to which they maintained, increased, or decreased their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea.

Hyun. When I asked Hyun about how he perceived the change of his English proficiency after he returned to South Korea, he showed indifference in maintaining his English proficiency.

Researcher: Have you ever thought about your English skills might not be as good as it used to be?

Hyun: I've never thought about that. I still remember my English in the U.S. Maybe I forgot a little, but I don't think I forgot English that much because mom sent me to an after-school institution, the Roy *Hakwon*.
(Interview, December, 2016)

When Hyun went to the U.S., he was seven years old, and his first language was Korean.

In an interview, Hyun described how he learned English while living in the U.S.

Researcher: Can you tell me how you learned English in the U.S. in the first place? Have you experienced any difficulty in communicating with them (English speakers) in English?

Hyun: It was a little hard when I went to school in the first grade. I was good at speaking in English. Well . . . not like Americans, but I got all As in my report card (Interview, December, 2016).

Hyun remembered that he was “good at speaking English” and was aware that he did not reach the level of native English speaker fluency. Hyun perceived that his English was strong enough to earn “As” on his “report card”. In this self-report, Hyun equated strong English skills with high grades in all subject areas. Hyun’s mother, Eun (pseudonym), perceived Hyun’s English level differently, and stated that it was “minimal” when they arrived in the U.S.; Hyun could barely speak or write in English before going to the U.S. (Interview, December, 2016). However,

by the time he returned to South Korea, Eun stated Hyun was confident in communicating with his friends and teachers in English and gained an ability to write both in English and Korean. Eun mentioned that “He knew some basic words, but his pronunciation changed dramatically” (Interview, December, 2016). Hyun agreed with his mother, “In Korea, my pronunciation was not that good and I only knew easy words but my pronunciation got better after coming from the U.S. ... I have learned more vocabulary and grammar skills” (Interview, December, 2016). Hyun thought his English proficiency, especially his pronunciation, improved during his stay in the United States as Eun mentioned. He perceived that his linguistic skills developed because he had learned more complex vocabulary and grammar competence. Hyun acknowledged the benefit of learning English in the U.S.

To understand Hyun’s perception of the extent of his change in his English proficiency after returning to South Korea, Hyun responded in an interview, “I’ve never thought about that. I still remember my English in the U.S. Maybe I forgot a little, but I don’t think I forgot English that much because mom sent me to an after-school institution” (Interview, December, 2016). It was interesting that Hyun answered that he never thought about the level of his English proficiency after returning to South Korea, even though speaking English is a huge merit in South Korea and maintaining English proficiency is one of the major concerns for Korean returnees (Kim, 2006). Many Korean returnees strive not to lose English proficiency that they gained studying abroad because English is a major subject in KSAT (Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test). Further, there is a chance that they might use English skills for future jobs in South Korea and outside of the country. However, Hyun mentioned he did not care much about maintaining or improving English proficiency that he gained from the U.S. After he returned to South Korea, he was enrolled as a third grader in elementary school and was learning English in the *Hakwon*, a

private school that focuses on English learning. Hyun believed that there was less need for English in South Korea where his first language, Korean, was used. English, for Hyun, was not a “communication tool” anymore (Interview, December, 2016). Further, Hyun was more interested in physical activities and playing with his friends. He mentioned several times that “children don’t like studying” (Interview, December, 2016; February, 2017).

Kayla. Kayla, a 10-year-old-girl, perceived her English proficiency decreased after coming back to South Korea. She thought her Korean got better as much as she had forgotten her English.

Researcher: You mentioned that your Korean has improved as much as you forgot your English, right? Why do think so?

Kayla: I don’t think my English proficiency improved. I would rather say it has decreased (in South Korea). Reading is all about memorization, and grammar is all about memorization as well. When you debate, you should memorize how to do this or that. Memorization is my weakest part. When you put something in your head, something else goes away. That is why I think my English proficiency has decreased. (Interview, December, 2016)

After returning to South Korea, Kayla mentioned that she was stressed about learning English grammar and reading. For her, learning English in the U.S. was an ordinary process much like that when she learned Korean, her first language. Unlike in the U.S., Kayla felt learning English in South Korea focused on grammatical terminologies and syntax structures that needed to be memorized. During an interview, Kayla mentioned several times that she was rather good at

understanding than memorization (e.g., math problems). However, in South Korea, English learning became memorization. As regression hypothesis (last in, first out) in language attrition studies show (Ribot, 1881; Jost, 1897; Jakobson, 1941; Jakobson, 1968), Kayla believed the attained language skills such as vocabulary or grammar memorized earlier would go away as she learned other languages. She participated in English debate competitions in South Korea several times, and while preparing for the competition, she had to memorize some debate points and vocabulary. She mentioned, “I was stressed out about memorizing social science and Korean history” (Interview, December, 2016), and expressed that learning language was a stressful part of memorization in South Korea.

Kayla also noticed the extent to which there was second language attrition in her friend, Sungmin (pseudonym), who was also a Korean returnee.

Researcher (R): Do you know many cases like you?

Kayla (K): Yes. I have a friend named Sungmin and he does not speak English at all now. He forgot all his English because he did not have a chance to speak English to anyone. He does not have any siblings.

R: When did Sungmin return to Korea?

K: He came back one year before I returned to Korea. So, he has spent more time in Korea than I have now.

R: Do you think the reason that he forgot his English faster than you was because he does not speak English at home?

K: I might be in a similar stage, but I have my brother who speaks English.
(Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla thought the reason for Sungmin's language attrition occurred because he did not have an English conversation partner like she had with her brother. She thought not having someone to talk to in English at home was the main reason that Sungmin lost his English competence faster than she did.

Brian and Timothy. While Hyun and Kayla perceived that their English proficiency decreased, two brothers, Brian and Timothy, perceived that their English proficiency had not changed. The reason that Brian thought his English proficiency remained the same was because he kept communicating with his siblings in English:

Researcher (R): How is your English lately?

Brian (B): Not much has been changed. There are not many chances to know how my English has been changed...

R: Why do you think you don't have a chance to know your English ability?

B: I don't know... I will figure it out when I go to college. Well, we (Brian and his siblings) are still talking to each other in English. So, I guess, my speaking is still good.

R: How is Jason's English (Brian's 8-year-old brother)? His Korean must be so much better now. Timothy (Brian's older brother) and Katie's (Brian's 11-year-old sister) as well.

B: He is such a mere child. He uses the fad words a lot.

R: Really?

B: Yeah... But still he seems more comfortable in speaking in English.

(Interview, April, 2017)

Brian thought his English proficiency had not changed much from the time he returned to South Korea. It was interesting that he pointed out he did not have many opportunities to think about his English proficiency in South Korea except for the conversation with his siblings. He was a junior when he returned to South Korea, and he was homeschooled instead of going to public or private school. Therefore, he did not have a chance to evaluate his English proficiency by taking an English test or using his English ability in the academic settings.

Brian talked about his English language practices with his youngest brother, Jason, because Jason was the important factor in maintaining Brian's English proficiency. In an interview in December, 2016, Brian mentioned that Jason learned Korean faster than he expected, and predicted that he would forget English sooner if his siblings did not continue to speak with him in English. He also stated that "Jason already had many Korean-speaking friends at church" (Interview, December, 2016), and began to speak Korean to his siblings, a language practice he did not do while living in the U.S. Brian thought if Jason stopped talking in English and started speaking Korean to his siblings, all his siblings would lose their opportunities to speak English more and more. He thought the reason that his younger brother and sister learned Korean much faster was that "they were learning Korean speaking with their friends as naturally as they learned English" (Interview, December, 2016).

While he perceived his English proficiency remained the same, Brian thought his Korean had improved by saying "It's because I am watching Korean general equivalency diploma

(KGED) online courses and read Korean texts at least two hours a day, a total of ten hours a week” (Interview, December, 2016). Brian also had more chances to speak in Korean to the people outside his home while chatting with church people, even though he still spoke English with his siblings in daily conversation.

After having returned to South Korea, Timothy stated that he had maintained his English proficiency for now, but he thought it would be more difficult to maintain his English proficiency in South Korea.

I think my English is the same. I might lose it while living in Korea. I know a friend who was Jason’s age. He came back and forgot all his English after two years. Katie and Jason might have more chance to forget their English because they are pretty young. I don’t think Brian and I will forget English easily. (Interview, April, 2017)

Timothy was worried about maintaining his English proficiency because one of his friends told him that he had forgotten much of his English upon returning to South Korea just two years earlier. However, Timothy thought his brother Brian and he would have less chance to lose English than their younger siblings. Children, he thought, learn language naturally without struggling, and Timothy intentionally communicated regularly and daily in English with Brian and his other younger siblings.

In an interview, Timothy related that he thought he would forget English grammar and vocabulary, and especially “casual English,” that he used to speak with his friends in the U.S.

Researcher (R): What would be the most challenging things while trying not to forget English?

Timothy (T): I think I would forget grammar and vocabularies. Well, I might not forget that much since I will be learning those things at school. But I might forget English that I used casually [when I] talked to my friends.

(Interview, December, 2016)

R: Aren't you talking to your siblings in English? What language do you use at home?

T: I use Korean when I talk to my parents. With my siblings, I use English because we all learned English. It's more comfortable to talk in English with my siblings. If any Korean people speak to me in English and I notice that a person is not that fluent in English, I use Korean instead. (Interview, April, 2017)

In this interview, Timothy mentioned that he spoke Korean when he talked to his parents and spoke English to his siblings. With his Korean-speaking friends, Timothy spoke "casual" English or Korean and which language he chose to speak depending on the person to whom he spoke. Some of his friends were able to speak English while others were less proficient. Timothy desired to maintain his English after returning to South Korea and consciously spoke English to his siblings: "We will be speaking more Korean at home eventually" (Interview, April, 2017). Without this intentional use of English in his social settings in South Korea, Timothy thought he might lose his ability to speak English with proficiency.

Sarah. Among the five participants, Sarah was the only one who believed that her level of English proficiency had increased after she returned to South Korea.

Researcher (R): Did you think you were fluent enough to talk to your friends in English?

Sarah (S): I felt I was the same, sometimes I was better [than my friends] (laughing).

R: Suppose you thought your English proficiency was 10 at the time of returning to Korea. How will you estimate your level of English proficiency right now? Do you think your English proficiency has improved or decreased?

S: I think my English proficiency has improved. Like 15? [out of 10]

R: Really?

S: Yeah, my friends in the U.S. are now sixth graders. [In the U.S.,] they don't learn English grammar or debate skills in detail. I was trained for English debate competitions in Korea, and thanks to the English debate training, my vocabulary increased a lot, and my logic increased as well.
(Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah recognized the change in her English proficiency. She was seven years old when her family went to the U.S. and stayed there for four and a half years. Thus, she thought she had reached the level of native English speakers' fluency before returning to South Korea. After returning to South Korea for more than two years, Sarah thought her English was still satisfactory proficiency and rated her English at a 15, a 150 % perceived growth in English since being in the U.S.

In South Korea, Sarah felt differently about how English was taught in school:

In case of my English class in Korea, I feel bored but I can't express how I am feeling. My classmates will think I am boasting. We are learning [such phrases as] "I am from

Germany. Would you like to go skating?”, [phrases] that my classmates already know.

They [have] already learned those from other *Hakwons*. (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah implied that if she told her classmates that she was bored in her English class because she knew the English that was being taught, she would be “boasting” (Interview, December, 2016). She did not want to stand out among her classmates, and did not want to be treated differently only because she could speak English better than her classmates. Since her English class introduced simple phrases far lower than her knowledge of English, Kayla did not have an opportunity to utilize her knowledge of and fluency in English and maintain her ability to speak English freely.

In a study conducted by Song (2016), this researcher found that Korean returnees pretend to lower their English skills so as not to stand out and be differentiated in EFL classroom community. To blend in a non-returnees group in the classroom, Korean returnees with native-like pronunciation tend to speak slowly with Korean-accented English pronunciation intentionally. Kayla also described her experiences in her English class in South Korea:

Researcher (R): How do you feel about English class in your school?

Kayla (K): It is SOOOOOOOO Boring! They are teaching me the things that I already learned from kindergarten. I literally fell asleep once in the classroom. But I go out for English competitions a lot. That is where I learn English, I mean REAL English.

R: What do you learn in English class in Korean public school?

K: Mostly, grammar. But it is TOO easy for me.

R: Why do you think so?

K: Well, Korean children read English, and then translate. But I started learning English from 4 years old. I did not really care about why sentences are formed that way... you know what grammar means here.
(Interview, December, 2016)

As a returnee, Kayla thought English class in South Korea was too easy for her. She did not think her academic English had improved under the public school curriculum. Although Kayla was fluent in reading, writing, speaking and listening, she thought she became fluent without learning grammatical terminology or sentence structures separately in the U.S. When she acquired English in the U.S., she did not have to make an effort to learn English grammar or sentence formations. In Korean public school, however, Korean returnees like Kayla must have knowledge about English grammar or sentence structures like other EFL learners because grammar and sentence structures of English and Korean are different. She expressed classmates' anxiety and jealousy on her advanced level of English skills and her fluent native-like pronunciation by saying that "they (classmates) are jealous of me when I earn awards in English speaking competitions" (Interview, December, 2016).

Kayla pointed out that her pronunciation (of English) remained the same while her brother Ethan's pronunciation had changed as he learned Korean.

The problem is that my brother uses the mixed pronunciation of Korean and English. He suddenly changed his accent and pronunciation kind of like "Konglish." You have to stick to English pronunciation when you are speaking in English, right? But he says /le:mon/ when he speaks in Korean, like /Na le:mon jom ju:lae?/ [will you please give me a lemon?]/ It is all mixed. (Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla called the hybrid between English and Korean “Konglish,” English with a Korean-accent. For example, “lemon” is called 레몬 /le:mon/ in Korean because lemon is a word that was adopted from another country. The pronunciation of lemon in Korean is more like /le:mon/ which is different from /lemən/ in English. Since lemon is the same word in both languages and similar in pronunciation, Kayla thought Ethan had become confused about how to pronounce “lemon” in Korean or in English.

In summary, across their experiences, participants in this study had diverse perceptions regarding the degree of their English proficiency influenced by the social and educational spaces. Sarah perceived that her English increased, Brian and Timothy thought their English had remained the same, and Hyun and Kayla perceived her English proficiency had decreased. The participants also expressed concerns that they might lose their English proficiency as they had insufficient exposure to an English-speaking environment and pressure to assimilate with non-returnee peers in the classroom. They also spoke of ways in which they tried to maintain their English including talking with family members in English, reading, conversing with friends, and having conversational partners.

Subfinding b. Influence of educational spaces and learning status impacted motivation to maintain English.

According to research, scholars have found that foreign language learners find it difficult to imagine the situations that they would use the language for communicative purposes (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Peacock, 1997).

Participants’ English learning experience before going to the U.S. and their motivation and language strategies to learn English as a foreign language was influenced by the change of

educational space and learning status after returning to South Korea. Korean returnees had various English language learning experiences depending on their learning contexts, and were labeled according to the contexts in which they learned English. Before going to the U.S., Sarah, Brian, Timothy and Hyun were emergent bilinguals or successive bilinguals who studied English as a foreign language in South Korea. García (2011) identifies emergent and successive bilinguals as “the children with potential in developing their bilingualism” (p.322). When they were in the U.S., they transitioned into ESL classes and after returning to South Korea they were labeled as Korean returnees and bilinguals and placed in EFL classes as students who could speak both languages. In each traditional context, they experienced different educational and social spaces and different levels of motivation to learn English or maintain their English proficiency. In this study, Korean returnees learned English in the U.S. with a strong motivation to communicate with people in English-speaking countries, especially as learned through their experiences. While in the U.S., they witnessed how English was used as a primary language in the everyday world, and experienced the cultures in which English was primarily used. As Hyun mentioned, “in the U.S., people use English a lot because it is their own language” (Interview, December, 2016).

Among the participants, Sarah and Timothy learned English as a foreign language in South Korea before going to the U.S. They thought this influenced their overall English learning in the U.S., and both stated that they were not motivated to learn English at that time. Sarah went to an English-speaking kindergarten as a preschooler before going to the U.S. and recalled that she did not learn the alphabet during her English kindergarten years. While English speaking in kindergarten is prevalent in South Korea, English kindergartens are private and provide environments in which English is predominant. For example, teachers in English kindergartens

are native English speakers, and books and materials are written in English. Children learn, sing songs, and play in English. English kindergartens thrive on Korean parents' beliefs that learning English should start from an early age (Birdsong, 2006; Lenneberg, 1967). These kindergartens operate daily programs in English and convince parents that providing a full English-only speaking environment will help their children to learn English naturally while in South Korea.

Sarah. When Sarah and her mother talked with the principal in the U.S., the principal suggested that Sarah enter the kindergarten level instead of 1st grade level because it might be too difficult for Sarah to acclimate with other 1st graders. She was assigned to the ESL class during her kindergarten and 1st grade years. When Sarah became a 2nd grader, she attended regular classes. She remembered,

The school did not have separate ESL classes, I thought. However, I was in an ESL class the whole day so I did not know the class that I belonged to was an ESL class. There were a lot of Indians. My teacher told me to make "V" if I would like to go to the restroom; there were some kids who did the same thing. (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah remembered that she struggled in the ESL class emotionally because she did not even know the alphabet. She recalled that she was so frustrated that she cried at school. Sarah remembered how she felt at the very beginning when she started to learn English in the U.S.

At first, I didn't speak at all at school. When I came back home, I talked to Chris [my brother] without hassle - "*siwonhage*" - in Korea. My brother went to preschool as well but he did not speak English at all. So, when we came home, we talked a lot in Korean. Six months later, we were accustomed to speaking in English at school and at home. My brother became more comfortable speaking in English and we started to speak only in

English. I still talked to my parents in Korean but it became much natural to speak in English with my brother. It felt weird to speak in Korean with my brother. Now, I don't remember what I talked about with my brother in Korean. (Interview, December, 2016)

In this interview excerpt, when Sarah explained her use of Korean in conversation with her brother Chris, she used the word “*siwonhage*” which means *pouring out*. When she first started to learn English in the U.S, speaking in Korean with her family members made her feel relaxed because she felt restricted while speaking in English. However, after attaining native-like English proficiency, Sarah used her knowledge of two languages between English and Korean, to communicate with both Chris and her parents.

As Sarah and Chris became more comfortable speaking in English, they started to bring English into their home as a communication tool. When Sarah was not accustomed to English-speaking friends, Chris was Sarah's Korean conversation partner who Sarah could rely on emotionally. After they both gained fluent English competency, Chris became her English conversation partner. After returning to South Korea, Chris became a valuable resource and reliable English conversation partner who helped Sarah to maintain her English proficiency. Song (2016) stated that “children transform, reorganize and renegotiate their two language and discourses from different social/cultural contexts in their interactions” (p. 91). Sarah and Chris' choice of language use at home transferred from Korean to English as they negotiated and renegotiated depending on their social contexts.

