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## European Language Education Models: Implications for Korea\*

**Andrew Edward Finch**  
(Kyungpook National University)

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Based on a fact-finding research trip to the European Community, this paper examines how European models of dual-language learning might be adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of Korean society. In the light of recent reforms aimed at producing multilingual citizens able to negotiate in English in the global marketplace, this paper explores the feasibility and practicality of introducing further reforms based on foreign models. Examination and observation of language teaching approaches in Europe suggests that a bilingual (as in Holland), immersion (as in Finland), or multilingual (as in Luxembourg) approach to language education is feasible in Korea and could produce a level of multilingualism that would greatly benefit Korean citizens and the Korean economy. Rather than advocating comprehensive changes in the education system, however, this study suggests that a gradual, choice-based approach, similar to the growth of bilingualism in Canada, would allow time for the development of effective curricula and for the training of multilingual teachers. While recognizing the importance of regional socio-cultural and economic factors, this paper finds that the goal of producing a plurilingual<sup>1</sup> workforce for the knowledge economy of the 21st century is both realistic and attainable in Korea.

### I. INTRODUCTION

A successful educational record and good grades from ‘top’ universities are highly valued in Asian societies (Leung, 2001, cited in Kennedy & Lee, 2008) including Korea,

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<sup>1</sup> Plurilingualism: “diversifying the individual’s use of languages in cultural contexts; interlocutors may switch between languages and dialects in order to achieve effective communication.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4).

where students are known for performing well in international assessments such as the OECD Programme<sup>2</sup> for International Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2006). However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one of rapid change, and the ‘knowledge economy’ (Drucker, 1995) is constantly producing new demands on education, calling for technically competent, multilingual<sup>3</sup> global citizens, capable of utilizing higher-order thinking skills and intuitive, creative, right-brain functions (Pink, 2006), in addition to the memory-based left-brain functions which continue to be emphasized in ‘cram schools’ in Asia (Kwok, 2004). Researchers are therefore pointing to the urgent need for educational reform, particularly in the field of language education: “We are facing growing needs to learn other languages and unprecedented reasons for doing so as we move into the new millennium” (Tucker, 1998, cited in Genessee, 2008, p. 22). This need is confirmed by the rapidly expanding literature on multilingualism, indicating significant links between globalization of business and commerce, population shifts and migrations, language diversity, the revolution in telecommunications, community affiliations, and program options in education (Dagenais, 2003; Genessee, 2008).

In view of this situation, and taking into consideration recent reforms already introduced in Korea, this paper makes suggestions for further English language teaching reform, based on the findings of a recent fact-finding trip to Europe, during which the researcher investigated successful language teaching models *in situ* and carried out interviews with Ministry officials, school principals, teachers, parents and students. Findings which emerged from the research suggested favorable possibilities for adaptation of European models into the Korean educational system, taking into account the Korean educational, political and social context.

The extensively-researched success of bilingual teaching in Europe (Beardsmore, 1993), the USA (Freeman, 2007; Met & Lorenz, 1997) and Canada (Genessee, 1988) has promoted the use of English as both learning content and a teaching medium around the world. However, it proved impractical for the writer to visit and examine North American and European models in sufficient depth in this study, so the focus of this research was limited to successful European models, with particular attention to bilingual language education. This European focus was considered appropriate, in view of the increasing attention being given in Asia to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001; Finch, 2009) and to UK-based language tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Rasti, 2009).

Education systems evolve according to the special characteristics and requirements of

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<sup>2</sup> Proper nouns and quotations retain their original spelling in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Multilingualism: “the knowledge of a number of languages or the co-existence of different languages in a given society.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4).

the regional setting and this is especially true of Korea. While being aware of the need for reform, therefore (Choi, 2006; Chong-Jae Lee, 2001; Park, 2000), it is also important to ensure that aspects of the system that are functioning satisfactorily are not sacrificed in the reform process. When Pufahl, Rhodes and Christian (2001) asked 22 elementary and secondary educators in 19 countries around the world the question “What do you think are three of the most successful aspects of foreign language education in your country?” (2001, p. 1), responses identified 15 ‘exemplary characteristics’: i) an early start; ii) a well-articulated framework; iii) rigorous teacher education; iv) comprehensive use of technology; v) access to information and entertainment; vi) interaction and collaboration with speakers of other languages; vii) effective teaching strategies; viii) focus on language learning strategies; ix) communicative teaching methods; x) integration of language and content learning; xi) building on the first or subsequent languages; xii) strong language and education policies; xiii) foreign languages as core subjects; xiv) assessment; and xv) maintenance of heritage, regional, and indigenous languages. These categories offer a suitable focus of reflection prior to reform, and are variously referred to during this paper. It is also recognized that reform has already been introduced in Korea in a number of these areas (e.g. ‘an early start,’ and ‘comprehensive use of technology’).

Before presenting the results of the research, the study is placed in context by reviewing the reform situation in Korea, followed by a brief description of the essentials of bilingual approaches to language teaching.

## II. THE CALL FOR REFORM

If schools are to reflect the “social, economic and political needs of the societies that invest in them” (Kennedy & Lee, 2008, cover page), then it follows that major changes in the economies and technologies of the world require corresponding changes in educational policies and institutional environments (OECD, 1996), in order to prepare a workforce that is radically different from that required by the Industrial Revolution – an event which initiated the ‘factory’ model of education which still survives in various manifestations around the world (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996). In this context, a number of commentators (Dryden & Voss, 2005; Graddol, 2006) have identified a new revolution in learning, with implications as profound as those which followed the invention of the printing press. This revolution can be seen in the day-by-day emergence of a number of mutually influencing factors:

1. The new world of instant information;
2. The new world of interactive technology;

3. The explosion of ‘mass innovation’ ;
4. The ‘computer in your pocket’ revolution (blogs and social networking);
5. The community revolution (schools as lifelong community learning centers);
6. The sharing revolution (online access to teachers and information);
7. The new open-source world of cooperative, collaborative, co-creativity.

