HOW DO YOU SAY ‘IMPERIALISM’?

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING INDUSTRY AND THE CULTURE OF IMPERIALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

by

Robert Prey
B.A. University of Windsor, 2001

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
School of Communication

© Robert Prey 2005

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2005

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.
APPROVAL

NAME: Robert Prey

DEGREE: MA

TITLE OF THESIS: HOW DO YOU SAY 'IMPERIALISM'? THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING INDUSTRY AND THE CULTURE OF IMPERIALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

CHAIR: Dr. Shane Gunster
Assistant Professor, School of Communication

Dr. Yuezhi Zhao
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor, School of Communication

Dr. Richard Gruneau
Supervisor
Professor, School of Communication

Dr. Jan W. Walls
Examiner
Professor, Department of Humanities and Director, Asia-Canada Program

Date: June 21, 2005
PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

W. A. C. Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada
The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics for the research described in this work, or has conducted the research as a member of a project or course approved by the Ethics Office.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for ethics approval and letter of approval is filed with the Office of Research Ethics. Inquiries may be directed to that Office.

Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada
ABSTRACT

Foreign language acquisition provides a fascinating angle from which to analyze the nature and evolving dynamics of global transformation. This thesis examines the emergence and stratospheric growth of the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry in South Korea in the context of ongoing debates over the continued relevancy of theories of cultural imperialism. A case study of the Korean conglomerate YBM/Si-sa, the overwhelming leader in the Korean ELT and English publishing industry, serves as the focal point. Founded over 40 years ago, YBM/Si-sa grew up under the “neo-imperial” conditions set by the USA after the Korean War. Since then, YBM/Si-sa has formed many intimate brand name and business relationships with American publishing, education and media companies. Through these ventures, YBM/Si-sa is aggressively seeking to expand its schools and products around the world, with the English language serving as a critical site for class formation, within and across national boundaries.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my two Korean families; the Kim family, who first welcomed me to their beautiful country in 2001, and the Shim family, who warmly took me into their home and their busy lives while I was doing research in South Korea in 2004.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my family. They weren’t always sure what exactly it was that I was doing, but they were always sure that they supported me.

My utmost gratitude goes out to Dr. Yuezhi Zhao, who infected me with her contagious excitement. I never left her office without feeling intellectually re-energized. It was because of Dr. Zhao that I managed to survive the early periods of disillusionment and loneliness.

I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Gruneau. Due to my travels we met infrequently. However those meetings were enough for me to realize the wealth of knowledge he possesses and how much more I need to learn from him. I was extremely lucky to have him on my committee.

Finally, I acknowledge the incredibly warm and genuine person that is Neena Shahani. She is a true role model and a buoy in the swirling waters of graduate school.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval ............................................................................................................................. ii  
Abstract........................................................................................................................... iii  
Dedication......................................................................................................................... iv  
Acknowledgements.......................................................................................................... v  
Table of Contents............................................................................................................. vi  

### INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 1

### CHAPTER ONE: QUESTIONING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SPREAD ......................... 9  
- Liberal Theories of Language Spread .................................................................................. 9  
- Critical Theories of Language Spread ............................................................................... 12  
- Cultural Imperialism ........................................................................................................ 18  
- Reverse-Flow Theory ....................................................................................................... 21  
- Summary: Present Project ............................................................................................... 26  

### CHAPTER TWO: AMERICAN POST-WAR POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE .... 30  
- American Post-War Political Influence .......................................................................... 32  
- American Post-War Educational Influence: A Shift To American English Usage ......... 33  
- American Post-War Cultural Influence: American Forces Korea Network (AFKN) .......... 36  

### CHAPTER THREE: YBM/SI-SA, THE EARLY DAYS AND ITS DEVELOPMENT INTO THE INDUSTRY GIANT ................................................................. 43  
- The Post-War Korean State’s Modernization Program ....................................................... 43  
- YBM/Si-sa ....................................................................................................................... 45  
- English 900 .................................................................................................................. 49  
- English Language Services (ELS) .................................................................................... 51  
- YBM/Overseas Education Services: Sending Koreans West ............................................. 53  
- Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the TOEIC ......................................................... 54  
- IPS and Foreign Publication Distribution ......................................................................... 57  
- Transnational English Expansion Today .......................................................................... 59  
- ELS and YBM/Si-sa Relationship Today ......................................................................... 59  
- The ELS Brand Name .................................................................................................... 61
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNN and Newsweek: American Media Teaching English</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: YBM/SI-SA’s EXPANSION INTO THE WORLD</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Korean Nation-State Goes Global</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young &amp; Son Global</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YBM/Si-sa’s Overseas Schools</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Allure of Disney</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE: ENGLISH AND TRANSCONTINUALISM</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Imperialist Network – America, To Japan, To Korea, And Onward To</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the USIS</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...to AMCHAM</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English As A Technology For The Information Economy</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Testing And Class Stratification</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnationalizing Class Interests</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions and Resistance</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

It is December 2004, a cold but sunny day in the bustling port city of Busan, South Korea.¹ I patiently wait for a taxi with my 8-year-old travel companion Pyron Kim, the son of my good friend and former boss Kim Sung Tcho. With our suitcases piled on the sidewalk in front of us, Pyron and I discuss the latest Spiderman movie. I haven’t seen it and Pyron figures this out immediately.

“Doc Ock never ever says it like that!” Pyron remarks in utter exasperation.

“Don’t you watch any movies?”

Apparently, I don’t. As Pyron launches into a mini lecture on the world according to Spiderman and any other issue that is of utmost concern in the eyes of a young Korean boy, I take one last look around his neighborhood. Over my left shoulder, against the backdrop of nearby Kumjong Mountain, I see the six-story concrete building that is home to “Moojuk”, the English Language Institute run by Pyron’s father Kim Sung Tcho. I gaze nostalgically at the third floor window of the classroom where I spent a year teaching conversational English to college students from Busan National University. Further on down the block, I notice the sign of a newly opened English institute, which must have sprung up during the time I was back in Canada. It is just one of the many competitors to Sung Tcho’s business. This is an industry where everyone is trying to find a niche. Where every entrepreneur tries to hone in on the best way to sell the

¹ From henceon, I will use both ‘Korea’ and ‘South Korea’ interchangeably to refer to the Republic of Korea. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, when referred to, will only be called by its common name, ‘North Korea’.
English language to Korean children, teens, university students, businessmen, housewives and everyone who may fall in between.

The taxi arrives. I hastily load our luggage into the trunk and climb into the backseat after Pyron. I tell the driver that we are headed to the central train station and then settle into another round of nonsense banter with Pyron. Over the course of many such cab rides, I have become accustomed to the visible shock that never fails to overcome every taxi driver, or any other Korean, who catches site of Pyron, a young Korean boy, speaking in fluent English to me, a white foreigner. The questions come quickly and in perfect sequence.

"Is this foreigner your father?" the driver asks Pyron in rapid-fire Korean.

"No, he's my friend."

This response never fails to trigger a deep laugh of incredulity. For Pyron seems to be the only Korean who is blissfully unaware of the fact that in Korea, you can only be "friends" with someone your own age.

"Why do you speak English so fluently?"

Pyron rolls his eyes, utterly frustrated at having to explain this for the "zillionth time". He turns his head to the window and simply replies, "Because I can."

I always feel sorry for him in these situations because I know how much he hates this sort of attention. It is not easy for an 8 year old to understand why he is elevated to superstar status by adults and relegated to freak status by his peers, simply because of the language he uses to express himself in. At the same time, I fully understand the astonishment and curiosity displayed by the driver, and in my best Korean, I apologize for Pyron's rudeness and I attempt to answer his many questions. I tell him that Pyron's father is an English teacher and institute owner, who spoke only English to Pyron as a
child. I explain that the den in their home is filled with hundreds of English books, from children’s classics like the Berenstain Bears series, to the poetry of Shel Silverstein, to autobiographies of political figures like Colin Powell. I also tell the driver how I am amazed at the new slang Pyron has learned since I last saw him, much of it coming from the Hollywood movies he watches. I was equally astonished when yesterday Pyron started telling me, in English, about the North Korean nuclear situation. He no doubt picked this up from the CNN newscasts his father tapes and uses as teaching material in his school.

The driver, apparently satisfied with the answers he’s been provided with thus far, asks me why I came to Korea in the first place, and how I became so close with Pyron and his family. I begin by trying to explain to him that I have for a long time been interested in the politics of the Korean peninsula. One of my earliest memories of participating in a “global spectacle” was the television coverage of the 1988 Seoul Olympics. I describe how my family watched it on our small black and white television and how afterwards I asked my German father to explain the division between North and South Korea. I wanted to know if this was similar to the situation in East and West Germany. Years later in the summer of 2001, upon graduating from university and suddenly faced with the foreboding presence of a massive student debt, I decided to go teach English in South Korea for one year. It seemed like both the answer to my money problems and a quencher for my long-held curiosity. The driver smiles when I say this, because of course he knew that I had initially come to Korea to teach English. In Busan there are only two kinds of westerners; the first carry guns and wear crew cuts, the second come with English dictionaries and bed-heads.

I go on to explain how lucky I was to have received a job at a family business like Kim Sung Tcho’s English institute. I made countless friends amongst the Korean
university students I taught and Sung Tcho’s family warmly welcomed me into their lives. Pyron, who was 5 at the time, became my second brother. Over the course of that year, we used to spend at least 2 hours a day together, hiking in the mountains behind Busan National University, swimming at Haeundae Beach or playing at Busan Grand Children’s Park. I remained in close contact with Pyron and his family after returning to Canada and beginning graduate school in the fall of 2002. Pyron was very excited to hear that I was returning to South Korea to do field research for my thesis in January 2004. On my return trip, I lived in Seoul with another incredible family for the duration of my 6-month stay. Nevertheless, I made many trips down to Busan to visit Pyron and his family before returning to Vancouver in August 2004.

Pyron has been poking me in the ribs for a few minutes now, pleading with me to stop talking so much to the driver and to pay attention to him. I tell him to relax, that we will have more than enough time to talk on the train trip to Seoul and then on the long flight to North America.

At the mention of “North America”, the driver turns almost completely around in his seat and queries “Are you taking the boy to America?”

“No,” I reply. “He is spending Christmas with my family in Canada.”

I proceed to tell him how Pyron’s father, Sung Tcho, had called me up a few months ago and asked if it would be okay for Pyron to spend 3 weeks of the winter holidays on my parent’s farm in southern Ontario. Of course I said yes, and we decided that I would fly to Korea and take Pyron back with me so that he wouldn’t have to face the long trip on his own. Sung Tcho saw it as a great opportunity for Pyron to experience rural Canadian life. My parents saw it as the long-awaited opportunity to finally meet the ‘wunderkind’ himself. Pyron mostly just wanted to see our dog.
“So, that is why I am here now.” I say to the driver, satisfied that I have completely answered all of his questions. We are at the train station by this time, ready for the first leg of our long journey. I pay the driver and thank him. He smiles and says he has one last question.

“What is the topic of your thesis?”

“Oh, it’s kind of confusing” I replied awkwardly. “It’s something about language and culture, I think.”

It is thus very plain to see that this thesis has grown out of personal questions, questions that raised their heads continuously in the year I spent living and working as an English teacher in South Korea. The trend that I was part of is a relatively recent but dramatic one. Almost everyone knows a young, university graduate who, undecided about what to do next, and/or heavily in debt, decides to head east...Far East. As one cog in a global phenomenon, it becomes very easy to lose perspective, to ignore one’s historical place and role as a historical subject. It becomes very easy to just take for granted the political realities of a particular language, its teachers and learners, and that slippery concept we clumsily call 'culture'. It is easy to get lost in a world of work visas, bosses and students, weekends and foreigner bars, contract completion pay and holidays in Southeastern Asia. This thesis is thus an attempt to outline a more historical and structural foundation to the world of the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry, and an attempt to pick out some patterns amongst the seeming chaos of global transformation.
I will examine the emergence and stratospheric growth of the ELT industry\(^2\) in South Korea against the backdrop of debates over cultural imperialism. I approach this topic from a historical perspective that attempts to trace the changes and development of the ELT industry in South Korea in relation to the larger political and economic context of the situated period. It is important to take this approach because something like the overwhelming success of the ELT industry in Korea may appear simple, commonsensical, or straightforward when viewed within a limited scale of time, but it takes on a different character when observed from a broader historical context.

Most of the data for this thesis was gathered during a period of fieldwork in South Korea, conducted between January and August 2004. The research was done in the capital city of Seoul and also in the southern port city of Busan. The research involved three aspects: archival research and monitoring print media content, documentary research, and interviews. I searched newspaper and magazine archives for relevant materials in both Canada and South Korea. While living in South Korea, I also subscribed to the Korea Herald newspaper for the duration of my 6-month stay. Each day I searched the newspaper for articles that related to my thesis topic and I stored these articles in a clippings file. I was also able to gather numerous primary documents, such as YBM/Si-sa press releases and promotional material that greatly aided in the formation of my thesis. Furthermore, I obtained a copy of YBM/Si-sa CEO and founder, Y. B. Min's autobiography, 영어강국 Korea를 키운 3.8따라지 (One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English). I read this book with the help of my friend Cho Seong Wha, who assisted me with translating some difficult sections.

\(^2\) I am not so concerned here with the “English language” per se and how it has been hybridized, although there are many interesting works of this nature which explore how new Englishes are constantly emerging, and challenging dominant value-laden notions of ‘standard English’ (see the academic journal World Englishes). I am more concerned with the idea of English and how this fuels the global expansion of the ELT industry.
Much of the information, anecdotes and perspectives for this thesis were derived through twelve in-depth interviews and numerous informal discussions. My interviewees included various YBM/Si-sa employees — including two separate interviews with the CEO and founder of the company, and with various editors and managers of different YBM/Si-sa branches. I also spoke with academics, students, and a couple of private ELT institute owners. I relied on open-ended interviews rather than a more rigid and formal questionnaire due to the fact that this structure seemed more appropriate for my topic, and for my diverse group of interviewees. I did rely on semi-structured interviews when meeting with employees of YBM/Si-sa because I was required to present a list of general questions before I was granted each interview. A much more informal process was used when discussing my thesis questions with individuals that I knew on a more personal level. I also interviewed Dr. Gi-Wook Shin, director of the Korean Studies program at Stanford University’s Asia-Pacific Research Center while I was living in Berkeley, California, in the fall of 2003. In all interviews, I attempted to engage in the type of dialogue that moved beyond simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers. Every interviewee granted me permission to use his or her name in this thesis before we began the interview process. Data collected through these interviews provided me with a rich source of context and perspective which I could compare with my textual research and with the more abstract theoretical components of this thesis.