Timothy. Timothy discussed his English learning experience in South Korea before going to the U.S. He stated that he went to the private English institution *Hakwon* for three months in preparation for this move. He remembered that he learned “overall English” such as “grammar, speaking and writing” (Interview, December, 2106). Timothy mentioned the reason he went to

English *Hakwon* in South Korea was that “my family had a plan to go to the U.S. for my father’s master’s degree” (Interview, December, 2016). However, Timothy thought that the *Hakwon* experience did not help his English competence as much as he expected. Timothy recalled that his English skills grew greatly in the U.S., but it took time, “I could speak English perfectly after two years” (Interview, December, 2016). He thought learning English was not that challenging for him in the U.S. Although there were some conversations that he could not quite understand, he mentioned that “I did not feel bad because eventually I knew what was being said” (Interview, December, 2016). Even at an early age of 9, Timothy knew that Koreans learn English for different purposes which depended on the context. He also knew that both purpose and context could influence Korean’s motivation to learn English. When he was in the U.S., Timothy thought the reason for learning English in the U.S. was for communicative purposes and for “survival” (Interview, December, 2016), and was essential to communicate with people in the U.S. After returning to South Korea at age 13, Timothy thought he should continue learning English. He equated knowing English with good grades and acknowledged that English was necessary to be admitted into a good college. He also related knowing English to ego, especially since he spent four years in the U.S., “It would be embarrassing if I don’t do English better than students who went to *Hakwon* in Korea” (Interview, December, 2016).

Brian. Timothy’s older brother, Brian, used his English learning strategies that he acquired as a foreign language learner in South Korea. He recalled that he started learning English at *Hakwon* by reading “kindergarten chapter books” (Interview, December, 2016). He also watched DVDs in English such as *Toy Story 3 (2010)* and *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (2008)* with his siblings at home, although he did not fully understand all English vocabulary used in these movies. Like Timothy and Sarah, Brian went to the English private

institution, *Hakwon*, when he was in 4th grade, one year prior to going to the U.S. At *Hakwon*, Brian learned to read in English through “concentrative listening” (Interview, December, 2016), a strategy in which he listened to books on tape and followed along with the printed book, pointing to the words with his fingers or pencils. He thought these reading and listening activities were helpful because they helped him build a base for learning English in the U.S. In the U.S., Brian honed these English skills and became proficient in the English language arts: reading, writing, speaking and listening. With these English learning experiences, he was motivated to continue these reading habits after returning to South Korea.

What happens to me while I am reading a [printed] book is that I don't concentrate that much. I was reading this part and, all of sudden, I am reading the next page. My eyes were looking at this part but my mind was somewhere else. This makes me read the same page over and over again. So, I try to point the words with my fingers when I am reading English book. I think this concentrative listening helped me a lot. It is a little different when I read a book and someone else read a book for me. I could be wrong, you know. The person reading a book on the tape has accurate pronunciation and proper intonation. Plus, I could focus better when someone read me a book than reading alone. (Interview, December, 2016)

Even after gaining proficiency much like a native English speaker while he was in the U.S., Brian applied these reading habits when he returned to South Korea. For Brian, internal motivation prompted him to continue using his English reading strategies by engaging in authentic English reading activities.

During the first year of public school in the U.S., Brian was very stressed about learning English. Brian's mother, Jihee, discussed Brian's general behavior when he came home after school during their first year in the U.S.

Brian, Timothy and Katie (Brian's younger sister) could not speak English at all at first, although I asked them to use English at home, especially Brian. He tried to read only Korean books, watched Korean movies and spoke Korean to everyone else in the family. I remember one time when I asked Brian to read books that were written in English. He became very angry and told me not to push him because he was very stressed already using English at school. That behavior went on for almost a year. Finally, he started using English and Korean interchangeably with his siblings in his second year in the U.S.

Brian's grandmother was very embarrassed when she met my children and they all spoke English to each other after their third year of staying in the U.S. (Interview, December, 2016)

For the first one or two years, Brian recalled that he spoke only Korean at home and tried to speak English at school although he stammered. When he thought about something and could not say it in English, he asked his ESL teacher or friends in the ESL class. Two years later, he started to speak English with his siblings at home, although he spoke Korean to his parents. He mentioned that "I could hear my accent changed from the tape recordings that my family made together" (Interview, December, 2016). After one and a half years, Brian's parents transferred him and his siblings from the public school to homeschooling hybrid school called Athena academy (pseudonym) in the U.S. As a result, Brian and his siblings spent more time together and he thought they became closer and talked more. When Brian talked to his younger sister, Katie, who was 6 years younger than him, and his other younger brother, Jason, who was 9 years

younger than him, the majority of their conversation was in English. Brian mentioned, “Timothy and I use English for about 70% of our conversation and Korean for about 30 % while Jason and Katie talk to each other, they use English in almost 90% of their conversation” (Interview, December, 2016).

At age 12, the time of his arrival in the U.S., Brian was the oldest one among the participants, and struggled the most to learn English in the U.S. Even though he perceived that he reached the level of a native English-speaking bilingual, he still remembered it was very stressful to learn English in the U.S. However, he had many reasons why he should learn English. He had to communicate with teachers and friends at school and talk to his English-speaking siblings. His motivation to learn English was stronger as he spent more time in the U.S., and yet drove his stress level in learning English for communicative purposes.

Kayla. Kayla was around four years old when she went to the U.S. and remembered that she learned English in the U.S. with little stress or struggle. Even though she attended ESL classes, she thought she learned English similar to U.S.-born children as they acquire English.

Researcher (R): Did you speak English before going to the U.S.?

Kayla (K): No, I just knew English alphabet song, abcdefg... [sings alphabet song]. I didn't even know it was English, and I guess it was just a song. But I was in the ESL class for a year when I went to the U.S. and it was okay.

R: Was it okay not to speak English for those times?

K: Yeah, I think, in the middle of ESL classes, I think I was more comfortable speaking in English than speaking in Korean. I don't think I

had any struggles related to English language learning. (Interview, December, 2016)

She did not have any prior English learning experience in South Korea before going to the U.S. She mentioned that “I was too young to remember what happened” (Interview, December, 2016), and as she acquired both English and Korean at the early age, she perceived speaking both languages equivalently.

Hyun. Hyun had a different motivation to learn English as a foreign language in South Korea and English as a second (and primary) language in the U.S. Hyun described why he thought people learned English in South Korea:

In the U.S., people use English because it is their own language. ... We don't use English in Korea at all. Only some words.... Well, if you live more than two to three years in the U.S., you can understand everything and you will build confidence. (Interview, December, 2016)

Hyun understood that learning English was necessary in the context where people use English as their first language. He perceived that he learned English in the U.S. because he was required to speak English to communicate with people in the U.S. and, as data showed in an earlier presented interview, to play with his English-speaking friends.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that Hyun realized the difference between learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea. Since he was an active, outgoing and energetic young boy, he remembered most of his English learning experiences had taken place outside of the school while playing soccer or football with his friends. Hyun perceived English as a

communication tool in the U.S., informally learned, and where he learned English as a second language.

I think I just played in English without thinking much about learning English. I was able to speak when talking to friends. So, I just played with them. (Interview, December, 2016)

Hyun's "play[ing] in English" was meant both literally and figuratively. He learned English literally while he played with his friends, and he figuratively played with language as he learned to speak English in this context. He learned English as it was enmeshed in his love of diverse sports activities as used it to chat with English-speaking friends. Thus, English learning through play was an authentic way in which to master English as a communication tool, and build his confidence in speaking English in sports settings in which English was the only language he could use to communicate.

Hyun may not have fully understood the extent to which the formal learning of grammar or vocabulary played a part in his learning English. Children learning through play is a universally accepted concept within the world of early years education (Broadhead & Aalsvoort, 2009; Owocki, 1999; Wells, 1981). Instead of memorizing formal English in form and syntax, he learned and used language through play with his friends and tried to remember and use what he heard next time. He stated that "I just followed what my friend said" (Interview, December, 2016). Hyun learned a more casual English by shadowing his English-speaking friends' pronunciations and intonations while playing sports with them. In terms of play, Cook (2000) claimed that "children could, when they have nothing to do, switch off like machines, or sleep, or use their free time and linguistic ability more profitably to learn about the real rather than fictional worlds" (p. 3). In Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1982), affective filters such as

anxiety, self-doubt, and mere boredom interfere with second language acquisition and determine how much input the learner can accept sufficiently. Without many affective filters, Hyun learned English used for communicative—spoken—purposes within meaningful and authentic situations. For Hyun, his ability to use and speak English developed “when children play in a purposefully designed, literacy-rich environment, teachers can discover and capitalize on teachable moments” (Owochi,1999).

Alongside learning English through play, Hyun described his English learning experiences in the U.S. and in South Korea. For Hyun, the process of learning English was different in the U.S. and in South Korea.

I was a little scared because I didn't know what to do with my not-good-enough English. Especially when I was in the first grade... but when I arrived in the U.S., I felt better. I became confident as I learn English playing with friends. (Interview, December, 2016)

During the first year of his stay in the U.S., Hyun attended ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) class, and he was pulled out of his regular classes four to five hours per week to learn English in a separate classroom from his language arts classroom. In his mainstream class, Hyun mentioned that he felt comfortable talking with classmates and teachers. Yet, even though he did not have high English proficiency, his personality and relationships built through play together gave him confidence in communicating with others in English. Even though he did not have formal grammatical or structural knowledge in English at the time, the open and safe ESL learning environment in the U.S. helped him to have a meaningful conversation with peers. He stated that “Korean classroom is very restricted and firm, while the U.S. classroom gives students much freedom (Interview, December, 2016). When Hyun learned English in the U.S.,

his engagement with play enabled him to feel less stressed and he became increasingly confident in his language learning. This confidence carried into his return to South Korea: “I can speak English well now, and I will be doing fine in Korea” (Interview, February, 2017), a statement he clarified in an interview.

Researcher: What do you mean by “You are going to be fine in Korea?”

Hyun: I mean.... I have lived in the U.S. where people use English as a common language. What could be more difficult in learning English in Korea where English is not a common language? Well... vocabularies are still hard for me. (Interview, December, 2016)

With his extended time in the U.S., Hyun thought learning English in South Korea would be easier than learning English in the U.S. He had already gained English fluency in the U.S., an English-speaking country. Hyun reasoned why he thought learning English would be easier in South Korea.

In the U.S., they do not translate like you (pointing to me, the researcher). But here in Korea, the English-speaking teacher and Korean teacher enter together in the classroom. So, they do some Korean translation because students cannot understand English well. ... It makes me feel that [learning English] is easier. (Interview, December, 2016)

As Hyun’s first language was Korean, he felt relieved when there was someone (e.g., a teacher or researcher) who could translate English into Korean and tell him what was happening in the classroom. Although he gained skills in speaking and listening in English while playing with his friends, Hyun distinguished between informal/casual (playing) and formal (classroom) English language learning. While in play with his friends, Hyun thought that learning English through conversation was not “learning” but a necessary way to communicate with his soccer mates and

to play a game. Conversely, for Hyun, “learning” English involved a more formal approach that happened in the classroom and involved reading textbooks and writing down in his notebook what teachers said: “In the U.S., there is no blackboard or textbook. But here [in Korea] we must bring textbooks and teachers always write down something on the board” (Interview, December, 2016). He continued, “Here in Korea, we use textbooks but in the U.S., we did not really use textbooks” (Interview, February, 2017). Even though Hyun may have attained some English proficiency while playing with his friends without reading books and writing down on the notebook, he did not acknowledge that it was a part of English language acquisition.

To sum up, as participants in this study experienced the changes in educational spaces (e.g. South Korea and the U.S.) and perceived a change in their learning status from EFL learners to ESL learners and EFL learners again. The study showed participants’ motivation to learn or maintain their English differed and was influenced by their educational spaces and learning status. Hyun, Timothy and Brian went to *Hakwon* before going to the U.S., and among them, only Brian thought *Hakwon* was helpful for his English learning and continued his reading habits that he gained at *Hakwon*. Sarah attended English kindergarten before going to the U.S., but she was assigned to an ESL classroom in the U.S., and she recalled that she learned English at ESL classroom and school. Kayla did not have prior English learning experience in South Korea and was assigned to ESL class in the U.S., and she perceived that she learned English without any stress or struggles because she was only four years old when she went to the U.S.

Table 10

Participants’ diverse perceptions of the extent to which they maintained English proficiency after having returned to South Korea and their motivation.

| Participant | Hyun | Sarah | Timothy | Brian | Kayla |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|---------------|
| English learning in U.S. | Soccer, ESL classroom | ESL classroom | Informal learning | Concentrative listening, ESL classroom | ESL classroom |
| English learning in South Korea prior to going to the U.S. | <i>Hakwon</i> | English kindergarten | <i>Hakwon</i> , | <i>Hakwon</i> , Watching DVDs | None |
| Maintenance of English proficiency after returning to South Korea | Decreased | Improved | Maintained | Maintained | Decreased |

In summary, and shown in Table 10, all five participants perceived the level of their English competence diversely and acknowledged that their English learning experiences in the U.S. and in South Korea were different. Among the five participants, Hyun and Kayla thought their English proficiency had decreased; Brian and Timothy thought they had maintained their English proficiency; and Sarah thought her English proficiency had improved. After returning to their home country, this group of Korean returnees' learning strategies were changed as per their English learning environments, and their English language acquisition continued as they strove to maintain or improve their English proficiency.

In the data, the change of educational space from South Korea to the U.S. and their learning status from EFL learner to ESL learner influenced participants' motivation to maintain English in diverse ways. As they passed the stage of English as second language learners and became Korean-English bilinguals, they returned to learning contexts in which English is learned as a foreign language. Their motivation to learn/maintain English shifted depended not only on the learning context – in South Korea and in the U.S. – but also their attitudes toward English language learning and personal learning experiences.

Finding 2: Participants' use of strategies for learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea

The environments of South Korea and the United States include many differences in culture, language, and social contexts. International children who learned English in the U.S., a context in which English is the primary language and return to their home country, a context in which they learn English as a foreign language, will experience many changes in terms of learning language. From an ecological perspective, people's behaviors are the result of interactions between internal factors and the ecological environments around them (Song, 2003). In other words, the ecological switch from ESL to EFL learning environments, which included the change of language, culture, and social contexts, influenced how Korean returnees maintained their English proficiency in different social contexts, specifically in the strategies that they used to maintain their English. Teaching styles and assessment systems both in the U.S. and South Korea informed which strategies participants used to maintain their English and informed their strategy use in their first language (Korean) maintenance experiences in the U.S.

Subfinding a. Teaching styles and the assessment systems in the U.S. influenced Korean returnees' language learning strategies.

The assessment systems in the U.S. and in South Korea are different. In South Korea, assessment is more formal and standardized. Students' scores are computed and summarized using percentiles, stanines, or standard scores. To make tests standardized and objective, multiple choice questions are dominant in these assessment systems. Therefore, children must focus on choosing an answer to which the question is directed. In the U.S., assessments are identified as both formal and informal. Formal assessments refer standardized tests such as multiple-choice questions or short answer questions. Informal assessments include portfolio assessment,

outcome-based assessment, observation, ecological assessment, and teacher-made tests (Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt, 2004). Teachers utilize quizzes, essays, performance, and a range of activities around which children are assessed in the classroom. Thus, which English learning strategies that Korean returnees used in a traditionally known as EFL context (South Korea) and those used in an ESL context (U.S.) were different. In the U.S., ESL learning strategies are similar to communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques (Halliday, 1978; Hymes, 1972) that actively engage students in classroom activities by employing a task-based approach to facilitate student-teacher interaction and student-student interaction (e.g., speaking, listening, writing, reading). For example, in some ESL learning environments in the U.S., English language learners incorporate their authentic real-life experiences and target culture as essential to learning English, an aspect of language learning that children might lose when they return to South Korea. In South Korea, EFL learning strategies, on the other hand, are more focused on grammar rules, syntax structures, and reading comprehension to gain high scores in high-stakes standardized tests (Shin, 2007). Different assessment styles in the U.S. and in South Korea led Korean returnees to employ specific learning strategies that were focused on improving their academic performance in English language learning.

Hyun. Hyun mentioned the difference of learning experiences and assessments in his English classrooms in the U.S. and in South Korea.

In the U.S., teachers do not use textbooks in reading and writing classes. For example, the reading class in Orange Grove Elementary School (pseudonym) has a series of books in the library. You have some kinds of level test. By taking those series, you work on reading and then you do writing. You can handwrite or type them in the computer. The teacher gave us a grade and that's all. (Interview, February, 2017)

In Korea, I think I studied English when taking a test. But in the U.S., there are not many tests. In Korea, we have midterm and final exams. (Interview, December, 2016)

Hyun did not think that the writing assignment in his U.S. elementary classroom was a test even though it was graded by the teachers. Also, English teachers in the U.S. utilized the books from the library for reading and used them as class texts so that children would have diverse reading experiences. In South Korea, the tests that focused on English language knowledge that Hyun took were mostly multiple-choice questions or short-answer questions with correct—specific—answers or responses. In South Korea, English language teachers use a textbook designated by school or education office. The English tests often contain a set questions in a range of textbooks so that students know what possible questions are. From Hyun’s perspective, he thought that since he did not have textbooks in the U.S. classroom, he did not have to study for exams in the U.S. He just took a test on the computer and was given a grade. Yet, in South Korea, he had to study English through a range of textbooks to be successful in the multiple-choice/short answer tests. In other words, he studied differently and used different learning strategies for tests administered in the U.S. and those administered in South Korea.

Sarah. Like Hyun, Sarah also talked about exams that Korean students take in the public schools, “... in Korea, at the beginning of the semester, the teacher tells us when we will take final exams, and students study only for two to three weeks to take that test. I thought that was so weird and I did horrible on my very first final exam in Korea” (Interview, December, 2016). Sarah was stressed from these high-stakes standardized English subject tests even though she had good English proficiency.

When I first came back to Korea, I thought it was really weird that everyone studies for final exams because we don't study for final exams in the U.S. In the U.S., when the teacher says, "we will take a test," students know that they are taking tests on that day. ... I think it is unfair because [a] student may not pay attention to the class all the time. They study very hard for a short period of time and do well for the final exam. Teachers then conclude that this student paid attention to the class and [is why] they do well on the test. In the U.S., if you do not pay attention in class, you cannot get a good grade and do well on the tests. Most of the tests were spelling tests in the U.S. and I did well. Other kids did well or poor depending to their ability and I thought it was fair. (Interview, December, 2016)

Although she perceived that she was both fluent in English and Korean, Sarah mentioned that she struggled with different teaching styles in South Korea and how this impacted high-stakes standardized tests such as final exams in each semester. The different teaching styles and how they impacted final scores bothered Sarah. She thought she was rewarded with good grades by paying attention in class in the U.S. school. Whereas, she was not pleased with how the Korean schools rewarded students who scored well on tests only for studying for short bursts of time.

In addition, she thought lack of Korean competence influenced her brother, Chris' scores on high stakes standard tests. She mentioned that she was good at Korean reading and writing compared to her brother who lacked competence in Korean and couldn't understand Korean as well as Sarah did.

I received 100% on my finals in English class since I came back to Korea. But my brother never got 100% in his English test. My brother did not understand the questions

that were written in Korean, and that is probably why he didn't get 100% in English. He also thinks the English class is boring, but he can't say that he is good at English exams.

(Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah thought Korean returnees who have a lack of competence in the Korean language could affect their academic achievement because the education system and the teaching styles in the U.S. are different from those in South Korea.