(Adapted from Dryden & Voss, 2005, pp. 20-21)

This situation has been described by Ridley (1999) as “The greatest intellectual moment in history” and by Tapscott (1996) as “the dawn of an Age of Networked Intelligence – an age that is giving birth to a new economy, a new politics and a new society.” If such statements represent reality, then it would appear that the economic future of East Asian societies depends on a matching educational transformation, involving a fundamental restructuring of schools, from architecture (OECD, 1996) to curricula and teacher training, while maintaining long-held cultural values. Such is the background to current educational reform in East Asia, a movement that requires urgent attention if it is to keep up with the speed of technical, political, economic and societal change (Graddol, 2006).

In spite of various barriers to effective and lasting educational reform (Chong-Jae Lee, 2001; Kwok, 2004), it is significant that restructuring has already begun in parts of East Asia (Feng, 2007; Hoare & Kong, 2008; Mok, 2006) and official policy on language teaching in Korea is also adapting to global requirements. Bilingual teaching, immersion, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are being permitted in some state schools, and the government is taking steps to make positive changes in English education (Oryang Kwon, 2000; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007a-d, 2008) and in teacher training, a crucial aspect of reform (Cheng, Chow, & Mok. 2004).

## 1. Korea

Linguistic ability in EFL, both in its traditional, grammar-based, instrumental concept of *usage* and in the more recent concept of performance-oriented *use* (Widdowson, 1978), has been considered for some time to be an essential requirement for Korean students wishing to enter prestigious universities and from there to pursue professional careers. However, recent tectonic shifts in national economies and global technological capacities have produced the need for different types of linguistic flexibility, in which negotiation of meaning (conversation strategies), collaboration (team-work), equity of relationship (pragmatics), and plurality of expression (plurilingualism, multilingualism) are emphasized, mirroring parallel directions in contemporary language-teaching theory. This trend can be seen in recent revisions to the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL), IELTS, and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), all of which

have either incorporated performance skills or are intending to do so (Kunnan, 1999).

Fully aware of such paradigmatic shifts, the Korean government implemented a number of new policies in the 1990s (Oryang Kwon, 2000; Jong-Hee Lee, 2007), although centralization of power, restrictions in terms of self-direction, and conservative attitudes (passivity) made it difficult for institutions to take full advantage of these policies and respond adequately to changing socio-economic and socio-political contexts.

Thus, in 1995, “Realizing that the old education governance model is inappropriate in the global policy context” (Mok, 2006, p. 175), president Kim Young-Sam commissioned a series of “Education Reform Proposals for the Establishment of a New Education System,” in which primary and secondary education was intended to develop morality, sociability, aesthetic appreciation and creativity (Mok, 2006; Park, 2000). The use of information technology was seen as vital in this New Education System and schools were given hardware and Internet access in the 1997-99 three-year plan, along with high-quality software, databases for teaching and learning, and in-service IT training (Mok, 2006). This was followed by a new school curriculum in 2000, which introduced more self-initiated studies and open classroom education, allowing for the promotion of students’ active participation and spontaneous learning through techniques such as team teaching and less direct instruction in classroom activities (Mok, 2006).

Since then, English language teaching reform has continued, in an effort not only to address the fact that a “tremendous amount of money has been spent on teaching and learning English” (Nunan, 2003, p. 601) with less than satisfactory results (cf. the “much time spent but little achieved” dilemma of English education in China (Wang & Wang, 2003, cited in Feng, 2007, p. 2)), but also to reduce the dependence on private education, which has grown steadily in the 2000s (75.1% of Korean primary and secondary students attended private institutes in 2009, Korea National Statistical Office, 2009) and which threatens to produce a learning gap between those who can afford to attend them and those who cannot (Byong-Sun Kwak, 2004; Kwok, 2004).

The current administration of president Lee Myoung-bak has continued the reform movement in a number of policies which are summarized below. Such reforms reflect an awareness of the need to adapt to a changing global situation, as well as the ability to make sweeping changes in a system “designed and closely controlled by the government” (Hye-Sook Kim, 2004, p. 150).

1. *Textbooks*: The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) has promised to develop and test digitized textbooks, to be used in 100 primary, middle and high schools by 2011. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008).
2. *Teacher qualification*: From 2009, new English teachers are being appointed through an intensive three-stage qualification system. Candidates must also sit for an English

listening test (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007d).

3. *Broadcasting*: English language education is being expanded in schools through broadcasting programs aimed at curbing the increase in private education expenses. The public Educational Broadcasting System (EBS) also launched a channel for English education TV programs for primary and middle school students in April 2007. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007b).
4. *Learning centers*: MEST intends to establish English learning centers within 1,300 primary schools across the nation by the end of 2009. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007a).
5. *Proficiency testing*: A government-administered test of English proficiency for students will be introduced by 2011, possibly replacing the English section of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007c).
6. *Teacher training*: Approximately 1500 English teachers are being provided with intensive training programs in 2009. “The ministry will also select and train 5,000 English speaking instructors so as to meet demands according to the increase of English instruction hours at primary schools as well as level-differentiated classes at secondary schools” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008).