In the following chapters, I will attempt to describe how the ELT industry has impacted South Korean society, and how the English language today is a key site for transnational capitalist class formation. Throughout, I will demonstrate the role American cultural imperialism plays in this process. In Chapter Two, I will outline the history of American occupation and involvement in South Korea after the Korean War. In Chapter Three, I will turn to my case study – YBM/Si-sa. I will detail the company's
origins, its development into an industry giant and the various business relationships it has established with American educational and mass media institutions up until the present day. Chapter Four will deal with YBM/Si-sa's own global expansionary pursuits, and the significance of the company's foreign operations for the global English market. More theoretical aspects of the global spread of English, its relation to global capitalism and the impact the hegemony of English has on both Korean society and transnational class interests will be discussed in Chapter Five. I will finish with some conclusions in Chapter Six. Now, let us first turn to Chapter One, where I begin by locating this study within an academic context through documenting the various works of scholars who have covered similar territory.
CHAPTER ONE:
QUESTIONING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SPREAD

English has become a lingua franca. Educated people throughout the world are expected to communicate fluently in English in addition to their first language. In East Asian countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, English is taught as a fundamental foreign language; fundamental because it is an essential tool for success in those societies.\(^1\) Thus, there can be little argument over the phenomenal expansion of what was "an obscure language of a few persons just 400 years ago."\(^2\) However, it is nevertheless interesting to look at the different ways that academics have characterized this spread of English, and the often conflicting theoretical models they have turned to for explanatory power. Most of these academics write within a field that can be loosely classified as the Sociology of Language. I will first delve into a few of the key writers within this discipline and summarize it's two main theoretical camps; which I will call the liberal and critical theories of language spread.

**Liberal Theories of Language Spread**

Scholars, who analyze the global spread of English from what can be called the 'liberal tradition', tend to share one basic feature; they operate from the perspective that

---

\(^1\) Jong Oh Eun, "How Idealized American English Norms Are Created And Reinforced In English Lessons On Television: A Discourse." (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 1.

"English is a language for wider communication"³. David Crystal, a professor of linguistics and the author of more than 90 books, is a giant within this field. His popular book *English as a Global Language* (1997) traces the historical rise of English to global status and discusses what the advantages and disadvantages to having a global language are. Crystal demonstrates how English has served and is serving as a lingua franca in areas as diverse as international relations, the media, international travel, international safety, education and communications. He documents, in an almost triumphant tone that it is estimated that 670 million speakers of English have native or native-like competence and if we were to include speakers with 'reasonable competence' in English, the total number of people in the world using English would increases to about 1.8 billion.⁴ In a latter book, *Language and the Internet* (2001), Crystal delves into how modern technology, primarily the Internet, has made English one of the major contact languages between speakers of different languages. He uses as evidence the fact that over 100 million hosts had been connected to the Internet by the year 2000 and that roughly 80 percent of electronically stored information is in English.⁵

There have been numerous other writings by academics that take a liberal perspective on the growth of English. One example is the definitive sociological study *The Spread of English: The Sociology of English as an Additional Language*. In the book, the authors Conrad, Cooper and Fishman, use a complex statistical cross-tabulation method to link the use of English in 102 non-native English speaking countries with a number of economic, educational, and demographic variables.⁶ The results show a positive correlation between many variables such as English and military imposition.

³ Ibid., 23.
length of colonial rule, urbanization and religious composition.\(^7\) One of the authors, Andrew W. Conrad is a scholar who has made a career out of studying the worldwide spread of English. Conrad, like Crystal argues that no one owns English, and that it "cannot be tied exclusively (or even primarily) to any shared cultural past, any "ethnic" identity, any religion (as Arabic is to Islam), any racial group, or any ideology. One can be an anarchist, neo-Marxist, or Fascist in English as well as one can be a social democrat or post-industrial capitalist."\(^8\) This is Conrad's main point; that English is merely a neutral tool, which can be fitted to suit the needs of any culture, social group or individual. Thus for him, human agency should be the primary locus of academic investigation into language spread. He defines his discipline as one which should be concerned with the "empirical question of how a particular language is understood to those learning it (the attitude question), or how the language is used in a particular socio-cultural setting (the function question), or even how the teaching of the language may play a role in the intentions of those teaching it (the ideology question)..."\(^9\)

This is where we enter the crucial battleground between liberal scholars of language spread (like Crystal and Conrad), and the critical school of thought that I will describe in the next section. Liberal theorists lament the politicisation of linguistics. Conrad in a combative article entitled, "The international role of English: The state of the discussion", argues that the debate over the relative status of languages is carelessly borrowing from the rhetoric of political science. For Conrad, political science is about power relations between individuals, groups and nations but linguistics is about language and a language cannot be "powerful". Thus he forcefully critiques Robert


\(^9\) Ibid., 19-20.
Phillipson's book *Linguistic imperialism* (1992), for repeatedly describing the English language as powerful. Conrad believes that Phillipson, by using "imperialism" as a guiding framework, begins from a flawed position that virtually guarantees empirical blindness. However, I would argue that while one may find weaknesses in Phillipson's thesis, it is in fact this obsession with limiting the boundaries of the study of language spread that demonstrates a certain blindness on the part of liberal theorists. By abstracting language from the rest of society (ie. politics and power relations), these scholars seem to promote the view that language is something that almost propels itself forward. Of course, mention is made of world historical events that brought English to this global level, but this description takes the form of seemingly unrelated background storytelling. Nowadays, it is apparently new technologies (ie. the Internet), which continue to facilitate the spread of English, not ongoing social, economic and political themes. In liberal linguistic theory, it is the English language itself that sits front row, getting all the attention.

Let us now look at critical theories of language spread in more detail.

**Critical Theories of Language Spread**

While there is no doubt that the global spread of English now allows people from far away countries and distinct cultures to speak with one another, the English language has also come to serve as much more than simply a tool for communication. Academics who take a more critical approach to this topic like to point out that English is also a sort of "Aladdin's Lamp", or a gatekeeper for one's future success. To put it simply, the ability

---

10 Ibid., 19.
to speak English is closely related to improved socio-economic status, prestige, and education, and this commands respect in countries with a different mother tongue.\(^{11}\)

Alistair Pennycook is one respected academic who has called for a critical applied linguistics that explores the social, cultural and political dimensions of English as an International Language. Pennycook sees the "self-conscious efforts at privileging English as a 'worldly' global commodity as a manifestation of contemporary neo-colonialism."\(^{12}\) He argues that the spread of English is neither natural or neutral, nor beneficial.\(^{13}\) Pennycook points out that it is the post-colonial legacy and the political and economic forces of international capitalism that have created a special status for English in the world and he problematizes the liberal view of colonialism that seeks to see "both sides" of things in an apolitical way. He writes,

> There is still a pressing need to write against the massive history that has extolled the benefits of [English] colonialism for so long, and, second, this history cannot be reduced to some even-handed balance sheet in which some things were lost and others gained...Having myself watched – and in some sense participated in – the micro-politics of colonialism, the constant dismissals, inequalities, putdowns, racisms of everyday life in Hong Kong, I see no good reason to go looking for the "good" [in English] colonialism.\(^{14}\)

B.R. Bapuji is another writer who has attempted to focus on the socio-historical context in which Linguistics in general and Language Education in particular are situated. In his book entitled, *Society, State and Education*, he argues that,

> The essence of Imperialism is not only economic exploitation, political oppression, military coercion and cultural domination but also linguistic imposition...Where Imperialism tolerated the use of indigenous languages, it established hierarchical relationships among languages.

\(^{11}\) Jong Oh Eun, 14.


\(^{13}\) Jong Oh Eun, 16.

Imperialism sees Education in general and Language Education in particular as the main instruments for disseminating its culture.¹⁵

Throughout the book, Bapuji contests the mainstream idea that linguistics is merely a scholarly exercise into the science of language, devoid of any social meaning. Instead, he identifies the discipline of linguistics as a fundamental interest of the dominant ruling class and its imperial aims. Bapuji points to many historical examples that document how linguistics came to the aide of political projects. For example, he explains how Britain consolidated its Imperial rule in the mid-19th Century by sending scholars to the many colonies to collect precise linguistic facts about "native speech". Likewise a Japanese official in colonial Korea once stated, referring to the Japanese national anthem, "Our ultimate goal (of Japanese teaching) should be that Koreans feel in themselves the holy/benevolent spirit of the (Japanese) national language that streams out with those words."¹⁶ As Hiroyuki Miyawaki writes, the linguistic concept of a national language for Japan's new empire was "strongly influenced by two pioneers of Japanese linguistics, Kazutoshi Ueda and Koichi Hoshina, who were both sent to Europe in the 1890s and early 1910s respectively by the Japanese government to research language policies in European countries."¹⁷

By the mid-20th Century, the power balance and the methods utilized to exert international influence had shifted, but the political importance of linguistics remained the same. Bapuji writes, "in 1973, it was estimated that America, the most aggressive Imperialist, allocate(d) nearly one billion dollars annually for language training."¹⁸ In conclusion, he argues that although "the 'thirst for knowledge' and 'search for truth' may

---

¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ Bapuji, 49.
inspire individual scholars to undertake research in linguistics, the decisive force that gives a general direction to linguistic research in the modern times has been 'Imperialism'.”

On that note, we now turn to a critical scholar, Robert Phillipson, who has gone one step further than Pennycook and Bapuji and developed a theory of “linguistic imperialism”. By this he means that the “dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” Phillipson's book provides a fascinating collection of factual evidence and anecdotes that describe how and why English has become so dominant. Speaking of English as a “world commodity”, he paints a compelling picture of the economic benefit that Britain and America accrue by promoting the spread of English. For example he points to a statement made by the Director-General of the British Council in that organization's 1987/88 Annual Report,

Britain's real black gold is not North Sea oil but the English language. It has long been at the root of our culture and now is fast becoming the global language of business and information. The challenge facing us is to exploit it to the full.

Phillipson generates this theory of linguistic imperialism from J. Galtung’s (1980) book *The True Worlds: A Transnational Perspective*. In it, Galtung posits a general theory of imperialism that consists of six mutually interlocking categories: *economic, political, military, communicative* (meaning communication and transport), *cultural, and social*. For his part, Phillipson sees linguistic imperialism as being a sub-type of the *cultural* category of imperialism. He recognizes that other related sub-types of this

---

19 Ibid., 47.
20 Phillipson, 47.
21 Ibid., 48-49.
category include media and educational imperialism but for the purposes of his book, Phillipson attempts to zero in on linguistic imperialism. He does this in order to locate the specific role of language within the larger imperialist structure. In his opinion, this is important because,

Language is the primary means for communicating ideas. Therefore an increased linguistic penetration of the Periphery is essential for completing the move away from crude means, the sticks of colonial times and even the more discreet means of the neo-colonialist phase of asymmetrical bargaining, to neo-neo-colonialist control by means of ideas.23

As useful as Phillipson’s concept of linguistic imperialism is in directing our attention towards the significant role language plays in imperialism, the concept has its limitations. First of all, Phillipson tends to focus on the struggle between the “powerful”, “dominant” language of English, and “weak”, “local” languages, with the foreshadowed result that one will have to lose out. This invokes the spectre of cultural homogenisation, whereby English threatens to submerge all ‘culturally specific’ languages in its wake. This type of argument is an easy target for scholars who like to point out that globalization does not necessarily imply homogenisation. As Laitin (1993) writes, “The maintenance of multilingual repertoires rather than the replacement of competing languages in all domains by English will be the mark of the emerging world language system.”24 Furthermore, Barbara Wallraf notes,

...more than three times as many of the world’s people continue to be native speakers of Chinese than native speakers of English, and fifty years from now (based on population projections and patterns of intergenerational language inheritance) it is estimated that English speakers will also be outnumbered by speakers of Hindi and Urdu, with Arabic and Spanish contending with English for third, fourth and fifth place among language groups.25

---

23 Phillipson, 53.
Thus a far more useful approach to looking at issues of language and imperialism would begin from the realization that English is by far and away the most common second language learned by people around the globe. When it comes to foreign language acquisition, English dwarfs other languages in popularity. This phenomenon of learning English as a second language ensures that the English language has become a *key site for class formation*. This is due to a number of reasons. First, the *opportunity* to master the language is heavily dependent on one's pre-existing socio-economic position, as language classes are often very expensive and immersion in an English speaking culture is possible only for wealthier classes. Furthermore, standardized tests of English ability such as the TOEIC and the TOEFL function as highly influential class determiners themselves. This is a fundamental issue which Phillipson is not able to address with his theory of linguistic imperialism. I will deal with the issue of how English now plays a key international role in determining class formation and class stratification in more detail later on.

Secondly, as mentioned already, Phillipson sees linguistic imperialism as being a sub-type of the *cultural category* of imperialism. He is correct in pointing out the crucial importance that language plays in first communicating ideas, and then in exerting cultural domination through the use of those ideas. However, in his book he focuses excessively on the role that British and American governments, foundations and councils have played in spreading the English language and in the process he largely ignores the role mass media and popular culture have played in both transmitting and teaching English. For example, in South Korea, as my thesis will demonstrate, the spread of the English language since the Korean War has been intimately linked with the

---

establishment and growth of American media outlets and the continued spread of American-dominated popular culture through various media channels in that country. Thus, for the purposes of the present project, I believe that it is necessary to refit Phillipson's concept of linguistic imperialism within the larger paradigm of debates over cultural imperialism. That being said, it is now time to take a closer look at this rich theoretical field.

Cultural Imperialism

Theories of cultural imperialism gained prominence in the 1970s through the writings of international communication scholars as diverse as Thomas Guback, Jeremy Tunstall, Herbert Schiller and Oliver Boyd-Barrett. It is difficult to arrive at one agreed upon definition of cultural imperialism because as John Tomlinson, in his book Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction states, “it refers to a range of broadly similar phenomena.” He writes, “the ‘cultural imperialism thesis’ does not exist anywhere in (any) original form: there are only versions.”

The general argument but forth in the most common version of cultural imperialism, was that inequalities between rich and poor countries were being exacerbated by an international communication system that expanded by flooding developing countries with television programs and motion pictures. For empirical research, scholars drew from clear-cut examples of Western based media organizations dumping cultural products on dependent Third World economies. This process was regarded as a new form of imperialism, an imperialism that encouraged the exportation through the mass media of Western (primarily meaning American) ways of life into

27 Ibid., 9.
"periphery" regions and newly independent postcolonial countries. A new layer of dependency was thus created which effectively prevented the development of indigenous national cultures. As Thomas Guback stated, "the powerful U.S. communication industry, including film and television as well as news, exerts influence, sometimes quite considerable, over the cultural life of other nations."28 Similarly, Jeremy Tunstall noted in his book The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World, "authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world [are] being overwhelmed by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial media products, mainly from the U.S.A."29 The theory of cultural imperialism provided the conceptual force behind the movement for the New World Information and Communication Order and the recommendations found in the 1980 UNESCO report, Many Voices, One World.

