

# Korea's Language Policy Responses to Globalization

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## Abstract

This study aimed to prove that the language policies of Korea have been changed to meet the needs of the globalized world. The purpose of this research was to examine how English language textbooks reconcile the goals of the language policies of Korea for the promoting of Korea's global participation. As for the research methodology, English language textbook analysis was adopted because English language textbooks approved by the Korean government show the essential elements of Korea's globalization policies, as found in the contents of the English textbooks. The 6 middle school textbooks published in 2015 and 2017 (two books in each grade) were analyzed, focusing on the topical construction and cultural contents. The results of the textbook analysis showed that the topics of textbooks were diverse and the cultural contents of English textbooks were various so that the cultural awareness of Korean students could be expanded. So the language policies of Korea can be evaluated as appropriate for cultivating the young Korean generation's capabilities so as to participate in the globalized world.

## Keywords

language policy, globalization, textbook analysis, topics, cultural contents

## 1. Introduction

Globalization is almost a synonym for the modern world in which the whole world interacts with each other in various aspects of social life (Mckay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). In the globalized world, competence of the English language has become an essential capability for individuals and for nations (Graddol, 2001; Gray, 2002; Parmenter, 2000; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Therefore, Korea's education policy focused on developing students in order to meet the challenges of the globalized world and to play a leading role in international affairs (Kwon, 2000; Yim, 2007). This study aims to prove that Korea's language policies have been changed to meet the needs of the globalized world, and the results were successful.

## 2. Research Methodology

The research method was to analyze middle school textbooks (grades 7,8,9: the textbooks of grade 7 were published in 2017, the textbooks of grades 8, 9 were published in 2015). For this purpose, the reading texts and cultural sections were analyzed according to three criteria: 1) topic and thematic construction 2) cultural contents of the textbooks (the introduction of foreign cultures to Korea and Korean culture to the world, and the observation of cultural similarities and differences), 3) the variety of cultural backgrounds of the textbook contents.

## 3. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Topical Analysis of Middle School Textbooks

Category	Topic		
		No	%
Personal Life	①personal life	5	5.7
	②family life & food, clothing and shelter	5	5.7
	③school life & friendship	5	5.7
	④social life & personal relationship	2	2.2
	⑤good use of leisure (hobbies, travel, sports, etc.)	7	8
	⑥animals, plants, seasons, weather (related natural phenomenon)	8	9.1
Cultural Exchange	⑦communication styles in English culture		
	⑧daily life of English speaking people	3	3.4
	⑨observation of cultural and linguistic differences	5	5.7
	⑩introduction of Korean culture to the world	6	6.8
Personal Welfare	⑪manners, public order, cooperation, voluntary work, responsibility, etc.	9	10.3
	⑫art, literature (related with creativity,	10	11.4

	imagination) ⑬career, job, work (related with one's welfare)	5	5.7
Social Matters	⑭environmental matters (related with environment preservation)	4	4.5
	⑮population problem, teenager problems, multicultural society (related with society changes)	1	1.1
	⑯human rights, democratic citizenship, global etiquette, the equality of the sexes (related with democratic awareness, world citizen awareness)	5	5.7
	⑰patriotism, peace, security, unification		
	⑱liberal arts (politics, science, math, economy, history, geography, etc.)	6	6.8
	⑲academic knowledge related with humanity, social science, natural science, art)	1	1.1
		87	100

▷ The ranking of topics:

- 1) art, literature (related with creativity, imagination): 11.4%
- 2) manners, public order, cooperation, voluntary work, responsibility etc.: 10.3%
- 3) animals, plants, seasons, weather (related with natural phenomenon): 9.1%

▷ The ranking of categories:

- 1) personal life: 36.7%
- 2) personal welfare: 27.5%
- 3) social matters: 19.5%
- 4) cultural exchange: 16%

▷ The distribution of categories in each grade:

- 1) Grade 7: Personal Life > Personal Welfare > Cultural Exchange > Social Matters
- 2) Grade 8: Personal Welfare > Personal Life > Cultural Exchange > Social Matters
- 3) Grade 9: Social Matters > Cultural Exchange > Personal Welfare > Personal Life

#### 4. Conclusions

The results of this study were as follows. First, the most common topics included the topics of art, literature (related with creativity, imagination: 11.4%), the topics of manners,

public order, cooperation, voluntary work, responsibility, etc. (10.3%), and the topics of animals, plants, seasons, weather (related with natural phenomenon: 9.1%).

Second, the ranking of categorizing showed the results like this: personal life (36.7%), personal welfare (27.5%), social matters (19.5%) and cultural exchange (16%).

Third, the distribution of each category was well established according to the grade. English textbooks for grade 7 focused on personal life and personal welfare, but the English textbooks of grade 9 focused on social matters and cultural exchanges rather than on personal life.

Last, the results of the cultural content analysis showed that the introduction of foreign cultures to Korea was most common and that the introduction of Korean culture to the world was not frequent. Therefore, this study showed that Korea's English language policy reforms in accordance to the globalized education purposes focused on introducing diverse cultural and historical facts of foreign countries to young Korean learners. Based on the findings of the study, a few suggestions were made for the effective English education of the young Korean generation.

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