In addition to similar policy trends and reform measures, Korea shares with its neighbors an acceptance of the need to move away from, or radically modify, a traditional model of education, and a perception of education as having economic, political, and social importance (Mok, 2006). Kennedy and Lee (2008) identify two tendencies in terms of educational reform in the Asia-Pacific region: i) adopting Western-oriented solutions; and ii) (in the cases of mainland China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) adopting models of teacher education and development that differ from those in English-speaking countries (Cheng & Chow, 2004). In view of the lack of research on this complex topic (Nunan, 2003), observers can do little more than call for further research and be aware of the pitfalls of searching for the ‘philosopher’s stone’ in any isolated educational model. For example, Japan has been promoted as one country with a well-developed system, but has nearly 140,000 primary and secondary school children who refuse to attend school (Nagata, 2007). This study, therefore, while suggesting directions for reform of language education in Korea, is aware of the dangers of ‘cure-all’ remedies such as the “bilingual-education ‘craze’ sweeping across major economic centres in China” (Feng, 2007, p. 5) and proposes a more moderate approach.

## 2. Immersion, Bilingualism and CLIL

In these times of educational accountability, bilingual and immersion programs offer promising solutions for administrators and language teachers pressured to produce quantifiable results, often in the form of high-stakes test scores. For them, immersion has the dual advantage of: i) being one of the most extensively researched aspects of education; and ii) producing positive research results, “Most scholars in fact consider that the second-language outcomes of immersion programmes are impressive” (Johnstone, 2007, p. 22). As Freeman points out (2007), however, there is still significant confusion and conflict about bilingual and immersion education, partly because these terms are often used to describe programs possessing differing goals, ideological orientations and target populations (Hornberger, 1991). Such programs do not lend themselves to clear-cut categorization or labeling (Fortune & Tedick, 2008), being mostly regional approaches to the goal of creating a multilingual or plurilingual citizenship (Council of Europe, 2006; Dell'Aquila, 1995).

The term ‘bilingual education’ covers a number of approaches that use two languages as the media of instruction, in order to “develop balanced bilinguals who identify with both minority and majority groups” (Feng, 2007, p. 3). These approaches include ‘Transitional bilingual education’ (helping ‘limited English proficient’ [LEP] students to transition to the all-English academic mainstream), and ‘Dual language education’ (cf. Freeman, 2007, pp. 3-9 for a full description of this term). Freeman points out that “evidence from research conducted over the last three decades at sites around the world demonstrates conclusively that cognitive, social, personal, and economic benefits accrue to the individual who has an opportunity to develop their bilingual repertoire when compared with a monolingual counterpart” (2007, p. 9). Programs that promote bilingualism, biliteracy development, and academic achievement through two languages show potential for adaptation to the Korean situation, provided that: i) they are well-implemented; ii) they hold students to high academic standards; and iii) they continue for a sufficient period. Tucker (1999) concludes that four to seven years of formal instruction in the cognitive/academic language are required for bilingual learners to catch up with their monolingual peers. Jong-Hee Lee (2007) provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of bilingualism in Korea.

Immersion programs use the immersion language (IL) to teach subject matter for at least 50% of the preschool or elementary day and 100% at the secondary level. They are usually choice-based alternatives offered within a larger public school system and aim for academic achievement, bi- or multilingualism, literacy in two languages, and enhanced levels of intercultural sensitivity (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). Extensive research on French immersion programs in Canada has shown that foreign language immersion programs enable learners to become bilingual and biliterate and to achieve academic goals through

two languages, with no negative impact on the mother tongue or on literacy development (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000).

Immersion programs vary in terms of the grade level at which the immersion experience begins and the amount of curriculum taught through the second/foreign language. Thus, *early immersion* begins in kindergarten and continues through the elementary grades and *delayed immersion* typically does not begin until the middle elementary grades (around 4th grade). *Early total immersion* teaches 100% of the curriculum through the second (L2) or foreign language in kindergarten and 1st grade, while *early partial immersion* teaches between 50% and 90% of the curriculum through the L2 or foreign language (Cloud *et al.*, 2000; Genesee 2008). These different approaches share “the basic goal of immersion programmes ... to make the school into a ‘large and natural L2 use/acquisition context’” (Artigal, 1993, p. 34).

The term ‘Content and Language Integrated Learning’ (CLIL) describes a form of instruction which promotes a plurilingual approach to education. CLIL allows for language teachers to become more involved with content and content teachers to become more involved with language. “This is particularly the case in Finland in which CLIL involves both language and content specialists” (Marsh, Nikula, Takala, Rohiola, & Koivisto, 1998). A significant amount of research indicates that a content-based second language instruction approach is an effective way of enabling students to develop the academic language and literacy they need in English across all content areas (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). Brinton *et al.* define content-based second language instruction as:

... the integration of particular content with language teaching aims. More specifically ... it refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills. ... The focus for students is on acquiring information via the second language and, in the process, developing their academic language skills. (Brinton *et al.*, 1989, p. 2)

These authors identify three models of CLIL second/foreign language programs that are appropriate for use in different instructional contexts: i) the sheltered model, ii) the adjunct model, and iii) the theme-based model. Sheltered courses contain subject content (e.g. math, science, social studies) taught by a specialist, who must be able to promote comprehension of complex content in the target language (Brinton *et al.*, 1989). The justifications for integrating language and content are that: i) content provides a motivational basis for language learning; ii) content provides a meaningful context within which learners can connect language forms and functions; and iii) students learn language most effectively when they need to use that language in meaningful, purposeful, social and

academic contexts (Brinton *et al.*, 1989; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cloud *et al.*, 2000; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1992). If the second language is also used for social interaction in class and elsewhere in the school, then additional opportunities are created for students to learn the language. Taking these factors into account, such an approach would seem particularly suitable for Korea.