My brother used do well in math in the U.S., and he was an honor student overall in all subjects. He even did pretty well in social studies and science. But now he lacks confidence in all subjects even English and math. (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah recognized that the difference in assessment and teaching styles may influence returnees' interest in school work and achievement. Sarah used her younger brother, Chris, as an example. Her brother lost interest in school work and showed less achievement not only in English subjects but also in overall subjects. Not having appropriate language skills, especially when they return to their home countries, Chris's lack of Korean proficiency became an obstacle in his academic achievement in South Korea. Sarah knew she used different English learning strategies in South Korea for academic performance but Chris did not. Or Chris knew that he should have used different learning strategies but could not use it because of his lack of proficiency in reading and speaking Korean.

Kayla. Kayla shared similar experiences to those that Sarah and Chris experienced. Although Kayla perceived that she was fluent in both languages, different assessment styles required Kayla to use different learning strategies to improve grades and academic performance

at school. She mentioned that she used “tricks” (Interview, December, 2016) to get good grades on English exams.

Once, I got 97% on my midterm because I missed one problem. The question was a short-answer question that asked about the preposition, but the answer I wrote was the one I used all the time when speaking English. After that, I tried to memorize the paragraphs in the textbook not to make the same mistake. To make sure if I memorized it correctly, I used some tricks. I wrote down translated Korean sentences on one side of the notebook and wrote what I have memorized on the other side. That way, I could get 100% all the time in English exams. (Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla was stressed because she did not receive 100% on her English exam and used different English learning strategies (memorization and sentences translated into English) to score perfectly on future exams that focused on detailed grammar (e.g. preposition use) instead of reading comprehension. She developed this memorization strategy to achieve high scores in her English exam, not for her English proficiency. She also pointed out it was important to have good Korean proficiency to have high scores in high stakes standardized tests. She compared her strategy learning to that of her younger brother, Ethan.

I am also good at Korean and I don't think I have a lot of trouble studying in Korean. When you solve problems on the test, it is all in Korean, right? I am okay with that. But my brother does not understand what questions meant in the test, even if it is English test. He could read the answers that are written in English but not the questions. We are on such different levels now. (Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla reasoned that her brother, Ethan, lost interest in studying because of his lack of knowledge of written Korean. Ethan did not receive good grades on English tests because he did not fully understand the questions that were written in Korean. Common in Korean public schools, exam questions are written in Korean and answer choices written in English. Although Ethan had native-like spoken English proficiency, he was less successful on English exams because he did not understand the intention of questions which were written in Korean.

Since South Korea and the U.S. have different teaching curriculums and styles, Sarah thought she did not benefit from what she had already learned or known in the U.S especially math:

I am good at everything else, but math is a real problem for me. ... The styles of math problems are very different in South Korea and in the U.S. I'm not sure if I was in 2nd grade or 3rd grade... In the U.S., the math problems have 5 or 6 sentences and explain the situation with specific names and amount: This is this much and that is this much. What are the differences between these two? But in South Korea, math questions contain only numbers. When you divide a bar in four [for example], the U.S. way is to draw a bar and make four pieces. So, we focused more on breaking down the problems, understanding what division means, and then the solution came along. But it was really difficult when you face only numbers and problems without any story. (Interview, December, 2016)

For Sarah, math was a subject that she experienced differently in the U.S. and South Korea. She did well when math problems were expressed as a story and solved through process (in the U.S.), but had less success when expressed solely in numbers (in South Korea). Although she understood the math concepts, she could not solve the math problems because Korean math problems only asked for solutions, not process or method to solve problems.

Kayla also discussed the difference in high stakes standardized tests in English and math in the U.S. and South Korea. Kayla felt the English curriculum in her Korean public school was low-leveled for her, “They are teaching me the things that I already learned from kindergarten” (Interview, December, 2016). However, she struggled with math in South Korea because she thought it was high-leveled and math questions were different from the public schools in the U.S.

Kayla (K): Korea and the U.S. teach mathematics in different levels. In the U.S., most of the math problems were like storytelling and I liked that a lot...

Researcher (R): Do they have different styles in math problems?

K: Yes, here in Korea, you just have numbers and formulas, and the explanation is so simple. But in the U.S., there are very few numbers and formulas in math questions. And most of the math problems were storytelling and made me read and think... I was really embarrassed when I first faced the Korean math questions. There were no stories, only numbers and formulas.... (Interview, December, 2016)

In South Korea, Kayla faced challenges when she had to solve math problems without words which only requested the answers and did not value the process.

Timothy and Brian. Timothy also thought he was not very adept in solving math problems in Korean. Once he tried to solve 8th graders’ math problems written in Korean, but he could not solve them because he was not able to understand the question. However, when he realized the problem in English, it was an easy task.

Brian mentioned the most challenging part of learning English in South Korea was the difference of learning strategies in the U.S. and in South Korea. He thought the basics were

different. In South Korea, students are trained to “read fast, find themes and solve the problems” (Interview, April, 2017) in English tests. However, he did not see himself as a fast English reader and it took time to understand the texts. He was stressed about reading books in English. He wanted to be comfortable when reading English books.

Brian did not go to high school after returning to South Korea. Instead, his parents homeschooled him along with his siblings, and he studied through online courses at home. Brian discussed the challenges in learning in South Korea and in the U.S., “I did not have many chances to interact and socialize with Korean-speaking people other than my family or relatives after returning to South Korea” (Interview, December, 2016). He continued,

I watched videos and online lectures on the EBS [Korean Education Broadcasting system] channel to take KGED (Korean general equivalency diploma). I haven't met many people 'cause I don't go to school. I have some friends at church, but not that close... I didn't socialize that much. (Interview, December, 2016)

Brian was preparing to take Korean general equivalency diploma (KGED), which signifies high school graduation and awarded to those who successfully complete a required examination. He thought English questions in KGED exam were at the level that his youngest brother could solve. What concerned him about KGED exam was Korean history. He mentioned he only learned Korean history during his elementary years and there were lots of difficult terminologies that consisted of Chinese letters.

It (KGED English exam) is pretty easy. I think my eight-year-old brother even could solve [those problems]. Well, ... in the listening problems, they give us a situation of restaurant and ask questions where this dialogue might have happened. What I am

struggling with is Korean history. Chinese terminologies are so hard to remember, historical events like Yimjinyoiran (임진왜란; 壬辰倭亂) or Eulmisabyeon (을미사변; 乙未事變). (Interview, December, 2016)

Brian did not worry about English exams as much as other participants like Hyun, Sarah and Kayla. Even though he was the oldest one among all participants, Brian was less stressed about grades for several reasons. First, he did not attend public school where grades were crucial. Second, he was preparing for the KGED exam which requires only 80% of the score to earn the diploma. Third, he did not plan to take KSAT (Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test) to enter college even though he planned to go to college in South Korea. If he went to a South Korea public high school, he might have had a stressful and competitive high school life while preparing for the KSAT along with other high school students.

Timothy was also homeschooled by his mother with his brother Brian and his other siblings. As a result, he did not have an English learning experience in the public school after returning to South Korea. Timothy mentioned that he was worried when he knew that his family decided to return to South Korea. He worried that high schools in South Korea would be more competitive than high schools in the U.S. Since he was a junior high school student, he could not avoid thinking about going to college, having a job in the future, etc. However, Timothy saw himself as a positive person and did not worry much until he returned to South Korea. He thought the transition from the U.S. to South Korea was a smooth and lasting process. He kept in touch with his friends by texting and video talk through Instagram or Google Hangout.

Timothy thought the English test in the KGED was relatively easy other than the grammar part. He thought the KGED assessment system could not measure Korean returnees' or

English language learners' "real" English ability. He mentioned that "All I have to do is score higher than the bottom line to pass the English test" (Interview, April, 2017). Timothy was confident that he would pass KGED and start searching for what he would want to do in the future.

In summary, participants in this study used a range of different learning strategies based upon teaching styles, assessment systems. Participants used strategies learned in the U.S. and South Korea that best suited them when they took formal and informal assessments. Due to more standardized and objective assessment systems and teacher-centered teaching styles in South Korea, participants, who achieved high level of English proficiency in the U.S., strove to receive good scores in their English exams learning grammar rules, syntax structures, and reading comprehension. Some of the participants stated that they or their siblings who achieved native level of English proficiency had lost Korean, their first language, in the U.S. and this became an obstacle to gain high scores in high stake standardized tests like the KGED. Although she perceived that she was both fluent in English and Korean, Sarah struggled with different teaching styles in South Korea and how this impacted her performance on high-stakes standardized tests and influenced how she prepared and studied for final exams each semester. For Kayla, to receive 100% on her English test in South Korea, she memorized all the passages that focused on detailed grammar and it was hard for her because it was not the way that she used to learn English in the U.S. Brian thought that Korean students were trained to read fast and find right answers in the English exams, but he preferred to read comfortably at his own pace. Timothy was confident that he would receive a good grade in the KGED English exam that he was about take, but thought the test did not represent his English ability. Hyun stated that he did not have to study for exams in the U.S. but in South Korea, he had to study English through a range of

textbooks in which he had to study these texts to be successful in the multiple-choice/short answer tests.

Subfinding b. First language experiences helped Korean returnees maintain their English proficiency.

All participants except Hyun stayed in the U.S. for more than four years. Four of the five were very young when they came to the U.S., and may have lost some of their native language while in the U.S. Only Brian was an adolescent while in the U.S. (age 12) and remained until he was 16. Their first language experiences influenced the extent to which they maintained English proficiency and/or shifted their native language as a result of living in the U.S. I highlight the experiences of two participants regarding their ability to maintain both languages.

Sarah. Sarah was confident about speaking both Korean and English, and she thought her Korean intonation and pronunciation were like native Korean speakers. Sarah moved to the U.S. with her parents at age seven, and at home, the family spoke Korean. Sarah was proud that she maintained her Korean accent even though many bilinguals tend to have a ‘foreign’ accent in one language compared to the other (Goldrick, Runnqvist, & Costa, 2014), and thought that if she had a visible American accent in her speech, her peers in South Korea might think she was “showing off” (Interview, December, 2016), a cultural trait of being Korean.

When I speak Korean, people rarely notice that I have lived in the U.S. until I say so. Only my friends and classmates know that I have lived in the U.S. But as soon as my brother says something, people ask “Where did you live?” because my brother speaks Korean with a strong American accent. So, my friends ask me if my brother is a foreigner. He hates books because he thinks reading is so hard. I don’t have a problem with pronunciation, but my brother does. (Interview, December, 2016)

Even though she was in the U.S. for four years, Sarah maintained her Korean language and its accents and pronunciation, unlike her brother who was often identified as a “foreigner” in South Korea. As for listening, reading, and writing skills, she thought having a good Korean accent and American accent would be beneficial in maintaining her language proficiency. She stated, “My brother’s pronunciation is a mixture of English and Korean, not like my pronunciation. I have more accurate pronunciation than my brother, and I am better in both English and Korean than my brother” (Interview, December, 2016). She also mentioned that “speaking Korean at home and going to Korean language school regularly (in the U.S.)” enabled her to maintain her Korean competence and pronunciation in the U.S., and this experience would motivate her to maintain or improve her English competence in Korea (Interview, December, 2016).

Kayla. Kayla was a confident Korean-English bilingual speaker and was proud that she was one of the rare Korean-English bilinguals who were both fluent in Korean and English, which was difficult for long-term study abroad returnees (Kanno, 2013).

I guess I was fluent in Korean and English. My brother learned English first and spoke only English to my mom. But I was fluent both in Korean and English, and I talked to my brother in English and talked to my dad in Korean. I know some friends who have similar English learning experiences. In a situation like this, people think we don’t know Korean, but we speak English to each other and speak Korean to our parents. (Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla described her confidence in both languages, and how she was able to maintain her Korean language.

Researcher (R): How could you be good at both Korean and English? You were only four years old when you went to the U.S.

Kayla (K): I think it was because I went to the Korean language school in the U.S. There was a level test like here in Korea. I went to the class according to my grade and I was one of the best students who could do good at dictation tests and speaking tests. Here in Korea, I am not one of the best students who could do like I was used to in the U.S. (laughter)

R: So how did you like learning Korean in the Korean language school?

K: I was only a second grader when I attended the Korean language school, but I ended up in the sixth-grade class.

R: How could you be so good at Korean even if you were in the U.S.?

K: I don't know. Just naturally. Oh, I learned Korean through Junior Naver (online website for children). I had Korean friends, Soyeon, who came from Korea later than me. She and I were in the same level sixth-grade class in the Korean language school and we liked to hang out speaking Korean because she did not speak English better than I spoke Korean. (Interview, December, 2016)

School, the Internet, and having Korean friends were significant in the extent to which Kayla had a good sense of learning language and maintained both languages while in the U.S. She utilized Korean and English language practices in school with Korean friends and teachers who spoke Korean and taught Korean spelling, vocabularies, and reading skills. She also had support in out-of-school language contexts at home with her family, exposure to a Korean-

speaking community continuously and consistently, and on websites like Junior Naver. Although Korean was her first language and she was fluent in speaking, Kayla had to put extra effort and time to learn grammar and writing. Kayla's strategies to maintain her Korean proficiency in the U.S. influenced her maintenance in English proficiency in South Korea. To maintain her English proficiency, she spoke English at home and studied at *Hakwon*, a private English institution. Going to an English institution in South Korea to learn English was similar to her experience going to a Korean language school in the U.S.

As the data shows, Sarah and Kayla maintained their Korean proficiency in an English-speaking country through family, friends, and teachers and also through the Internet in the U.S. to maintain proficiency in Korean. They used these two languages interchangeably in school and out of school as an everyday practice. As returnees, they maintain their English much in the same way they maintained their Korean in the U.S.

Finding 3: Participants' use of educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency

Current English education in South Korea did not fulfil the expectation of Korean returnees to maintain their English proficiency and they looked for supports other than public education. All participants in the study used a range of different ways to maintain their proficiency from reading printed materials, having family/sibling conversations, attending *Hakwon* a private, expensive school that focuses on English proficiency, and the use of social media (Table 11).

Table 11

Participants' resources to maintain their English proficiency

| Ways to maintain English | Hyun | Brian | Timothy | Sarah | Kayla |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| | Attended <i>Hakwon</i> ; spoke to his brother in English | Spoke to his siblings in English; used social media | Read books; spoke to his siblings in English; used social media | Read books; wrote in English; posted on the Internet; Attended <i>Hakwon</i> ; spoke to her brother in English | Attended <i>Hakwon</i> ; spoke to her brother in English |

Subfinding a. Reading Printed Materials

For two participants, Sarah and Timothy, reading printed materials was important to improve and/or maintain their English.

Sarah. Sarah's belief that she had not forgotten English and that her English proficiency improved was attributed to her reading books written in English. Although Sarah's learning environments had changed from the U.S. to South Korea, she kept her own strategies to maintain or improve her English proficiency. Sarah talked about how she could improve her English proficiency in South Korea.

I like reading books, so I read a lot of books. I read books like Harry Potter repeatedly.

But if I did not have my brother, I would have forgotten my English already. I guess it

helps me that I have someone to talk to in English. (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah acknowledged that the environment in South Korea was not sufficient to maintain or improve her English proficiency. However, by reading books and talking to her brother in

English as a daily routine, she perceived that her English proficiency had improved after returning to South Korea.

To maintain English proficiency, Sarah employed regular conversation to maintaining her English, and talked daily with her brother in English. Sarah soon realized, though, that her brother, like herself, was increasingly losing his proficiency in English. Therefore, she thought reading books was a permanent and reliable source to maintain English, especially in terms of learning new vocabulary.

When I first came back to Korea, I started to think in Korean and it made me feel weird. I thought, “Is this the process how I am going to forget my English?” I even dreamed in Korean and it made me very anxious. So, I tried to read more. But what I realized is that it is much more helpful to read books for fun, and not while under stress or pressure.

(Interview, February, 2017)

I love reading fantasy novels like Harry Potter and Fort Jackson. I only read fantasy novels. I learn a lot of vocabulary while reading those books, and never get bored like reading classic books. If you look up the dictionary, you can find the words from these novels. I am not reading these books for studying, but for pleasure. As I read more, I learn more new words and it makes me think how I would like to use those words in sentences. (Interview, December, 2016)

In South Korea, it is hard to find time for elementary school children to read just for fun due to their busy schedules at *Hakwon* (Kim, 2011) It was Sarah’s commitment, as a returnee, to use her spare time to study school materials, and also to read books written in English to maintain and improve her English in addition to work hard to maintain her school work.

When Korean returnees return to their home countries, they invested more time in learning Korean especially academic literacy. Although they have been communicating in Korean with their family, their level of Korean is usually not as good as their English performance in academic literacies. Sometimes, Korean returnees' lack of Korean language proficiency becomes an obstacle in academic achievement. In addition, South Korea and the U.S. have different teaching curriculums and styles, and Korean returnees do not benefit from what they already learned or knew in the ESL contexts. Therefore, it was Sarah's commitment that she decided to read more English books and use other resources to maintain her English.

I will keep reading books. And I love writing as well. I love fiction writing from the books that I already read, or with the characters from the novels. Like creating a whole new story with the characters in the book. I like posting and receiving feedback from forums on the Internet. So, I will keep writing... also, I will talk to my brother in English a lot.... (Interview, December, 2016)

As a returnee, then, Sarah read books written in English, wrote in English, and shared her writing through Internet posts and print materials that enabled to maintain her English proficiency.

Timothy. Another participant, Timothy, also loved reading books especially novels. He enjoyed reading books written in Korean and English. Timothy reported that he was trying to read more Korean books than English books. As a returnee, Timothy thought reading textbooks in his level in Korean was a little difficult and was why he spent more time reading Korean books after returning to South Korea.

Researcher (R): Do you read books in English?

Timothy (T): Not lately. The books in my grandpa's house are all in Korean. And I am trying to read more books in Korean for the KGED exam. Korean textbooks are a little more difficult than I thought. So, I need some time to read those books.

R: Do you plan to read books in English later?

T: Yes, I will. I hope the price of books is not so expensive. (Interview, April, 2017)

Since Timothy enjoyed reading books written in Korean and English, he thought he that would enable him to maintain his English reading skills by reading more books that are written in English. Further, he stated that he wanted to read books written in English, but in order to do well on his Korean exams, he prioritized the need to read books written in Korean. Further, he explained he wanted to read more English books, but they are "expensive." Also evident in his discussion was the importance of reading books written in Korean as a family.

For Timothy, access to printed materials is important in maintaining his English, but also improving his Korean language as well. The libraries in South Korea do not carry many English books, a convenience that Timothy had while living in the U.S. To maintain his English, Timothy would have to put extra effort in reading English books in South Korea than he was in the U.S.

Timothy also mentioned that he liked to draw comic books when I asked him about his early English learning experiences. From elementary school years, he enjoyed drawing comics and made up the stories.

Researcher(R): Do you have any story that you could remember about learning English?

Timothy (T): Well, I don't have any bad experiences related to learning English in the U.S. But I noticed some wordings were not right at that time in the comic books that I drew. Most of them were wrong.

R: Do you draw comics?

T: Yeah...

R: Can you give me some examples about the wordings that you found wrong?

T: I wrote "I'm boring" instead of "I'm bored". (Interview, December, 2016)

Even though Timothy mentioned that "it was embarrassing some words were wrong in my comic books" (Interview, December, 2016), he continued this practice in South Korea, largely while preparing for the Korean general equivalency diploma (KGED) for middle school diploma in South Korea. He thought comic book writing would also be helpful to maintain his English proficiency by stating that "comic book writing is something I like, and I keep using English while drawing comics" (Interview, December, 2016).

Subfinding b. Conversations Within Family

Having conversations with family was another way in which all participants thought helped them to improve and/or maintain their English.

