

## **Exploring Non-native English Speaker Teachers' Classroom Language Use in South Korean Elementary Schools**

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### **Michael Rabbidge**

Chonnam National University, South Korea  
<mikemindhotmail.com>

### **Philip Chappell**

MacQuarie University, NSW, Australia  
<philip.chappellmq.edu.au>

### **Abstract**

The teaching of English as a foreign language in South Korean public schools has seen the implementation of a number of new innovations. One such innovation, the teaching of English through English, dubbed TETE, is a government-initiated policy that requires public schools to teach English by only using English. Nevertheless, studies reveal that teachers are not implementing the policy. The current study, through a series of observations and interviews, ascertained that teachers were not implementing the government policy at the elementary-school level due to a conflict in government decrees, making it difficult for them to teach English by only using English while maintaining student motivation to learn English. The study reveals the importance that teachers place on the belief that motivation needs to be maintained at all costs, even superseding the need to maximize target language exposure. The paper calls for further studies of teachers who have established techniques to maintain student motivations for learning the target language while teaching exclusively in the target language, as well as touching upon the idea of the need for an alternative to the TETE policy.

### **Introduction**

English education and effective methodology are evergreen topics on the Korean peninsula. Stakeholders from all walks of life debate the most effective strategies for the acquisition of English language communication skills in order to increase Korea's global competitiveness. In 1997, the Ministry of Education lowered the starting age of English education in elementary schools to include 3rd-grade students; the aims of these changes were "to motivate a student's interest in English and to develop basic communicative competence" (M.O.E, 1998).

The seventh National Curriculum, announced in 1997, sought to encourage more exposure to English for students in the public school system, and in 2001 this was realized by introducing the Teaching English Through English' (TETE) policy (Nunan, 2003). The aim of TETE is to eliminate the use of the native language (L1), in this case, Korean, when teaching English, in order to maximize the exposure of English to students in a country that has limited opportunities to expose its citizens to the language. McKay (2009), however, contests that support for English-only instruction comes from English as a second language (ESL) contexts rather than the Korean English as a foreign language (EFL) context, and therefore cannot be cited as support for the TETE policy.

The TETE policy has led to a rise in tension amongst the Korean English teachers (KETs), with at least one study (Jun, 2010) suggesting that a large proportion, 43%, of surveyed teachers had considered quitting their job, due to the induced stress of having to teach solely in the target language.

Other concerns with the TETE policy focus on socio-cultural issues that the ban on L1 in the elementary English classroom would have, particularly how the exclusion of the mother tongue could negatively impact the students' development of the Korean language as well as their Korean identity (Lee, 1992). However, the government answered such criticisms by suggesting that the learning of English at an early age can promote a greater appreciation of the Korean language and culture in the context of other cultures (M.O.E., 1996).

Teachers throughout the country are charged with implementation of the TETE policy, yet a number of studies show that the realization of the TETE policy is yet to be established in most classroom settings (Shin, 2012). Research to date on language choices by Korean teachers of English suggest that the majority still do not fully implement the government's policy (Kang, 2008; Lui, Baek & Han 2004; Shin, 2012), and continue to use the Korean language to assist in the teaching of English. Kang's (2008) case study of an elementary school teacher's language choices revealed the use of both Korean and English by a KET, with motivations mirroring previous findings (Duff & Polio, 1994; Macaro, 1997, 2001; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002) in other FL contexts.

This research project set out to discover how language teachers were actually using English and Korean at the elementary-school level and what affected their decisions when it came to using either language. The specific purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

- What prevents Korean elementary teachers from using only English in their classes?
- Do Korean elementary-school English teachers perceive Korean to be necessary for the English language classroom?
- What are the beliefs that underlie perceptions of necessary language for the classroom?

## ***Literature review***

### L1 avoidance

The prominence of target language (TL)-only pedagogy is driven by several criticisms of first language (L1) use in the classroom. A quick look through the history of language methodology reveals a series of innovations that sought to exclude the L1 from the classroom completely. The direct method (Cook, 2001) dictated that the L1 must be excluded so that students could engage in natural use of the target language instead of focusing on the grammatical analysis of the second language (Richards & Rogers, 1986). Following in its footsteps came the total physical response method, the natural approach (Liu, Baek & Han 2004) and the more modern communicative language teaching and task-based teaching methods, all of which are based on the merits of exposing the learners to as much of the TL as possible. The prevalence of L1 avoidance is also exposed by the lack of reference to L1 use in most teaching manuals (Cook, 2001), and those books that do mention L1 use list it as a problem to be overcome (Scrivener, 1994).