The common thread that ran through many of the writings informed by the theory of cultural imperialism was their focus on mass media. At the time, many of the more "pluralist" scholars of international communication even proposed that critical research of this type be grouped under the heading "media imperialism". One of the leading thinkers representing this view was the British scholar J. Oliver Boyd-Barrett who defined media imperialism as "the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution, or content of the media in any country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected."30 Similarly, Christine Ogan

described media imperialism as the "process whereby the United States and Western Europe produce most of the media products, make the first profits from domestic sales, and then market the products in Third World countries at costs considerably lower than those the countries would have to bear to produce similar products at home."31 Thus while more critical (often neo-Marxian) scholars utilized the term "cultural imperialism", liberals preferred the term "media imperialism". However, in general the two terms were used as synonyms. As Livingston A. White points out, the interchangeability of the two terms "implies that the media have such an overwhelming role in the process referred to as "cultural imperialism" that the word "cultural" can be interchanged with "media" from time to time."32 There is a danger here, as one must be careful not to overstate the role of the media when attempting to explain cultural happenings. Tomlinson (1991) rightly points out in Cultural Imperialism: A critical introduction, that "to understand claims about media imperialism, one would need to examine the relationship of the media to other aspects of culture without assuming its centrality from the outset."33

The tendency to describe processes of cultural imperialism by heavily referring to examples of media imperialism set the stage for its inevitable critique, something which became intellectually fashionable in the 1990s. By focusing on media and abstracting it from the multiple ways cultural power is exerted, theorists of media imperialism had set themselves up for attack. Furthermore, many traditional theorists of cultural and media imperialism tended to describe world relations in the centre-periphery model of world systems theory without properly acknowledging the agency of elites in the periphery. Critics argued, that world systems theory was outdated, or too conceptually clumsy to

---

33 Ibid.
deal with current realities. Theories of dependency and cultural imperialism, the
argument went, may have worked in the Cold War era but were seen to be of limited use
in the emerging global environment of "transnational commercialization". The new
global environment was characterized as one that consisted of multi-directional cultural
flows. In the following section I will summarize the general ideas of "reverse flow
theory", a school of thought that arose to critique the arguments of cultural imperialism.

Reverse-Flow Theory

Since the 1980s, the advance of communication technologies has in the words of
Michael Griffin, "shift(ed) the network of control from the overt military-industrial synergy
of the Cold War era (particularly in the U.S.), to a global grid of transnational
communications systems..." Given these complexities, the idea of cultural imperialism
which grew out of "international and/or intercultural relations of dominance and
dependence" seemed to be a relic of the past. This challenge to the cultural
imperialism (or media imperialism) framework derived its empirical power from the
expansion of media production out of traditional Western "center" locations. Media
scholars including Joseph Straubhaar, Geoffrey Reeves, and John Sinclair pointed in
their writings to evidence that regional hubs of media production were increasingly
beginning to emerge in places like Brazil, Mexico, Japan and the Middle East, along with
regional, "geocultural" markets for their cultural products. The book, 

Global Television: Peripheral Vision, (1996), published by Australian scholars, Sinclair,

34 A term used by Michael Griffin (2002) to explain the spread of "the logic of the market, and the
aspirations of a life based on consumerism." (Michael Griffin, "From Cultural Imperialism to
Transnational Commercialization: Shifting paradigms in International Media Studies" Global
Media Journal 1, no.1 (2002)

35 Michael Griffin, "From Cultural Imperialism to Transnational Commercialization: Shifting

36 Ibid., 9.

37 Straubhaar, J. "Distinguishing the global, regional and national levels of world television" in A.
Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (Eds.), Media in global context: A reader (New York: St. Martin's.
1997) 284-298, quoted in Griffin, 8.
Jacka, and Cunningham, is widely cited by like-minded scholars who have come to reject the thesis of cultural or media imperialism as empirically and theoretically unsustainable in the mid-to-late 1990s. The authors point to examples of some 'non-metropolitan' regions, such as Hong Kong, which have significant television industries and are successfully exporting programs and personnel to neighbouring countries. One can see the same processes occurring in South Korea in recent years. The total amount of South Korean television program exports increased more than 5-fold between 1995 and 2003. Dal Yong Jin writes that "exports of television programs in 2002 exceeded imports of television programs for the first time in (Korean) history." These television programs mainly found audiences in China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Japan and their popularity coincided with an increase in the circulation of Korean films in the same region. A Financial Times article even stated, "Korean creative industries are staging their own version of cultural imperialism by expanding into neighbouring Asian markets..."

The United States' direct share of the Korean television and film market has levelled off with the emergence of talented Korean producers and the popularity of co-production strategies between Korean broadcasters and broadcasters in other East Asian countries. However, in reality as Dal Yong Jin points out, US cultural dominance in Korea's cultural market has not decreased at all. Massive capital flows through investment and the influence of American based transnational corporations through the

form of joint ventures has "more rapidly increased than those of a few regional producers." For example, MTV established MTV Korea in July 2001 with Korea's On Media. Korea's MBC Sports has an affiliation with Disney owned ESPN, and JEI, a Korean educational channel, contracted with Nickelodeon, a Viacom affiliate in order to broadcast 4 hours of Nickelodeon-produced animation everyday. Likewise, the stellar examples of "reverse cultural imperialism" cited by Sinclair et al. also exhibit these same characteristics. Televisa in Mexico and Globo TV in Brazil, increasingly entered into joint ventures with transnational giants such as News Corporation, and were rarely wholly autonomous. These developments considerably weaken the arguments of reverse flow theory.

On a theoretical level, reverse flow theorists often tended to reify media, abstracting it from the larger multifaceted concept of cultural imperialism. This is of course identical to the misstep first taken by scholars who narrowly characterized cultural imperialism as meaning media imperialism. This reductionist approach served to blind scholars to the larger issue of the spread of global consumer culture and capitalist relations. As Dal concludes,

The rapidly growing emerging market in several places is a result of the interaction among transnational capital, international agencies, and emerging domestic actors, while the U.S. still maintains its dominance in global communication in the early twenty-first century. Cultural imperialism maintains its rule in developing countries not only through the exports of Western cultural products, but also through the institutionalization of cultural industries in these countries. Cultural imperialism acts as a means of cultural transformation in the form of flow of cultural products, capital, and industries in the globalization era. (emphasis mine)

---

42 Dal Yong Jin, (accessed on 24 March 2005)
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
Thus, the argument can be made that if Korea begins to export its soap operas to other countries in East Asia, or in light of the present topic, if a Korean company opens English Language Schools across the globe, this by no means proves that Korea has freed itself from the grip of cultural imperialism. Instead, it may show just how successful American cultural imperialism has been and continues to be.

Perhaps a more fruitful approach to theorizing cultural imperialism then can be found in Herbert Schiller's much-cited definition, where the concept of cultural imperialism is used to describe,

...the sum of processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system.45

While Schiller has also been critiqued at times for overstating the role mass media plays in issues of cultural domination46, his definition of cultural imperialism certainly allows for multiple factors that operate within the political, economic and cultural realms. In order to truly understand Schiller's arguments however, it is crucial to recognize that the real target of Schiller's critique is the world capitalist system and class domination.47 As he wrote in his memoirs, "I interpreted my task as trying to explain how the powerful communication system in all its spheres (film, television, publishing, the press, recording, and education) was structured, and how it created, or at least justified, inequality."48 His inclusion of "education", and the way he saw it as being interlinked with

46 See Tomlinson, 58.
47 Ibid., 68.
other spheres of message production and creation, is certainly crucial for the purposes of this project.

Already in 1976, when he published Communication and Cultural Domination, Schiller realized that it had become "inappropriate to describe the contemporary mechanics of cultural control as the outcome of 'invasion'..."\(^{49}\) He spent a great deal of time describing the "consent, solicitation, and efforts of national leadership in the periphery to incorporate their societies into the world system."\(^{50}\) Thus in Schiller's definition, cultural imperialism cannot be simply proved or disproved by looking at the citizenship carried by those in control of a nation's cultural industries.

In contrast to reductive theories of "media imperialism" and with Phillipson's conception of "linguistic imperialism" -- for Schiller global cultural homogenisation is not the central focus or concern. Schiller realized that capitalism, driven by the logic of profit, will adapt its strategies to fit local conditions, as long as this doesn't interfere with the bottom line. Instead, for Schiller, it was the American-led internationalisation of the capitalist class system that concerned him most, what he called "...the replication throughout the periphery of the class structure of the core countries."\(^{51}\)

However, Schiller's views on cultural imperialism have often been sharply criticized by scholars for being too functionalist. Quotes like "The cultural-communications sector of the world system necessarily develops in accordance with and facilitates the aims and objectives of the general system"\(^{52}\) give the impression of cultural imperialism acting in the service of the capitalist system. John Tomlinson sums up this view as one that suggests "the 'good life' of capitalist consumerism is displayed

\(^{49}\) Schiller, Communication and Cultural Domination. 9, quoted in Maxwell, 70.
\(^{50}\) Maxwell, 70.
\(^{51}\) Ibid. 69.
\(^{52}\) Schiller, Communication and Cultural Domination, 6.
as a lure to the powerful in developing countries to get them on to the hook of the capitalist world system.\textsuperscript{53} Often in neo-Marxist discourse, capitalist media is seen as a carrier of capitalist ideology, which instils consumerist values and teaches people how to become good consumers. Tomlinson rightly argues that the assumptions of media effects that underlie many neo-Marxist accounts of cultural imperialism are far too deterministic and he insists that it is difficult to prove empirically whether or not audiences actually internalise media messages in this way.\textsuperscript{54} Changes in values are difficult to quantify, and virtually impossible to explain in simplistic causal patterns.

However, what happens when we look at the active adoption of the language most readily associated with global capitalism – English - as a value, or an ideology, in order to probe the more grounded “cultural implications of multinational capitalism?”\textsuperscript{55} If the English language is seen as a value, or an ideology, perhaps it becomes easier to trace the abstract processes that link the cultural with the economic at the level of the individual.

**Summary: Present Project**

In summary, liberal theorists of language spread argue that no country, or culture owns ‘English’ anymore. The English Language Teaching (ELT) industry today is an industry that is increasingly being owned and controlled by non-Western, non-native English speakers who are using the hegemony of the English language to their advantage. Thus, liberal theorists see imperialism as an anachronistic non-issue. This perspective is echoed by reverse-flow theorists in International Media studies who see

---

\textsuperscript{53} Tomlinson, 104.

\textsuperscript{54} Tomlinson also sees audience research studies such as Ien Ang’s *Watching Dallas* as fundamentally limited in what they can prove about whether audiences create their own meaning out of media texts, or if they do indeed adapt the dominant message. (Tomlinson, 55.)

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 113.
the growth of audiovisual industries in the “peripheries” as proof that the concept of “imperialism” no longer holds any value. Reverse-flow theory evokes the image of previously marginalized regions of the world producing and exporting their own ‘cultural-selves’ out from under a deluge of American media, ready to take control of their own destinies. Both liberal theories of language spread, and reverse-flow theories of international media studies make the same ideological claim, they just point to different “proofs” in order to get there.

Herein lies part of the problem that I will attempt to deal with in this thesis. One cannot simply study in isolation language, or international media flows, and then claim to arrive at conclusions that disprove cultural imperialism. Tomlinson reminds us that cultural influence is always multi-faceted and as I hope my thesis will show, language and media are intimately connected and dependent on one another.

The global spread of English links the economic with the cultural. The global ELT industry is a mammoth enterprise. About one billion people per year are learning English as a second language and teaching English as a foreign language turns over $26 billion annually. This is an industry generated on the most cultural of all activities, as language is the primary means for communicating ideas and values across cultures. In modern times, language increasingly is relying upon mass media in order to do this. Nowadays, a great deal of the English language is being consciously taught in Korea through the same media products and media outlets, such as CNN and Newsweek, that the core of the whole cultural imperialism argument is based around. Therefore, throughout this thesis I will acknowledge the important (although not functionalist) role of the mass media in the spread of English and in the business of ELT, to transform “what

---

56 Ibid., 34.
would otherwise be the unrealized dream of a few modernizers into the dynamic aspiration of a whole people.\textsuperscript{58}

I believe that the ELT industry provides me with a particularly interesting angle from which to view these contentious theoretical debates and to chart this historical process. This is because English is both a by-product of the spread of capitalist logic, and in many cases, the essential practical component for creating unified transnational markets. In order to allow for a macro-level perspective on this topic, I will utilize a political economy framework that looks at these issues in relation to the spread of global capitalism and capitalist class relations. This perspective will also allow me to detail the different, and changing forms of American cultural imperialism, from direct ownership to more subtle issues of ideological dependence. Thus, my thesis will attempt to locate English as a significant cultural implication of the spread of global capitalism, and as a critical site for class formation. Throughout, I will attempt to stay away from the argument that the “invasion” of the English language is threatening any idealized or authentic Korean culture. English in South Korea is not about to become the language of the ‘private sphere’ anytime soon, if ever. Rather the hegemonic ‘power’ that English exerts in South Korea serves to create a parallel world that is politically and economically transnational in orientation, serving to link up the upper-class across borders while at the same time fundamentally re-organizing social class at the national level.

As I noted earlier, theories of cultural imperialism are often criticized for ignoring agency, both at the micro-level of audiences and at the macro-level regarding the role of

national elites in the so-called “periphery”.⁵⁹ Referring to cultural imperialism's neglect of audience agency, John Tomlinson writes, “the practice of watching television cannot be deemed to be straightforwardly imposed”.⁶⁰ The same holds true for the English language in South Korea, albeit in a much more obvious way as a language must be learned, by a learner, an active process which at its heart implies "agency".

However, for the purposes of this thesis, I will mostly limit my concerns to the agency of the 'engineers' behind the Korean ELT industry. I will look at the Korean ELT company – YBM/Si-sa - for my case study. YBM/Si-sa grew up under the imperial conditions set by the US after the Korean War, and is now a giant global English teaching/publishing conglomerate that is itself aggressively seeking to expand around the world. YBM/Si-sa, and other smaller ELT operators in South Korea help shape the global spread of English through the choices they make, though these choices are made not in the conditions of their own choosing.

---

⁵⁹ These elites who collude with Western capital and capitalists are often referred to in the Third World as the “comprador class” (see for example Manjunath Pendakur, Canadian Dreams, American Control, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990, p. 17.)

⁶⁰ Tomlinson, 3.
CHAPTER TWO:
AMERICAN POST-WAR
POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

This chapter will trace the growth of the Korean ELT industry from a time of great upheaval on the Korean peninsula, the Korean War of 1950-1953. However, in order to set the conditions for that historical moment, it is necessary to fill in some background events that are critical in order to understand Korea's relationship to the outside world and to the English language in particular.

In a dissertation that covers the historical arrival of the English language in Korea, Jong Oh Eun describes the “First Phase” of English in Korea, which began when the country signed its first foreign treaty with the United States in 1882. The signing of this treaty effectively opened the “Hermit Kingdom” to the West, at a time when “western cultures had already infiltrated China and Japan.”¹ In 1883, a year after official relations had been established with the United States, a government institution known simply as “English School” opened its doors to the children of 19th Century Korean elites. English lessons were also provided in a number of private schools founded by foreign missionaries who were primarily concerned with spreading Christianity.² As Jung writes,

---

the newly established schools by American missionaries were the primary agents for the (initial) spread of English in Korea.\textsuperscript{3}

From 1910 until 1945 Korea was brutally colonized by Japan. Older Koreans sullenly remember this dark era as an age when all things Korean were devalued, with the Japanese language being forcefully imposed upon the ruled subjects. In school, Japanese was the official language of instruction and Korean was relegated to a private language, only spoken in the home. As Baik writes, Japan attempted to "disseminate a Japanese identity among its colonial subjects through education and language."\textsuperscript{4} However during this period, English was also taught in secondary schools mostly to prepare students for college entrance examinations. Thus, Korean students of this era became recipients of Western culture through Japanese imposed filters.\textsuperscript{5} This period marked the first time English was incorporated into the Korean public school system. However, the ELT industry and the overall hegemony of English in South Korea wouldn't emerge until much later.