Integral to all the above models is the concept of 'additive bilingualism,' according to which acquisition of a second language does not interfere with or retard development of the native language if the learning environment is positive and non-threatening (Genesee 2008). Programs that aim for additive bilingualism create supportive learning environments in which students acquire a second language while they continue to develop L1 language skills and their own cultural heritage. This concept is crucial to the successful implementation of bilingual education and has implications for reform in Korea, since a failure to provide such an environment can result in 'subtractive bilingualism' (Freeman, 2007), in which the L2 interferes with acquisition and development of the L1.

This review has demonstrated that educational reform is a complex topic, subject to problems of dissemination, adoption, interpretation and comprehension. Despite such problems, the following sections attempt to describe successful models of language education in Europe and to suggest reasons for their success. In doing so, important facilitative factors such as strong policies, teacher training, government support, internationally accredited assessment, and parental involvement are identified.

### **III. EUROPEAN MODELS: THE RESEARCH**

Various schools were visited in six countries (The Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and England) during the fact-finding research trip. These schools represent a range of school types (state schools, private schools, 'European Schools,' International schools and Business Colleges), pedagogic approaches (bilingual, multilingual, immersion and CLIL) and student ages (kindergarten, primary, secondary, and tertiary). Data was collected through classroom observations and interviews with teachers, students, principals, and Ministry officials. The schools are acknowledged in Appendix A and the consent of principals, teachers, students and parents, for observation, discussion and publication of results was obtained through emails and personal contact. There is insufficient space here to dwell in detail on the classroom observations and discussions with professionals that occurred. Instead, a summary of findings is offered.

## 1. Bilingual Models

A number of schools practicing various types of bilingualism were observed during the trip. In The Netherlands, a visit to a bilingual high school offered an interesting model in a country that “has traditionally cultivated the most deeply rooted spirit of civic humanism of all the European countries” (Nagata, 2007, p. 58). In keeping with the freedom of education which is part of the foundation of The Netherlands, and which is at the heart of the Korean educational policy of *Hongik Ingan*<sup>4</sup> (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2006), this school enjoyed financial independence along with freedom of school organization, so that it was able to hire teaching staff, make its own program, create or select teaching materials appropriate for its teaching methodology and realize its own school policy. This high school was part of a 200-teacher, three-campus ‘College’ comprising elementary, middle and high schools, and was sponsored by the European Platform ([www.europeesplatform.nl/](http://www.europeesplatform.nl/)). Subjects in the high school were taught 50/50 in Dutch and English through bilingual classes and CLIL was used in grades one to three. From grades four to six, all subjects except those tested in Dutch on the International Baccalaureate (IB) ([www.ibo.org/](http://www.ibo.org/)), were taught in English.

Specifically designed for gifted children, the high school was able to vet its intake of students, so that its academic success was ensured. It could also count on the support of parents (who sent their children there by choice), while taking advantage of the freedom given to schools in The Netherlands by making its own curriculum, employing multilingual teachers from all over Europe and choosing an evaluation system suited to its specific needs. Classes tended to be teacher-directed at the beginning of the semester, gradually fostering student autonomy and responsibility and promoting additive bilingualism through workshop-oriented, project-based and student-centered study as the semester progressed. The teaching and learning autonomy exhibited by this model, plus the freedom to choose an internationally accepted evaluation system (the IB), offers interesting possibilities for foreign language schools and science high schools in Korea.

Another form of bilingual education was observed in Helsinki, Finland, in a state-run high school. Finland’s education system gives tremendous scope for self-determination to schools, principals and teachers, firstly by placing responsibility for education and evaluation with local municipalities, and secondly by practicing a ‘hands-off’ approach to policy design in its National Core Curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009). As the author was informed in an interview with a representative of the Finnish Ministry of Education in Helsinki,

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<sup>4</sup> Hongik-ingan: “Contributing to the overall benefit of humankind — the founding spirit of the first kingdom in Korean history” (Ministry of Education and Science, 2001).

Local education authorities are responsible for drawing up the curriculum ... they may decide to have one curriculum for every school in its area, or they may give each school the task of drawing [up] their own curriculum. But local curricula have to be based on this national framework, the core curriculum.

It's up to the local authorities and up to the teachers to decide how they teach. The teachers have absolute liberty ... so we give no orders about how to teach.

The national education authorities don't inspect the local education authorities. They have to assess, evaluate their schools in one way or another, but it's up to them to decide how they do it. But they have to do it and they have to publish the results. (Interview, Finnish Ministry of Education representative, October 2008)

In following its vision of developing “the best learning in the world” (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009), the Finnish Ministry of Education sets baseline standards for foreign language students, using achievement levels set by the CEFR ([www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp)) and gives schools and teachers freedom to achieve those goals in whatever way they consider effective.

The bilingual curriculum in this particular high school in Helsinki was popular with parents and students, and worked inside the state education system, preparing students to take the Finnish Matriculation exams. Bilingual education was offered for no extra charge, though entrance tests were used to select applicants by language ability, placing them in an English-only stream, an English/Finnish bilingual stream, or in a Finnish-only stream. Students (from over 40 countries) were highly motivated by the multilingual environment, scoring above average on the Finnish section of the Matriculation exam and scoring the highest in the country on the English section of the exam (Interview, school principal, October, 2008). Although “bombarded with English all day every day” (Interview, October, 2008), students quickly adapted and improved, picking up English in the content lessons, as well as in English classes.

Ministry authorization of textbooks was abandoned in Finland in 1992 (Interview, Finnish Ministry of Education representative, October, 2008), and teachers in this school made in-house books for grades seven to nine, due to the lack of appropriate textbooks for their students (a significant issue for any bilingual language program). When using the texts in the classroom, teachers focused on content, always speaking in English, though students could choose to answer in English or in Finnish. In this way, the lessons contained a significant amount of code-switching and it was evident that students were comfortable in both languages from grade seven onwards. The current legislation concerning the 9-year comprehensive school and upper secondary school states that “the medium of instruction

may, when it is considered appropriate, be other than the instructional language of the school?" (Marsh, *et al.*, 1998, p. 3), but there is no specific bilingual curriculum in Finland.