### L1 exclusion in EFL contexts

In the foreign language classroom, the exclusive use of TL is deemed necessary in order to provide a context for learners to communicate using the TL in a more meaningful and authentic manner. Simply put, the more TL input available, the better. Conducting classroom management and organization is a must as it adds to the overall of input of the TL (Ellis, 1988). As Chaudron (1988) states, the belief is that the best competence in the foreign language is realized by creating a rich TL environment that uses the TL for not only instruction but also disciplinary and management. Ellis (1988) claims that in the ESL classroom, the TL used for these functions is inevitable; however, in EFL environments this does not always occur due to teachers' beliefs that the L1 facilitates language-related learning goals of the lesson, which, according to Ellis, can actually devalue the input of the TL.

### Maximizing the TL

Advocates of maximum TL use accentuate the benefits of language exposure, claiming that it allows for more confident, effective language use and improved cultural competence (Duff & Polio, 1990; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Other theories that underpin the aforementioned teaching methodologies suggest that a TL only methodology allows for interaction within the TL and negotiation of meaning in the TL (Long, 2000; Pica, 2002), allowing learners to adopt the language for their own communicative and socio-cultural needs. It has been claimed that the use of L1 in the classroom serves to undermine this language acquisition progression by denying learners the essential TL input (Chambers, 1991; Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1988; Macdonald, 1993; Krashen, 1982).

Quality of TL implies that total exclusion of the L1 is not necessary. Cook (2001) calls for a maximizing of the TL use in class rather than a complete exclusion of the L1, insisting that there is a genuine role for the L1. However, in terms of a theoretical or a

pedagogical standpoint, just exactly what constitutes an appropriate ratio of TL to L1 use in the class remains unclear (Polio & Duff, 1994; Turnbull, 2001). Swain's output hypothesis (1985), which affirms that learning takes place when a gap in the linguistic knowledge of the TL is encountered, proposed that mere exposure to TL is not enough for acquisition; learners need to be given the opportunity to interact with and in the TL, including written and spoken output relative to the input. Swain (1993, p. 160) shows how students are able to make use of their own linguistic resources to generate new linguistic knowledge, using both TL and L1 to reprocess knowledge and test hypotheses about language as part the process of second language learning (Swain, 1985, 1993, 1995).

### The multi-competent language learner approach

Socio-linguistically, the prohibition of L1 use in the language classroom is the equivalent of banning a learner's particular identity. Sociolinguistics asserts that that the language, dialect or register that a learner uses represents unique features of identity (Belz, 2003). Whereas the monolingual bias, based on what Belz (2003, p. 212) describes as modernist aesthetics, decries the learner as a 'deficient communicator' that needs the 'idealized native speaker', the multi-competent language learner approach ascertains that the knowledge brought to the classroom by the learner in the form of prior language knowledge needs to be exploited when learning the TL. The acknowledgement of multiple language use in the classroom not only mirrors multi-lingual realities in the world but aids in the development of both intercultural competencies and critical awareness of others and of one's self, as well as reflecting authentic language use in the classroom, all of which are often stated goals of most modern L2 teaching approaches (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993a, 1993b, as cited in Belz, 2003). This is further reiterated by Cook (2005) who calls for the language classroom to be re-designated as a multilingual community in which native speaker norms are no longer imposed on multilingual users of language, and where teachers need to start viewing learners as developing bilinguals or multi-lingual language users, allowing the learners to use their extensive L1 knowledge to complement their L2 knowledge.