Victory for the Allied forces in World War II resulted in Korea's liberation from Japan. It was a liberation in name only however. The political vacuum was quickly filled by the Soviet Union in the northern part of the peninsula and the United States in south. This era marks the start of what Jong Oh Eun refers to as the "Second Phase" of English in Korea. The American Military Government was immediately established in 1945. It directly ruled the southern part of the Korean peninsula for three years, before installing the pro-American Rhee government in the summer of 1948.

\textsuperscript{5} Jong Oh Eun, 27.
Covering this period, Jong writes, "Americans and English-speaking Koreans who were appointed by Americans, occupied all governmental positions to facilitate effective communication." Both the military occupation and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953) contributed to an increased practical and political value of English. As M.J. Baik writes in his book *Language, Ideology and Power*, "English became the language of power; it was the language of the liberators." Similarly, the executive director of the *Language Education Research Institute* at Seoul National University, told me "in the 1940's and 1950's, American Gi's were everywhere. They were the ruling class at the time."

**American Post-War Political Influence**

During the Korean War (1950-1953) the United States had almost full control over South Korea. This control did not end when the Korean War stalled in an armistice in 1953. Instead, American influence over the southern half of the peninsula increased tremendously. This influence manifested itself both visibly in the heavy American military presence, and more invisibly, in the political and social control of the country. Writing about this period, Lee Dong-Hoon states, "Almost all aspects of governmental policy and administration in Korea, including educational issues, were copied after those of the United States." The primary American aim in South Korea was emblematic of almost every US-driven post-World War II foreign exercise to come. The central

---

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
9 Dr. Kim Seong Kon, executive director of the LEI at SNU, interview by author, tape recording, 31 March 2004, Seoul, South Korea. Dr. Kim went on to say, "We Koreans learned English at this time for direct communication because it was a matter of life or death."
10 Ibid., p.17.
endeavour of this policy was to contain the spread of Communism, and to integrate Korea "into the American-dominated world capitalist economy."\footnote{Howard B. Schonberger, \textit{The Cold War and the American Empire in Asia} (Radical History Review, 1985), 139.}

Princeton graduate and U.S.-installed President Seung-Man Rhee, was supported by the United States until the corruption of the Rhee administration led to massive public protests and a successful military coup in 1961. The U.S. government initially opposed the coup, until it became clear that the new leader, General Park Chung-Hee was a staunch anti-communist. This served to endear the new Park regime to the U.S. government.\footnote{Lee Dong-Hoon, p. 18.}

**American Post-War Educational Influence: A Shift To American English Usage**

The early years of the Park regime saw the continued authority of the United States over the Korean education system. The American government continued its policy of sending American military personnel and civilians to Korea to teach English. These Americans constituted the primary English education resource, although a number of Korean teachers and professors were sent to America to receive education and training, a situation which exploded in the years to come.\footnote{N. Park, \textit{Foreign-Language education in Korea: Past, Present and Future}. (Ehakyenkwu, Language Research, 1992), 28; quoted in Jong Oh Eun, 28.} The Korean government attempted to establish a solid foundation for English education within the public system by utilizing such programs as the Fulbright Scholarship, the East-West Culture Center, and the Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers for example, taught English throughout
all levels of the Korean educational system. English was now instituted as a required course in middle and high schools and during the first year of college.

Of course these education outreach programs operated in many more countries than just Korea. By the 1960s, American government funding for educational and cultural work throughout the world had exploded. By 1964, the government was spending 200 million dollars per year, with at least 40 governmental agencies involved in such international work. P.H. Coombs, appointed by Kennedy, dubbed education and culture the 'fourth component' of foreign policy, after economic, political, and military components. American foundations played a considerable role in ensuring the success of this "fourth component." Organizations such as the Ford Foundation, by the mid-1960s had projects in 38 countries and provided grants to American universities to establish English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. One of the Ford Foundation's most significant contributions was in financing the development of the TOEFL examination. This test of English ability became the most important mechanism by which to judge whether foreign student applicants would be able to enter American universities, a topic I will elaborate on in Chapter 5. All in all, the general strategy was to link periphery nations to the "values, institutions, and way of work of the United States."

---

14 K.T. Jung, quoted in Jong Oh Eun, 28.
17 Phillipson, 157.
19 Phillipson, 161.

Of course, the United States had previous experience in introducing a language and education system to a country in a more direct colonial relationship. Phillipson documents how the Americans imposed the English language in the Philippines as the primary language of instruction at the turn of the century, and notes that "with American textbooks, Filipinos started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life" and thus developed a
Lee Dong-Hoon sums up this period by writing that the United States "greatly influenced the policies regarding the national curriculum in general and EFL (English Foreign Language) education in particular, including the areas of educational content, teaching methodology, and assessment." This process operated through what Herbert Schiller has referred to as "educational philanthropy", which, as he noted in Communication and Cultural Domination, was about much more than merely the transfer of skills, but the popularising of "a corporate-commercial interpretation of the value of life."

When we talk of the increased teaching of English in the Korean education system, it is important to point out however that it wasn't just any form of English that was being taught, but specifically American English. While this may seem obvious given the heavy presence of US personnel in Korea, the following anecdote does much to reveal the mid-20th century's shift in global power dynamics, a struggle which illustrated itself very clearly on the Korean peninsula.

During our conversation one afternoon in August 2004, Y.B. Min, the founder and CEO of YBM/Si-sa, the largest player in the Korean ELT industry, told me that it was possible to trace both the growing impact of the American influence on Korea and the diminishing global influence of the British empire, through the history of English textbooks in South Korea. According to Mr. Min, during the Japanese colonial days, textbooks in Korean middle schools and high schools were based on British English. In 1948, three years after the Japanese were forced out of Korea, a new English textbook was published. This textbook still relied exclusively on British spelling and pronunciation. However, when the publishers made the second edition five years later

"borrowed consciousness" due to the resulting dependence on foreign theories and methods. (Phillipson p.153)

20 Lee Dong Hoon, p.19.
during the Korean War, for the first time both British and American grammar was included. American English continued to make steady headway in subsequent publications that came out throughout the 1950s. Eventually in 1963, for the first time middle school and high school English textbooks in South Korea contained no British spelling whatsoever. American English was now considered 'Standard English' in South Korea.

However, to explain the growing hegemony of English in South Korea in purely political terms would be misleading. There were also strong cultural influences and mass media played a crucial role in this process. I will focus on one of the main influences, the American Forces Korea Network in the following section.

**American Post-War Cultural Influence: American Forces Korea Network (AFKN)**

Coalescent with its firm political control, the United States also exerted a strong cultural impact on the battered nation of South Korea. One of the earliest mediums of cultural influence was the American Forces Korea Network (AFKN). AFKN is an affiliate of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, a system, which has been around longer than even the Voice of America. In Korea, the radio-broadcasting arm of the American Forces Korea Network, was established in September of 1950 while the first AFKN television program was broadcast four years after the end of the war on September 15, 1957. The stated goal of both AFKN's radio and television stations is to inform and entertain U.S. troops but its shadow audience is much larger than that. As Jae-Young Kim writes,

---

22 Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 10 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
24 Ibid.
AFKN-TV has been broadcasting for (over) 40 years as an information and entertainment medium for 55,000 United States military personnel, civilian employees, and their dependents. However, as its signal reaches the entire nation through a sophisticated cable and microwave system, AFKN has become one of the most popular entertainment media, among younger Koreans in particular.\(^{25}\)

A number of different surveys have shown that a majority of Koreans watch the network, especially before the 1990s, when other western television media outlets providing competition arrived in Korea. One study conducted in the mid-1980s, reported that 65 percent of Koreans watched AFKN-TV during weekdays, with the percentage of weekend viewers at 82 percent.\(^{26}\) Another survey by Kang and Morgan in 1988, found that about 52% of Korean college students watched AFKN-TV for over an hour every day.\(^{27}\) AFKN’s around the clock programming is comprised overwhelmingly of entertainment shows such as American dramas and sitcoms, with the remaining time filled by American news broadcasts from ABC news, CNN Headline News and 60 Minutes. As well, instead of regular commercials, AFKN-TV presents “Department of Defence internal information, information programs prepared by military and civilian personnel, and other public service announcements.”\(^{28}\) To counter the viewpoint that AFKN is simply there for the American troops, Kim et al. concluded in their study, “Broadcasting in Korea”, that, “there is no doubt that AFKN-TV provides entertainment to Koreans.”\(^{29}\)

In the late 1980's, the Korean public sphere was alive with debate over America’s role on the Korean peninsula in general and more specifically, concerns over AFKN’s

\(^{25}\) Ibid.
\(^{28}\) Kim Jae Young, (online), accessed 13 September 2004.
negative cultural influence on young Koreans. As Jae-Young Kim writes, while the United States promoted their broadcasting policies as a way "to familiarize Koreans with American culture", many Korean civic groups felt that American entertainment insulted Korean values with its highly sexual and violent content. Numerous studies conducted by H.D. Kang, Jong-Geun Kang and Michael Morgan, and others, wrestled with this issue, as did countless newspaper articles at the time.\(^3^0\)

While the studies listed above were mainly concerned with understanding the role AFKN-TV has played in the "Americanisation" of Korea, or in seeing the network as a "propaganda medium" which inundated Koreans with "American values", I want to look more specifically at how AFKN was used to promote a particular value – the value of the English language. In the remainder of this section, I will attempt to outline how AFKN was utilized as an educational tool for those learning the English language and how Korean entrepreneurs harnessed the curiosity amongst Koreans for all things American, by using the network to grow the ELT industry in post-war South Korea.

Soon after AFKN was launched, it became a magnet for Koreans who were interested in learning what Shim (1994) refers to in his book *Englishized Korean*, as "real" English – meaning American English and particularly the slang spoken by US soldiers that occupied South Korea. The early influence AFKN had on the lives of Koreans involved in today's ELT industry is unmistakable. A senior editor at the company YBM/Si-sa, told me that AFKN radio was incredibly popular when he was in university. He related to me how he always listened to AFKN radio with his friends when

\(^3^0\) Kim Jae Young, (online), accessed 13 September 2004.
he should have been in class. He told me how he and his friends would listen intently to
the broadcasts and then discuss what they heard amongst themselves. 31

However, The use of AFKN Radio and AFKN-TV as an English educational tool
didn’t fully bloom until the mid to late 1970s. A newspaper article entitled, “AFKN-TV
Increasingly Popular among College Students for Lively Language Learning”, which
appeared in the August 13, 1980 issue of the Dong-A Ilbo, claims that in the late 1970s,
every university in the country had AFKN-TV English Learning extracurricular clubs. The
article also states that every language institute in the country had instructors who taught
courses specifically on how to study English by using AFKN-TV. Furthermore, a
magazine - AFN News, was published which prepared students by giving English
learning tips for AFKN-TV programs 10 days before they were aired. Another AFKN-TV
broadcasting textbook became popular by providing students and young workers with an
audio-tape and an English/Korean script of a Sunday night AFKN comedy program
called “Rhoda”. The material was released a week before the program aired in order to
attract public attention. Interestingly, the popularity of AFKN-TV also arrived at the same
time as colour TV’s began making their inroads into the Korean marketplace. Domestic
Korean television programming was still only available in black and white, which meant
that there was little incentive to buy a colour TV set. However, the above mentioned
newspaper article enthusiastically states,

AFKN only broadcasts shows that are highly popular in the United States,
so their programming is relatively superior to Korean programming. On
top of this, it also attracts Korean’s interest because it is the only
broadcasting station which telecasts colour TV programming presently in
Korea. 32

31 Keun Dal Lee, Senior Editor of CNNez Magazine, interview by author, tape recording, 25 June
2004, Seoul, South Korea.
32 C. K. Hong, "AFKN-TV Increasingly Popular among College Students for
Lively Language Learning." Dong-A Ilbo, 13 August 1980. 5.
The writer of the article, estimated the number of Koreans who watched AFKN in order to improve their English skills to be around 20 or 30 thousand, and he believed that number would explode once more Koreans bought colour TV sets.\textsuperscript{33}

As the article states, entrepreneurial English teachers in Korea quickly began to realize that they could attract legions of students if they taught their classes with the aid of AFKN material. Every English institute soon offered AFKN classes. By the 1980s the phenomenon was well established and highly profitable. Demonstrating Korea's dependency relationship with American post-secondary educational institutes and the way AFKN addressed this issue, Y.B. Min, the founder of YBM/Si-sa, told me,

In the early to mid-1980s, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) came in because a growing number of students were leaving for America, to study. TOEFL was very important to get into an American University and to train yourself for TOEFL you had to be able to listen, and speak and understand American culture. AFKN fit right into that demand...In the mid-80s, at my hogwon (language institute), the AFKN teacher was earning the most of all the teachers.\textsuperscript{34}

The owner of another famous English institute in Seoul, Lee Ik Hoon made a name for himself in the early to mid-1980s by taping AFKN news broadcasts, transcribing them, and then getting a native English-speaking foreigner to edit them before testing his class on it.\textsuperscript{35} It caused a sensation among students. He currently still works on the magazine edition of the AFKN news broadcasts called \textit{AFN News}. Mr. Lee

\textsuperscript{33} On this subject, it may be useful to look at a study done by the communication researcher John Lent. Lent looked at the adoption of colour TV sets in Malaysia and according to Richard Maxwell this study demonstrates “how the United States not only exported the technology, colour TV sets in this case, but how it also exported a kind of social frenzy with the technology – a frenzy based on a threatening feeling that non-adoption of the latest industrial wonder would leave people in the dark ages.” (emphasis mine) (Maxwell, 78.)

\textsuperscript{34} Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 30 April 2004, Seoul, South Korea.

\textsuperscript{35} Mr. Lee Ik Hoon is also representative of a large number of English speaking elites within Korean society who learned English directly from the American military. He was a KETUSA army member as a young man. Young Korean men who show promise in their English ability are chosen for KETUSA; a joint Korean army/US army task force. In Mr. Lee’s case, he lived together with US soldiers for almost 3 years. Every young man in Korea must serve 2 years in the army and KETUSA is the most highly desired posting.
told me in an interview that AFKN played a very important role at that time in popularising English education.

When I started in 1983 there was mainly Korean radio news...(Korean) TV was aired but it wasn't so popular. It (AFKN) was a unique opportunity for the students because they didn't have CNN, or ABC news. AFKN was very important for the students. Right now, it is not very important compared to the previous years. Right now there are many media they can have access to, such as CNN, sitcoms, or movies.36

London Lee, the research manager at Lee Ik Hoon Language Research Center, explained that AFKN was so popular because,

AFKN was the only window into American culture before Cable and Satellite. It was "authentic" American fare that wasn't interpreted or translated by Korean culture. It came straight from the source. All Koreans grow up hearing and learning about America due to that country's presence on the peninsula but most Koreans could never meet an American or are able to travel to the USA so AFKN satisfied this curiosity.37

This is an important point because it demystifies Koreans interest in American culture. Rather then seeing the spread of American culture and language as some proof of an intrinsically superior or more fascinating culture, it begs repeating that people seek sources to understand their political and economic reality.

The monopoly that AFKN enjoyed by being the sole channel of foreign media before the advent of satellite and cable, gave it a distinct and authoritative role in presenting western culture to Korea. As Jae Won Lee wrote in 1982, "By law, foreign nationals are not allowed to own and operate news media in Korea. An exception is the U.S. military-run broadcasting system, AFKN."38 Likewise, as Keun Dal Lee put it, "there

36 Lee Ik Hoon, founder and owner of Lee Ik Hoon Language Institute, interview by author, tape recording, 10 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
37 London Lee, Manager at Lee Ik Hoon Language Research Center, interview by author, tape recording, 22 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
38 Kim Jae Young, (online), accessed 13 September 2004.
was no other way than AFKN. AFKN was very famous for teaching and learning English because it was the only window into American culture for a generation of Koreans who grew up in the post-war period, and it provided rocket fuel for the growing ELT industry.