A bilingual Business College in Helsinki was also visited. This followed a bilingual in-house curriculum, using English as the teaching medium and alternating between a lecture format and a student-centered approach. Thanks to its strong reputation, this college was able to select its students according to academic scores and L2 proficiency and could guarantee high standards of achievement.

## 2. Immersion Models

The majority of schools visited were in Finland (Appendix A), reflecting the attention to bilingual approach for which Finland is well-known. The Swedish/Finnish immersion program in Vaasa was begun by Vaasa University in 1987, and is the only source of immersion teachers in Finland, being run from the Centre for Multilingualism in the university. This immersion program, practiced in a number of attached schools in the city, begins in kindergarten and runs for nine years, finishing in grade nine of secondary school. It began as a restricted entry, nine-year pilot program, but parents were so impressed with the results after two years that the government was persuaded to allow it to take in more students. Since then it has continued with the approval of teachers, students and parents, selection being by lottery, rather than money or intelligence. Further expansion is under consideration.

In terms of numbers, in 1996/97 Vaasa/Vasa had about 400 children enrolled in immersion classes, and the total enrollment in Finland was about 3,500. During the previous three years the enrollment had grown by about 100 per cent every year. (Cummins & Corson, 1999, p. 293). By the autumn of 2001 there were 1151 immersion children in day nurseries/preschools, 2808 immersion pupils in grades 1-6 of the comprehensive school and 433 immersion pupils in grades 7-9 of comprehensive school (University of Vaasa, 2008).

Immersion kindergartens, elementary schools and secondary schools were visited in Vaasa by the researcher, lessons observed, and interviews held with teachers and with university academic faculty. In all these cases the participants agreed that traditional teaching methods were not appropriate for immersion schooling, since they promoted subtractive bilingualism. A student-centered, theme-based, workshop approach was therefore followed. Children beginning kindergarten at the age of five studied in a holistic, experiential learning environment, with one teacher in the morning speaking in Swedish and one in the afternoon speaking in Finnish. These teachers mentioned that everything was strange for the children on the first day, but when they saw others in the same situation, they became more comfortable. They showed few problems with the use of two

languages and quickly adapted, picking up Swedish in the morning and Finnish in the afternoon. Södergård (2008) provides an excellent description of teaching methodology in an immersion kindergarten.

In elementary school (grades 1-6), the program continued in Swedish, students sitting in groups and working on projects or theme-based assignments. Lessons contained linguistic as well as content goals, though there was little explicit grammar instruction, except when necessary during content work. As in the bilingual secondary school mentioned earlier, there was a significant lack of appropriate published teaching materials, including textbooks. Swedish textbooks were too difficult for the immersion age group, while authentic texts at the appropriate level were aimed at younger children. Students were generally confident of their own abilities and identity and graduated from this school with a much higher level of Swedish than other students, though this was not reflected on the graduation certificate, which did not indicate the fluency of the students. At this age and with this teaching approach, immersion seemed to be better for boys, since it allowed them to be active learners (Interview, faculty members, University of Vaasa, October, 2008).

By grades seven to nine (secondary school), lessons were subject-based, with different teachers for each subject. Some teachers tended to take a more traditional approach, since they were preparing students for Matriculation, though others continued with the student-centered project approach. By grade nine, students are fluent in Swedish and Finnish and “don’t understand why others have problems in learning languages” (Interview, secondary teacher, October, 2008).

While immersion in Vaasa focused on the needs of a Swedish-speaking community living on the east coast of Finland, English was a normal language of communication in Helsinki. The International School of Helsinki thus had no problems in offering English-medium instruction from kindergarten to grade 12. Being an independent International School, it had a source of competent multilingual teachers from the International School network, and was able to offer the universally accredited IB program to its students. This school promoted and practiced inquiry-based learning and was committed to the “holistic development of each student,” while “respecting individuality and diversity.” Students covered a range of abilities, came from diverse cultures, and were mostly internationally mobile; they rarely stayed at the school for more than a few years, due to the professions of their parents (diplomats, international business-people, etc.). Teaching in this school therefore presented special challenges, which were addressed by an experiential, non-threatening learning environment, which had the support of teachers and students.

### 3. Pro-CLIL

A great deal has been written about the effectiveness of CLIL (Brinton *et al.*, 1989; Deller & Price, 2007; Fortune, Tedick & Walker, 2008; Mehisto, Frigols, & March, 2008; Snow *et al.*, 1992), which Jong-Hee Lee (2007) considers to be transferrable to the Korean education system, “With regard to contemporary pedagogical models, it would be necessary to positively consider the introduction of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methods to public EFL education” (2007, p. 56). This research confines itself to the Pro-CLIL project, as observed and discussed in Weingarten, Germany, and in Bristol, UK. The goal of this project, which began in 2006, is funded by the European Commission and currently has partners in six countries in Europe, is to “develop and investigate aspects of CLIL methodology, find ways to successfully implement CLIL in preprimary and primary education and to design teaching materials and an initial and in-service course [sic] for teachers” (Pro-CLIL, 2009). This focus on elementary content-based teaching is a valuable feature of Pro-CLIL and was observed in Weingarten elementary school, where the teacher used the target language (English) in her lessons, with the approval of the school principal and the parents of the children. Being still in its infancy, the program in Weingarten is currently concentrating on teacher-training (centered in the University of Education, Weingarten) and was, at the time of this research, unable to offer sufficient support for the teachers interviewed. It was difficult, therefore, to make observations about the long-term results.