Brian and Timothy. Family conversations were important to Brian and Timothy to maintain their English in South Korea, Brian mentioned that "I just talked with my siblings to maintain the basic conversation skills" (Interview, December, 2016). Brian's siblings, Timothy, Katie, and Jason, served as English language partners to each other. Brian mentioned that "most of our conversation is in English" (Interview, December, 2016). In South Korea, I also observed

these four children playing cards and having dinner in a restaurant. During both occasions, all of them spoke English to each other except for time that they emphasized or indicated that they wanted something like “do you want some *koguma* (Korean: sweet potato)?” (Interview, April, 2017). To learn and maintain their Korean, Brian and his siblings also accessed the Educational Broadcasting System (a TV channel in South Korea that broadcast lectures), online courses, and workbooks in the U.S. While they were in the U.S., Brian and his siblings spoke to each other in English as he thought it was “more comfortable” for them, especially Jason, the youngest brother. As a home/social practice, then, Brian was able to maintain his native language through conversations at home in Korean with his parents, as well as maintain English with his siblings. Further, Brian used other social resources, online courses from their previous homeschooling academy, and his intentional decision to speak English, that helped him to maintain his English-speaking skills.

Timothy, Brian’s brother, remembered that he started using English at home about one or two years after their arrival to the U.S. He said he and his siblings only used English in their U.S. home and even now, as a returnee, in South Korea. Yet, in both contexts, Timothy and Brian spoke Korean to their parents. Like his brother, Timothy stated that he spoke English to his siblings in large part because his younger brother and sister felt more comfortable speaking in English; they were very young when they moved to the U.S., and this immersion led them to understand and speak English more fluently. Timothy described why his younger siblings felt more comfortable, “We speak English because we are good at it. Even if I met some Koreans who spoke English fluently, I spoke Korean until I felt that person was really good at speaking in English” (Interview, December, 2016). As Timothy perceived himself as a fluent Korean-English bilingual, he chose which language to speak depending on the person whom he talked to.

Kayla. Like Brian and Timothy, Kayla thought talking consistently to her brother in English would be the best way to maintain her English proficiency.

I will keep talking to my brother in English. You could use lots of vocabularies even only in speaking English. My brother and I are pretty close right now, but I don't know what's going to happen when my brother reaches puberty. (laughter). (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah. Sarah indicated in an interview that she did not think she had forgotten English that much since returning to South Korea. As noted in the previous finding, Sarah reported that reading books written in English “repeatedly” helped her maintain her English but emphasized that “having someone to talk to in English” helped her not to forget English. With these two resources, Sarah believed that her level of English proficiency increased since returning to South Korea, despite that the environment in South Korea did not have the resources necessary to maintain or improve her English proficiency.

Sarah also attributed conversations with her friend, who spoke both Korean and English, in helping her maintain her English.

I have a friend, Yurim (pseudonym), who I met in Texas. She lived in the U.S. for five years and she spoke English much better than I did. Yurim is also [now] in Korea. Yurim and I talk in English, but Yurim talks to her brother in Korean. Her brother is too young to remember English that he used to speak in the U.S. It seems Yurim forgets English faster than I do because she talks to her brother in Korean. (Interview, December, 2016)

Sarah reasoned that Yurim’s English proficiency decreased because she could not talk to her brother in English. For Sarah, continual conversations in English with her friends and/or siblings helped her maintain her English proficiency.

Hyun. Like Brian, Timothy, and Sarah, Hyun talked to his brother, Min, in English which helped him maintain his English proficiency. Min went to preschool for six months in the U.S. and did not gain native English speaker proficiency. Yet, Hyun was happy to speak in and teach his brother English. A video clip taken by Hyun’s mother showed Hyun and his younger brother, Min, in conversation in English.

Min (M): Ah...! I went to kindergarten and I went to the piano school. (change of intonation to Korean language) Do you eat dinner?

Hyun (H): Um... Yes, I did. What did you eat for dinner?

M: I eat “Kim /김/”

H: You ate “Kim /김/”? I ate KimchiJigae. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun, Hyun’s mother, mentioned that Hyun enjoyed having English conversations with his younger brother from time to time. In this conversation, Hyun was eager to lead the English conversation with Min asking questions related to daily routines—piano and dinner--and correcting Min’s grammatical mistakes (e.g., eat and ate). In the EFL context, Hyun did not have enough opportunity to engage in peer-peer collaborative dialogues in South Korea except for his younger brother. Hyun acknowledged that he did not have English-only speaking friends around him in South Korea, and tried to find another supports, like conversations with his brother, to maintain his English proficiency.

Subfinding c. *Hakwon* as an Educational Resource

One of the key resources that three of the participants – Hyun, Sarah and Kayla – used to maintain their English proficiency was *Hakwon*, a private, highly exclusive and expensive cram school that prided itself on students' maintenance and achievement in English. *Hakwon* is a highly selective and competitive intensive English learning institution that teaches English to students as a second language (ESL) and not as a foreign language (EFL) through lectures, discussions, on and off-line homework systems, independent reading programs and expressive writing program(s). Although *Hakwon* claims that they create an ESL rather than EFL context by hiring native English-speaking teachers, *Hakwon* must abide by the Korean educational system and teach English with a focus on the grammar, vocabulary and standardized assessment. According to Yun (2006), cramming schools or private institutions like Roy (Pseudonym) *Hakwon*, an offshoot of *Hakwon* for younger returnees and study abroad students, collect \$300 monthly from a student's parents as tuition. The school uses this money, in part, to employ native speakers of English, and often have to hire unqualified native English speakers in order to meet the expectations of Korean parents (Yun, 2006).

The *Hakwon* that participants attended was Roy *Hakwon* for preschoolers and elementary school students. To be eligible for its Returnee program at Roy *Hakwon*, students have to take a rigorous customized assessment, the Roy Language Aptitude Test (RLAT), which allows the school to assess and analyze each student's English language abilities and to place each student in the right program. They also have to have studied abroad for at least a full year or at least have equivalent English proficiency. Hyun, Sarah, and Kayla met these requirements and attended this highly exclusive English school to help them maintain their English.

Hyun. While Hyun mentioned that playing with his friends in the U.S. helped his English proficiency, both Hyun and his mother, Eun, agreed that Hyun would not have been able to

maintain his English proficiency if he did not go to Roy *Hakwon*. They discussed Hyun's enrollment in *Hakwon*.

Eun (E): Do you think you would study English by yourself if you didn't go to the institution [*Hakwon*]?

Hyun (H): No. I don't think so.

E: I don't think you would, either. Children do not really know they should maintain English skills for the future. They only think about playing.

H: I liked speaking English to my friends while playing soccer. But I don't have English-speaking friends who can play soccer here [in South Korea].
(Interview, February, 2017)

As mentioned in a previous finding, Hyun informally learned English while playing with his friends in the U.S. to maintain his English proficiency. Yet, in South Korea, he did not have this same opportunity to speak English. Without this activity, Eun—as an adult—knew that “children do not know they should maintain English skills,” and enrolled Hyun in Roy *Hakwon*. Eun knew that Hyun's knowledge and ability to speak English would be important to his future.

Widespread belief among Korean parents is that only smart children are enrolled in this institution, and Hyun's mother was proud that Hyun was accepted to Roy *Hakwon*. Eun was a full-time working mother and had to support the family while Hyun's father was still in the U.S., and “could not spend much time teaching [Hyun] English” (Interview, December, 2016). She stated that sending Hyun to Roy *Hakwon* would be the best, and most convenient choice that she could make to maintain and/or improve his English skills. Eun added, “I don't think Hyun would try to maintain his English skills by himself, if I had not sent him to the Roy *Hakwon*”

(Interview, December, 2016). Eun acknowledged that Roy *Hakwon* would not create exactly the same ESL environment as he experienced in the U.S. However, Roy *Hakwon* would, at least, provide a similar learning environment with its native English-speaking teachers who catered specifically to young children who had study abroad experiences. However, from Hyun's perception, the Roy *Hakwon*'s way of teaching English in this institution was different from the way he was taught in the U.S.

We don't read books here. In *Hakwon*, they use some textbooks and let students to read and solve the problems. In the U.S., we don't really solve any problems. We just talked about what the book was about and finish reading. (Interview, December, 2016)

Although Eun was satisfied with the fact that Hyun went to this institution, she did not favor the way of teaching English as compared to Hyun's learning experience in the U.S.

This institution has a practice book and teachers try to finish the book as soon as they can. Most of the problems are fill-in-the-blanks and completing sentences. In the case of the U.S., [children] read books, discuss them during the class, and show some graphic presentation on the screen [PowerPoint]. The education in the U.S. seems to be more free and natural. Teachers [at *Hakwon*] sent me text messages telling me what score Hyun got on the level test, vocabulary test and so on. I was stressed out when Hyun did not do good enough. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun preferred the learning environment in the U.S. because teachers used a variety of ways to learn English: reading, discussing, and PowerPoint presentations. Further, she perceived that Hyun's education was less prescriptive. With the cost of *Hakwon* and its seeming ESL approach to teaching English, Eun expected that Hyun should do well in his English test after returning to

South Korea, yet she was not satisfied. This was evident in a book review on *Scardey Squirrel* (Watt, 2006) that Hyun shared and that he wrote at Roy *Hakwon* (see Figure 2).

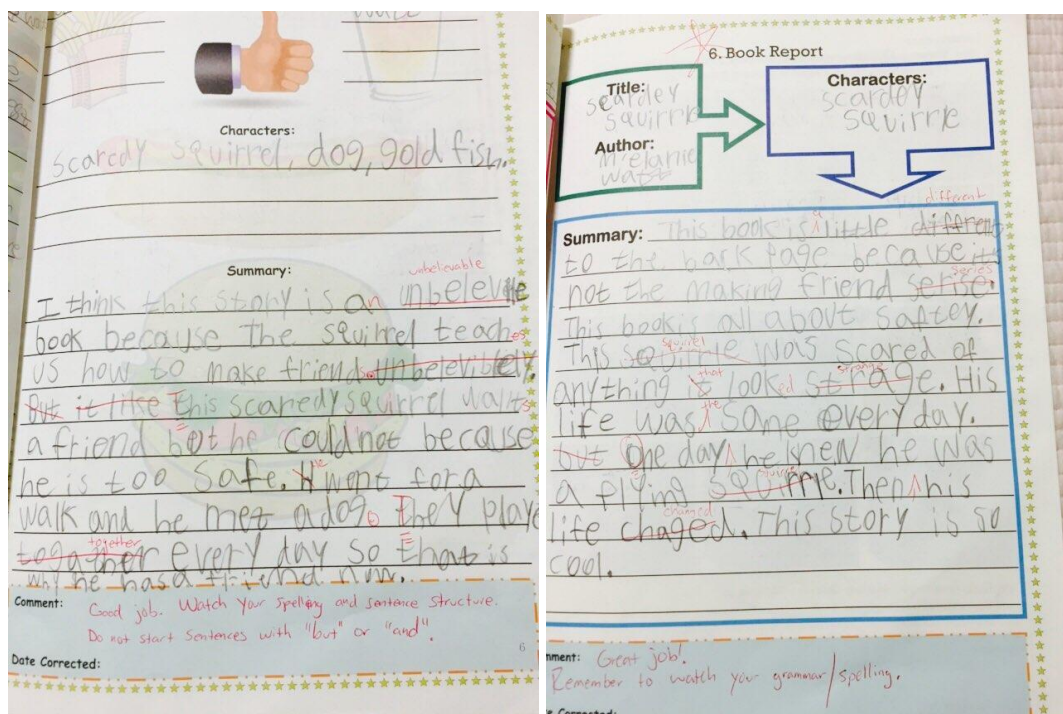


Figure 2. Hyun's book review with comments from the teacher in the *Hakwon*

Most of the corrections that the teacher made on this essay focused on spelling, grammar and sentence structures: "Watch your spelling and sentence structure. Do not start sentences with "but" or "and." Such feedback is often ascribed to an approach sometimes ascribed to EFL teaching and in line with the Korean educational system. Unlike teachers in the U.S., Hyun and his mother perceived that teachers in Roy *Hakwon* did not provide any constructive feedback on the content. Teachers only gave grammatical and mechanical corrective feedback on Hyun's papers pointing out the errors with a red pen.

Kayla. Kayla thought she had to rely on *Hakwon* to maintain her English proficiency, however, she was a little skeptical about the *Hakwon* system itself.

Researcher: What do you think about going to [Roy] *Hakwon*?

Kayla: I did not know what *Hakwon* was in the U.S. because there are none. So, children [in the U.S.] compete on what they know without the support from this kind of *Hakwon*. But here in Korea, going to *Hakwon* means a lot and children depend on their learning in *Hakwon*. (Interview, December, 2016)

Kayla believed that schools like *Hakwon* interrupted the natural competition between U.S. children in public schools, yet children in South Korea often relied on the support of *Hakwon*, and “meant a lot...to learn” in English. Children who learn at *Hakwon*, as is the widespread belief, know more than the ones who do not attend this school. They get a head start on children who attend public schools and learn through this curriculum. For example, some *Hakwon* teach high-school math, called *Senhanghakseup* or prior learning, to middle school students during vacation times. It is common knowledge that *Hakwon* teaches beyond what is required in public school curricula and supplements content that students may have missed in the public schools. For Kayla, children who go to private institution have an unfair advantage because *Hakwon* advances their learning beyond what is expected from public schools. Whereas, Kayla thought children who attended public school were disadvantaged and must compete with each other in their learning without the support of *Hakwon*.

To maintain her English, Kayla did extra work when she enrolled in Roy *Hakwon*, work she did not have to do in the U.S.

Kayla (K): How I acquired Korean was from online materials like *Junior Naver* (name of a website for Kids in South Korea) and I did not do a self-study

book like Kumon (self-study book with at-home-worksheets, designed to do self-study) or went to a private institution in the U.S. I thought what interests me was more important than what I was forced to do.

Researcher (R): Do you think you are forced to do some things here?

K: I am not good at memorization and it makes me really exhausted and frustrated. Like grammar questions in English test, you just know it as you keep using English and using sentences. I know this sentence is wrong, but I don't have to explain why it is wrong grammatically. That is stressful.

(Interview, December, 2016)

With her years-long living abroad experience, Kayla acknowledged the way she learned English was different from what Korean students learn in South Korea. She acquired English naturally as English native speakers do in the ESL context of the U.S. Thus, it was hard for her to understand Roy *Hakwon*'s English test questions, which contain some grammatical and sentence structural questions. She mentioned, "I was so confused when I had to explain why the sentences were right or wrong. The teacher tells us [students] to find what is wrong with a sentence like 'He worked home.' I know this sentence is wrong but cannot explain why it is not 'He worked in home' or 'He worked to home.'" (Interview, December, 2016). In grammatical questions, Kayla knew which answer was wrong but could not exactly explain why it was wrong. She thought grammar was closer to memorization than understanding. She stated, "It was stressful that she [the teacher] had to explain something that I already knew naturally" (Interview, December, 2016) based on the learning structures in English class in South Korea.

Sarah. Sarah also thought that she could improve her English proficiency by learning more vocabulary and debate skills at Roy *Hakwon*. As mentioned earlier, Sarah won prizes several times in the English debate competitions in South Korea, and thought preparing for these competitions helped her learn more new vocabularies about social issues. She thought that was something that she did not learn in the U.S.

[In the U.S.,] they don't learn English grammar or debate skills in detail. I was trained for English debate competitions in Korea, and thanks to the English debate training, my vocabularies increased a lot, and my logic increased as well. If I didn't go to Roy institution..., it wouldn't be possible. The reason that my mom thinks it is important to go to Roy *Hakwon* is because it could help me to "at least" maintain my English proficiency. But I think my English proficiency has improved. (Interview, December, 2016)

To maintain her English in an EFL context, South Korea, Sarah thought it was beneficial to learn public speech and debating skills on the top of English language learning. She could also gain knowledge about social issues and learn new vocabulary by reading on diverse topics.

While my friends learn how to do public speech and how to debate in Korean, I learned those in English in the Roy institution. As I do read more about social issues, I got interested in those topics and learned new vocabularies about social issues as well. (Interview, December, 2016)

In summary, participants in this study found that *Hakwon* benefitted their maintenance of English proficiency although the school did not provide full ESL learning environments. The Roy *Hakwon* created a mixture of ESL and EFL learning environments that contained native-

English speaking teachers and grammar- and syntax-focused instruction. However, the participants thought *Hakwon* was still a useful resource for several reasons. First, Hyun's mother, as a busy working mom who could not devote as much time to Hyun's learning, believed *Hakwon* was an alternative resource to help Hyun to maintain his English proficiency. Second, Kayla thought studying harder to understand grammatical rules and syntax structures at *Hakwon* helped her to maintain her English proficiency. Lastly, Sarah thought that, while preparing her English debating competitions, she learned new vocabularies and knowledge about social issues that she could not learn from public schools.

Subfinding d. Personal/electronic Social Networks

Two participants, Brian and Timothy, mentioned that they used social networks such as Google Hangout, FaceTime or email to keep in touch with their friends in the U.S. They thought that these networks helped them maintain their English proficiency. Hyun also mentioned that using PC tablets in *Hakwon* helped him to maintain his English proficiency.

When interviewed, Brian stated that he used Google to maintain his English: "I chat with my friends through Google Hangout" (Interview, December, 2016), and showed the chat room that he had with his friends in the U.S. (see Figure 3). Figure 3 shows how Brian consistently participated in Google Hangouts to chat with his friends in the U.S. Technology enabled Brian to communicate to his friends in the U.S. in an easier way. He mentioned that he was a part of this group chat and they shared information about their school, teachers, friends, etc. Even though he was not going to the same school as his friends were, he was able to share his life in South Korea with his friends in the U.S. in the chat room.

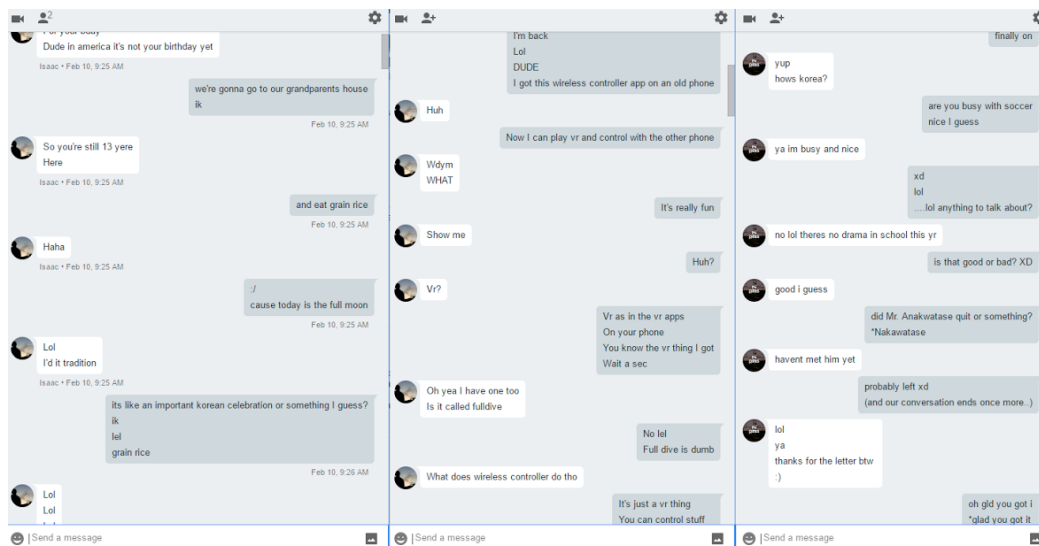


Figure 3. Brian's texts in English on Google Hangout

Like Brian, Timothy also used Google Hangouts regularly and FaceTime with his friends to maintain his English proficiency.