Let us now go to our case study, the ELT giant YBM/Si-sa. Over the next two chapters I will attempt to document the rise of this conglomerate, their business deals and publishing contracts with American companies, and finally YBM/Si-sa's own global expansion outside of Korea.

---

CHAPTER THREE:
YBM/SI-SA,
THE EARLY DAYS AND ITS DEVELOPMENT INTO THE INDUSTRY GIANT

Before delving into the case study of YBM/Si-sa, it is first crucial to briefly outline the particular program of modernization pursued feverishly under the heavy hand of South Korea's President, General Park Chung Hee in the 1960's and 1970s. This modernization strategy set the conditions for the development of the ELT industry in Korea, and particularly the growth of YBM/Si-sa.

The Post-War Korean State's Modernization Program

When General Park took power in 1961, he put the country on a heavy export-led model of development. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the government's priority was to achieve rapid economic growth through industrialization. Education and Culture, which President Park called "the Second Economy",¹ were seen as the generating force behind the drive for modernization. In terms of education, "the 'First National Curriculum', which lasted from 1954 to 1963, emphasized 'vocation', 'ethics' and 'anti-communism' as the primary goals of public education."² Under Park's new regime, the


'Second National Curriculum', which covered the period from 1963-1973, emphasized "self-determination" and "self-reliance". Regarding culture, Park was referring in particular to traditional Korean culture. He emphasized traditional culture and "values" as a way to unify the country and to legitimise his authoritarian rule. The promotion of "a sound culture conducive to anti-communism, nationalism, traditional morality and state-led economic development strategy," was set against 'unsound culture' of the west. This mindset dramatically changed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Seoul Olympics and Korea's rise into the world's league of developed capitalist nations, saw the new leaders of the Korean State rhetorically praise globalization and actively push for the increased admittance of western cultural products. This however is a point I will get to in Chapter Four.

Thus, while there was regulation of some western popular culture such as films which were deemed 'unsound' during Park's almost two-decade rule, one should not get the impression that Park's regime, with its rhetoric of 'self-reliance' and 'traditional culture' was moving away from the United States. Just the opposite was true. The American market became increasingly critical to Korea's export-based economic success, through the 1960s and 1970s. In Bruce Cumings' view, the Korean economic 'miracle' can only be understood when one considers the hegemonic role that the US played in the "Northeast Asian Political Economy." Learning English became ever more important in order to maintain contact and communication with Korea's main market.

---

3 Ibid.
It is precisely the combination of a heavy American influence on the southern part of the Korean peninsula and a highly effective modernization program pursued by the Korean State, which created the conditions for the formation of today’s ELT industry in general. In particular, it set the conditions for the rise of YBM/Si-sa, the ELT giant I will now turn to in detail.

**YBM/Si-sa**

*YBM/Si-sa was founded in 1961, with the publication of its first magazine, “Study of Current English”. Since then it has expanded to become a company whose name is synonymous with the study of English in Korea.*

YBM/Si-sa is far and away the dominant player in the Korean ELT Industry. The company is one of South Korea's largest publishing concerns and the undisputed leader in the field of English language studies. A massive conglomerate, it has interests in many different fields. YBM/Si-sa owns a record company, a mutual savings firm, audio and video distribution companies, and one Japanese language school. However, there are three crucial fields that have solidified its leading position and which make it a rich source for a case study. These overlapping, yet organizationally distinct fields are Publishing, English Language Schooling, and English Language Testing. As a Korean publishing giant, YBM/Si-sa publishes an exhaustive list of language-related books, magazines, and dictionaries. Included in this category are over 9,000 English teaching materials and seven magazines. Over 50 of YBM/Si-sa’s products (in total 650 volumes), have been licensed to 25 publishing companies in nine countries. Also, it is a major importer of foreign publications, including magazines and mass-market paperback

---

6 YBM/Si-sa, *YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year*, (2001, promotional material, obtained from YBM/Si-sa corporate headquarters, Seoul, Korea) 5.


books, and the company distributes these products through telemarketing, home tutoring, wholesale and retail outlets, and direct marketing to public and private institutions throughout Korea.\textsuperscript{9}

Language Schools comprise the second primary interest within the YBM/Si-sa parent company. In total, there are currently 118 YBM/Si-sa schools - 115 in South Korea, two in Canada, and one in China, with ongoing plans to open more around the globe. These schools teach English at all levels, from pre-K to adult level. In addition specialty programs prepare students to take English-language tests. According to the company website, more than 700,000 people participate in language programs provided by YBM/Education every year. An additional service, YBM/Overseas Education Services helps Korean students arrange overseas language-study programs in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and England.\textsuperscript{10}

A third major focus of interest for YBM/Si-sa is its business in Language Testing. YBM/Si-sa develops and administers a variety of tests for judging foreign language ability and the company has an exclusive license to publish TOEIC and TOEFL materials. TOEIC, the reigning king of English language aptitude testing, is used by 5,000 institutes in 60 countries all over the world, and has 2 million applicants in Korea alone each year. TOEFL, as mentioned earlier is the test taken by international students around the world who hope to study at American post-secondary institutions. In addition, YBM/Si-sa prepares language skills tests for use in Korean schools, universities, and institutions. Finally, YBM/Si-sa also has a deal with Microsoft that

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
allows it to be in charge of carrying out the Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) computer aptitude test.\textsuperscript{11}

The story of how the founder and current chairman of YBM/Si-sa, Mr. Y.B. Min, learned English once again emphasizes the important influence the American military presence has had in Korea. After Y.B. Min started university in Seoul in the 1950s, he enrolled in a conversation class where officers from the US Army taught English.\textsuperscript{12} His interest in English grew and he began to attend a church on the main US Army base in central Seoul. As the service was conducted in English, he found it very helpful.\textsuperscript{13} Min soon began to make personal friendships with US soldiers, particularly one young soldier whose father had a bookstore in Chicago. Min writes in his autobiography that he was able to get many new English books through this friend. He also supplemented his thirst for English literature by visiting a bookstore located inside the Post Office at the US Army base.\textsuperscript{14}

I spoke to Mr. Min about the status of English in Korea at that time. He told me that in 1961, the total number of university students in Korea was between 100,000-150,000. University students were thus a rather select group. In the early 1960s, the best job a university graduate could attain was working for the Bank of Korea. The Bank of Korea gave English tests to all of its applicants and the test materials were drawn from the editorials of the Korea Herald – an English newspaper that Mr. Min began working for upon graduation in 1955. Thus, the Korea Herald became incredibly popular

\textsuperscript{12} Y.B. Min, 왼어/강국 Korea 를 키운 3.8 따라지/(One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English), (Seoul, YBM/Sisa, 2004), 23.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.35.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.39.
amongst university graduates.\textsuperscript{15} While the English industry in general was still very small, the structural favouring of the English language within the Korean political economy was already beginning.

Mr. Min continued working as a newsman for 10 years. However, since English language journalism was not the mainstream, he felt that his future as a reporter was limited. So in 1961 he made the risky decision to buy up a struggling magazine. The magazine, \textit{Study of Current English}, had been very successful in the first year of its launch in 1959. However, the magazine struggled during the student revolution and political turmoil that resulted from the overthrow of the Rhee administration and the subsequent take-over of power by General Park in 1961. According to Mr. Min, when he bought the magazine he did not foresee the coming explosion in popularity of the English language in Korea. Rather, he simply saw it as a potential market.\textsuperscript{16}

Once in Mr. Min's hands, \textit{The Study of Current English} underwent a change in format. Previously the magazine was created by compiling English articles from Japanese magazines. Mr. Min decided to improve on this format by instead collecting articles from a variety of famous English language magazines such as "New York Times Magazine", "U.S. News and World Report", "Post", "Life", "Mad", "Saturday Review", "Encounter" and even "Playboy". He would then publish the resulting ensemble. This was legally possible because at this time Korea was not party to the Universal Convention on Copyright and therefore did not have to worry about copyright laws.\textsuperscript{17}

Throughout the 1960s, Y.B. Min worked hard at strengthening the reputation of his upstart company, named "YBM/Si-sa" (the word "si-sa", meaning "current" or

\textsuperscript{15} Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 30 April 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Y. B. Min, 63. (South Korea became a member of the International Copyright Convention in 1988.)
“modern” in Korean). In 1964, he founded another English education magazine, this one called “English World” giving YBM/Si-sa two magazines in the still tiny, but growing, English language market. The Korean government also began calling upon Mr. Min’s expertise. In 1967 he helped publish a new English textbook for the Korean high school curriculum.

**English 900**

*In 1970, YBM/Si-sa opened a new chapter of English teaching in Korea by publishing English 900. English 900 was the first audio study aid in Korea and also the first that emphasized listening and speaking.*

It was in 1970 when YBM/Si-sa began making its first major forays into the English teaching market. Mr. Min completed his first international publishing contract that year with Collier-Macmillan of New York. Collier-Macmillan had the rights to the English 900 conversation series which was designed by the American linguist, Dr. Edwin Cornelius. In his personal and company autobiography, *One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English*, Y.B. Min explains the historical reasoning behind the United State’s development of this English educational package.

I discovered the purpose of English 900 in a Japanese magazine that was advertising the English 900 textbook. This ad said “except for in South America, British English was everywhere in the world. But after WWII and the Vietnam War, the US became the great power in the Asia-Pacific area. So it is very urgent to spread American English to those countries in Asia”.

In a personal interview, Mr. Min elaborated on this.

What happened was that in the 1960s, during the peak of the Vietnam War, America wanted to replace all British English in the South East Asian region. They (the US) said “They all speak British English so we have to replace it with American English.” So they had a push, and the US government subsidized scholars to develop a variety of English learning programs. One was called

---

18 YBM/Si-sa, *YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year*, 10.
19 Y.B. Min, 52.
20 Ibid., 111.
'English 900', and along with the others, the government aided in its development.\textsuperscript{21} The American government wanted to spread it, but as the Vietnam War became sour they gave it up. Instead they gave the programs to major publishers and washed their hands. Collier-Macmillan got English 900, and McGraw-Hill received English for Today (EFT). English 900 made a worldwide hit in South America and Japan.\textsuperscript{22}

Y.B. Min immediately recognized English 900's success in Japan and the potential it had in South Korea so he went to New York, intent on buying the Korean rights to the product. The president of Collier-Macmillan was surprised and questioned why Mr. Min wanted to pay for something that was essentially free for him to pirate, since Korea was not party to the Universal Convention on Copyright. Y.B. Min responded by saying, "I have 30-40 years to go as a publisher and I don't want you to blacklist me one day on pirating."\textsuperscript{23} In the end, Mr. Min said that he received a very good deal in terms of royalty payments and upon returning to Korea, he began publishing his highly successful 'Audio Training Tool' package—a 6 book, 60-tape program based on the English 900 series. There were many other companies in other countries with similar business deals with Macmillan to sell English 900, but YBM/Si-sa sold the most and paid the most in royalties.\textsuperscript{24} Mr. Min soon established a new branch company, 'YBM/Language Services' in order to deal with the marketing of educational material such as English 900.

Although YBM/Si-sa held the only legal rights to the English 900 series, by the late 1970's, there were about 15 other illegal "copycat" editions on the Korean market. Regarding his decision to officially attach himself to the English 900 brand, Mr. Min told me, "On this project I had vision. I saw that there was a great future in this audio tool."\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{21} The other two textbooks/programs based on American English were "English For Today", and "English This Way". (Y. B. Min., 112.)
\textsuperscript{22} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Y. B. Min., 119.
\textsuperscript{25} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
As he writes in his autobiography, English 900 "was a bible for English learning for 30 years."²⁶ It also represents the crucial take-off moment for YBM/Si-sa.²⁷ Before it was published, the only way to learn English conversation was in language lab education programs at large universities in Korea. English 900 introduced cassette tapes, individual learning and a more market approach to education.²⁸

After the initial success with English 900, YBM/Si-sa turned its sights on classroom education, by opening their first English Institute, "New World", (now called "E4U") in 1974. This became another crucial point in the company’s history as it set the stage for the YBM/Si-sa’s future relationship with the American English education giant, ELS.

**English Language Services (ELS)**

In 1976, YBM/Si-sa made its first business contract with English Language Services (ELS) in the United States. At that time ELS had many English institutes throughout the United States, a large publishing division and several popular textbooks in English conversation, including the *New English Course* (NEC) and *Intensive Course in English* (ICE). Dr. Edwin Cornellius, who designed English 900, wrote both textbooks. YBM/Si-sa’s first license agreement with the publishing division of ELS allowed the company to begin distributing ELS books, cassettes and educational packages throughout Korea. This arrangement proved to be a great success for both companies.

---

²⁶ Y. B. Min., 131.
²⁷ Ibid., 111.
²⁸ It is interesting to note that many Chinese people who were learning English in the 1970s also used English 900, although the product entered this market through a different route. In the early 1970s, Chinese people could listen to the *Voice of America* from Okinawa, Japan, 24 hours a day. It was broadcast using very slow and clear English that helped non-native speakers learn the language. *Voice of America* also broadcast a lecture using English 900 which according to Min was a big hit in China. (Y.B. Min, 112.)
The ELS – YBM/Si-sa relationship intensified in the following years when the president of ELS approached Y.B. Min, and asked him to start an ELS franchise in Korea. As Mr. Min describes it in his own words; “they came to me and said, ‘Y.B., we want to license schools in Asia. We have one in Taiwan, one in Tokyo, and one in Jakarta but not in Korea. Do you want to do it?’”

Min accepted and the deal for his ELS franchise was soon worked out. He would pay a royalty to ELS and they in turn would provide YBM/Si-sa with the education programs and teaching skills. ELS would also handle recruiting American teachers to teach at the new YBM - ELS schools in Korea.

The opening of the first ELS school in 1984 was a critical moment in the history of the English Language Teaching industry in Korea. At that time, the majority of businesses located in Seoul were on the north side of the Hangang River, which bisects the capital. However, Mr. Min could not obtain a licence to open a school in this heavily regulated region, so instead he opted for the largely unregulated neighbourhood of Gangnam, south of the river – a district which has since become known as ‘the Mecca of English Education’ in South Korea because of the many well-known English institutes located there. YBM/Si-sa’s ELS franchise was also the first language school in Korea that was connected to an American language school chain. Significantly, it was also the first to employ Americans as English teachers. Min describes this as the establishment of a “new frontier”. For the first year of operation, Min hired seven American teachers

---

29 Y. B. Min, 151.
30 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
31 Ibid. (In the last two decades, real estate prices have soared in Gangnam, making it one of the most expensive places to live in Seoul. One reason for this gentrification is that most of the nation’s top ELT enterprises have a presence in this neighbourhood and wealthy Koreans move here to take advantage of the high quality English educational resources available for their family.)
but in a few years this number grew to over 50. For roughly 10 years, YBM/Si-sa was the only English institute in Korea to hire native English speakers as teachers. Nowadays, according to Min, there are about 11 thousand foreigners with E2 visas (teaching visas) in South Korea.

