

# **Korean Curriculum Reforms and the Progressivism**

**Bok-Myung Chang (Namseoul University)**

bmchnag@nsu.ac.kr

**JaekunLee (Korea Nat'l Univ. of Education)**

jkeun@knue.ac.kr

This study pursues to survey three educational value systems, especially the progressivism in foreign language curriculums and Korean curriculum reforms so that this study can suggest some clear evidence for the progressive traits of Korean curriculum reforms. The main purposes of this research are like these:

Purpose 1 : to study educational value systems -Classical Humanism, Reconstructionism, Progressivism – on the basis of educational philosophy and curriculum designs

Purpose 2 : to survey the progressivism of the foreign language curriculum

Purpose 3 : to study the history of Korean curriculum reforms especially the 6th and 7th national curriculum reforms, and find out the progressive characteristics of curriculum reforms in Korea

The present study surveyed theoretical basis of educational value systems- Classical Humanism, Reconstructionism, Progressivism-and analyzed the governmental documents of the 6th and 7th national curriculums of Korea. This study also included the previous studies on Korean national curriculums and textbook analysis for the 6th and 7th national curriculums.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This study pursues to survey three educational value systems, especially the progressivism in foreign language curriculums and Korean curriculum reforms so that this study can suggest some clear evidence for the progressive traits of Korean curriculum reforms.

Purpose 1 : to study educational value systems -Classical Humanism, Reconstructionism, Progressivism - on the basis of educational philosophy and curriculum designs

Purpose 2 : to survey the progressivism of the foreign language curriculum

Purpose 3 : to study the history of Korean curriculum reforms especially the 6th and 7th

national curriculum reforms, and find out the progressive characteristics of curriculum reforms in Korea

Data

The present study surveyed theoretical basis of educational value systems- Classical Humanism, Reconstructionalism, Progressivism-and analyzed the governmental documents of the 6th and 7th national curriculums of Korea. This study also included the previous studies on Korean national curriculums and textbook analysis for the 6th and 7th national curriculums.

**. LITERATURE SURVEY**

English education curricula must be based upon the educational value systems which reflect the educational contexts and backgrounds of that time and place. According to the historical development of educational value systems, they can be classified into three categories: Classical Humanism, Reconstructionism, and Progressivism. The main characteristics of these educational value systems can be represented on the basis of philosophy, syllabus, methodology, individual difference, and assessment.

**1. Educational Value Systems**

**<Table 1: The Comparison of Educational Value Systems>**

<b>Classical Humanism</b>	
<b>Philosophy</b>	The promotion of generalizable intellectual capacities The maintenance and transmission of the knowledge, culture and, standards of one generation to another The creation of an elite of guardians
<b>Syllabus</b>	Subject-centered Content-driven Sequencing of elements of knowledge
<b>Methodology</b>	Transmissive and teacher-directed understanding of rules
<b>Individual differences</b>	Stream or set pupils into homogeneous classes in terms of ability or achievement, and teach whole class as one unit
<b>Assessment</b>	Norm-referenced

<b>Reconstructionism</b>	
Philosophy	<p>Social change through education planned to lead towards certain agreed goals</p> <p>Egalitarian concern for the equal valuing of all citizens</p> <p>Emphasis of the practical relevance of the curriculum to the social goals of the nation</p>
Syllabus	<p>Goal-centered/Ends-means approach</p> <p>Objective behavioral needs of the learner</p> <p>Sequencing in terms of part-skills leading to global activities</p>
Methodology	<p>'Good habit' forming</p> <p>Practice of part-skills</p> <p>Rehearsal of behavioral goals</p>
Individual differences	<p>Mastery learning or predetermined pupil contract schemes</p>
Assessment	<p>Criterion-referenced</p>

<b>Progressivism</b>	
Philosophy	<p>The development of the individual as a whole person</p> <p>The promotion of learner responsibility and of a capacity for learning how to learn</p>
Syllabus	<p>Process approach</p> <p>Process-driven Principles of procedure</p> <p>Learners impose own sequence on what is learnt</p>
Methodology	<p>Learner-centered</p> <p>Experiential learning</p> <p>Learning how to learn</p>
Individual differences	<p>Promotion of individual responsibility so that pupils work at their own level</p> <p>Negotiation of appropriate assignments</p>
Assessment	<p>Individual evaluation</p>

(Source: Clark, John L. (1987) )

## **2. Progressivism and the Foreign Language Curriculum**

The progressive traits reflected in foreign language curriculums can be summarized in the areas of Aims of language learning, Provided language, Syllabus content, Methodological Emphasis, Classroom activities, Expected learning from students, and Purposes of assessment.