### The L1 as a psychological tool for learning

Within the socio-cultural framework it is argued that a common L1 can function as a psychological tool for learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Within both EFL and immersion-learning contexts (Anton & Dica-milla, 1999; Brook & Donato, 1994), the L1 has been shown to provide learners with cognitive support, enabling them to achieve more in class by using their L1 to scaffold learning, enlist and maintain interest in tasks as well as develop strategies for accessing higher level tasks and activities (Anton & Dica-milla, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

### Factors affecting L1 use

Factors affecting the amount of L1 used in classrooms vary according to local policy, level of instruction, students' proficiency in the TL, lesson content and objectives, curriculum and materials used, teachers' pedagogical beliefs based on training experiences and teaching experiences, as well as experience with the target language

culture (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). The only strong argument that can be made on functions and reasons for L1 use is that the use of L1 seems to be a very subjective and personal matter for most teachers. Teachers themselves often seem unaware of the scope and nature of their L1 use with studies showing that teachers often underestimate how much L1 they use in the class (Edstrom, 2006; Levine, 2003).

Studies that have looked at language choices of non-native speaker teachers are limited, with the focus being on teacher perceptions of government policies such as the South Korean governments' TETE foreign language policy, and whether or not teachers can effectively teach according to such policies (Kim, 2002, as cited in Kang, 2008). Kang (2008) conducted a qualitative case study of the language choices of an elementary-school teacher in order to ascertain the teacher's language use in regards to TETE. Language choices were described as either exclusive use of the TL, exclusive use of the L1, use of L1 followed by TL and use of TL followed by the L1. The motivations for each type of language use mirror previous findings (Duff & Polio, 1994; Macaro, 1997, 2001; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002). Kang concludes that the reason for language decisions was the teacher's attention to her students' interest in the class at the moment of language use. A similar case study conducted in Hong Kong found that the teacher's decisions were based mostly on her TL proficiency (Carless, 2004). The differences found by Kang (2008) and Carless (2004) in their respective studies suggest that more research is needed in order to broaden the scope of understanding of this particular area of foreign language teaching and language use by non-native speaker teachers.

### Research in EFL contexts

Via a series of case studies, Liu et al. (2004) investigated the use of L1 in L2 teaching in Korean secondary schools, identifying functions of L1 and L2 use within the Korean context. L1 seemed to be primarily used for cognitive and pedagogical reasons, similarly to the L1 uses described by Forman (2010), whereas the TL was used for affective and pedagogical reasons, which differs from the Forman study. Liu et al. found that English was used on average only 32% of the time in the class with students claiming to understand on average only 49% of the teacher's English. The authors write that there needs to be a rethink on pedagogical policies regarding the L1/TL use in the Korean EFL context. The forced shift by the newly implemented government educational policies into exclusive TL use is being met with resistance in the classroom, with a call for teacher training programs to reevaluate how they teach more effective strategies for code switching practices that allow for optimal use of the L1 and TL in the classroom. Such case studies can be used to inform mono-lingual biased ELT programs on how to accommodate the needs of non native speaker teachers in terms of methodological and curricular issues in EFL teaching as opposed to the ESL context, addressing the concern of L1 use based on more appropriate findings within the EFL context rather than on the findings of ESL contexts.

### ***Research methodology***

#### Context

The study took place in four elementary schools in the city of Gwangju, the sixth largest

city in South Korea. Four teachers, working in grades 3 to 6, volunteered to participate in the study. The teachers were female, reflecting the feminization of elementary school education in South Korea (Korean Education Development Institute, 2011, as cited in Shin, 2012), and fell within the 30-40 year age bracket. They had passed through an in-service teacher training program and were selected for the study after accepting an invitation to participate was sent to all previously enrolled trainees. Self-evaluated English language proficiencies concurred with our previous experiences with the trainees, placing them from low intermediate to high intermediate level of English ability, confirmed by two teacher trainers who had taught them previously. The classes consisted of 20-30 students of mixed English language abilities, with some more affluent students attending local English academies that run after-school English programs, usually at considerable cost to parents. Two of the schools had a separate English learning zone, or classroom for students, while the other two schools conducted English classes in the students' homeroom class.