YBM/Overseas Education Services: Sending Koreans West

In 1982 YBM/Si-sa founded YBM/Overseas Education Services (OES) to inform students about study-abroad opportunities and to help them complete forms and marshal the required academic and travel documents. YBM/OES currently counsels more than 7,000 students per year. Professional counsellors provide the most recent information about study at all educational levels in English-speaking countries and in Japan and expedite paperwork for students applying for admission to foreign institutions.

In 1981, Min was asked by the ELS head office in the United States to represent the company in Korea by recruiting students for American schools. Initially, Min thought this idea was ridiculous. He figured that Korean students would never travel all the way to America just to study English. But the ELS office persisted and they sent a Japanese representative to meet with Min. This representative had been recruiting for ELS in Japan for 17 years. He told Min that in the first year he had found only two Japanese students for ELS but that he now sends them about 700 students every year. Since there was no obligation to the ELS office if the experiment failed, Min reconsidered. As he recounts, "I thought, why not? Maybe in 17 years I will be making big commission." In the first year, he surprised himself by finding 25 students who were interested in studying at an ELS school in America. Then in 1982, Korean President, Chun Doo-hwan, made a crucial statement during a public speech, which Min believes had a direct effect on his recruiting results. In an effort to keep pace with Korea's increasingly global-

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 YBM/Si-sa, YBM/Si-sa's Fortieth Year, 17.
35 Y.B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
minded Asian neighbours, President Chun stated, "I know that most other Asian
countries are sending their students for English vacation tours so we must do the same
here."36 That very year, 600 students signed up to go to the USA to study at an ELS
school. The situation had changed very suddenly for YBM/Si-sa and ELS, and the
phenomenon of Koreans studying English abroad had begun.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the TOEIC

The TOEIC is a test of English for business, commerce and industry, first
developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS), Princeton, New Jersey,
in 1979. The TOEIC was introduced to Korea in 1982 and met with
immediate popularity with companies that wanted to measure and monitor
employee proficiency in English...To date, nearly five million people have
taken the TOEIC in Korea.37

The TOEIC is an internationally used test of English ability that YBM/Si-sa
originally imported by way of Japan. In the 1970s the Japanese economy was well
developed and Japanese businesses had economic interests throughout the world.
However they had problems communicating in English and this was seen as a big
barrier for striking contracts with other countries. In order to solve the problem, the
Department of Economy and Industry in the Japanese government turned to Educational
Testing Service (ETS), the American developer of the ‘Graduate Record Exam’, the
‘National Teachers Exam’, the ‘Advanced Placement Program’, and the ‘Scholastic
Achievement Test’.38 ETS was asked to develop an English test which was different from
TOEFL (used primarily to set English language admittance standards for foreign

36 Ibid.
37 YBM/Sisa, YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year. 18-20.
38 Dan Schiller, Digital Capitalism: Networking the Global Market System (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT
students to American Universities). In 1979, the new TOEIC test first appeared in Japan.\(^{39}\)

Y. B. Min was keeping a close eye on English business developments in Japan so when the TOEIC was first established there in 1979, he travelled to Japan to see if he could apply this model to Korea. He met with the Japanese government and made a deal with them that would permit him to administer the TOEIC in South Korea. In order to initiate interest in the then unknown test back home, Min ordered every employee of his company to take the test. Min told me in conversation that the TOEIC branch in Japan was very impressed that he had found 100 people for the initial test. A few months later, ETS, having received word of Min’s success, approached the CEO and suggested to him that ETS set up an independent operation in Korea. Rather than administering the TOEIC through Japan, YBMi-sa was given the opportunity to work directly with ETS. Min went on to explain to me the original deal with ETS,

In the beginning Americans could not trust Koreans because they had no experience working with us. So in 1981, we made a tripartite deal with ETS and a group of American professors working at Sogang University (a university in Seoul). But a few months later we ditched the Sogang University team because professors are so slow.\(^{40}\)

The first official TOEIC test in Korea was conducted in January 1982.\(^{41}\) In that first year, 550 people applied for the test. After 10 years, 100,000 people were applying for TOEIC annually. In 1997, there were 750,000 applicants alone and then in 2001, 1,200,000 applicants. From this point on, the numbers exploded exponentially and in

\(^{39}\) Y. B. Min., 207.
\(^{40}\) Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
Mr. Min didn’t tell me about the role that the Korean government played in TOEIC’s early success in Korea. However, Kim Sung Tcho related to me that Mr. Min was only successful after heavily lobbying the Korean government to implement TOEIC. (Kim Sung Tcho; owner of Moojok Language Institute, interview by author, tape recording, 21 February 2004, Busan, South Korea.)
\(^{41}\) Y. B. Min, 208
2003, 2,200,000 Koreans took the test, finally surpassing Japan as the country with the largest number of applicants for TOEIC.\textsuperscript{42} When I asked Mr. Min to explain the reason for the importance of TOEIC in Korea, he replied,

\begin{quote}
During the Korean economic development years of the late 1960's to early 1980s, companies were recruiting young people every year. For example, Samsung would be recruiting and 8000 people would come to take the test. Samsung had to give an English test to everyone. There was no way they could manage. So they recruited university professors to do the job but they couldn't handle it. It was a big problem that TOEIC solved...One time KBS (Korean Broadcasting Corporation) came to us because they were giving an employment test and 4500 applied. KBS asked us to conduct the TOEIC on behalf of them and KBS was so happy. Next year, we agreed that applicants should just bring their TOEIC score with them when they go in for a job interview. So all of a sudden TOEIC was a must for every young guy.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

As Min mentions, the giant Korean conglomerate, Samsung Group was one of the first companies to require that all applicants take the TOEIC. In the 1990s the number of Samsung job applicants exploded as the company increased its economic clout. Samsung found TOEIC grades to be the most efficient way in which to rank applicants, an issue with profound social consequences that I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Five.

Initially, due to the fact that ETS was a non-profit organization, its foreign partners also had to be non-profits. For this reason, Mr. Min founded ICF (International Communications Foundation), a non-profit corporation, in order to make a contract with ETS that would allow it to control TOEIC in Korea.\textsuperscript{44} However, by the early 1990's ETS changed its policy so that a non-profit was not necessary anymore. Nowadays, as Mr. Min told me, they actually "prefer commercial companies in order to make profit."\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.  
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{44} Y. B. Min., 210.  
\textsuperscript{45} Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 11 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
Since then YBM/Si-sa has had a direct business relationship with ETS.\textsuperscript{46} ETS still owns the test and YBM/Si-sa pays royalties to them in exchange for the right to exclusively control the TOEIC in Korea.

\textbf{IPS and Foreign Publication Distribution}

IPS (International Publication Services), established in 1983, is another daughter company of YBM/Si-sa. IPS specializes in the importation and distribution of foreign periodicals, magazines and mass-market paperback books. It is currently the biggest foreign books distributor in Korea, handling the importing and distribution of more than 5 million copies of English and Japanese-language publications annually.\textsuperscript{47} There are currently about 90 mega bookstores under IPS control, and around 1,300 normal bookstores and it has sales networks in airports and big hotels.\textsuperscript{48} YBM/Si-sa partnered with Panmun Book Co.; also a publication company, in order to create IPS.

IPS holds the monopoly for Newsweek International magazine distribution in Korea. IPS completed the contract with the headquarters of Newsweek in America in December of 1983. They started selling Newsweek in Korea on January 9, 1984. Newsweek actually has had quite a long history in Korea. Another publication company, UPA, started distributing Newsweek right after the Korean War. However, after UPA made a contract with TIME magazine, Newsweek was handed to another company and Newsweek's sales numbers decreased. For this reason, the President of Newsweek International decided to give the distribution rights of Newsweek to YBM/IPS.\textsuperscript{49} IPS sells

\textsuperscript{46} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
\textsuperscript{47} YBM/Si-sa, \textit{YBM/Si-sa's Fortieth Year}. 12.
\textsuperscript{48} Y. B. Min., 231
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 232.
annual subscriptions for Newsweek and its other magazines through telemarketing and is currently the leading telemarketing company in Korea.\textsuperscript{50}

Historically TIME magazine was a greater seller than Newsweek in Korea, as it was in every country the two magazines competed in. TIME had the advantage of a much longer history. However, since 1994 Newsweek has surpassed TIME magazine in sales in South Korea. This was the first case of Newsweek magazine surpassing TIME anywhere in the world, a very big issue at the time for YBM/Si-sa and IPS.\textsuperscript{51}

IPS has also had a very long and close relationship with National Geographic magazine. After one year of this partnership with National Geographic, IPS sold subscriptions to 67,000 Koreans. The number of Korean readers of National Geographic continues to grow every year even though the number of subscribers in the US has been declining. Thus, when the headquarters of National Geographic in the US decided to publish the Korean translation of their magazine in 2000, they awarded YBM/Si-sa the distribution rights.\textsuperscript{52} IPS markets the translated version of National Geographic, through YBM/mbu, another daughter company of YBM/Si-sa. However, the English version of National Geographic still sells more than 30,000 copies per month. This number is greater than Japan, where about 25,000 copies of the English version of National Geographic are sold per month and according to Min more than in any other country in the world, making the headquarters of National Geographic in the US very satisfied with the business contract they signed with YBM/IPS.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 235.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 231.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 74.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 235.
Transnational English Expansion Today

YBM/Si-sa has grown considerably in the last decade. Currently YBM Education Inc., (one of numerous subsidiaries under the YBM Group umbrella), operates two different lines of English education institutes. The first, YBM/ELS, caters to university students and adults. There are 15 of these schools scattered throughout South Korea. While maintaining the ELS brand name, these chain schools are nevertheless all directly owned and operated by the YBM/Si-sa head office, a subject we will discuss in more detail later. The second line of operation is called YBM/ECC, and it is composed of 120 children’s institutes, of which 30 are directly operated, the rest being franchises. In total, there are about 1,050 faculty members teaching English at one of YBM/Si-sa’s schools. About 400 of these teachers at any given time, are native English speaking foreigners who are hired on E2 teaching visas.

ELS and YBM/Si-sa Relationship Today

Through its international presence, ELS Language Centers is able to reach people all over the world who share one common goal - a desire to learn English. Established in 1978, our International Division operates more than 45 schools in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Australia and the Middle East. Our goal of teaching English to the world is continually being realized in our schools outside the United States.

In the early 1980s, ELS set up overseas franchise schools all across Asia. Currently the company website boasts of 45 language schools around the world, including three in Japan, five in Korea and six in Malaysia. The Malaysian ELS

54 Y. B. Min is quoted as saying that he believes that ECC “helped Korean children to get rid of their foreigner phobia.” (Y.B. Min, 386.)
55 Daniel Choi, Manager of YBM/Si-sa ELS/Jongno Branch, interview by author, tape recording, June 7 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
56 YBM/Sisa, YBM/Si-sa's Fortieth Year. 14.
58 Ibid.
branches are especially thriving and Y.B. Min claims that Malaysia seems to be totally dependent on ELS teaching skills.\(^5^9\) In Korea nowadays, ELS seems to only have a minor influence on YBM/Si-sa's day-to-day operations. Their presence instead seems to be felt more on the brand name level. ELS was heavily involved in and influential in their relationship with YBM/Si-sa in the 1970s and early 1980s. However presently, as Min explains, "We (YBM/Si-sa) are too strong so we are not really a franchisee. We don't use their curriculum, materials or anything...we only pay royalties for their name, that's all."\(^6^0\)

ELS has also gone through many fundamental changes at home in the USA. In the early 1980s, the company operated 25 different schools across America. However, the business environment worsened and they decided to cease renting schools in downtown urban areas and instead moved their operations onto university campuses. In this way, the company could cut down on infrastructure costs and simply pay a profit margin to the respective home university. The strategy seems to have worked, as ELS currently has about 40 schools located on campuses around the USA, and they are expanding their network.\(^6^1\) Enrolment in an ELS program is also very popular because successful completion is worth the same as a passing TOEFL score for foreign students wanting to enrol in American universities.

It is at the ownership level, that ELS has undergone the most dramatic changes. In 1989, the Washington Post, (owners of Newsweek) made a strong bid for the company but they lost it to the Benesse Corporation, a leading Japanese publisher of correspondence courses and other educational materials. This Japanese company had

\(^{59}\) Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
\(^{61}\) Ibid.
already bought the well-known educational publishing company Berlitz. The interlocking relationships between many of the top corporations in the ELT industry are interesting to trace. Berlitz became a subsidiary of Macmillan, Inc. back in 1966. Macmillan of course, owned the rights to the English 900 series that YBM/Si-sa began distributing throughout Korea in 1970. In 1988, Maxwell Communication Corporation took over Macmillan, and the Benesse Corporation subsequently acquired Berlitz before it bought ELS. As one business article stated, the Japanese company Benesse, "is Berlitz's ideal partner, adding substantial expertise in education, database management, and correspondence marketing." Another article, highlighting the vertical integration potential of the deal, commented, "Berlitz and Benesse together are uniquely positioned to provide for the language needs--instruction, translation, and publishing--of the global marketplace." Thus, a Japanese company currently owns both Berlitz and ELS, two famous and well-entrenched name brands in the English Language Teaching and Publishing industry. The theoretical implications of this will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The ELS Brand Name

*(YBM/ELS) was the first domestic institute to employ exclusively native English speaking instructors. The ELS Language Centers also introduced English conversation programs from the U.S.* The ELS

---

62 Berlitz International, Inc. was founded in the USA in 1878 and is a giant in the English language teaching industry. The company has 475 language centres in over 65 countries and has expanded quickly by opening wholly owned centres, acquiring established schools and especially through franchising centres in new locations. "We view franchising as one part of our overall growth strategy in that it allows us to expand into geographic areas we may not have been so quick to open with company-owned centers," explains Michael Palm, Berlitz's director of Worldwide Marketing. Berlitz currently has five schools in South Korea alone. (Gillian Evans, "Language School Evolution," *Language Travel Magazine* http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltm/ltmbackissues/may03web/may03specreport.htm , (accessed 25 January 2005)

63 Ibid.

Language Centers are a major contributor to the professionalism and reputation of YBM/Education’s family of schools.\textsuperscript{65}

Regardless of ELS’s seemingly marginal influence over the day-to-day operations of YBM/Si-sa, the ELS logo still proudly displays itself on over half of YBM/Si-sa’s adult English language institutes. As Mr. Min explained to me, “We wanted to continue using the name so we renewed the contract on that condition, that we would use their name, but no textbook, no curriculum or anything else.”\textsuperscript{66} YBM/Si-sa is currently in their third ten-year contract of a deal that allows them to use the ELS name on no more than ten of their institutes. According to Mr. Min, the only involvement of the ELS head office in the corporate affairs of YBM/Si-sa is in the monitoring of the limits of this contract.\textsuperscript{67}

The continued use of the ELS brand name, while seemingly superficial, appears to be an incredibly important priority for the YBM/Si-sa corporate agenda. In our conversations, Mr. Min described the competitiveness of the English education market and he expressed worry that if the contract with ELS was discontinued, a competitor may take the name and “claim that he was stronger.”\textsuperscript{68} When I pressed him to give a reason for this, Min replied that it was simply because of the “power of American brand names in Korea.”\textsuperscript{69} Apparently, even though ELS is now owned by a Japanese company, it continues to derive its brand power from its ‘Americaness’.