Aims of language learning are to promote individual development, to enable pupils to create wider networks of personal relationships, and to learn how to learn a language.

Provided language is the one which reflects the personal aspirations and interests of the learners

Syllabus content contains a series of activities and tasks of a realistic communicative nature, selected through negotiation with learners.

Methodological Emphasis

Providing the conditions in which the mental processes for spontaneous learning are activated through engaging in communicative activity

Classroom activities

Problem-solving activities in which learners are involved in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of their own meanings

Expected learning from students is 'Interlanguage' forms with errors, the gradual increase in fluency, and the confidence to tackle new communicative challenges.

Purposes of assessment are to assist learners to reflect upon their own learning process and to promote a capacity for self-evaluation.

## **. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

From the 6th curriculum, Korean English education policy has focused on the development of communicative competence in Korean students. In this curriculum, the English department made various reforms with respect to the previous curricula in Korea. Because of these reforms, the 6th curriculum is called “the innovation of curricula history.”

Since the 6th national curriculum was adopted, Korean English education policy has focused on the development of communicative competence of Korean student, so the 6th and 7th national curriculum have very innovative traits.

### **1. Progressive Principle 1 : Focusing on Communicative activities and tasks**

**The 6th and 7th national curriculum: a communicative syllabus,**

**cultivating the communicative competence, utilizing various activities and tasks**

**The 6th national curriculum** made various reforms compared to the previous curriculums of Korea. Especially it adopted a **communicative syllabus** instead of the grammatical-structural syllabus.

Reform Principles of **the 7th National Curriculum**:

English Education for focusing the student-centeredness.

English Education for **cultivating the communicative competence**

English Education for **utilizing various activities and tasks**

English Education for fostering logical and creative thinking.

English Education for functioning effectively as nation in the era of globalization.

Table 2 and 3 show the communicative function categories of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum.

**<Table 2 : Communicative Function Categories of the 6th National Curriculum >**

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	RATIO(%)
Personal Function	Personal Thoughts	5.6
	Personal Feeling	6.9
Interpersonal Function	Intimate Relationship	14.2
	Social Relationship	10.8
Directive Function	Suggestions and Requests	6.4
	Directions and Command	7.8
Information Search Function	Information Exchange	36.4
	Opinion Exchange	8.1
Creative Function	Problem Solving	3.9

(Chang, 2001)

**<Table 3: Communicative Function Categories of the 7th National Curriculum>**

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	RATIO(%)
Intimate Activities	Greeting	3.9
	Introducing	4.7
	Expressing appreciation	0.3
	Attracting attention	1.4
	Complimenting, Congratulating	4.3
	Making a promise	2.8
	Expressing want, desire	0.7

	Proposing a toast	2.5
	Beginning and ending a conversation	0.7

<b>CATEGORY 1</b>	<b>CATEGORY 2</b>	<b>RATIO(%)</b>
<b>Exchanging factual information</b>	Asking and Identifying factual information	13.7
	Describing factual information	5.0
	Asking and answering about habits	0.7
	Asking and answering about experience	1.8
	Planning	1.8
	Correcting	0.3
	Comparing	1.4
<b>Expressing intellectual attitude</b>	Giving one's approval or disapproval	3.6
	Offering and inviting	1.4
	Proposing someone to do something	6.1
	Remembering	0.7
	Expressing possibility or impossibility	1.4
	Expressing certainty	0.3
	Expressing one's obligation	1.4
	Giving permission to do something	0.7
	Instructing or forbidding others to do	2.5
	Expressing opinions	3.9
<b>Expressing emotion</b>	Expressing likes or dislikes	6.1
	Expressing pleasure, anger, love or joy	2.5
	Expressing preference	2.5
	Expressing sympathy	0.7
	Expressing desire, wish	1.0
	Expressing dissatisfaction	-
<b>Expressing moral attitude</b>	Apologizing	1.0
	Expressing regret	-
	Asking and talking about concern	1.0
<b>Persuading Suggesting</b>	Persuading	-
	Asking	1.4
	Warning	0.3

<b>Problem Solving</b>	Expressing cause and effect	0.3
	Guiding	3.9
	Shopping	3.2
	Ordering	1.8
	Confirming	1.4
	Checking comprehension	-
	Telephoning	3.2

(Chang, 2001)

**2. Progressive Principle 2: Focusing on Language Acquisition Process**

**The 6th national curriculum: the acquisition theory**

The 6th curriculum takes the acquisition theory, and divides the language functions into productive skills and receptive skills, which are presented prior to productive skills. (Chang, 2001)

**3. Progressive Principle 3: Emphasizing on the Pre-Productive Stage**

**The 6th national curriculum: the students' developmental stages**

The 6th curriculum organizes the learning material according to the students' developmental stages. The acquisition sequence of communicative competence is comprehension-production, so the 6th national curriculum began to emphasize the comprehensible process for the beginning level students and productive process for the intermediate and advanced level students. (Chang, 1995)

**4. Progressive Principle 4: Emphasizing on the Process-Oriented Syllabus**

**The 6th and 7th national curriculum: the notional-functional syllabus, various syllabus types**

**The 6th national curriculum:** The 6th curriculum adopts the notional-functional syllabus instead of grammatical-structural syllabus.