### Procedure

Data collection took place over a four-week period in 2012. We met with each teacher individually in order to obtain information about the teacher, organize an observation schedule and conduct a semi-structured interview in order to obtain data about the teacher's context and beliefs in regard to the use of different languages in the classroom. The interviews revealed insights into teacher's reasons for how they used language in the classroom as well into possible influences that the teachers' background had on these language choices. During the observations the teachers were video-recorded, while we observed and took detailed notes describing what the video was recording. The observations allowed us to collect data on language use and conditions in the classroom. The transcribed lessons provided data showing how Korean and English were used. The video also showed classroom influences on the language choices, such as student-teacher interactions, activity types, and teaching aids etc. Both the notes and the video were then used in a stimulated recall session after each lesson in order to explore what had taken place. The stimulated recall yielded insights into the language used by the participants by allowing them to present their thoughts about what was happening in the moment to moment events in the classroom, allowing us to add the participants' interpretations to our own interpretations of classroom language uses and interactions.

### Data analysis

An iterative-inductive approach (Dörnyei, 2011) was used in the coding and analysis of the collected data. Interviews were transcribed and thematically coded after multiple readings via qualitative analysis to find similar or different themes within the responses to the interview questions. The responses to each question in the interview were analyzed and summarized, with a focus on content rather than language, in order to determine the similarities or differences in teachers' opinions to the questions asked. The coding of the responses allowed us to isolate data that was then compared against data extracted from the observations.

Classroom observation transcripts were thematically coded via qualitative analysis to

find reoccurring themes. Korean statements were confirmed by the participants during the stimulated recall sessions and then transcribed and translated into English, focusing on the content of the language. The coding of the transcripts derived from the observations occurred after repeated reading of the transcripts in order to discover naturally reoccurring themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Descriptions were based on how the languages were used in the classroom. The coding scheme was developed independent of any previously constructed schemes in order to avoid any influence the scheme might have on us. A second analysis of these functions then looked at when the L1 and when English was used with the listed functions. This included a description of the interaction between the languages used by the teachers, as first done by Kang (2008). The percentage of English used in class was also determined in order to compare with the participants' own perceptions about this question. This percentage was discussed with the participants in order to discover how close the participants felt the observed classes were to normal, unobserved classes.

Stimulated recall sessions (Dörnyei, 2011) went unrecorded but were used to confirm what we had observed during the observed lessons. Reliability, although impossible to establish in the traditional sense (Burns, 2000), was created via a triangulation of data obtained from the interviews, observations and stimulated recall sessions. This study utilized Stake's idea (2000, as cited in Dörnyei, 2011) that triangulation clarifies meaning by identifying a variety of ways the phenomenon is investigated.

## ***Findings***

### Teacher attitudes to TETE and using English

Teachers perceived the meaning of TETE to be the total exclusion of the Korean language while teaching English. However, all teachers expressed the need to use Korean to maintain control, as the use of English for classroom management issues is often misunderstood and ignored, with teachers reporting that total exclusion of Korean is impossible in everyday class situations. The participating teachers felt that there were positive outcomes of the use of only English in class, including an increase in exposure to the language for the students, which lead to both increased proficiencies of teachers and students alike. This increased use and ability allows the teachers to act as a positive role model for students in that the students can see their teacher effectively using the language and so understand that learning English is not an unattainable goal. Teacher K explains her situation:

*Teachers can be a good role model..., 3rd graders didn't expect my English, they didn't expect me to speak English and I'm a Korean who keeps trying to use English only to English class... That's how I indirectly like to let them think if I use English with confidence they will that means it will motivate them if I study English hard I can be like her so they can learn y attitude not just English skills."*

Above all the teachers saw their role as making sure that the students enjoy learning English, striving to maintain student motivation for learning English, and avoiding

students associating English with stress as much as possible. This is achieved by focusing on more communicative activities rather than the traditional grammar-based activities.

### Maintaining motivation

The teachers felt that the use of Korean allowed them to maintain the motivation levels of the students, which is also described as a primary pedagogical belief and task for elementary-school teachers by the participants, as stated here by Teacher E:

*This is elementary school so the English content is not so difficult, it's very simple and easy, so in every lesson we don't learn many expressions so I think... we need to give them more motivation or fun to learn English so I don't want to give them any stress to speak or to learn English so I try to let them enjoy English.*

Class objectives were conveyed in Korean to make sure that students know exactly what is happening in the class. Three of the four participating teachers used Korean when presenting class objectives, which were also written in Korean on the board.