### 4. European Schools

A number of European Schools (ES) were visited in various countries, with the aim of observing their unique approach to language learning, although it was acknowledged that they represent an elite system. Educational choice is an important recommendation of this study, so it was important to observe models at each end of the proficiency spectrum. The ‘Schola Europaeae’ were set up in 1953 as co-educational public schools providing free nursery, primary and secondary education for children of personnel of the European Institutions and acquiring “a solid reputation for scholastic achievement, linguistic equity, multilingual proficiency among the pupils and the promotion of multicultural awareness” (Beardsmore, 1993, p. 121). They now form a network of 9 schools in 6 different countries and are attended by approximately 12,000 children. European Schools aim to guarantee the development of the child’s L1 and cultural identity, “while striving to promote a European identity through instruction for all pupils in at least 2 languages, compulsory learning of a 3rd as a subject and options regarding a 4th language” (Beardsmore, 1993, p. 122).

Language learning is a feature of European Schools, with most students being multilingual when they graduate. In fact one headmaster commented that his students' language proficiency was often higher than their content knowledge (Interview, ES headmaster, October, 2008). All modern foreign languages are taught in the language being learned, and selected content-subjects are available in non-L1 languages. Because of this, each subject area requires the presence of teachers from various countries, and L1 maintenance can be difficult to provide for some non-mainstream languages. Outside the classroom, pupils usually communicate in their common second language (English), or in the language of the host country.

According to Beardsmore (1993) the European School program does not fit any clear immersion or multilingual model, though it has elements in common with the enrichment approach, in which acquisition of the second language does not impair that of the first language. Rather, parallels might be drawn with the Luxembourg education system, in which the first language (Luxemburger) is used at nursery level and decreases in significance as the pupils get older, being replaced by German and French as the medium of instruction (Figure 1) (Lebrun & Beardsmore, 1993; Hughes, 2006). The main difference between these two models is that languages of instruction are chosen by the students in European schools. EXTRA SENTENCE EXTRA SENTENCE

**FIGURE 1**  
**Luxembourg Education System: Medium of Instruction**

Secondary, years 4 - 6		French replaces German	
Secondary, years 1 - 3		Most classes taught in German	French and Maths taught in French
Primary grade 6			French as a subject
Primary grades 3-5	Luxemburger gradually replaced by German as medium of instruction		
Primary grade 2	Medium of instruction: Luxemburger	German as a subject taught from Grade 1	French from Semester 2
Primary early grades			
Nursery (age 5)			

The Schola Europea experiment has been successful in producing students fluent in a number of European languages and has served an important role in encouraging plurilingualism. Students taking the European Baccalaureate (EB) exams in these schools are eligible to enter any university in Europe, where they usually find that their language skills are an advantage in the building up of a specialist knowledge base for their majors.

## 5. Teacher-designed Language Programs

The models described so far have described institutional approaches to learning through various languages. However, two schools visited were noticeable for their in-house language programs, designed by the teachers to suit the particular needs of the students. In both cases (an elementary school and a high school), teachers of English had proposed an innovative program to school principals and had been given permission and funding to develop and pilot their schemes. In the elementary school visited in Vaasa, this involved introducing English as a third language and using it to teach the school curriculum in an immersion setting. In the high school visited in The Netherlands, local teachers of English adapted the 'Natural Learning' program already existing in a small number of schools, and produced their own variants. In both cases, students attended by choice, and parents were informed of program development.

## 6. Parental Involvement

The last sentence in the preceding paragraph is significant, highlighting an important aspect of educational reform – communication with parents. Canada's foreign language immersion program model originated, in 1963, during conversations among a small group of English speaking parents (Fortune & Tedick, 2008), who worked together to set up what later became known as immersion schools and, in the final analysis, every educational reform must be accountable to parental approval, though their involvement is not always sought out. The importance of home background has been long recognized and well documented, "What is emerging more recently is the importance of building an effective alliance between the teacher and the significant adult in the implementation of change" (Hughes, 2006, p. 256). INSERT HERE This fact was brought home to the researcher when talking with parents of high school pupils in The Netherlands. Having received written notification of proposed changes in the language program, they were generally in support, but were concerned about the lack of parent-teacher and parent/administration meetings, since this could only result in ignorance about the program, uncertainty about its effectiveness, and reluctance on their part to choose it for their children.

## 7. Teacher-training

Teachers are "key actors in education" (Cheng *et al.* 2004, p. 3) being expected to understand and implement innovation, along with their roles and responsibilities related to school management, curriculum planning and development, staff development, student

counseling and liaising with parents and others out of school. As Khadaroo (2009) points out, “Teachers are vital allies if any reform is to go beyond surface change and bring long-term results.” Teacher-training and in-service professional development is thus a crucial aspect of educational reform, a fact that is well-recognized in Finland, where the teacher-training model is particularly well-developed. Teaching is a highly valued profession in this country, and the competition to enter university teacher-training programs is intense, with only 10 to 15 percent of applicants being successful. Since 1979, master’s degrees have been required for teaching in primary and secondary schools, students taking their Master’s degree in their respective faculties, with the subject of instruction as their major. English teachers “usually have English as their major, maybe another language, because most language teachers have two languages” (Interview, representative of The Ministry of Education, Finland, October 2008).

Teacher-training in Finland typically lasts for a minimum of five years, with two years of practical in-service training in schools. By the end of this time, teachers are theoretically and practically grounded and can justly be called competent professionals. For this reason, the Ministry of Education gives them the freedom and responsibility to teach according to their convictions, within the limits of the national Core Curriculum, “We trust our teachers. That is very important, and it’s not easy to realize in all countries – the culture of trust we have in Finland” (Reijo Laukkanen, head of international relations at the Finnish National Board of Education, quoted in Khadaroo, 2009). This ‘culture of trust’ was also encountered in the present research study, during discussions with professors and teachers.