Researcher (R): How did you use social networks to maintain your English proficiency?

Do you have a Facebook account?

Timothy (T): Not Facebook. I have an Instagram account, though. I like the online game and we always talk in the chat room while playing a game.

R: How often do you talk in the chat room?

T: Almost every day. It's a little hard because of the time difference.

R: Do you use any other apps?

T: I use Google Hangout a lot. Sometimes, FaceTime, but usually Hangout works best for me. I talk to my friends with google hangout video chat.

(Interview, April, 2017)

Timothy and Brian utilized the social network media – Instagram, Google Hangout, and FaceTime – to communicate and keep in touch with his friends in the U.S. and helpful in order to maintain English proficiency and maintain close relationships with their friends.

In summary, participants used a range of different ways to maintain their English. Participants in this study mainly used four approaches to maintain their English; reading printed materials, conversation within family, studying at *Hakwon*, and connecting with English-speaking friend in personal/electronic social networks.

Among the participants, Sarah and Timothy utilized reading English books regularly to maintain their English in South Korea. They both enjoyed reading and it helped them to continue to grow as a strong reader. Luckily, all participants had English-speaking siblings at home and they all thought having English conversation partner at home would increase their chances to maintain their English. Three participants, Hyun, Sarah and Kayla studied at Roy *Hakwon* to maintain their English, and they all thought it was beneficial although *Hakwon* did not provide ESL learning environments that they expected. They learned grammar, syntax rules, and new vocabularies in *Hakwon*, which was designed for Korean returnees, and accordingly higher-leveled than the public-school curriculum. Brian and Timothy used social media such as Facetime and Google Hangout to keep in touch with their English-speaking friends and mentioned it would help them to maintain their English.

Finding 4: Parents as a critical resource in participants' maintaining English proficiency

Among the five participants, I interviewed Hyun's mother, Eun, and Brian and Timothy's mother, Jihee. The reason that I added participants' parents' interviews in this study was to have a clearer picture about their children's educational background, and investigate how parents' beliefs influenced their children's education. I interviewed these mothers based upon the

responses in participant interviews. Three specifically mentioned their English learning experiences were closely related to their parents' decisions on how their parents wanted to help them maintain or improve their English proficiency. During an interview with Hyun, he mentioned that "I don't think I will forget English because mom sent me to *Hakwon*" (Interview, December, 2016). Brian also mentioned that "my mother cared more about learning Korean than English when we came back to Korea" (Interview, December, 2016). Therefore, it was crucial to investigate participants' parents' perspectives on maintaining their children's English proficiency.

Hyun. When I asked Hyun how he would like to maintain or improve his English proficiency, he mentioned that he did not worry that he would forget English in South Korea. Eun thought Hyun did not care much about his academic performance and grades at school and seemed to be insensitive about English attrition that could occur to him.

Hyun showed indifference to where he learned English—in the U.S. or at *Hakwon*. Yet, Hyun's mother, Eun, was concerned that Hyun would not try to learn/maintain/improve his English in South Korea unless he went to *Hakwon*, as Hyun was a young boy who liked physical activities over academic activities. He saw no purpose in maintaining English in South Korea as "no one uses English in their daily lives" (Interview, December, 2016). Eun discussed Hyun's interest in English.

Researcher (R): I was panicked when he answered that he had no purpose of learning

English in Korea.

Eun (E): That's right. But his answer is comprehensible that he just followed us to the U.S. and went to school. That's all.

- R: You are right. His answer really makes sense. It must have been weird for him when he was asked for the purpose of learning English.
- E: Yes. I think so, too. The purpose is from us, parents, that “you should learn English.” The children go to school or *Hakwon* because they are asked to do. They are not going there voluntarily. I think they are not aware of the importance of learning English. He learned English enjoyably in the U.S. because he really doesn’t have that kind of purpose. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun knew that she was a critical resource in maintaining Hyun’s English proficiency. She knew that for Hyun to go to a good college, he had to prepare for the KSAT with English as one of its main subjects. After returning to South Korea, Hyun’s mother felt pressure and conflicted. She knew that it was “important” that Hyun did well in English, and should do well because he learned English in the U.S.

I think Hyun is positive about going to Roy institution. He never says no if I tell him to go to *Hakwon*. I don’t really want to pressure him and say anything that discourages him. I hope he could learn English in a comfortable and enjoyable way. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun did not want to pressure Hyun to maintain good scores in English test. Rather, she wanted English to be enjoyable for Hyun, and to continue to want to go to *Hakwon*. She continued, referencing how Hyun learned English.

He did not play to learn English but learned English by playing with his friends naturally. Not that he was ‘I want to be their friend to learn English’ but by playing soccer and footballs together, he always learned some new words. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun believed that Hyun enjoyed learning English in a natural way by playing with English-speaking peers in the U.S. She wanted Hyun to have a similar English learning experience after returning to South Korea. However, Hyun did not have enough opportunity to engage in peer-peer collaborative dialogues in South Korea. This was largely due to the fact that he did not have English-only speaking friends around him in South Korea nor did he contact friends in the U.S. That was the primary reason that Hyun’s mother decided to send Hyun to *Roy Hakwon* where Korean returnees and native English-speaking teachers existed.

Eun did not want Hyun to be stressed when learning English or maintaining his English proficiency. In trying to adapt to Korean public school, Hyun had been discouraged and daunted by his teachers because of his behavior in the classroom. Eun mentioned that Korean classrooms have relatively conservative rules compared to the classrooms in the U.S. Korean culture emphasizes the hierarchy between teachers and students, and it is very important for students to be respectful and obedient to their teachers. Once, Eun recalled, Hyun asked his teacher if he could go to the restroom during the class. His teacher allowed him to go to the restroom at first, but Hyun had to go to the restroom for a second time. His teacher did not allow him because he thought Hyun was making an excuse to leave the classroom and it would influence other classmates. When Hyun was warned by his teacher, he spoke back and said that he was allowed to go to the restroom anytime during the class in the U.S. Hyun’s teacher thought Hyun’s behavior was impertinent and told him to stand at the back of the classroom.

- Researcher (R): (To Hyun's mother) Can you tell me about Hyun's attitudes of learning English in the U.S. and in Korea and how it makes you feel from a parent's perspective?
- Eun (E): (To Hyun) Can you answer this question, Hyun?
- Hyun (H): In the U.S., studying was easy. It is natural and comfortable. But in Korea, you are pointed out for bad behaviors.
- E: How about when you are learning English?
- H: I don't know.
- E: You know, they have lots of tests such as vocabulary or grammar tests. Hyun learned English naturally in the U.S., and here they have tests every week. The teachers sent parents text messages mentioning that "This kid has failed the level test, he got such and such score in the vocabulary test." When students don't listen to their teachers, they let children stand in the back of the classroom or outside in the hallway.
- R: You mean, at the institution?
- E: No, the school. The institution gives more freedom to the students. Hyun once cried and did not want to go to school. In the afterschool English conversation class, the teacher asked Hyun to stand in the back of the classroom. Hyun was very scared and did not want to go to that class any more. It is not the way of teaching in the U.S., right? Of course, control

could be an issue, but they are forceful and are a little harsh. The English tests are always fill in the blanks. Last time, he got 0 in his math test.

R: Oh, that's why Hyun is so stressful about math.

E: They are doing fractions now. Hyun's math teacher gave me a call and said Hyun was not the kid who would have a zero in his math test. He probably does not have a clear understanding of multiplication. The teacher was asking me to do something to help Hyun out. So, I decided to send him a private institution for math. It costs \$170 per month. Twice a week.

R: Wow, that is expensive.

E: The Roy (*Hakwon*) is \$300. (Interview, December, 2016)

Eun realized the difference between the U.S. and the Korean educational systems in how English was learned, how children were treated in the classroom, and how they were tested. While she stated she did not always agree with what *Hakwon* did to Hyun, she knew that for Hyun to be successful, he had to go to this school, despite his resistance.

During member checking with Hyun and Eun, I learned that Hyun's family united in the U.S. during Eun's sabbatical year and applied for permanent residence in the U.S. Eun stated that Hyun and Hyun's brother, Min, was satisfied with attending public school in the U.S and made many friends. Eun expressed her excitement as well saying that "Hyun and Min would learn English better this time" (Member-check, March, 2018).

Timothy and Brian. Like Hyun, Timothy and Brian's mother, Jihee, was a critical factor in Brian and Timothy's English proficiency. She thought her children could maintain their English proficiency by "having conversations with their siblings and through homeschooling" (Interview, December, 2016). Brian and Timothy had relatively unique educational backgrounds and English learning experiences. They started learning English in the public school for one and a half years. After transferring to a homeschooling-hybrid school, they learned English not only at school but also from diverse places such as church, community, and home. Unlike typical Korean parents, Timothy and Brian's parents did not want to send them to a public high school in South Korea.

Brian and Timothy's parents were very skeptical about public education in the U.S. and in South Korea. Brian and Timothy's parents wanted to keep homeschooling their children when they returned to South Korea. 17-year-old Brian and 14-year-old Timothy agreed to continue to be homeschooled and to take the Korean general equivalency diploma (KGED) to earn a high school diploma. In South Korea, however, homeschooling is not a common education option. The Korean government requires school attendance for children ages 7 to 15, and homeschooling is not specifically protected by law. Brian's mother talked about her beliefs about the Korean and U.S. educational systems.

Researcher (R): Would you send Brian to high school in Korea?

Jihee (J): My husband and I are skeptical about public school in Korea. Well, we were also skeptical when we were in the U.S., haha (laughter). At the time that we came back to Korea, we thought there must be some homeschooled families. But we couldn't find any.... I am not 100%

satisfied with homeschooling in Korea but it is better than sending him to the public school or institutions.

R: What do you think about Korean education system?

J: I don't know high school especially well. But I heard that it is very competitive. There was an 11th grade high school boy who stayed at my friend's house for about two months in the U.S. He was good at speaking English. He mentioned several times that he loved studying at Athena Academy (pseudonym: private homeschooling school in the U.S.) because there was no competition here in the U.S. In Korea, he couldn't even get along with his friends because they all cared about their grades. I don't like competition and hate that people only care about their children's grades. Studying is not all my children's life. (Interview, December, 2016)

To avoid the pressure and stress in the competitive education system, Jihee chose to homeschool her children. She did not want Brian to compete for grades or see grades as the only way to succeed. This emphasis on grades prevented Brian from "getting along with his friends."

According to Jihee, by homeschooling, parents and children can create their own curriculum according to the children's levels, and there is no comparison with other children. In so doing, Brian and Timothy would have more opportunities designed by their parents to maintain their English proficiency.

Brian and Timothy's parents were very religious. Their values emphasized the need for children to learn in a non-stressed environment. This grounded Eun's decision to homeschool their children, and based their curriculum on that of a Christian private school.

Jihee (J): Brian, Timothy, and Katie went to the public school for one and a half year and transferred to homeschooling-type of school. Here, they only went to school three times a week and stayed at home with me for the other two days.

Researcher (R): That's interesting. Is there any specific reason that they were transferred to the homeschooling type of school?

J: My children liked to go to school. It's just that... by chance, I learned that there is a private Christian school which supports homeschooling. It was a newly established school and the principal was a Korean pastor. The school was launched from a church. It was not even expensive because it was a homeschool-based school and parents volunteered a lot to help out teachers.

R: Did your children enjoy homeschooling better than going to school?

J: Of course, they loved it! They didn't have to go to school every day. (laughter) Anyway, the public schools in the U.S. – especially in the southwestern region of the U.S. - are too liberal. You know that they were transforming a restroom with a unisex restroom.

R: You mean, gender neutral bathroom?

J: Yes, that! I just can't believe it. Well... I just liked the Athena Academy, the teachers, the children, their educational belief and all. (Interview, December, 2016)

Brian and Timothy's mother and father located their educational values in their religious beliefs. Athena Academy's curriculum pursued a Christ-centered, Classical Education for grades K-12 using a hybrid homeschooling model: part time schooling at Athena Academy and part time schooling at home. The school covers all traditional core subjects through the lens of a Christian worldview. Brian and Timothy enrolled in this hybrid model and attended school three days a week and their parents implemented teacher-directed lessons at home on the other two days. This model allowed Jihee to integrate the Bible in all subjects. She explained why she embraced this model of learning.

Jihee (J): ... for example, they teach creative science.

Researcher (R): Creative science? The public schools usually teach evolution theory, right?

J: That is the start of being apart from faith. Kids in elementary school think "the school taught me something wrong." When these kids went to junior high school, "this is right, my mom is wrong!" If they don't believe in creative science, it means they are denying the Bible. If Jason and Katie learn something about geological stratum, the homeschooling academy teachers teach what the Bible says about stratum with specific evidence.
(Interview, December, 2016)

Jihee wanted her children to learn a Christian worldview in all subject areas. She wanted her children to know the value that the Bible teaches and they would not learn this in public school. Further, she thought that public schools had troubled notions of gender and were shifting in terms of gender, "transforming a restroom with a unisex restroom."

In South Korea, Jihee followed specific guidelines for homeschoolers in the homeschooling academy. When I observed Brian's and Timothy's homeschooling Bible class, Jihee, sitting in a comfortable chair, instructed their children to memorize verses from the Bible. With Brian and Timothy sitting separately, and Katie and Jason lying on the floor, they memorized one line from the English Bible every day. If the children memorized verse 1 on their first day, they memorized the verse 1 and 2 on the second day; this accumulated until they memorized the whole chapter. Brian, Timothy, Katie, and Jason took their turns to memorize the allocated verses of the day and supported each other when they had a hard time memorizing. Memorizing Bible verses was Jihee's parenting and social practice in helping her children learn and maintain their English proficiency. While memorizing these verses from the Bible, her children learned new words or "thoughts." Their English language usage at home occurred naturally within this daily language practice.

In terms of maintaining English proficiency, Jihee wanted them to experience language in the way that many people do, in natural settings and at their own pace and level. At 17, Brian was the oldest child and I wondered what plans his mother had for him.

Researcher: So, what is your plan for Brian? Do you have any plans to maintain or improve his English proficiency?

Jihee: I just thought I would let my kids watch videos and read books in English according to their age level. I think this way would work for Brian's siblings, but I am not sure about Brian. They used to do homeschooling and naturally spoke to each other in English. When they are talking about something serious, elders like Brian and Timothy use English for their younger ones. Talking to each other in English would help them to

maintain their English skills. If there is any chance, I would like to send them to an English camp someday. I am also thinking about English home schooling program.... (Interview, December, 2016)

Brian's and Timothy's parents' beliefs on homeschooling influenced Brian and Timothy's English learning experiences in South Korea. They had the choice to learn English as they wished. Unless they want to go to university, Brian and Timothy will not take the KSAT. Jihee wanted them to choose.

Researcher: Have you thought about sending Brian and Timothy back to the U.S. to go to university there?

Jihee: Of course, I have thought about it. I don't think Brian will go back because he thinks speaking Korean is more comfortable. There might be a chance that Timothy will want to go because he says that he wants to go back to the U.S. and study. He misses his friends there. (Interview, December, 2016)

True to her beliefs, Jihee has faith that her children will make good choices in the extent to which they wish to maintain English, if they want to go to college and where, and to trust them to do the right thing. At the follow-up interview, Brian mentioned that he started to help out his aunt at a coffee shop, learning how to brew coffee and working to earn a barista certificate.

I know that I am doing something different from the people in my age. I would've still been in the Athena Academy while I was in the U.S. Here, I think I need to find something else, and I think I found [a job] that fits me. (Interview, April, 2017)

Brian also mentioned that he was interested in becoming a chef and found a college with a culinary school that he wanted to attend. He felt privileged learning English in the U.S. and saw this as an affordance as this school was looking for “students who received at least 2 years of education (elementary, junior high, or high school) outside of Korea.”

I am so happy that I found this college. This Hyowon (pseudonym) college does not request KSAT scores. They only do an interview [conducted] in English to accept students. They accept Korean returnees or foreign citizens and operate all the classes in English. (Interview, April, 2017)

With his English learning experiences and English proficiency in the U.S., he thought he had a good chance to be accepted to this college if he passed his English interview. While I conducted member checking with Brian, he stated he was accepted to the culinary school at this college. He was excited that he found the way to use his English competence at college and for his future career.

In summary, Hyun’s full-time working mother, Eun, had to support her family financially until Hyun’s father earn his doctoral degree in the U.S. She was a decision maker and critical supporter in terms of Hyun’s education including English learning in Korea and in the U.S. Eun believed that Hyun enjoyed learning English in a natural way by playing with English-speaking peers in the U.S and thought registering him at Roy *Hakwon* would help him to maintain or improve his English in South Korea because Roy *Hakwon* insisted they provide a similar English learning environment with the U.S. On the other hand, Brian and Timothy’s mother, Jihee, was skeptical about public education in the U.S. and in South Korea, and decided to have their children homeschooled instead of enrolling them in public schools. Thanks to Brian and

Timothy's younger siblings, Jihee believed that her children could help each other maintain their English by speaking English at home and learning through online homeschooling materials.

Summary

Four key findings emerged in the analysis of data collected in this study. The findings were

1. Participants' perceptions of English proficiency after their return to South Korea
 - a. Participants perceived their level of English proficiency in different ways after returned to South Korea.
 - b. Influence of educational spaces and learning status impacted motivation to maintain English.
2. Participants' use of strategies for learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea
 - a. Teaching styles and the assessment systems in the U.S. influenced Korean returnees' language learning strategies.
 - b. First language experiences helped Korean returnees maintain their English proficiency.
3. Participants' use of educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency
 - a. Reading printed materials
 - b. Conversations within family
 - c. *Hakwon* as an educational resource
 - d. Personal/electronic social networks

4. Parents as a critical resource in participants' maintaining English proficiency

The results from the study indicate that all participants described the difference of learning English in what is sometimes known as ESL and EFL contexts. They perceived the change in their English proficiency and used English learning strategies differently in these two contexts. In the ESL context, they tended to learn English as a communication tool to interact with others who speak English as their first language. However, in the EFL context, according to participants' personalities, attitudes toward English learning, and parents' values on their education, they all employed different strategies to maintain their English proficiency. For example, 11-year-old Hyun did not realize the importance of learning English due to his perception that people in South Korea do not use English. Thus, to maintain Hyun's English proficiency that was achieved in the U.S., his mother registered him into an English private institution, *Hakwon*, particularly designed for young Korean returnees who learned English in the ESL context. Although Hyun and his mother were not satisfied with the curriculum and the traditional way that English speaking teachers teach English in *Hakwon*, his mother believed that creating a similar learning environment to the ESL context would be the best way to help Hyun to maintain his English proficiency and not to lose what he has gained from the U.S. While Hyun thought it was not necessary to maintain his English proficiency, 12-year-old Kayla and 13-year-old Sarah thought maintaining or improving their English proficiency was important because it means acceptance into a good college and their future career. Thus, they participated in English debate competitions and tried to improve their English proficiency learning new vocabularies and discussion skills. By reading books written in English and having a conversation with their siblings in English on regular basis, they tried to maintain or not to lose their English proficiency gained in the U.S.