### Scaffolding learning

The use of Korean allowed the teachers to ensure learners were able to more successfully complete the assigned tasks. The use of Korean while giving instructions to ensure the successful completion of an activity was observed most commonly in combination with English, supporting the teachers' stated desire of increasing students' exposure to English where possible without compromising their motivation to learn the language. The following are examples of these combinations for different language functions.

*Display questions*, defined as questions that the teacher knows the answer to (Farrell, 2007):

T: ok today we learned about the weather right?

Ss: yes

T: 오늘 날씨에 대해서 배웠지?

*Referential questions*, defined as questions that the teacher does not know the answer to (Farrell, 2007):

T: who knows the order?

T: 누가번호순서대로아는사람?

The L1 was also used in combination with English during elicitation, language explanation and the confirmation of students' answers to help guide the students through the activities. The use of both Korean and English was used when teachers monitored students during pair or group work, when telling students to be quiet and also when telling students to wait their turn. Korean was used in combination with English when getting students' attention by Teacher E in her 1st observed class:



T: 자! (Ok! waits for s)

T: ok start

T: first

When telling students to do something quicker:

T: ss name hurry up hurry up

T: 빨리해 (hurry up)

Overall, the combination of Korean and English saw Korean following English seven times more often than English following Korean. These observations are consistent with the results of the interviews.

#### A comfortable learning environment

The interviews revealed that the teachers liked to use Korean when creating a rapport with their students in order to construct a comfortable teaching environment in which the students enjoy learning English. To do this, the teachers stated that they used Korean to put students at ease and create relationships with the students. As one teacher pointed out when talking about how students feel when she uses Korean in class:

*Comfortable, easier to understand and can feel deep meaning like jokes they can easily understand. The teacher confirmed her belief that Korean helps build the student-teacher relationships in class.*

The following exchange between Teacher Y and her 6th grade students (Observation 2) proved effective in lightening the mood and allowing students to express themselves in the language during the role-play activity. The teacher's use of humor served to create an environment in which the students enjoyed using the language. In this exchange the students were encouraged to add items that they would like to sell or buy but that were not part of the textbook, and this resulted in the students incorporating vocabulary that was humorous to them. The teacher picked up on this and responded to their humor in the L1 rather than suppressing it or using English.

T: ok any other person? You can use another item the other items

T: calls two more volunteers

Ss volunteer

T: 잘했어요 (it was good)

T: I think you need to recommend some specific book

T: 구체적인 책을 제안해주면 좋겠죠 for book

하면은 그냥 책을 찾는다는 표현이니까 (You should try recommending a book)

T: ok two more students

Ss volunteer

T: 7 dollars

T: (in audible due to students laughing with teacher) 엄청 싸네 (It's really cheap)

T: too big

Praise was also given in combinations of L1 and English as well as either English or the L1. The following shows how one teacher gave praise using the different languages:

Praise in L1

T: 잘했어요(it was good)

Praise in English

T: wow amazing very good

In combination of L1 and English

(Students do rap activity)

T: very good

T: 잘했어요

(well done/very good)

The following shows an example from Teacher K's 2nd observed class where she interrupts her use of English to stop two students who were arguing about why they lost the game:

T: good ok sit down please this group..

S: (ss interrupts and says 2 students are fighting)

T: 하지마.....입.....앉아.. (Stop...mouth...sit down)

T: good this group will be the winner this group

Calling for volunteers during class also saw the use of Korean to ensure that students continued to listen to the teacher.

Korean was used exclusively when telling students to not rush out of class and when explaining homework, as seen in Teacher Y's 2nd observation:

T: 잠깐만요(wait a minute)

T: 빨리가져가서 주말동안하세요. 주말까지 100 로된 친구들은 스티커 10개 주고 진도는 화요일까지 끝낼 거예요. 다음 시간에는 스티커 시상식도 하겠습니다.

스티커 개수를 꼭 말해주세요. (Take it home now and do it during the weekend. If you do it all on the weekend I'll give you ten stickers. We'll finish the book next Tuesday. In the next class you can claim your sticker awards.)