## 8. Assessment

The research did not set out to investigate assessment models in Europe, since this would have necessitated a separate comparative/investigative study. However, it soon became apparent when visiting schools and discussing language-related curricula that governments in Europe were in the process of adapting to the CEFR and using its criteria, rubrics, and assessment processes for formative, classroom-based assessment (e.g. the DIALANG ‘Can-do’ project [Finch, 2009]) and for language performance assessment (Council of Europe, 2001) in their education systems. Along with Europass and the European Portfolio, such innovative approaches are showing great promise and could have beneficial implications and possibilities for the Korean educational scene (Finch, 2009), offering universal accreditation and well-researched, rigorous standards. The EB and IB are further examples of internationally accepted evaluation models being used in the European Community (EC).

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A recent study carried out in Thailand (Segovia & Hardison, 2009) identified a number of key issues in educational reform, including “(a) the economic benefits of globalization as the driving force behind English teaching, (b) concern for teachers’ English proficiency and methodological training, and (c) the disconnect between curriculum policy and classroom practice in terms of teaching principles, referred to as the gap between ‘rhetoric and reality’” (Nunan, 2003, p. 604). Additional issues included the lack of sufficient teacher training, resources, mentoring support, and the cost of further education for in-service teachers.

Such findings have important implications for Korea if students are to be prepared for globalization and if reform is to be implemented successfully (Chong-Jae Lee, 2001). Freeman notes that it takes at least five years of exposure to academic English to catch up to native speaker norms (Freeman, 2007), so that there is a danger of not being able to cover as much content knowledge in bilingual as in monolingual content classes. Because of this, students must receive sufficient resources, educational opportunities and competent, qualified teaching staff. Further research is needed to investigate how a balance in the amount and depth of content knowledge and language focus might be achieved when implementing bilingual/immersion/CLIL.

Bilingual education presents an infrastructure for the development of resources that has been effective in Canada and Europe: “Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned from past experience with dual language education is that most school-age children are able to acquire two, or more, languages successfully in these programs while mastering the academic skills and knowledge we expect of all students” (Genesee 2008, p. 42). Models such as bilingualism, immersion and CLIL are not universal panaceas, however. They rely on the presence and efficient functioning of a number of factors, including curriculum design, teacher-training, professional development, textbook design, evaluation, and parental support: “If immersion is to achieve its potential, it is the implementation of immersion programmes, especially teacher knowledge and skills, that must be developed” (Hoare & Kong, 2008, p. 260). Thus, any reform which attempts to adapt features of models that are successful in other settings must provide an effective infrastructure for implementation, a comprehensive support system, and an informed teacher-training program, in addition to compensatory mechanisms appropriate to the local socio-cultural and economic conditions. Based upon the preceding findings and discussions, recommendations for bilingual education reform in Korea are offered at this point.

## 1. A bilingual Approach

Having made the point that no innovation is ‘teacher-proof’ or ‘student-proof,’ and that every reform must satisfy a number of important conditions, this study suggests that successful models of language education in Europe merit examination and piloting in a socio-culturally adaptive manner in Korea. Such models have potential for contributing positively to the movement for reform that is already taking place in Korea. Despite cross-linguistic problems (Korean students need greater preparation for bilingual acquisition of English than students whose L1 is related to English) and socio-cultural problems, Jong-Hee Lee has proposed that “it would be appropriate to pursue the track of *coordinate and additive bilingualism* rather than compound and subtractive one,” and has called for “a *strong type of bilingual education* (2007, p. 53).

Rather than imposing a bilingual model nationwide, however, the evidence from European models suggests that it might be installed gradually and on a small scale befitting the individual needs of the stakeholders. Recent experiments in Seoul have shown that a bilingual alternative is popular with a great number of parents. However, this does not mean that it should become compulsory for everyone; such a measure would place an intolerable burden on teacher-training establishments and would cause immense bad-feeling among mono-lingual subject teachers. Instead, de-centralization of educational policy-making could give provincial education authorities the right to set their own standards and requirements, within the bounds of the National Curriculum. If this were done, then individual schools could emulate their sisters in Finland by providing dual language programs according to local demand. If such programs proved successful, then they could be allowed to expand, providing employment opportunities for the growing number of multilingual teachers. In this way, parents, students, principals and teachers would have the choice of participating in and developing a bilingual education model.

Such an approach could be combined with a stronger emphasis on lifelong education, allowing “students to move in and out [of education] at different times as it proves helpful” (Hughes, 2006, p. 260) and satisfying the pressing need, in an age when the need to re-skill affects people throughout their lives, “to make schooling, and particularly secondary schooling, work effectively for all, rather than using it as a filtering system, leaving a large proportion of students with a feeling of failure and frustration” (Hughes, 2006, p. 260).

## 2. Teacher Training and Professional Development

How teachers can be prepared and empowered to take up new roles and effectively perform teaching to meet the challenges and expectations raised from education reforms and paradigm shifts in school education is a crucial concern in policy and implementation

of teacher education in Asia-Pacific (Cheng, *et al.*, 2004, p. 3).

In the global setting of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, traditional methods of teacher-to-student information transfer can no longer deal with the volume of new knowledge which is “too huge for any possible delivery to students during school years” (Cheng, 2001). In addition, the subject knowledge that is taught in schools is often outdated and irrelevant for the students’ future. It is vital, therefore, to produce a highly qualified and committed teaching force and make teacher education institutions more effective in the provision of up-to-date, socially and technologically relevant teaching models. In addressing this goal, these institutions should be given the autonomy and responsibility to rebuild their programs, “and the mandate to do the kind of research that can support the teaching profession as a knowledge-based endeavor” (Cheng, 2001). This would also involve overcoming obstacles such as “subject knowledge vs. professional knowledge,” “scholarship of discovery vs. scholarship of teaching and application,” and “exclusiveness vs. competitiveness” which have persisted to date (Cheng & Chow, 2004, p. 229).