17-year-old Brian and 14-year-old Timothy had a unique educational background. In the U.S., they went to public school for two years and homeschooled with the other two siblings, attending hybrid homeschooling private school three days a week. Brian and Timothy's mother believed continuing to do homeschooling in South Korea would be best for their children especially in maintaining English. By providing more opportunity to talk with their siblings in English and creating a curriculum that corresponding the level of each child's English proficiency, she thought they would have better chances to maintain or improve their English proficiency. In addition, their children would not be stressed out to take a test in Korean, and still do well in their academic performances in English. Brian and Timothy agreed on their mother's educational belief, and tried to maintain their English proficiency by reading various materials from online and offline resources, talking to their siblings in English, and keeping in touch with their English-speaking friends in the U.S through technological tools such as Facetime, Google Hangout.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study sought to answer the following questions: 1) How do Korean returnees perceive the change of learning status from ESL learners to EFL learners? 2) What factors influenced the extent to which Korean returnees maintained or lost their English proficiency after having returned to South Korea?

From the data analysis of participants' semi-structured interviews supported by written documents and observation, four key findings emerged in relation to Korean returnees' English language practice and usage:

1. Participants' perceptions of English proficiency after their return to South Korea
 - a. Participants perceived their level of English proficiency in different ways after returned to South Korea.
 - b. Influence of educational spaces and learning status impacted motivation to maintain English.
2. Participants' use of strategies for learning English in the U.S. and in South Korea
 - a. Teaching styles and the assessment systems in the U.S. influenced Korean returnees' language learning strategies.
 - b. First language experiences helped Korean returnees maintain their English proficiency.
3. Participants' use of educational and social spaces to maintain their English proficiency
 - a. Reading printed materials

- b. Conversations within family
- c. *Hakwon* as an educational resource
- d. Personal/electronic social networks

4. Parents as a critical resource in participants' maintaining English proficiency

In this chapter, I discuss the importance of this study, suggestions for Korean returnees' language learning experiences in ESL and EFL contexts, concluding thoughts and implications for practice and future research.

The Significance of the Study

I was a returnee myself; I experienced the struggles and the challenges that Korean returnees faced. When I was 15 years old, I came to the U.S. with my family because my father took his sabbatical year as a visiting scholar in the U.S. I went to a U.S. high school for one year, and spent the most challenging and transitional year of my life. After returning to South Korea, I realized that I was labeled a Korean returnee. I was the only student who had lived in the U.S. among 1,500 students in my high school, and it was taken for granted that the school did not have any class or program for Korean returnees. During my high school years in South Korea, I strove to achieve a good score on English tests to meet my teachers' and my classmates' expectations. I wanted to prove that I reached a high level of English proficiency and the way to prove it was achieving high scores on English exams. Instead of maintaining or improving my English proficiency that I gained as an ESL learner in the U.S., I cared more about the results of assessments based on the Korean education system. Afterwards, I chose English major at college, and I believe my English proficiency improved during college. However, I have seen other Korean returnees struggle to maintain their English proficiency with their own trials and

errors. Looking back, my personal experience guided me to be interested in the specific ELL population, Korean returnees, and more widely, returnees with diverse nationalities. I wanted to understand returnees with the similar experiences and challenges that I had. This study ideally will offer insights that will enable Korean returnees to continue with their English learning experience wherever they reside and no matter to what learning contexts they belong.

Self-perceptions of Korean Returnees' English Proficiency are Influential in their Language Learning Experience

After returning to South Korea, returnees have less access to their authentic English learning resources and less exposed to English speaking environment. Thus, it is assumed that returnees would lose their English competence after a certain amount of time (Schmid and Köpke, 2011). However, the results from the study showed that only two participants—Hyun and Kayla—perceived their English had decreased after returning to South Korea. Other three participants—Brian, Timothy, and Sarah—perceived their English proficiency had improved or maintained after returning to South Korea.

Based upon the data, each participant perceived their own proficiency in different ways. While research shows that proficiency is determined through more formal testing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Weir, 2005), this study identified *perceived proficiency* from the participants' viewpoints. Hyun understood English proficiency as speaking and listening skills that enabled him to play with his friends. His need to communicate with his friends in person or on social media suggested that he saw proficiency as being able to speak to friends. However, Eun, his mother saw proficiency as a mixture of speaking, listening, reading and writings skills that could be used for academic purposes and outside of the classroom. Sarah understood English

proficiency as a presentation tool that could express her feelings or insist her opinions with linguistic knowledge.

Hyun stayed in the U.S. for two years, which was shorter than other participants, who lived in the U.S. for over four years. He acknowledged that his English proficiency was not at the level of a native English speaker, and he might have lost his English faster than the ones who attained the level of native English speakers. Timothy thought he would have less chance to lose English proficiency than his younger brother and sister, which implies the age may be a factor that influenced language attrition. Sarah was the most highly motivated returnee among the participants, and she self-perceived that she gained more lexical knowledge and improved her English-speaking skills after returning to South Korea due to her effort to maintain or improve her English proficiency. This study provides original insight into the importance of participants' perception as it relates to their understanding of their English proficiency. While other studies demonstrate more formal approaches to proficiency, this study demonstrates that proficiency was viewed differently by these participants. Thus, this study suggests that while proficiency is often measured through formal testing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Weir, 2005), information from these tests does not always translate into how a language learner perceives her/his own proficiency. There is a need to attend to the dissonance between proficiency determined by formal testing and perceived proficiency. Further, the concept of "proficiency" should include how language learners understand their own proficiency. As shown in the data, proficiency was perceived not just by how well a language learner reads/writes in target languages, but the purpose behind why a language is learned. Hyun needed to communicate with friends; Sarah needed to use language to debate, Timothy and Brian needed English to read and study religion. Hyun perceived his English decreased in this educational and social environment. For all

participants, being young while living in the U.S. was motivating enough—they had to communicate in English to learn, to play soccer, to debate, and to communicate through social networking. All participants agreed that studying English in the U.S. was far less stressful than in South Korea. Hyun's mother Eun was concerned that Hyun would not continue to learn English after the restroom incident at school. Thus, it is important to understand how returnees perceive the reasons for maintaining English or not.

My research corroborates the findings of other studies in which researchers found that there is a relationship between and among language attrition and age of the learners, the length of time without input, and motivation for language maintenance (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010; Schmid & Köpke, 2011). However, Taura (2008) claimed that literacy instruction in English-speaking countries can delay language attrition and observed that Japanese returnees who had received literacy instruction for four years improved in their lexical knowledge and writing and speaking skills. Three factors that account for the observed improvement of these returnees were (a) high enough attainment of L2 proficiency when leaving the L2-dominant environment, (b) high motivation to maintain their L2 literacy abilities, and (c) favorable environment in which to sustain the L2 skills. Sarah met all three factors; (a) she lived in the U.S. from 7 years old to 11 years old and attained native-level L2 proficiency; (b) she had a high intrinsic motivation to maintain her L2 literacy ability by reading English books; and (c) she had favorable environments. At home, she could talk to her brother in English. At school, she was supported to participate in English debate competition. At *Hakwon*, she was surrounded by native English-speaking teachers and returnee friends. She perceived her proficiency in English as strong by participating in these resources. On the other hand, Hyun had not met these factors (a) he lived in the U.S. from 7 years old to 9 years old and did not attain native-level L2 proficiency although

he was fluent enough to communicate in English; (b) he only had extrinsic motivation to maintain his English by attending *Hakwon*; (c) it is hard to say he has a favorable environment because his brother, Min, could not speak English as much as Hyun did. He lost contact with English-speaking friends in the U.S. although he still talked to English-speaking friends at *Hakwon*.

This study provides some evidence around self-efficacy and how and why participants provided reasons why they were motivated to learn and maintain another language (Zimmerman, 2000). Debate was an important factor in the extent to which Sarah and Kayla felt good about their knowledge of and use of English in their competitions. This continued use of English for the purpose of debating different issues enabled Sarah and Kayla both to earn prizes in English debate competitions. While Sarah perceived her level of English proficiency increased, Kayla thought her level of English decreased. The reason that this difference was articulated by two participants who engaged in the same type of activity may be because Sarah had higher self-efficacy and as a result, stronger motivation, than Kayla. Wong (2005) found a relationship between self-efficacy and use of language strategies. Wong reported that students with high self-efficacy tend to use more number of language learning strategies than students with low self-efficacy. This study corroborates Wong's study in the extent to which participants used a range of strategies to learn/maintain English language. While Kayla only mentioned she talked to her younger brother in English regularly, Sarah utilized more strategies to improve her English such as reading fantasy novels in English and writing fan fictions on her blogs. Hyun used only one means – attending to *Hakwon* – to maintain his English and perceived his proficiency decreased because he had less intrinsic motivation than the other participants.

This finding offers several insights into the relationship between self-perception and maintaining English proficiency which contributes to the field of language learning. First, through self-perception, participants monitored and were conscious of the level of their English proficiency. Kayla, for example, perceived her level of proficiency had decreased while at school because English was “SOOOOO boring!” Hyun perceived English served little as a communication tool in South Korea because few people speak English, and he did not need to use it to communicate. Thus, he perceived that his English might have decreased because of lack of use in everyday communicative contexts. Brian perceived the level of his English while talking to their siblings and he thought “my speaking is still good.” Timothy thought his English remained the same but he would have more chances to forget while living in South Korea. Sarah thought her English improved because she gained English discussion skills and advanced vocabulary while preparing English debate competitions. Second, developing English competencies afforded returnees a number of benefits. Brian, for example, while homeschooled, thought that he had a better chance at getting into culinary school because he could speak and write in English and had a study abroad experience, two criteria the school valued. Third, participants perceived that there were advantages in being bilingual in EFL learning context, and were motivated to maintain their English. Sarah, Kayla, and Hyun were accepted into *Hakwon* that has a rigorous standard for admission. They were smart children, and they were proficient in English. Studying at such a prestigious school will enable these participants to achieve, not only on the KSAT, but English will, as Eun, Hyun’s mother stated, help them get a better career. Fourth, participants perceived that by learning new vocabulary reading books, taking online classes, they would nurture their linguistic knowledge of English.

This study provides evidence that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are important to Korean returnees' on-going English proficiency. Participants' personalities, ages, language learning abilities, their exposures to English maintenance resources, and their motivation to maintain English proficiency were identified as reasons why they did or did not maintain English proficiency. *Hakwon*, for some participants, like Hyun, was an extrinsic motivation for him to maintain his English, whose teachers were native English speakers which extrinsically motivated him to continue his learning in and of English. Hyun's was also extrinsically motivated to maintain his English proficiency because of his mother. His mother enrolled him *Hakwon*, and she expected he would continue his knowledge of English. However, although Hyun attended *Hakwon*, this context did not motivate him to maintain his English. He thought that since English was not a primary language in South Korea, he found little reason to maintain it. He was immersed in Korean, and did not have many opportunities to speak and write in English. Sarah had an intrinsic motivation to maintain her English proficiency because she loved reading books in English and presenting in English debate competitions. She also wanted to keep talking to her brother in English because it would help her to maintain her English proficiency. With these language practices and motivation, she self-perceived her English proficiency improved for the past two years after having returned to South Korea. While Hyun and Sarah had a purposeful English-speaking environment at *Hakwon*, Timothy was intrinsically motivated to maintain his English by speaking with his siblings in English. He believed he had a more naturally constructed English-speaking environment by talking with his siblings, especially with his youngest brother who grew up in the U.S. and who could not speak Korean well. He also communicated with U.S. friends Google Hangout and FaceTime.

This study corroborates the findings of other studies regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Brown (2001) found that students in an ESL learning context are subject to have higher intrinsic motivation because they recognize English is relevant to their everyday lives (Brown, 2001). They needed to communicate in schools, in their everyday lives, and in sports. On the other hand, Krieger (1996) stated that intrinsic motivation is lower in an EFL setting because using English is unnecessary in the EFL learners' daily lives. While Kayla and Sarah were also placed in *Hakwon* by their parents, they acknowledged the importance of maintaining their English proficiency in South Korea. By participating and earning awards in English debate competitions, they were confident that they were learning new vocabulary and discussion skills that they had not learned in the U.S. This provides some evidence to show how extrinsic motivation transformed into intrinsic motivation for Korean returnees as they adjusted to new English learning environment in which English is learned as a foreign language. Sarah, especially, had a high motivation to improve her English proficiency by reading English novels and talking to her own brother as a daily conversation. This research on Korean returnee in terms of self-perception and motivation to continue their proficiency in English contributes to current research on motivation research of study abroad students or international students and even bilinguals. (DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Isabelli-García, 2006)

Flexibility in ESL/EFL Strategy Use is Important in Maintaining English for Korean Returnees

All language learners use a number of language learning strategies (LLS) consciously and unconsciously (Gürsoy, 2010). Depending on where students learn English, fundamental differences can be found between classrooms traditionally recognized as ESL and EFL (Bell, 2011). In traditional ESL classrooms, students tend to focus more on building communicative

competence by utilizing hands-on English activities suitable for their immediate needs and learning explicit cultural contents. Students in EFL classes focus more on practicing linguistic skills by intentionally using authentic English materials. Motivated language learners use their strategies effectively by expanding or integrating their existing strategies or developing new ways of learning (Oxford, Holloway, & Horton-Murillo, 1992; Reid, 1995).

The results of this study showed that Korean returnees used different modes of studying to maintain their English, and chose the learning strategies that best suited them and were dependent on the learning context. This study provides evidence that Korean returnees needed to be flexible in their use of language strategies to maintain their English. That is, Korean returnees understood the difference between strategies for ESL learning such as Hyun's speaking with friends through sports or Sarah and Timothy's reading books in English, and strategies for EFL to strengthen English grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and pragmatics. The curriculum taught in mainstream English language arts classrooms in the U.S. was different from the English classroom in South Korea. The English language arts curriculum in the U.S. included encouraging discussion on a variety of books such as English literature, novels, and story books which enhanced participants' discussion and writing skills by learning diverse essays formats. In the EFL classroom in South Korea, however, instruction focused on structures, grammar, vocabulary and reading skills. The learning contents are different because English is taught as a primary language in the U.S. while English is treated as a foreign language in South Korea. For Korean returnees, they reported that the level of English taught in EFL classroom is much lower than English taught in ESL classroom or mainstream English language arts classroom. However, not all Korean returnees with high English proficiency had good grades in English assessments.

It is difficult to measure or assess returnee children's language skills accurately under the current assessment system in South Korea. Sarah and Kayla mentioned that they were not familiar with the assessment formats and found it difficult to understand test questions in Korean. In English classrooms in South Korea, accuracy is more emphasized than fluency under the current curriculum and assessment (Song, 2016). Returnees tend to have relatively fluent oral skills but not "desired" or required language knowledge which is the key in English assessment system in South Korea. Additionally, Korean returnees may tend to get bored and lack motivation because the EFL classroom in South Korea is more teacher-centered than English classroom in the U.S. Although Korean EFL classroom aims to promote learner-centered language learning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) pedagogies, the pressure of deriving high academic performances from students has led to an excessive amount of content knowledge delivered by teachers who lecture and prepare children for exams. Research shows that Korean parents want their children to succeed in a highly competitive Korean society and will pay a great deal of money for private English learning (Park, 2009; Shin & Albers, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary for Korean teachers to have the capacity to restore Korean returnees' motivation by encouraging them and relating the importance of studying English as a second language.

Outside of the classroom, Brian and Timothy also endeavored to develop test-taking strategies while preparing for the Korean general equivalency diploma (KGED). While being homeschooled with their siblings and learning through online English homeschooling websites, they kept utilizing their ESL learning strategies at home talking to their siblings in English. However, to pass the KGED test, they had to study for how to solve English problems with Korean questions through Korean lectures in EBS. In the KGED English test, Korean texts are

presented as a question, which was the constraints for Timothy. He mentioned he needed more time to understand the Korean texts to solve English problems. Therefore, he strived to understand Korean texts in English problems, and studied for grammar terminologies as well.

In terms of using ESL and EFL learning strategies flexibly, participants' past English learning experience in the U.S. and their future goals that expected knowledge and use of English influenced their current English maintenance strategies in South Korea as well. Sarah and Kayla perceived that they were fluent Korean-English bilinguals. Although Kayla thought her English proficiency decreased, she was still able to speak English fluently. During the interviews, they mentioned that they attended a Korean language school for several years and used an online language learning platform. They believed that if they put in extra effort and time they would maintain both their Korean and English proficiency. Both Sarah and Kayla did not have an American accent in their Korean pronunciation. Considering that they spent their critical ages in the U.S. for more than four years, they might have lost their first language, Korean, and acquired their second language, English, instead. As they both maintained their Korean well in the U.S. while learning English in the ESL contexts, they had goals and desires to maintain both languages after they returned to South Korea. They improved their English proficiency by attending *Hakwon*, reading English books, and participating in English debate competitions. Participation in English debate competitions was an example of how Korean returnees integrated ESL and EFL strategies which required both fluent oral communication skills and lexical and structural knowledge. They also had to gain background knowledge related to the debate topics by reading English materials, memorizing new vocabulary, and produce accurate English knowledge, all strategies that they could use in their future education. Memorization for Kayla was difficult; she developed context-appropriate study habits, using EFL learning strategies to

acquire accurate grammar, syntax and lexical knowledge. In addition, to maintain their speaking skills, Sarah and Kayla attended *Hakwon* twice a week and prepared for the competition with help from native English-speaking teachers. *Hakwon* provided both an ESL learning environment with EFL features, and was a place that Korean returnees used their ESL and EFL learning strategies flexibly.

This research suggests that flexibility in strategy use is very important because learners have diverse self-efficacy, agency, attitudes and beliefs (Oxford, 2016). In addition, this study adds to the research to emphasize the importance of returnees' self-perception of English proficiency and language learning strategies for maintaining their English proficiency. Many researchers (Watanabe, 1990; Rost and Ross, 1991; Osanai, 2000; Warton, 2000) found that self-perceived proficiency is correlated with learners' use of language learning strategies. For example, Watanabe's (1990) found that students who had higher self-rated proficiency used more language learning strategies. As this study found, there is a relationship between English proficiency and flexible use of ESL and EFL strategies. This finding aligns with Wharton's (2000) study that there is "... a linear relationship between proficiency level and the reported frequency of use of many strategies" (p. 231), and Oxford's (2016) claim that, in authentic learning contexts, diverse strategies are flexibly employed in relation to learners' emotion, motivation, cultures. This study has provided evidence to show that to maintain their English in South Korea, returnees must draw flexibly from strategies learned in both ESL and EFL learning contexts.

Seeking Out Alternate Resources is Important in Maintaining English Proficiency

This study also found that Korean returnees utilized diverse approaches to maintain and/or improve their English proficiency after returning to South Korea, and sought out ways to

maintain their proficiency. First, reading printed materials were important for participants to maintain their English proficiency, and is in agreement with Oxford (2016) who found that reading helps English learners maintain their proficiency. Sarah read fantasy novels written in English consistently and consciously after returning to South Korea, and served as a permanent and reliable source to keep her learn new vocabularies. Timothy sought out online materials and utilized social media because Korean libraries have few books written in English and purchasing books written in English were far too costly.