\textsuperscript{65} YBM/Si-sa, YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year. 14.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} One interesting note is that the ELS head office strictly forbade the use of the ELS brand on YBM/Si-sa’s ECC line of institutes. Apparently, ELS wanted their company to remain associated with adult education rather than children’s schools. (Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.)
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
CNN and Newsweek: American Media Teaching English

In this section, I will attempt to chart the present day expansion of American media companies into the Korean English education market by detailing the mutual importance of the YBM/Si-sa's business relations with CNN and Newsweek.

In the late 1990s, YBM/Si-sa took one further step into the transnational marketplace when they solidified a business deal with both CNN and Newsweek. These contracts, signed within several months of each other, launched YBM/Si-sa into a new stratosphere of global media brand association. The relationship with Newsweek was the first to take effect. Newsweek allowed YBM/Si-sa to simplify the English in articles from Newsweek International to construct a magazine for English learners entitled Newsweek21. Material from Newsweek America however, was not permitted to appear in YBM/Si-sa's version. Newsweek21 is sold by YBM/Si-sa, mostly through bookstores and telemarketing, to readers for slightly over $30 per issue. Many smaller ELT institutes in Korea persuade their students to buy the magazine and Newsweek21 is often used as teaching material in the daily lessons of these schools.70

In a similar vein, YBM/Si-sa's contract with CNN International allows it to publish CNNez Magazine – an edited collection of CNN International broadcasts that comes with a CD ROM and an audio CD. CNNez first made its appearance in the Korean market in November 2000. Much like Newsweek21, CNNez is used by many smaller English institutes and is sold through telemarketing and on the shelves of bookstores for about $40 an issue. I asked Mr. Keun Dal Lee, senior editor of CNNez, to explain how the product is put together.

We record the CNN International broadcasts every month and then my job is to select the best programs among them. We edit those news

70 Lee Young Lock, Editor of Newsweek21 magazine, interview by author, tape recording, 25 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
stories; give them to native speakers and they make transcripts from the recorded materials. We then take the transcripts and translate them into Korean. Finally we add Korean connotations, include some appropriate photographs from Reuters and from AP and then we edit the materials publish the magazine and CD's.  

CNN broadcast material is used to teach English both to adults at the ELS schools and to children at ECC schools. The stories are edited to suit the differing levels of English ability. Y. B. Min explained to me the general philosophy behind the use of CNN for children.

I told the directors in the beginning that our aim is not to teach the real news. They are too young. For example, when Saddam Hussein was arrested, the newscast said, "We got him". So we'll teach, "We got him". That's all. And we show the picture too. If we teach the full paragraph, that's no good.  

In addition to the CNNez audio-visual magazine, YBM/Si-sa plans to publish a CNN study book. The company made a new contract with CNN International in December 2003. The new contract will allow YBM/Si-sa to publish a CNN study book made up of edited CNN video material from television broadcasts. While other smaller English language institutes in Korea regularly use CNN broadcasts as teaching material in their classes, YBM/Si-sa is the only ELT enterprise to have a contract that allows them to fully market CNN-based products, such as textbooks, as English educational tools. As Lee Keun Dal explained to me, "in the past we taught classes with AFKN material. Strictly speaking it may (have been) illegal and nowadays it is commonplace to teach CNN in many institutions (without a license). However, publishing a book is different."  

The founder of YBM/Si-sa, Y. B. Min is uncertain about whether or not his company initially approached CNN, or whether the CNN office in Seoul first approached

---

71 Lee Keun Dal, Senior Editor of CNNez, interview by author, tape recording, 25 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
72 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
Regardless, he says CNN was greatly interested in making a deal with YBM/Si-sa because as he puts it, "they are very aggressive.... they wanted to make visibility in as many areas as possible...they wanted to promote the CNN name in many ways." Mr. Min speaks very positively of his company's relationship with CNN. Realizing that their expertise lies in news media, CNN seems fully content to leave the publishing, editorial and education decisions up to YBM/Si-sa. For example, as mentioned earlier CNN welcomes revisions to their news stories, if it makes the text easier to understand for children. Mr. Min describes the flexibility of CNN in this way,

We can do whatever we want...as long as we use the CNN name. Unless there is a strong legal violation they (CNN) don't care what we do. They just want to make their name visible.

It is clear that the YBM/Si-sa – CNN business relationship is one that Mr. Min values highly. CNN material is used for teaching in all of YBM/Si-sa's institutes. Beyond the day-to-day educational rationale for working with CNN, lies the recognition by Mr. Min that CNN helps set YBM/Si-sa apart from other English institutes in Korea. CNN is an international brand that strengthens YBM/Si-sa's reputation and gives YBM/Si-sa more prestige than its competitors in the ELT market. In fact, Y.B. Min feels that his work with CNN is the crowning achievement of his decades long pursuit of association with American transnational brands. When I asked him how important it is for a growing Korean company like YBM/Si-sa to establish links with international brands he replied,

---

74 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
75 Apparently, CNN is also growing increasingly active and visible in the Japanese education/publishing market through a similar flexible working relationship, whereby they give total rights to a Japanese publisher. (Ibid.)
76 Min told me an interesting story of how CNN differs markedly from Disney in this respect. He claims that Disney is very hard to work with. YBM/Si-sa and Disney worked together on children's English books and dictionaries but in Min's opinion Disney was too "picky" and controlling. (Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.)
77 Ibid.
For so long now I have been working with International companies. The first contract was with Collier-Macmillan, then many major publishers made a contract with us. Then we went on to ELS, ETS, Newsweek and CNN. These major names made my company strong and in this global age, if you have no contract with world major companies you are an outcast...All these major brands are with my company. It is our strength.79

Lee Young Lock, editor of Newsweek21 magazine, echoed the above sentiments when I asked him the same question. He said that YBM/Si-sa "can have international name value through assignment with international companies like Newsweek or CNN."80 His colleague, Lee Keun Dal went on to state that a particular brand's international recognition factor was the single most important factor when YBM/Si-sa chooses its business partners.81 However, with all the talk about CNN and Newsweek's "international appeal", it is important not to lose sight of the fact that these media companies derive much of their power from being recognizably American. As Keun Dal Lee admitted to me, YBM/Si-sa added CNN and Newsweek to its team in order to "comply with the trend of current readers, who prefer brand magazines from the US."82 Even more tellingly, he went on to explain the criteria his team used to decide what CNN broadcast material to include in the CNNez product, and what to omit.

We try to select CNN articles broadcast by American natives rather than by European, Asian or African reporters because they have their own accent. We want to make our magazine with a standard US accent and pronunciation. (emphasis mine)83

79 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
It is quite straightforward to discern how CNN benefits from the relationship with YBM/Si-sa. Mr. Lee states flatly, "CNNez and CNN International help each other. Our magazine helps CNN distribute more widely among Koreans."\(^{84}\) Mr. Min expanded on this subject when we discussed the use of CNN as teaching material in his ECC (children's) line of institutes. He told me, "children from 5 years to 12 get to know the name 'CNN' everyday. It's CNN's strength to make their name known to children."\(^{85}\)

As a teaching tool, CNN and Newsweek appear to contemporise YBM/Si-sa's relations with its students by bringing the familiar faces of two mass media giants into the education sector. As Y. B. Min describes, children these days are "living in an age of mass media with radio, TV, printed media and internet surrounding them all day."\(^{86}\) Thus, media seems the natural channel through which to deliver education.

Finally, one of the most important reasons CNN is such an effective educator and brand name with whom to associate with is its accessibility. Everyone I talked to mentioned that almost every Korean can access CNN easily in his or her home. This gives CNN a huge advantage. As Keun Dal Lee explains, every Korean can watch CNN at home on TV but most of them don't understand the broadcasts. They want to learn how to listen to the material freely.... so they purchase CNNez."\(^{87}\) This of course sounds very similar to the description of the ubiquitous presence AFKN commanded in South Korean society in the past.

Presently, YBM/Si-sa has had to limit it's sales of CNNez to domestic markets, as the contract they signed with CNN International forbids them to sell the product abroad. In order to market CNNez internationally, YBM/Si-sa would have to renegotiate

\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{85}\) Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
\(^{86}\) Ibid.
\(^{87}\) Ibid.
a new contract and the company is trying to assess the desirability of this. Mr. Keun Dal Lee told me that they have entertained ideas of expanding CNNez into China or Latin America. Apparently he was approached by some Korean businessmen from Argentina recently who suggested that he allow them to market a Spanish-English version of the product in that country. As of yet however, YBM/Si-sa has not done enough research on that region’s market potential.98

On that note, I will now turn to the subject of YBM/Si-sa’s expansion and desired expansion into foreign markets outside of Korea.

---

CHAPTER FOUR:
YBM/SI-SA’s EXPANSION INTO THE WORLD

The fact that YBM/Si-sa has thus far had to limit its marketing of CNNez to the southern half of the Korean peninsula, does not mean that the company has not explored other global prospects. In fact, YBM/Si-sa has been aggressively searching for opportunities to expand its operations through both global corporate partnerships and by directly opening for business in foreign countries. This has occurred within the larger context of the Korean State’s steadily increasing adoption of the rhetoric of globalization since the 1980s.

The Korean Nation-State Goes Global

The present day state of the English language in South Korea is what Jong Oh Eun refers to as the “Third Phase” of English expansion. He sees this era as emerging around the mid-1980s when South Korea hosted two major international sporting events, -the Asian Games (in 1986) and Seoul Olympics (in 1988).¹ Not coincidentally, this was also the democratisation era, when Korean citizens took to the streets to press for the right to choose their representatives through free and fair elections. The Korean nation began to imagine itself as part of the modern democratic capitalist world system. This of course served to accelerate the perceived importance of English as an international language. As M.J. Baik notes, “the Korean public...began to feel an urgent need to learn and speak English” and this atmosphere developed “into the desire to attain the

identity of a 'modern,' 'sophisticated,' 'assertive,' and 'educated' person that came with the ability to speak English."² As noted in Singh et al. (2002), as a commodified product, English is a "marker of personal status and signification of cosmopolitan ambience as well as its value as a symbol of the nation-state's desire to modernize and internationalise."³

At the same time, South Korea was moving from a 'production economy' (manufacturing) to a 'knowledge economy' (based on innovations in new technology, especially communications technology) and education on the whole became of greater importance. English was afforded a central position in this drive to create a highly educated class of knowledge workers. As I have written earlier in Chapter Three, the former military dictator of Korea, Chun Doo-hwan stated during a famous public speech in 1982, that Koreans must do what other Asian countries such as Japan were doing, and send their children abroad to learn English.⁴ YBM/Si-sa's CEO Y.B. Min believes that this one speech had a direct effect on triggering the wave of Koreans who began to send their children abroad to study English and to obtain university degrees, particularly in the USA. By the mid-1980s, these American-educated Koreans returned home, "taking with them American English and culture, forming an elite group in Korea, which facilitated the spread and impact of English."⁵

President Kim Young-Sam (1993-1998) was the first of the 1980s pro-democracy generation to be elected to the highest office in Korean politics. From the

⁴ Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 30 April 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
start, he made "globalization" his motto in order to "meet the needs of the 21st century. As part of President Kim's plan to prepare Korean children to participate in the globalization age, an earlier start to English education was proposed in 1993. The Korean Ministry of Education decided that English should be taught beginning in the third grade of elementary school. However, first every elementary school was ordered to offer English as an extracurricular club activity for two years before having it instituted as part of the regular curriculum thereafter. Prior to 1993, public school English education began in middle school although parents could always enrol their younger children in private English lessons and institutes. The Korean government awarded ELS the contract to teach English to elementary school students beginning in 1993. As one can imagine, this was a huge business opportunity for ELS as they were called upon to train the teachers, set up the programs and to provide the teaching materials. Alas, after some months, ELS withdrew citing problems with distributors and booksellers.

Nowadays, the Korean government is making serious attempts to refocus its educational strategy. Rather than pulling out of this crucial national field completely, the government is under pressure from industry types to reorganize education in order for the country to achieve its goal of $20,000 (US) per capita GDP. Samsung has been one of the most vocal champions of education reform. In the article mentioned above, Kim Eun-hwan chief researcher at Samsung Economic Research Institute, emphasizing the fundamental importance of education reform states, "...the abhorrence against educational elitism and insistence to provide everyone with equal education and equal

---

6 Jong Oh Eun, 29.
7 Ibid., 38.
8 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
9 A newspaper article on Korean higher education cites a study in the World Competitive Yearbook 2003 that ranks Korea's economy as 12th largest in the world but places its post-secondary education far behind in the 28th slot. (Kim Sung-mi, "Trained human resources essential for growth," The Korea Herald, 23 March 2004, p.18.)
chances (has) hampered the country from fostering excellent brains." The English Language Teaching industry is one industry which fits particularly well into a neo-liberal model of education. This model attempts to reconstitute students from passive, dependent receptors of information, to active consumers consciously competing to maximize their talents and opportunities. Let's now look at some interesting examples of this in development.

Recently, the Korean government has put forth a plan to open numerous "English-immersion villages", which are similar to camps where parents can send their children to learn English. The "Experience English Village" opened in the Pungnap-dong area of Seoul in October 2004. According to an article describing the project, a maximum of 400 children will be admitted daily into what will resemble an "authentic Western village." The "Experience English Village" will be managed by Herald Media Inc., publisher of Korea's largest English daily newspaper (and the newspaper Y.B. Min began his career with). The children will be allowed to communicate only in English while visiting Western themed shops (where they will use dollars rather than Korean won), immigration counters, parks and village museums and pavilions, where students will learn the history of English-speaking countries. Asked about the rationale behind the creation of the village, Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak remarked, "Immersing kids in an English-only society from a very young age will lead to a rise in English capability and therefore improved competitiveness for Seoul." Interestingly, one of the arguments for creating this type of village is that it will benefit low-income families who are unable to afford sending their children abroad for English education. The article doesn't explain

---

10 Ibid.
11 Singh et al.
13 Choe Young Shik, "Seoul to open English immersion campus in October," The Korea Herald, 3 February 2004, p.3.
14 Ibid.
how 'low-income families' will be able to afford paying the weekly fee of 250,000 won (about $300), let alone the number of weeks a child would have to attend in order to achieve noticeable linguistic improvement. Yet another newspaper article noted how the government of Gyeonggi Province, the populous region surrounding Seoul, is also planning on opening a number of English education communities in the cities of Paju, Ansan, Uijeongbu, and Yangpyeong. According to the article, the hope is that these projects will "turn the province into a community dominated by the English language."\(^{15}\) (emphasis mine)

Meanwhile, not surprisingly for a country that boasts one of the most advanced Internet infrastructures in the world, 'e-learning' is the latest rage. An article on the topic noted that with the government lagging behind in this field, the private sector had "already grabbed the initiative and moved to stay ahead in the quest for this lucrative market with huge growth potential."\(^{16}\) Not surprisingly, the foreign language education field is the most lucrative of all in the cyber world. The online English education market was worth 5 billion won in 2000 before doubling in value to 10 billion won in 2001 and then 20 billion won in 2002. A newspaper article projected that the sector would generate 50 billion won in revenue for 2004.\(^{17}\) YBM/Si-sa has transferred its expertise in the traditional education market to cyberspace, and is the current heavyweight of online foreign language education. The company provides course content to both individuals and companies who are looking to train their employees. According to the article, YBM/Si-sa posted 12 billion won in revenue in 2002 and was targeting 20 billion won for 2004.\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\) O Young Hee, "Herald, Seoul sign English village deal," *The Korea Herald*, 13 May 2004 p.3.
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
The Korean government recently entered the e-learning sector after facing criticism over the outrageous costs of private tutoring, much of it spent on English language learning, and the growing inequalities this is creating in Korean society. Starting in April 2004, the state-run educational television and online network, EBS, began running lecture programs to prepare high school students for the national university exam. The Education Ministry decided on this action in a bid to strengthen the public education system and reduce the dependency on costly private after-school tutoring, but it does not appear to have the intended affect thus far. A newspaper article noted that in the two months following the launching of the EBS lectures, 333 new private educational tutoring institutes opened up in southern Seoul alone.\(^{19}\)

To sum up, I have documented how the Korean government and Korean industry has leaned on English education as a central plank in its attempt to make South Korea more “global”. In the following sections, I will demonstrate how the ELT industry in Korea is going global itself. Once again I will focus on YBM/Si-sa and its recent business ventures. As Singh et al. write, “globalization from above” is accelerating change in three interconnected arenas of the ELT industry. It is “leading to the integration of the work of English language teachers into a worldwide economic system, to the subjugation of national ELT businesses to the regulatory force of transnational markets, and (it is) spurring on the project of globalizing English through popular consumer culture.”\(^{20}\) As YBM/Si-sa has already realized, “integration of the ELT industry into the world market makes an exclusively nationally bounded ELT business meaningless.”\(^{21}\) The remainder of this chapter will detail how YBM/Si-sa now imagines itself as operating within a “borderless” world economy.