From the 1st national curriculum to the 5th national curriculum of Korea, grammatical-structural syllabus was adopted. Grammatical-Structural syllabus is sometimes referred to as the 'traditional' syllabus, which consists of two components: a list of linguistic structures and a list of words. This syllabus is based on the underlying assumption that learning a language meant learning to master its grammatical system. The objectives or purposes were still stated in terms of linguistic forms. The actual goal of the 6th curriculum is to improve the communicative competence of Korean students, instead of only grammatical competence.

**The 7th national curriculum:**

According to the reform principles 2 and 3, the syllabus design of the 7th curriculum is very inclusive compared with that of the 6th curriculum: according to principle 2, the product-oriented syllabus (grammatical-structural syllabus, notional-functional syllabus) is adopted, according to principle 3, **the process-oriented syllabus (procedural syllabus, task-based syllabus)** is very usable. (Chang, 2001)

<Table 4: The Comparison of Syllabus Design between Korean Curriculums >

CURRICULUM	SYLLABUS DESIGN
the 1st-5th curriculum	grammatical-structural syllabus
the 6th curriculum	notional-functional syllabus
the 7th curriculum	product-oriented syllabus ( grammatical-structural syllabus notional-functional syllabus) process-oriented syllabus ( procedural syllabus task-based syllabus)

**5. Progressive Principle 5: Emphasizing on Mastering learning**

**The 7th national curriculum: reducing the content of learning by 30%**

**The 7th national curriculum** reforms has **reduced the content of learning by 30%** compared to the 6th curriculum in order to maintain the levels of learning contents at a reasonable level. (Chang, 2001)

**6. Progressive Principle 6: Focusing on Individual Differences of Students**

**The 7th national curriculum: a proficiency-based language program, topics which are appropriate for developmental learning**

In **the 7th curriculum reform, a proficiency-based language program** was introduced in order to allow students to learn according to their own abilities and interests. (Chang, 2001)

In the 7th curriculum reforms, **topics which are appropriate for developmental learning** and helpful for intellectual and emotional development and forming a sense of value are presented. (Chang, 1999)



## **. CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this study suggest clear evidences for the progressive orientation of Korean curriculum reforms. The 6th and the 7th national curriculums of Korea are based on the core principles of progressivism as follows :

### **1. Progressive Principles of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> National Curriculums of Korea**

1. Focusing on Communicative activities and tasks
2. Focusing on Language Acquisition Process
3. Emphasizing on the Pre-Productive Stage
4. Emphasizing on the Process-Oriented Syllabus
5. Emphasizing on Mastering learning
6. Focusing on Individual Differences of Students

### **2. The Principles of Curriculum Renewal**

Three educational value systems pursue the curriculum reforms according to the following the principles of curriculum renewal. The curriculum reforms must reflect the educational value systems harmoniously, not concentrating on just one value system.

#### **Classical Humanism**

Top-down, with the two major agencies for change outside the classroom, i.e. the examination board which is largely dominated by university interests, and the inspectorate who produce reports and policy documents, and organize one-off annual in-service courses

#### **Reconstructionism**

Top-down, Research, Development and Diffusion form of curriculum renewal where the agent for change is outside the classroom, I. e. committees of 'experts' set up by government to develop new policies and curricular packages in accordance with certain guidelines

#### **Progressivism**

Bottom-up school-based curriculum renewal

The agent for change is inside the classroom; i. e. teachers who come together to renew their curriculum

As a conclusion of this study, it can be said that the national curriculum reforms need to be integrated according to the contexts. Integration of reconstructionism and progressivism: concern for socially agreed goals, content + processes with individual interpretation.

Integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' initiatives into a coherent framework for curriculum renewal; responsible 'top-down' curriculum renewal is dependent upon effectively supported school-based development.