In one case, for a third grade class taught by Teacher K (1st observation), who was also the homeroom teacher for that class; Korean was used to signal the start of English class, which was then followed by greetings in English:

T: 시작합니다 (let's start)

T: hello everyone

SS: hello

### Percentage of English used

The average amount of English used for the observations was 92% of all language functions. The teachers on average stated that they use anywhere from 50% English to 80% English in class depending on the level of the students. The classroom observations a series of situations when the participating teachers used Korean and English while teaching English. (These can be found in the appendix.) Post-observation interviews identified that three of the four teachers felt that the amount of English used in the observed lessons was an accurate account of how much they usually use, with teacher C stating that she used more English than she necessarily would have in a typical class due to the researchers' presence (Labov, 1972), which she stated affected the students' behavior and made it easier for her to use more English.

### ***Discussion***

Although the teachers all expressed agreement with the need of maximizing exposure to English, they perceived the use of both English and Korean to be necessary language while conducting their classes. Motivation was a key factor that seemed to determine most decisions in the classroom, with teachers especially sensitive to how motivated students were to learning the language. The interviews revealed that the teachers believed that Korean served to preserve student motivation to participate in class. In order to sustain motivation, the participating teachers used Korean to preserve classroom order and assist students in successfully finishing the tasks laid out in the textbooks. They also used Korean to maintain a comfortable learning environment and to maintain effective relationships with the students.

The use of Korean in this study has also been reported by Kang (2008), who identified that the main reason the participating teacher used Korean was to maintain students' interest in the class. However, this study differs from a similar study conducted by Carless (2004), who concluded that teacher language proficiencies affect how teachers use the L1 in class. The fact that the study was conducted in a similar context to the Kang study, that is, South Korea, as opposed to that of the Carless study (Hong Kong), might be a factor behind the similarities and differences between the three studies.

The combinations of Korean and English for maintaining discipline, giving instructions

and maintaining rapport mirror the different amalgamations of language use found in Kang (2008) as well as those found in non-Korean EFL environments (Duff & Polio, 1994). Whereas L1 use can be a subjective issue dependent upon the teacher as much as anything else (Edstrom, 2006), the factors influencing teacher language choices in this study, such as local policy, level of students, lesson contents, and materials and activities, coincide with previous findings as summarized in Storch and Wigglesworth (2003). It might be expected that the older the students get and the more exposure they have to English, the less they will need the teacher to use Korean when explaining activities. However, as activity types change from grade to grade, more advanced activities, such as cultural exploration activities and advanced CD-ROM game activities, require the teachers to use Korean to assist the students as they confront such activities for the first time. Korean is often used in combination with English, either preceding or following, as the teacher guides students through the different activity types that occur in the textbooks. Language used for giving instructions, including referential, display and eliciting questions as well as language explanation and the confirmation of student's answers were observed more than for any other situation due to the need to ensure that the students could understand what they had to do to successfully complete the textbook activities.

These findings lend support to the ideas developed within the socio-cultural framework that the L1 creates a more facilitating learning environment in which the learners are free to use already established cognitive and social structures when learning the TL (Anton & Dicamilla, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Wood et al, 1976, as cited in Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). In the Korean EFL environment, the learning of English at the elementary school level presents the teachers with government initiated policies that, for the participating teachers in this research project, inadvertently contradict themselves: the teachers are compelled to construct a comfortable learning atmosphere which must alleviate any stress the students might have when studying English in order to ensure that they continue to learn English throughout their academic career, while using English as the only form of spoken language in the class. Conversely, the language itself is a source of stress for the students as described by the participating teachers in this research project.

For the participants, the need to maintain student motivation in the subject overrides the need to comply with the government's TETE policy. The use of Korean with English enables teachers to maintain motivation levels in the subject, no matter what the age group. Students' levels also has little effect on whether or not they wish the teacher to use more English in class, as all teachers believed that the students enjoyed it when the teachers used Korean. Whether or not this is accurate is up for debate, and any studies in the future would need to include student feedback on how students feel about the languages used in the classroom. The fact that the teachers have clearly opted for maintaining student motivation over maximum exposure to the target language, even though they agree with the notion of maximizing exposure to the target language, suggests that certain practicalities are not being genuinely considered when educational policies are decided. The TETE policy is based on language learning theories derived from ESL learning contexts (MacKay, 2009). In EFL learning, however, there are

different tools available for successful language learning, and that the L1 is used by teachers to assist students. The exclusion of the L1 in the EFL classroom is not an option for even the most dedicated of teachers, and a major rethink on its use in the Korean EFL context is called for. Research needs to go into how the L1 can be used successfully in class in order to ensure that teachers do not fall into the trap of over-relying on the L1 in class.