Teacher-training is extremely important in education reform. Research in Hong Kong (Hoare & Kong, 2008) and in Canada (Stevens, 1983, cited in Genesee, 2008) has shown that a lack of awareness on the part of teachers regarding the theory and practice of bilingual methods, usually due to insufficient teacher training and professional development, can result in a corresponding failure of the language program to achieve the expected outcomes. If combined with a lack of dissemination and promotion on the part of policy makers, “a vacuum at the mid-level of school adoption” (Feng, 2007, p. 6), and adverse contextual factors in schools, then any educational innovation can be diluted beyond recognition. This study therefore recommends that:

1. Appropriate in-service teacher training and support programs should be implemented as indispensable parts of any educational reform in Korea;
2. Teacher training institutions, when rebuilding their programs to suit the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, should be encouraged to take on contemporary language teaching theories and practices, including inquiry-based learning. New models require new methods, and language education must adapt to the changing times, emphasizing - learning “as a self-actualizing, discovering, experiencing, enjoyable, and reflecting process” (Cheng & Chow, 2004, pp. 230-231).
3. Pre-service teacher-education programs should be expanded to five or six years, with teaching practicums for student language teachers being extended from the five weeks to a minimum of one whole school year. The example of Finland shows that extensive on-site teacher training is extremely effective in producing autonomous, professionally responsible teachers, competent in both theory and practice.

### 3. Parental Involvement

The third recommendation is that initiatives which were begun in the mid 1990's to encourage and facilitate increased participation by diverse stakeholders (Anna Kim, 2005) might be intensified in the near future, with parents being brought into the process of policy-making and implementation of reform (Chong-Jae Lee, 2001). Parents are the ultimate stakeholders in any education system, though they are sometimes ignored in favor of more 'expert' interests, "However, parents' participation in school management has ironically been very limited in Korea while their contributions were the main factor for rapid educational development" (Anna Kim, 2005, p. 128). It is certain that no attempt at innovation can hope to be successful without parental support and participation.

### 4. Choice

A significant finding of this research, one which emerged from all the schools visited, is the element of choice. In Finland, for example, municipalities have the choice of prescribing their own criteria for local schools, teachers choose how to meet Core Curriculum goals and parents have the choice to send their children to immersion schools. In European Schools, students can choose the medium of instruction, and in some of the state schools visited, teachers could choose to implement bottom-up reform by modifying existing programs or coming up with their own innovations. The respect for professionalism and self-direction that lies behind such a culture of trust results in an enhancement of standards on the part of teachers and improved achievement by students at all levels. Rather than seeking to micro-manage the 'key players', it appears that successful programs actively encourage (and provide opportunities for) professional involvement and participation. The fourth recommendation of this paper is, therefore, that choice and trust be incorporated into the Korean education system through decentralization, self-determination (for provinces and schools), and extended choice of schools (for parents) (Chong-Jae Lee, 2001).

### 5. Assessment

As mentioned in section III.8, it was noticeable during the research period that the CEFR, Europass, the European Portfolio and ALTE<sup>5</sup>-approved assessment tools such as the EB, the IB, and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) are increasingly being used or made available to students as internationally accredited

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<sup>5</sup> ALTE: The Association of Language Testers in Europe

assessment tools. These examinations are accepted worldwide by employers and universities and provide a secure standard of achievement for all stakeholders. In view of this situation, it is recommended that further research be carried out into the feasibility of introducing examinations that satisfy global assessment criteria (as measured by international assessment bodies) into the Korean education system (cf. Finch, 2009). This would have obvious benefits for secondary students, employers and educators in general.

The above recommendations are offered as a means not only of enhancing and supplementing the significant changes that are already taking place in English language education in Korea (Oryang Kwon, 2000), but also of facilitating the sort of paradigm shift that is necessary if the challenges of globalization are to be met and if Korea is to ensure its economic status in the world.

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## APPENDIX A

The following schools were visited by the researcher during the research trip in 2008. Not all these schools are mentioned in the study, but they all contributed to the research data and helped to build an overall picture of successful models of language teaching in the countries visited. Most of the schools are representative examples of dual-language teaching.

The Netherlands	GSG, Schagen (high school) Scala College, Alphen a/d Rijn (high school) ROC Horizon College, Alkmaar (vocational college) European School, Bergen (Netherlands)
Finland	Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, professor Rolf Palmberg Vaasa University, Centre for Multilingualism, professor Siv Björklund Vaasa Övningsskola School Vaasa Merenkurkukoulu School Inkeriparkens Daghem Kindergarten, Vaasa International School of Helsinki Kulosaari Secondary School, Helsinki Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences Finnish Ministry of Education
Germany	University of Education, Weingarten, professor Ute Massler, Pro-CLIL Project PH Weingarten (elementary school), Pro-CLIL
Luxembourg	European School, Luxembourg II (Bertrange/Mamer)
Belgium	European School, Brussels I (Uccle)
England	European School, Culham Graduate School of Education, Bristol University, Pro-CLIL project

Applicable levels: Kindergarten, primary, secondary, tertiary

Key words: Reform, policy, language models, bilingual, immersion, CLIL

Andrew E. Finch  
Dept. of English Education  
Kyungpook National University  
1370 Sankyuk-3-dong, Buk-gu  
Daegu 702-701, Korea  
Tel: (053) 950-5832 / H.P.: 010-8960-1031  
Fax: (053) 950-5832  
Email: aef@knu.ac.kr

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