Second, conversations with other English-speaking people maintain proficiency. Coincidentally, all participants in this study had younger brothers or sisters who stayed in the U.S. for the same period of time and attained English-speaking skills. Their younger siblings except Min preferred to speak in English and enabled participants to maintain their English proficiency. While participants conversed with their parents and grandparents in Korean, all participants spoke to their siblings in English. Thus, participants used translanguage in both the EFL and ESL contexts, and was a natural social and linguistic practice. Siegel (2018) argued that children's language development is influenced by the complexity of language used within the family. That participants spoke both languages flexibly inside the home, they were able to navigate both languages outside of the home such as in school, in the neighborhood community, and in the larger Korean society. Yet, as time passes, participants like Hyun may simply not prefer to speak in English. So, even though Korean returnees are able to flexibly speak two languages, they must be encouraged to maintain their English through reading, writing, and communicating across contexts and across different people.

Third, outside educational resources like *Hakwon* provide support for Korean returnees to maintain their proficiency. This specific private institution endeavors to create an ESL learning

environment to support language learning and development. With increasing pressure to succeed, parents will sacrifice to ensure their children are competitive. Schools like *Hakwon* provide a reputable resource to help Korean returnees to maintain their English proficiency. Yet, as Sarah suggested, this is unfair to those who cannot afford private tuition, as *Hakwon* students will always be advantaged in future school and career choices. Therefore, it would be best if public schools could provide additional English support in the way of a program or separate class for Korean returnees designed like ESL classes. Currently, only three cities have public schools that have classes for Korean returnees Seoul, Daejun and Busan, cities with high concentrations of Korean returnees, sojourned employees, and/or researchers. Local branches of Korean education offices could look to the programs in these cities as models to support Korean returnees who live in their communities. Song (2016) suggested Korean returnees would benefit from participating in such opportunities creating school English newspapers or English broadcasting, or volunteer to assist foreign visitors at international events.

Finally, social media has the potential to highly influence the extent to which Korean returnees maintain their English. Google Hangout, FaceTime, emails and other social media connect returnees with their friends in the U.S., digital spaces that returnees like Timothy and Brian used to help them to maintain their English proficiency. For Timothy, social media enabled him to sustain international friendships and relieve a sense of being homesick for the U.S. Yet, sustaining these relationships is not seamless even with social media. Eun, Hyun's mother, understood that even though Hyun used to talk to his friends in the U.S., this communication has waned over time. Common topics that generated conversations with friends in the U.S. become remote with time. For Korean returnees who have goals to return to the U.S., social media is an effective platform to practice their English maintenance face-to-face, not only with people that

they know but also with people that they do not know. Brian and Timothy texted, were gamers, and video chatted through the social network sites, unaware that these activities helped them maintain their English. As a comic book writer, Timothy uploaded his comics in the comic book community on regular basis to receive feedback and was a blogger. Korean returnees can become involved in online writing forums, composing blog threads, and even creating or subscribing Youtube channels. As Zourou (2012) argued, social media has the potential to be used in teaching curriculum and be used in meaningful ways.

This study extends current research and underscores the importance of returnees having diverse approaches and resources to maintain their English proficiency. While there is a plethora of quantitative research that addresses short-term or long-term study abroad experiences, much less is known from a qualitative perspective the struggle that returnees experience in trying to maintain English proficiency in the EFL learning context. This study identifies ways that Korean returnees found to maintain their English for communicative purposes and academic purposes. While there may be idiosyncratic approaches to maintaining English for returnees of other countries, this research may offer a starting point for returnees across the world in the area of language retention.

Parents were a Critical Resource in Participants' Maintaining English Proficiency.

According to Park (2009), Korean parents have positive attitudes toward their children's English language learning and its maintenance. Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders (2012) found that parents play a critical role in their children's learning and schooling not only at home but also at school and in the community. This study concurs with this scholarship. Korean returnees' parents believe that their children's high level of English proficiency would increase their

chances for better academic and future economic opportunities. In case of Korean returnees, the parents are pivotal in whether or not children have such English learning experiences.

In this study, the parents were a critical factor as to the extent to which Korean returnees maintained their English. Hyun, Sarah and Kayla's parents enrolled them in *Hakwon*. Brian and Timothy's mother homeschooled their children using English and Korean materials gathered from diverse resources such as textbooks from Athena academy, online homeschooling websites, and Korean-English Bible. Evidenced in the interviews, Korean returnees recognized the importance of their parents' support to maintain or improve their English proficiency. Hyun's mother was willing to pay the high registration fee and tuition to the Roy school to motivate Hyun, who saw little reason to maintain his English. Eun believed that the Roy school could better support Hyun's English in an ESL learning context, than the less expensive, but still private, *Hakwon*.

Brian and Timothy's mother played an important role in how she supported their maintaining English. She consciously homeschooled her children to avoid the high-pressure learning environment and competition among students in Korean public schools. She encouraged her children to have conversations with each other, read books and have discussions in English, watch movies, and learn Bible verses in English. As such, Brian and Timothy did not have to worry about high-stakes standardized tests administered in Korean public schools, and had more flexibility in how and what they studied, and could continue learning through the ESL context and curriculum of the Athena Academy in the U.S.

Parents are important influences and powerful decision makers in children's early years, and intensely related to children's motivation and attitudes toward language learning (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Song, 2006). For their children's early study abroad experiences, many Korean

parents sacrificed their money, time and even life in the hope that these investments in their children's English education will pay off (Park, 2009). As this study shows, parents must be aware of the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to help their children maintain their English proficiency in the EFL context. Eun, Hyun's mother, was aware that Hyun had little intrinsic motivation to maintain his English, and enrolled him in *Hakwon* as an extrinsic factor to support his English proficiency. Parents like Eun and Jihee, Brian and Timothy's mother, had specific purposes and strategies to support their children's English language. They encouraged their children to have diverse opportunities and utilize the resources around them. There is little research on parental engagement in maintaining the English proficiency of English language learners who have early study abroad experiences, including Korean returnees. This study will contribute to and extend current literature on the role of parents in maintaining their children's English proficiency in the EFL context.

EFL or ESL?

This study provides evidence to suggest that the dichotomy between what is sometimes identified as ESL and EFL must be interrogated. While research discusses an "ESL" or "EFL" environment (Bhatt, 2010; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Gilquin and Granger, 2011; Mora, 2013; Nayar, 1997), this study suggests that it is not the environment that makes an ESL or EFL experience, but how returnees perceive this environment and how they adapt to the environment through use of strategies, private schooling, and accessing online resources. When Korean returnees' English learning experiences in the U.S. and in South Korea were examined in this study, often their characteristics of English learning could not be defined by binary terms as ESL or EFL. For example, although Timothy was studying for KGED exams (Korean general equivalency diploma) to earn a high school diploma, at the same time, he continued to contact

his friends in the U.S. by Google Hangout as the way that he learned English in the U.S. Sarah learned English debating skills that she mentioned that she could not learn in the U.S., but simultaneously, she accessed to fan fiction writing forum based in the U.S. as often as she would like to in South Korea. These kinds of participants' English learning experiences happened on a continuum of both ESL and EFL learning contexts. Although Korean returnees' motivation to learn English were influenced by the learning contexts which they were belong to (e.g. highly motivated to learn English in the U.S.), their motivation to maintain or improve their English proficiency were diverse no matter where they resided in "ESL" or "EFL" environment. They were transitioning from "ESL" learners or "EFL" learners to emergent bilingual not by their learning environment, but by their motivation, educational supports from family and external sources like *Hakwon*. Instead of defining and labeling Korean returnees as binary terms like "ESL" and "EFL" learners, they could be considered as emergent or successive bilinguals who used English learning strategies flexibly according to the "ESL" and "EFL" learning contexts.

Implications for Practice

Korean returnee studies offer inspiration and insights for teacher educators, parents, and researchers. Teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) classrooms could learn from studies of Korean returnees about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to maintain language proficiency, and perceptions of language learners and how and why they maintain or lose their second language. There are a number of implications for practice that arise from this study.

First, as a teacher educator, I would like to suggest that educators in South Korea, both in private and public schools, encourage parents to provide adequate reason or purpose of learning to young Korean returnees and encourage them to use English as a communication tool. Since the study's participants already recognized the use of language in the community and are

confident in using English in the EFL context, this study found that maintaining English in South Korea necessitates motivation, on the part of the whole family. Resources (books written in English, access to YouTube, etc.), and connections with others interested in speaking English are also critical to maintain an ESL learning environment in South Korea. Korean returnees would benefit by engaging with peers, especially of Korean returnees and/or English-speaking children. Learning English in EFL settings, content that focuses on grammatical and structural instruction, may not provide enjoyable and comfortable learning environment as participants experienced in the ESL context. Thus, educators may encourage parents to seek out peer communities who regularly speak English in ESL contexts as an effective learning strategy to help Korean returnees maintain or improve their English proficiency.

Second, educators who work with Korean returnees can encourage parents to provide English speaking environment at home. As this study found, parents want their children to maintain their English. Helping them design experiences that encourage English speaking may motivate and encourage their children to maintain their English. Since there is great pressure for their children to succeed in life, parents could have conversations related to their returnee children's English learning experience at home, school or *Hakwon*, on a regular basis. Although *Hakwon* is an alternative support for Korean returnees who need more access to the English-speaking learning environment, it is an expense parent may or may not be able to take on. Therefore, an interactive approach can be used by parents to support their children's maintaining English proficiency and fluency. This approach might include speaking English at home, watching English movies and talking about them with their children, texting and emailing in English with their children, etc. Additionally, there are some cases that Korean returnee's parents operate online book clubs or create online space for virtual face-to-face with native English

speakers as part of homeschooling. Parents could focus discussions on their children's interests or activities done at home, school or *Hakwon* through conversations. Houtenville and Coway (2008) found that parents' dinnertime engagement had a great effect on their children's academic performance. Another study (Bryk et al. 2010) also found that students with strong family engagement tended to develop their reading skills over times. By talking about or showing interest in returnee children's challenges and struggles to maintain and improve their English proficiency, they could lower their affective filters and gain emotional support.

Third, schools and educators might consider the importance of family literacy practice as an effective instrument to help young Korean returnees maintain their English proficiency. As this study found, families who regularly engage in speaking English to their parents and siblings benefited the Korean returnees. Schools that enroll Korean returnees might support after school activities related to English (book clubs in English, conversations in English, etc.). Due to their study abroad experiences, the Korean families' practices after returning to South Korea may be different from those of monolingual families in South Korea. More specifically, in the cases of children who have long-term study abroad experiences, their language practices may not resemble the local children's language practices who learned English as a foreign language in the community (Kanno, 2003). While a limited amount of research has focused on bilingual skills, few studies have investigated the home language environment (Scheele, Leseman, and Mayo 2010), or language maintenance, shift, and code-switching (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997; Chung, 2006; Lee and Shin, 2008; Shin, 2005; Shin & Milroy, 2000). It would be useful if future studies are conducted that show school to family outreach in which schools and educators support Korean returnees in public schools so that all returnees would have equal opportunity to have ESL support in English, especially since many families cannot afford private education.

Fourth, returnees may have returned from abroad filled with a sense of achievement or challenges and they may rely upon supports available only in the ESL context (e.g., authentic communication opportunities). This could make learners feel frustrated or disenchanted with English education system in the EFL context and constantly look back to the study abroad experience. It is easy for teachers to have the misconception that returnees who have achieved a successful academic performance in the ESL context will continue or even more greatly accomplish their academic goals. However, it is important to remain aware of the constant interactions between learners and the learning context and how these interactions affect approaches to learning. Therefore, teachers in returnee settings must shift from the EFL approach in which children learn only linguistic aspects of language learning, and design learning activities that integrate the students' cultural, emotional, intellectual experiences. It's critical for teachers to engage students not only in the language, but in the cultural aspects of what it means to be a language learner in an English-speaking context. According to Seoul Metropolitan office of education, there are limited number of schools that operate classes for Korean returnees, and these schools are located and concentrated in only three cities where many Korean returnee populations are. South Korea should support and provide professional development for teachers in the regular classroom, especially English teachers, to help them create English curriculum that draws upon the cultural, emotional, and linguistic experiences that Korean returnees had. As noted in this study, participants did not boast about their proficiency in English, as there are some reports that Korean returnees were bullied by other classmates (Won, 2015). Teachers should guide non-returnee students to understand the struggle that Korean returnees might face or challenge.

Implications for Research

The topic of Korean returnees' English proficiency maintenance is an understudied area, and there are possible directions for further research. Further research related to Korean returnees' use of digital technology tools is an area of study. Digital technologies and the Internet platform provide diverse online learning resources that Korean returnees could have open access for maintaining and improving their English proficiency. We live in a world of open-access to online learning resources. Nowadays, spaces of learning are not bound by geography. Digital technologies including smartphones, apps and social network system enable English language learners to have open access avenues for learning, sharing and communicating (Albers, Pace, & Brown, 2013; Leu et al, 2004). As Brian and Timothy utilized apps such as Google Hangout to have audio chat and video chat with their friends in the U.S. on the regular basis, Korean returnees could find a way to be closer to ESL learning contexts by using digital technologies.

Moreover, research can be done on the reciprocal relationship between language and identity by drawing on the examples of Korean returnees' cases. Korean returnees are bilinguals uniquely shift between their first language and second language, depending on the surroundings and the countries in which they reside. Bilinguals tend to choose to speak a particular language over the other language in particular contexts. Participants in this study preferred to be interviewed in Korean because they felt that I, as the researcher, seemed to be more fluent in Korean. Hyun hesitated before choosing Korean for an interview because he thought he might have to do some tests in English during the interview. A person's identity or personality can be decided not only by language but also the environment and culture attached to the language (Grosjean, 1982). Thus, additional research on language shift and identity as it relates to

returnees would be helpful to understand how they readjust to their home countries and educational systems.

Further investigation into how returnees in other countries perceive their change in their English proficiency and how they navigate their social and educational spaces after returning to their home countries is also warranted. Future studies might examine more deeply how these returnees utilize their learning strategies in classroom practice. Further, a case study addressing returnees' family's literacy practice and their language practice at home, at school and in the community could add another dimension to our understanding about returnees' literacy and language practice.

Finally, a follow-up study that examines how the participants in this study changed or maintained their learning strategies in South Korea might yield further understanding of effective practices for Korean returnees.

Concluding Thoughts

This study investigated how Korean returnees perceive the change in their English proficiency and how they used English in their social and educational spaces in ESL and EFL contexts. While it is critical to understand the relationship between ESL and EFL language learning contexts, they are not in binary, but they are an oscillation between how returnees see themselves in particular settings. As bilingual speakers, Korean returnees use English and Korean interchangeably and tend to live some aspects of their lives in one language, live other aspects in the other language. They use English at home and Korean at school. For example, within the family, they see themselves as more of a native approach to maintaining English. However, at *Hakwon*, it is an EFL approach, even though they have English-speaking teachers

and friends. So, returnees abruptly and necessarily have to maintain two different stances, one that is EFL and often manufactured and an ESL type of learning which is often more organic.

This study attempted to contribute in the field of second language acquisition and attrition studies especially in English language learners' perceptions of their transition process between ESL and EFL learning contexts, motivations depending on the learning contexts, and use of strategies to maintain or improve their English proficiency.

Today's world sees internationals working across settings and languages. Native speakers of a country find opportunities to extend their own experiences through work or education, and in turn, children benefit from these experiences. Korean returnees bring back to South Korea valuable social, educational, community-based, and linguistic experiences. Children and teachers in South Korea could benefit greatly by working with returnees to share their ESL experiences in EFL classes. This may inspire more Korean children to venture out and seek the many experiences that await them in the world.

REFERENCES

- Albers, P., Pace, C., & Brown Jr, D. W. (2013). Critical participation in literacy research through new and emerging technologies: A study of web seminars and global engagement. *Journal of Literacy and Technology, 14*(2), 79.
- Amuzie, G. L., & Winke, P. (2009). Changes in language learning beliefs as a result of study abroad. *System, 37*(3), 366-379.
- Anderson, J. R. (1982). Acquisition of cognitive skill. *Psychological review, 89*(4), 369.
- Andrews, T. (2012). What is social constructionism. *The grounded theory review, 11*(1), 39-46.
- Au, S. Y. (1988). A critical appraisal of Gardner's social-psychological theory of second-language (L2) learning. *Language learning, 38*(1), 75–100.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Bahrack, H. P. (1984). Semantic memory content in permastore: Fifty years of memory for Spanish learned in school. *Journal of experimental psychology: General, 113*(1), 1.
- Barbour, R. S. (2001). Checklists for improving rigor in qualitative research: A case of the tail wagging the dog. *British Medical Journal, 322*, 1115-1117.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Stringer, D. (2010). Variables in second language attrition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 32*(01), 1-45.
- Belcher, D., & Hirvela, A. (2005). Writing the qualitative dissertation: What motivates and sustains commitment to a fuzzy genre? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 4*, 187–205.

- Bell, K. (2011, July 12). *How ESL and EFL classrooms differ*. Retrieved from <https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2011/07/12/how-esl-and-efl-classrooms-differ/>.
- Bhatt, R. (2010). World Englishes: Globalization and the politics of conformity. In Saxena, M. & Omoniyi, T. (Eds.), *Contending with globalization in world Englishes* (pp. 93-112). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Birdsong, D. (2006). Age and second language acquisition and processing: A selective overview. *Language learning*, 56(s1), 9-49.
- Block, D. (2007). Socializing second language acquisition. In Hua, Z., Seedhouse, P., Cook, V., & Wei, L. (Eds.). *Language learning and teaching as social interaction* (pp. 89-102). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blommaert, J. & Rampton, B. (2011). Language and superdiversity. *Diversities*, 13(2), 1-22.
- Blommaert, J. (2003). Commentary: A sociolinguistics of globalization. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 7(4), 607-623.
- Boghossian, P. (2001). What is social construction?. *The Times Literacy Supplement*. Retrieved from <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/private/what-is-social-construction/>
- Brecht, R. D. (1993). *Predictors of Foreign Language Gain during Study Abroad*. National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) Occasional Papers.
- Broadhead, P., & van der Aalsvoort, D. (2009). Guest Editorial: Play and learning in educational settings. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 26(2), 5.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles*. New York: Longman.

- Brown, R. (1973). *A first language: The early stages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Easton, J. Q., & Luppescu, S. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Caramazza, A., & Zurif, E. B. (1978). *Language acquisition and language breakdown: Parallels and divergencies*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (1996). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chihara, T., & Oller, J.W. (1978). Attitudes and attained proficiency in EFL: a sociolinguistic study of adult Japanese speakers. *Language learning*, 28(1), 55–68.
- Cho, G., Cho, K. S., & Tse, L. (1997). Why ethnic minorities want to develop their heritage language: The case of Korean-Americans. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 10(2), 106-112.
- Cho, U. (2007). Korean families on the forefront of globalization: a case study of new global mother–child families, *Economy and Society*, 64, 148–71.
- Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Chung, H. H. (2006). Code switching as a communicative strategy: A case study of Korean–English bilinguals. *Bilingual research journal*, 30(2), 293-307.

- Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, A. D. (1975). Forgetting a second language. *Language Learning*, 25, 127 – 138.
- Cohen, D. J., & Crabtree, B. F. (2008). Evaluative criteria for qualitative research in health care: controversies and recommendations. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 6(4), 331-339.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques*. Sage.
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learner's errors. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 5(1-4), 161-170.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crotty, M. (2013). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage.
- Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press. UK.
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 35, 36-56.