### **. REFERENCE**

- Asher, R. E., & Simpson, J. M. Y.(1994) *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Aston, G. (1988) *Learning Comity*. Bologna: Editrice CLUEB.
- Breen, M. (2001) Navigating the Discourse: On what is learned in the Language Classroom. In C, Candlin and N. Mercer (Eds.). *English Language Teaching in its Social Context : A Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Celce-Murcia, M. and Olshtain, E. (2000) *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Chang, Bok-Myung.(1996) A Study on the 6th Curriculum and English Textbooks. *Ph.D dissertation*. Korea University, Seoul, South Korea.
- Chang, Bok-Myung.(1997) The Perspectives on the Development of English Textbooks Analysis Theories. *Phoenix*, 35, 235-255.
- Chang, Bok-Myung. (1998) A Critical Study on the Syllabus Design of the Middle School English Textbooks in Korea. *JKAAL*, 2, 137-149.
- Chang, Bok-Myung. (1999) Syllabus Model Development for the 7th National Curriculum of Korea. *Journal of PAAL*, 3, 107-132.
- Chang, Bok-Myung.(2000) An Analytic Study on Communicative Language Activities in Middle School English Textbooks in Korea. *Journal of PAAL*, 4(1), 232-257.
- Chang, Bok-Myung.(2001) An Analytic Study on Syllabus Design for the 7th National Curriculum. *English Language & Literature Teaching*, 7(2), 1-15.
- Chang, Bok-Myung.(2002. The Development of English Educational Materials based on the 7th National Curriculum of Korea. *Journal of PAAL*, 6(1), 15-29.
- Clark, John L. (1987) *Curriculum Renewal in school Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cromlie, W. (1985) *Discourse and Language Learning : A Relational Approach to Syllabus Design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Finocchiaro, M. & Brumfit, C. (1983) *The Functional - Notional Approach*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, R. K. (1982) *Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology*. Oxford : Pergamon Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_(Ed.). (1989) *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Kim, Hyun-jin. (1998) A Theme-centered Integrated English Language Curriculum Development. *Ph. D dissertation*. Korea University, Seoul, South Korea.
- Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation.(1997) The Study on the 7th Curriculum Development. Seoul, South Korea.
- Krahnke, K. (1987) *Approaches to Syllabus Design for Foreign Language Teaching*. New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Lee, Jae-Keun.(1997) A Study on the Development on English Textbook for Learner's Communicative Competence, *Ph. D dissertation*. Korea University, Seoul, South Korea.
- Long, M. H., & Crookes, G. (1992) Three Approaches to Task-Based Syllabus Design. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 27-56.
- McCarthy, M. and Carter, R. (2001) Designing the Discourse Syllabus. In D. Hall & Ann Hewings (Eds.) *Innovations in English Language Teaching : A reader*. London: Routledge.
- McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (1993) *Materials and Methods in ELT*. Oxford: Blakwell Publishers.
- Ministry of Education. (1992a) The 6<sup>th</sup> Curricula: Middle School Curricula. Seoul: Author.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996b) The 6<sup>th</sup> Curricula: High School Curricula. Seoul: Author.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1995) The Curricula of Elementary School: General and the English Subject. Seoul: Author.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996) The Supply Plan of Elementary English Teachers. Seoul: Author.
- Nakano, M., Miyasaka, N., & Yamazaki, T. (2000) A study of EFL Discourse Using Corpora: An Analysis of Discourse Completion Tasks. *Journal of PAAL*, 4(2), 273-297. Tokyo: PAAL.
- Nunan, D. (1988) *The Learner-Centered Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1988) *Syllabus Design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Park, Kyung-Ja, Chang, Bok-Myung, Lee, Jaekeun, & Ko, Insung (2000) Non-native Speakers' Performance of Apology and Complements: What Can They Learn from EFL Textbooks. *Journal of PAAL*, 4(1), Tokyo: PAAL.
- Read, J. A. S. (Ed.). (1984) *Trends in Language Syllabus Design, Anthology Series 13*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Sheen, R. (1994) A Critical Analysis of the Advocacy of the Task-Based Syllabus. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 127-151.

- Sheldon, L. E. (Ed.). (1987). *ELT Textbooks and Materials: Problems in Evaluation and Development*. *ELT Document 126*. Oxford: Modern English Publications.
- Sheldon, L. E. (1988) Evaluating ELT Textbooks and Materials. *ELT Journal*, 42, 237-246.
- Tickoo, M. L. (Ed.). (1987) *Language Syllabuses: State of The Art*, Anthology Series 18. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- van, Ek J. A. (1976) *The Threshold Level*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978) *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilkins, D. A. (1976) *Notional Syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, D. (1990) *The Lexical Syllabus*. London: Collins E.L.T.
- Yalden, J. (1983) *The Communicative Syllabus*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1987) *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.