This study revealed a few interesting contrasts to studies done in a similar vein, especially in terms of perceptions of language use, and reasons for L1 use. The difference between teacher perceptions and actuality of language use runs contrary to other studies in which teachers have often underestimated the use of L1 (Levine, 2003, Edstrom, 2006), with the teachers here underestimating their use of English rather than that of the L1. This discrepancy could be due to the small sample size, which might lend itself to misrepresentations. A larger sample of data might reveal a more accurate account of language use in the classroom. Previous reports have also included teacher language proficiency as a reason why TETE is not properly implemented (e.g., Shin, 2012). The teachers in this study felt that their language ability was more than sufficient to teach the target language, however, other factors made it difficult to use English entirely throughout a lesson. Teachers assert that low level students struggle the most with the teacher using English in class. All participants believe that the students prefer the teacher to use L1 in class as it makes a more comfortable learning environment.

### ***Implications***

Government policies that cite theories based on ESL environments need to be rethought, and ideas that address EFL learning specifically need to be permitted in order to help assist students in such contexts. As Cook concluded (2001), the L1 should be “deliberately and systematically used” (2001, p. 418) rather than something that is “a guilt-making necessity,” as it is possibly the next revolution that could improve current teaching methods as well reestablish the power imbalance that occurs in so many language learning classrooms. Any innovation introduced to improve a curriculum ultimately succeeds or fails depending on how teachers perceive its effectiveness in the classroom (Coburn, 2001; Kelly, 1980; Li, 1998; Markee, 1997; Wallace, 1991, as cited in Shin, 2012). The participants in this study, when presented with two different mandates for how to teach in their classes, chose one over the other in the belief that the two were incompatible. This in turn presents another possible avenue of investigation into why the government-initiated policies are not establishing themselves within the classroom.

Studies of L1 use when teaching at the elementary school level are limited in EFL contexts. More research is needed in this area to discover what influences the teacher’s language choices in the classroom. Such choices may be similar to other contexts but also have the potential to be different due to the uniqueness of the context itself. We need further research into elementary-school teachers who have established techniques to maintain student motivations for learning the language while teaching exclusively in English to explore the Korean EFL context in its entirety. For the participants of this project, the need to maintain motivation in the class so that students do not stop

learning English superseded the need for exclusive English use. To clarify how students feel about English as a motivating or demotivating factor, future studies should include feedback from the students as well.

### About the Authors

**Michael Rabbidge** lectures in the English Education department at Chonnam National University, South Korea. He is also a PhD candidate at Macquarie University. His current research interests include teacher language choices as well as the cognitive influences behind said choices.

**Phil Chappell** is a Lecturer in Macquarie University's Linguistics department, convening the Postgraduate Certificate of TESOL, and supervising higher degree research students. His current research interests are in classroom-based second language learning, dialogic teaching, and language teacher cognition.

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## Appendix

### How Korean and English were used in the observed lessons

<b>Korean only</b>	<b>English, then Korean</b>	<b>Korean, then English</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirm answers</li><li>• Referential questions</li><li>• Creating rapport</li><li>• Responding to students' Korean</li><li>• Giving instructions</li><li>• Eliciting</li><li>• Explaining language points</li><li>• Calling for volunteers</li><li>• Praise</li><li>• Classroom management</li><li>• Display questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirm answers</li><li>• Referential questions</li><li>• Creating rapport</li><li>• Giving instructions</li><li>• Eliciting</li><li>• Explaining language points</li><li>• Calling for volunteers</li><li>• Praise</li><li>• Classroom management</li><li>• Display questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirm answers</li><li>• Giving instructions</li><li>• Classroom management</li><li>• Display questions</li></ul>

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