- De Bot, K., & Weltens, B. (1995). Foreign language attrition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 15*, 151-164.
- De Villiers, J. G., & De Villiers, P. A. (1973). A cross-sectional study of the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in child speech. *Journal of psycholinguistic research, 2*(3), 267-278.
- Derry, S. J. (1999). A fish called peer learning: Searching for common themes. *Cognitive perspectives on peer learning*, 197-211.
- Dey, I. (2003). *Qualitative data analysis: A user friendly guide for social scientists*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1990). Conceptualizing motivation in foreign language learning. *Language learning, 40*(1), 45-78.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9-42). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Duff, P. A. (2013). *Case Study*. The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics.
- Duff, P. A., & Anderson, T. (2015). Academic Language and Literacy Socialization for Second Language Students. *The Handbook of Classroom Discourse and Interaction*, 337-352.
- DuFon, M. A., & Churchill, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (Vol. 15). Multilingual Matters.
- Dulay, H. C., & Burt, M. K. (1974). Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition. *Tesol Quarterly, 129-136*.

- Dulay, H. C., & Burt, M. K. (1977). Remarks on creativity in language acquisition. *Viewpoints on English as a second language*, 2, 95-126.
- Dulay, H. C., & Burt, M. K. (1978). From research to method in bilingual education. *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*, 551-575.
- Dyson, A. T. (1988). Phonetic inventories of 2-and 3-year-old children. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 53(1), 89-93.
- Eckman, F. R. (1977). Markedness and the contrastive analysis hypothesis. *Language learning*, 27(2), 315-330.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Emerson, L., Fear, J., Fox, S., & Sanders, E. (2012). Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research. *A report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the Family–School and Community Partnerships Bureau: Canberra*.
- Flynn, S. (1987). A parameter-setting model of L2 acquisition. In W. Richie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 121-58). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Freed, B. F. (Ed.). (1995). *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (Vol. 9). John Benjamins Publishing.
- García, O. (2009). Emergent Bilinguals and TESOL: What's in a Name?. *Tesol Quarterly*, 43(2), 322-326.
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (Eds.). (2013). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Gibbons, P. (1991). *Learning to learn in a second language*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gilquin, G., & Granger, S. (2011). From EFL to ESL: evidence from the International Corpus of Learner English. In Hundt, M. & Mukherjee, D. (Eds.), *Exploring second-language varieties of English and learner Englishes: Bridging a paradigm gap* (pp. 55-78). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Benjamins.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Goldrick, M., Runnqvist, E., & Costa, A. (2014). Language switching makes pronunciation less nativelike. *Psychological science*, 25(4), 1031-1036.
- Gomm, R. (2004). *Social research methodology: A critical introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goodman, K. S., & Goodman, Y. M. (1979). Learning to read is natural. In L. B. Resnick & P. A. Weaver (Eds.), *Theory and practice of early reading*, Vol. 1 (pp. 137-154). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English next* (Vol. 62). London: British Council.
- Griffiee, D. T. (1997). Validating a questionnaire on confidence in speaking English as a foreign language. *The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Journal*, 19(2), 177-197.
- Grosjean, F. (1989). Neurolinguists, beware! The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person. *Brain and Language*, 36(1), 3-15.

- Gürel, A. (2004). Selectivity in L2-induced L1 attrition: a psycholinguistic account. *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, 17(1), 53-78.
- Gürsoy, E. (2010). Investigating language learning strategies of EFL children for the development of a taxonomy. *English language teaching*, 3(3), 164-175.
- Guthrie E.R. (1935). *The psychology of learning*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Halliday, M. A. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London.
- Hansen, L. (1999). Not a total loss: The attrition of Japanese negation over three decades. *Second language attrition in Japanese contexts*, 142.
- Hansen, L., & Chen, Y. L. (2001). What counts in the acquisition and attrition of numeral classifiers. *The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Journal*, 23(1), 83-100.
- Harel, I. & Papert, S. (Ed.) (1991). *Constructionism*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Hayashi, B. (1999). Testing the regression hypothesis: The remains of the Japanese negation system in Micronesia. In L. Hansen (Ed.), *Second language attrition in Japanese contexts* (pp. 154 – 168). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hedgcock, J. (1991). Foreign language retention and attrition: A study of regression models. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 43 – 55.
- Holec, H. A. (1981). *Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Houtenville, A. J., & Conway, K. S. (2008). Parental effort, school resources, and student achievement. *Journal of Human resources*, 43(2), 437-453.

- Hsieh, P. P. H., & Kang, H. S. (2010). Attribution and self-efficacy and their interrelationship in the Korean EFL context. *Language Learning*, 60(3), 606-627.
- Hull, C. (1943). *Principles of behavior: an introduction to behavior theory*. Oxford, England: Appleton-Century.
- Hwang, D. J., Yang, H.K., & Kim, H. (2010). E-learning in the Republic of Korea. *UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education*. Moscow: Russia.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. *sociolinguistics*, 269-293.
- Irie, K., & Ryan, S. (2014). Study abroad and the dynamics of change in learner L2 self-concept. In Dörnyei, Z., Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 520-552). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. *Language learners in study abroad contexts*, 15, 231-258.
- Jakobson, R. (1941). *Kindersprache, aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*. Uppsala: Almqvist.
- Jakobson, R. (1968). *Child language, aphasia and phonological universals*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton.
- Jost, A. (1897). Die Assoziationsfestigkeit in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der Verteilung der Wiederholungen [The strength of associations in their dependence on the distribution of repetitions]. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*, 16, 436-472.
- Kanno, Y. (2003). *Negotiating bilingual and bicultural identities: Japanese returnees betwixt two worlds*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism: *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching and technology*. 1-8.
- Kim, H., Chang, M., and Kim, J. (2007). *People's attitudes toward early study abroad: focusing on compliance to the regulations: policy research report 2005*. Korea Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (in Korean).
- Kim, I. S. (2006). *Study on attrition of English suffered by the students who returned from abroad to the Korean-speaking environment: focused on syntactic errors*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Yonsei University, Seoul: Korea.
- Kim, J. Y. (2006). *Language Attrition by Korean Returnees*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Korea University, Seoul: Korea.
- Kim, M. (2006). On the mixed method research from the perspective of a qualitative researcher. *Korean Journal of Sociology of Education*, 16(3), 43-64.
- Kim, T. Y. (2011). Korean elementary school students' English learning demotivation: A comparative survey study. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12(1), 1-11.
- Knoch, U., Rouhshad, A., Oon, S. P., & Storch, N. (2015). What happens to ESL students' writing after three years of study at an English medium university?. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 28, 39-52.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language learning*. New York: Pengamon.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.

- Krieger, D. (2012). Teaching ESL versus EFL: Principles and practices. *English Teaching Forum*, 43(2). Retrieved from <http://silviaspence.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/teflarticle.htm>
- Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (Vol. 78, No. 4). Oxford University Press.
- Lee, B. J. (2014). *Korean jogiyuhaksaeng's early study abroad and bilingual development in Australia* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/research/handle/10453/26002>.
- Lee, J. S., & Shin, S. J. (2008). Korean heritage language education in the United States: The current state, opportunities, and possibilities. *Heritage Language Journal*, 6(2), 1-20.
- Lee, J. Y. (2015). using a life history approach within transnational ethnography: a case study of Korean new Zealander returnees. *Researching the Lifecourse: Critical Reflections from the Social Sciences*, 183.
- Lee, Y., & Koo, H. (2006). 'Wild geese fathers' and a globalised family strategy for education in Korea. *International Development Planning Review*, 28(4), 533-553.
- Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2009). Social construction of reality. In S. Littlejohn, & K. Foss (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 892-895). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lees, R. B., & Chomsky, N. (1957). Syntactic structures. *Language*, 33(3 Part 1), 375-408.
- Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). The biological foundations of language. *Hospital Practice*, 2(12), 59-67.

- Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J. L., & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies. *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, 5(1), 1570-1613.
- Leung, C., Davison, C., & Mohan, B. (2014). *English as a second language in the mainstream: Teaching, learning and identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Li, Q. (2014). Differences in the motivation of Chinese learners of English in a foreign and second language context, *System*, 42, 451–461
- Lichtman, M. (2012). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lightbown, P. M., Spada, N., Ranta, L., & Rand, J. (2006). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. M. (2006). *How languages are learned*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Little, D., & Dam, L. (1998). Learner autonomy: What and why?. *Language teacher Kyoto JALT*, 22, 7-8.
- Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction, and second-language acquisition. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences*, 379(1), 259-278.
- Long, M. H. (2007). *Problems in SLA*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Magnan, S., & Lafford, B. (2012). Learning through immersion during study abroad. *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*, 525-540.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2008). Designing a qualitative study. *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods*, 2, 214-253.
- McCargo, D. (2004). *Rethinking Vietnam*. New York, NY: Routledge Curzon.
- McKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language: rethinking goals and perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McMahon, M. (1997). Proceedings from ASCILITE conference '97: *Social constructivism and the World Wide Web-A paradigm for learning*. Perth, Australia.
- Melitz, J. (2016). English as a global language. In *the Palgrave Handbook of Economics and Language* (pp. 583-615). Palgrave Macmillan, UK.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation: Revised and expanded from qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G. & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Mitchell, R., & Lee, J. H. W. (2003). Sameness and difference in classroom learning cultures: Interpretations of communicative pedagogy in the UK and Korea. *Language Teaching Research*, 7(1), 35-63.
- Mora, R. A. (2013). The notion of second languages: Responding to today's linguistic ecologies'. *The Journal for ESL Teachers and Learners*, 2, 53-61.

- Myles, F., Hooper, J., & Mitchell, R. (1998). Rote or Rule? Exploring the Role of Formulaic Language in Classroom Foreign Language Learning. *Language Learning*, 48(3), 323-364.
- Nayar, P. (1997). ESL/EFL dichotomy today: Language politics or pragmatics? *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(1), 9-37.
- Newton, N. (2010). The use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research: strengths and weaknesses. *Exploring qualitative methods*, 1(1), 1-11.
- Noor, K. B. M. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American journal of applied sciences*, 5(11), 1602-1604.
- Norton, B. (2000). Investment, acculturation, and language loss. In McKay, S. L., & Wong, S. L. C. (Eds.), *New immigrants in the United States* (pp. 435-461). New York, NY.
- Norton, B. (2006). Identity: Second Language. In K. Brown (Ed), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (2nd Ed)*. Elsevier.
- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL quarterly*, 37(4), 589-613.
- Oller, J. W. (1978). Attitude variables in second language learning. In M. Burt, H. Dulay, & M. Finocchiaro (Eds.), *Viewpoints on English as a second language* (pp. 172–184). New York: Regents.
- Olshtain, E. (1989). Is second language attrition the reversal of second language acquisition?. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 11(02), 151-165.

- Opper, S., U. Teichler, & J. Carlson (Eds.). (1990). *Impact of Study Abroad Programmes on Students and Graduates*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Osanai, D. (2000). *Differences in language learning strategies between male and female, and also between Asian and Latino ESL students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.
- Owen, I. R. (1995). Social constructionism and the theory, practice and research of psychotherapy: A phenomenological psychology manifesto. *Boletin de Psicologia*, 46, 161-186.
- Owocki, G. (1999). *Literacy through play*. Heinemann, 88 Post Rd. West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007.
- Oxford, R. L. (1996). New pathways of language learning motivation. In R. L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Pathways to the new century* (pp. 1–8). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Oxford, R. L. (2016). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context*. Taylor & Francis.
- Oxford, R. L., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(1), 12–28.
- Oxford, R. L., Holloway, M. E., & Horton-Murillo, D. (1992). Language learning styles: Research and practical considerations for teaching in the multicultural tertiary ESL/EFL classroom. *System*, 20(4), 439-456.

- Park, J. K. (2009). 'English fever' in South Korea: its history and symptoms. *English Today*, 25(01), 50-57.
- Park, J., & Bae, S. (2009). Language Ideologies in Educational Migration: Korean "Jogi Yuhak" Families in Singapore. *Linguistics and Education: An International Research Journal*, 20(4), 366-377.
- Patton, M., (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd Ed). Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28, 163–188.
- Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned reflexes: an investigation of the physiological activity of the cerebral cortex*. (G. V. Anrep. Trans.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Peacock, M. (1997). The effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners. *ELT journal*, 51(2), 144-156.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. Taylor & Francis.
- Pike, K. L. (1967). *Etic and emic standpoints for the description of behavior*. Chicago.
- Reetz-Kurashige, A. (1999). Japanese returnees' retention of English-speaking skills: Changes in verb usage over time. *Second language attrition in Japanese contexts*, 21-58.
- Reid, J. M. (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom*. Florence, KY: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

- Ribot, T. (1881). *Les maladies de la memoire [Diseases of memory]*. Paris: Germer Bailliere.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (1982). Method: Approach, design, and procedure. *Tesol Quarterly*, 16(2), 153-168.
- Riley, L. D., & Harsch, K. (1999). Enhancing the learning experience with strategy journals: Supporting the diverse learning styles of ESL/EFL students. In *HERDSA Annual International Conference, Melbourne, Australia*.
- Rose, K. R. (1999). Teachers and students learning about requests in Hong Kong. *Culture in second language teaching and learning*, 167-180.
- Rost, M., & Ross, S. (1991). Learner use of strategies in interaction: typology and teachability. *Language Learning*, 41, 235-273.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Salvia, J., Ysseldyke, J. E., & Bolt, S. (2004). *Assessment in special and inclusive education*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Scheele, A. F., Leseman, P. P., & Mayo, A. Y. (2010). The home language environment of monolingual and bilingual children and their language proficiency. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 31(1), 117-140.
- Schmid, M. S., & Dusseldorp, E. (2010). Quantitative analyses in a multivariate study of language attrition: The impact of extralinguistic factors. *Second Language Research*, 26(1), 125-160.

- Schmid, M. S., & Köpcke, B. (2011). Second language acquisition and attrition, *Language, Interaction and Acquisition*, 2(2), 185–196.
- Schmidt, R., Borai, D., & Kassabgy, O. (1996). Foreign language motivation: internal structure and external connections. In R. L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Pathways to the new century* (pp. 9–70). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Schumann, J. H. (1978). *The pidginization process: A model for secondary language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10(1-4), 209-232.
- Seo, & Kim (2015). Investigating the Effectiveness of Early Study abroad English Language Training: Focusing on Elementary, Middle, and High School in Jeollabuk-do. *The Research Institute of Korean Education*, 33(1), 101-125.
- Seth, M. J. (2002). *Education fever: Society, politics, and the pursuit of schooling in South Korea*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Shin H. (2007) English language teaching in Korea. In Cummins, J. & Davison, C. (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 75-86), Vol 15. Boston, MA: Springer.
- Shin, J. H., & Albers, P. (2015). An Analysis of the Effect of a Cyber Home Learning System on Korean Secondary School Students' English Language Achievement and Attitude. *TESL Canada Journal*, 32(2), 45.

- Shin, S. J. (2005). *Developing in two languages: Korean children in America* (Vol. 5). Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Shin, S. J., & Milroy, L. (2000). Conversational codeswitching among Korean-English bilingual children. *International journal of Bilingualism*, 4(3), 351-383.
- Shuttleworth, M. (2008). Case study research design. *Podcast retrieved from* <http://www.experiment-resources.com/case-studyresearch-design.html>., 10(23), 2011.
- Siegel, J. S. (2018). Linguistic Proficiency and Acculturation: Role of Family, Neighborhood, and Metropolitan Area. In *Demographic and Socioeconomic Basis of Ethnolinguistics* (pp. 605-624). Springer, Cham.
- Skinner, B.F. (1938). *Behavior of Organisms*. New York: Appleton Century Crofts.
- Smith, M. S. (2014). *Second language learning: Theoretical foundations*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Song, J. (2016). (II) Legitimate Language Skills and Membership: English Teachers' Perspectives on Early (English) Study Abroad Returnees in EFL Classrooms. *TESOL Journal*, 7(1), 203-226.
- Song, S. M. (2005). *Korean Mothers' Beliefs and Practices on Early English Education in ESL and EFL Context* (Doctoral dissertation), Pennsylvania State University, US.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443– 466). Thousand oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-53). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, 97, 114.
- Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: Theory and research. *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, 1, 471-483.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2002). Talking it through: Two French immersion learners' response to reformulation. *International journal of educational research*, 37(3-4), 285-304.
- Taura, H. (2008). *Language attrition and retention in Japanese returnee students*. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.
- Thorne, S. & Black, R. (2008). Language and literacy development in computer-mediated contexts and communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 27, 133-160.
- Tomiya, M. (1994). Longitudinal Second Language Attrition: Case Studies of Japanese Returnees. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Baltimore, MD.
- Tomiya, M. (2000). Child second language attrition: A longitudinal case study. *Applied Linguistics*, 21(3), 304-332.
- Tomiya, M. (2008). Age and proficiency in L2 attrition: Data from two siblings. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(2), 253-275.

- Toohy, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations, and classroom practice*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Tracey, D., & Morrow, L. (2012). *Lenses on Reading: An Introduction to Theories and Models (2nd Ed.)*. NY: Guilford Press.
- Unrau, N. J., & Alvermann, D. E. (2013). Literacies and their investigation through theories and models. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J. & Ruddell, R. B. (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (6th ed. pp. 47-90). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Verdon, S., McLeod, S., & Winsler, A. (2014). Language maintenance and loss in a population study of young Australian children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(2), 168-181.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Watanabe, Y. (1990). *External variables affecting language learning strategies of Japanese EFL learners: Effects of entrance examination, years spent at college/university, and staying overseas*. Unpublished master's thesis, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK.
- Wei, J. (2014). Selectivity of Second Language Attrition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(8), 1603-1608.
- Weir, C. J. (2005). *Language testing and validation*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Wells, G. (1981). *Learning through interaction: Volume 1: The study of language development* (Vol. 1). Cambridge University Press.

- Weltens, B., de Bot, K., & van Els, T. (Eds.). (1987). *Language attrition in progress* (Vol. 2). Walter de Gruyter.
- Weltens, B., Van Els, T. J., & Schils, E. (1989). The long-term retention of French by Dutch students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11(2), 205-216.
- Wharton, G. (2000). Language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign language learners in Singapore. *Language Learning*, 50(2), 203-243.
- White, L. (1989). *Universal grammar and second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Won, J. S. (2015). Classroom Adaptation and Korean Language Education Teaching Strategies for Elementary Returnee Students -With a Focus on Special Classes as a Sheltered Program for Returnee Students. *Korean Language Education Research*. 50(4), 6-39.
- Wong, M. S. L. (2005). Language learning strategies and language self-efficacy: Investigating the relationship in Malaysia. *RELC journal*, 36(3), 245-269.
- Yi, Y. (2013). Adolescent multilingual writer's negotiation of multiple identities and access to academic writing: A case study of a Jogi Yuhak student in a US high school. *Canadian modern language review*, 69(2), 207-231.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousands, Oak: SAGE Publications.
- Yoshitomi, A. (1999). On the loss of English as a second language by Japanese returnee children. In L. Hansen (Ed.), *Second language attrition in Japanese context* (pp. 80-111). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Self-efficacy: An essential motive to learn. *Contemporary educational psychology*, 25(1), 82-91.

Zourou, K. (2012). On the attractiveness of social media for language learning: A look at the state of the art. *Alsic. Apprentissage des Langues et Systèmes d'Information et de Communication*, 15(1).