---

20 Michael Singh et al., 39.
21 Ibid.
Young & Son Global

As with the power of the ELS brand name, discussed earlier, a similar relationship between business and American brand association can be seen with Young & Son Global, a subsidiary of YBM/Si-sa that was set up in America purely for associative reasons. On the company website, the subsidiary is described as follows,

YBM/Si-sa has set up Young & Son Global, the strategic point of publication business and globalization business of language schools in the United States. Young & Son Global recruits outstanding staff overseas, and controls planning, public relations, and marketing activities on the actual location. It has recently begun its full-scale ELS language school franchise business in Canada, and also started to open up the Chinese market through its branch, Young & Son Global China, Inc.  

When I spoke to Mr. Min about Young & Son Global he explained that it was specifically set up as a way to globally market the English language textbooks YBM/Si-sa develops. He elaborated,

We have an American company because we develop textbooks for learning English and if you make it a Korean publication you will have no overseas market. So we make it an American publication, American imprint, and an American ISBN number...If it comes from America it is easier to sell globally. We can claim that this is an American publication.

Through Min's quote, we can see that the English language is (still) powerfully associated with America, and although YBM/Si-sa has had a history of American business ties, its liability is that it is still essentially a Korean company. Thus YBM/Si-sa needs to physically graft itself onto the American landscape in order to disassociate its marketing arm from its Korean business body.

The example I gave in Chapter 3 of the brand power of ELS, demonstrates the desire by YBM/Si-sa to mentally associate itself with an American brand name on

---

22 YBM/Si-sa, "Young & Son Global"; available from http://www.ybm.co.kr/eng/ybm_eng01_1.asp; (accessed August 13, 2004)
23 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
Korean soil. The Young & Son Global example shows how the strong drive to expand markets globally impels YBM/Si-sa to physically situate itself on, thus fusing itself with the home base of English expansionary power.

YBM/Si-sa’s Overseas Schools

When it comes to expanding its English institutes into new markets, YBM/Si-sa has been hard at work. Over the last few years, YBM/Si-sa has set up branch institutes in a number of different countries. In the late 1990s, ELS headquarters in the United States advised Y.B. Min to open an ELS branch in Vancouver, Canada. After much preparation, ELS Vancouver opened its doors in 1997. About 25 teachers staff the institute with students primarily coming from Korea, Japan, Brazil and European countries. Then in 2002, another YBM ELS institute was opened in Toronto, Canada. In his autobiography, One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English, Min writes that the ELS headquarters in the US gave him the business rights for Canada because of “the trust between ELS headquarters and YBM/Si-sa ELS Korea.”

YBM/Si-sa also attempted to start up a SAT Institute for Korean students living in Los Angeles in the late 1990s. However, soon after it was opened the East Asian financial crisis hit and the branch was forced to close down. YBM/Si-sa’s ELS branches in Canada have also gone through their fair bit of financial struggle. Y.B. Min writes in his book that the first 3 years saw big losses. On top of this, the recent SARS episode made it difficult to attract international customers, especially for the Toronto branch.

---

24 Y.B. Min, 영어강국 Korea를 키운 3.8파라지 (One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English), (Seoul, YBM/Sisa, 2004), 51.
25 Lee Keun Dal, senior editor of CNNez mentioned to me in conversation how ironic it was “that Korean students go abroad to study English at a Korean institute” (Keun Dal Lee, Senior Editor of CNNez, interview by author, tape recording, 25 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.)
26 Y.B. Min, 157.
27 Ibid., 51.
Nevertheless, YBM/Si-sa has plans to continue expanding into new markets. As the CEO told me in conversation, "I'm struggling to set up this world wide network."28  

The company moved once step closer to this goal when in 2003, the first YBM/Si-sa English institute opened for business in Beijing, China. The school, which specializes in providing Chinese students with English conversation lessons, is named the American School of English (ASE).29 According to Mr. Min, this is only the start of what he hopes to be serious inroads made by YBM/Si-sa into the Chinese market. He pins much of his optimism on the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics which he feels will dramatically increase the number of English learners in China.30 As J. Kang writes in an article entitled English Everywhere in China, the 'English-wave' in China is a process that has been ongoing since the government's 'open door' policy of 1978. Chinese citizens have been increasingly exposed to English in their daily lives over the last 3 decades, with this exposure presenting itself through various mediums, everything from street signs to television programs.31 Economically, as China integrated itself more firmly into world markets, international communication for business purposes and therefore the importance of knowing 'Business English' skyrocketed. Interestingly, this 'Business English' is a distinct form of 'American English'. Y. Wang writes that before the 1980s, the model for the teaching of English in China was British English; however, in the last two decades American English has become more popular because of China's closer political-economic ties with the USA.32 This is of course analogous to the Korean textbook anecdote I described in Chapter Two. The Korean educational trends

---

28 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
30 Y. B. Min, 52.
described in this thesis have also firmly taken root in China, where students may attend private schools offering English and/or learn it at home from English lessons broadcast on TV.\(^{33}\)

This is where YBM/Si-sa comes in. The company’s rationale for expansion outside of Korea is simple. The CEO, Mr. Min sees the Korean English education market as saturated. Koreans are having fewer and fewer children and this is having an impact on enrolment in the children’s education ECC schools. However in the Chinese market, according to Min, a company “can recruit millions.”\(^{34}\) The difficult question for YBM/Si-sa however is, how do you best get at those millions? Min finds the Chinese market difficult to work in and ideally he would prefer to send Chinese students to his institutes in Canada or in the United States. Unfortunately for Min, it is very difficult for Chinese students to get a VISA to study in Canada and virtually impossible for them to study in the United States. Thus Min is presently doing market research on the feasibility of attracting Chinese students to Australia. He explained the difficulties to me in our first conversation,

Before Hogwans (English institutes) could issue documents for a VISA [in Australia] but not any more. Only formal schools like high schools, and universities, now can make the documents for the Chinese people. So you have to open a high school in Australia, which is okay because it is not so complicated there to open one as it is here. But the problem is that if you have a high school of mostly Chinese students it is not good. You need a mixture of nationalities and that is not easy.\(^ {35}\)

A few months later, Min related to me that one of his managers had just returned from a research trip to Australia with bad news. According to this manager, Australia is 


\(^{34}\) Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 11 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.

\(^{35}\) Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
also moving to close the door on Chinese students because, as an Australian government official put it, “there are just too many coming.”36

Regardless of this potential problem, YBM/Si-sa is pushing ahead with their Australian plans. Instead of opening a high school, the company is now considering opening a language institute on an Australian university campus. A few universities have expressed interest. However, this avenue is unstable for YBM/Si-sa as well. According to Min, in Australian universities the vast majority of the foreign students are Chinese. So the Australian government is starting to regulate the nationality of the foreign students to ensure more diversity in its international student population.37

The frustration Min is experiencing in trying to attract wealthy Chinese students to schools outside of China may in the future result in him focusing most of the company's attention on expanding further into the Chinese mainland itself. I will now focus on YBM/Si-sa's relationship with Walt Disney Co. regarding this particular issue.

The Allure of Disney

As mentioned earlier, YBM/Si-sa has had a lukewarm working relationship with Disney. A few years ago, Disney executives approached YBM/Si-sa with the idea of starting a joint YBM/Si-sa – Disney children's language school in Korea. According to Mr. Min, the idea was that if the model worked in Korea, Disney hoped to then move on to China through a partnership with YBM/Si-sa.38 However, the deal was never completed. YBM/Si-sa was in charge of developing the entire language course and textbook design but apparently Disney was never completely satisfied with the material. Disney continued to insist on editorial changes for over two years before giving up on the

36 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 11 August 2004.
37 Ibid.
38 Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
process. Mr. Min told me during an interview that Disney is extremely “hard to work with” and he strongly believes that this is because Disney’s publishing division is constantly at the mercy of its entertainment interests.\textsuperscript{39}

After failing in its goal to set up a line of children’s English institutes in Korea, Disney moved on to Japan. After three years of working on English educational product design with a large Japanese publisher, they eventually opened a Disney language school. However, two months later, the school closed.\textsuperscript{40} Mr. Min told me that he has no idea why the project didn’t work in Japan because the Disney brand is particularly strong in that country.\textsuperscript{41} Min seems frustrated by Disney’s seeming inability to succeed in the Asian ELT market and what he sees as their aversion to taking the advice of local publishing partners. In our interview he told me,

I wish Disney listened to me. Leave it to us...If we had the brand of Disney to open children’s schools in Japan we could make it. And if they listen to us, we could then make it a success here (in Korea) and then bring it to China.\textsuperscript{42}

When I reminded him that YBM/Si-sa had already established an institute in Beijing and that it seemed like it was doing quite well without the help of Disney, Min stated definitively,

Yes, but in the Chinese market there are many wolves, hungry wolves, and a Korean company cannot survive alone. Disney has money and brand power. American name really works in China.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} In 2003 alone, 24 million Japanese visited ‘Disneyland’ in Tokyo. (Ibid.)
\textsuperscript{42} Y. B. Min, interview by author, 30 April 2004.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
CHAPTER FIVE: 
ENGLISH AND TRANSNATIONALISM

The previous chapter closed with a substantial theoretical question hanging in mid-air. If YBM/Si-sa, a Korean company, has embarked upon its quest to spread English throughout China, does this mean that the English language has finally become disentangled from its western imperial roots? What do we make of YBM/Si-sa's apparent continued dependence on American brand names (i.e. Disney and ELS), as part of their expansionary strategy?

The Imperialist Network – America, To Japan, To Korea, And Onward To China

Before we delve into this issue, one should first be reminded of the particular geographic journey that English education has generally taken on its way to reaching the minds of young Koreans. In Chapter Two, I described how during the Japanese colonial period, English was first introduced into Korean public secondary schools by the Japanese government. Thus, English was taught to Koreans of this era through Japanese imposed filters. Recall also that the magazine that officially launched Y.B. Min's ELT career, Study of Current English, was originally created by compiling English articles from Japanese magazines. As described in previous chapters of this thesis, YBM/Si-sa introduced most of its English educational products and programs to the Korean market and created partnerships with American educational companies, either directly or indirectly by way of Japan. English 900 was first a hit in Japan, ELS had first
licensed a franchise in Tokyo before coming to Korea, YBM/Overseas Education Services was founded after Y.B. Min was convinced of its potential by a Japanese representative to ELS, and YBM/Si-sa imported the TOEIC test directly from Japan, who in turn had it developed in the USA. Even more interestingly, a Japanese company now owns two of the largest English teaching and publishing companies in the world, Berlitz and ELS, with ELS being of course an intimate part of YBM/Si-sa's global success.

It seems commonsensical though to note that throughout all these examples of English education transfer to Korea via Japan, the English language and the educational products and services marketed by YBM/Si-sa were never viewed as "Japanese" in essence. They would never have been so successful if this were the case, given the intense anger, humiliation and bitterness felt by Koreans towards Japan for their colonial subjugation. This is especially true given that YBM/Si-sa introduced most of these services during the 1960's-1980s, when hostility towards anything Japanese was especially strong. In fact, the Korean government didn't begin to allow the importation of Japanese cultural products until 1998. Therefore, it doesn't need to be said that the English educational products introduced by YBM/Si-sa to Korea via Japan were never even remotely considered to be "Japanese", just as the English educational services YBM/Si-sa is introducing to China are not considered "Korean". Instead, the success in these education programs and products lies in their ability to convey "Americaness". Y.B. Min is completely aware of the fact that a Japanese company now owns ELS. Yet as noted in Chapter Three, he is determined to continue his partnership with ELS precisely because of its power as an American brand name.

Koichi Iwabuchi has developed the concept of cultural odor, which I believe is useful when explaining YBM/Si-sa's outward expansion into China, and the rest of the world. Iwabuchi uses the term cultural odor to explain the way in which cultural features
of a country of origin and images or ideas of its national, in most cases stereotyped, way of life are associate positively with a particular product in the consumption process. Most importantly for him is the “moment when the image of the contemporary lifestyle of the country of origin is strongly and affirmatively called to mind as the very appeal of the product...”¹ While Iwabuchi uses the term to explain the appeal of Japanese technologies, for my purposes cultural odor can be usefully applied to examining the global export of English. In South Korea, English, like “McDonald’s” or “Coca-cola” is powerfully associated with the idea of “American modernity”. This idea of “American modernity” has been vigorously promoted to Koreans first through AFKN and now increasingly through the same media channels we are familiar with in the West. Because of this powerful mental association that English has with “the American modernity” or perhaps vice versa, YBM/Si-sa, a Korean company, must now enter the Chinese market, base its Young & Son Global operations in the American market, and open schools in Australia, while hiding it’s ‘Korean-ness’. So one way it does this is by naming its Chinese branch school, American School of English. This is essentially the same condition described by Iwabuchi when he explains how “the propensity of Japanese animators to make their products non-Japanese points to how a Western-dominated cultural hierarchy (still) governs transnational cultural flows in the world.”²

To conclude this discussion, as Leslie Sklair argues, it is the “culture-ideology of consumerism”³ that now fuels globalization, not anymore any direct “Americanization”. However it is still America which provides the reference point, the symbol and the

² Ibid., 29.
ubiquitous "model for (post)modern culture." Just as Walter Benjamin coined the term dreamworld to explain how department stores entice capitalist consumer desire, so does the English language in Korea cloak itself in a "dreamworld" that promises access to "American modernity". For Koreans, the English language, after its initial imposition via American imperialism, was understood, accepted, and learnt within the political/economic project of modernization and the ideological/cultural dimension of becoming modern. As mentioned earlier however, the desire for "American modernity" that is enticed, obscures capitalist and imperialist ambitions that provide English's driving force.

South Korea is a country still positioned in a dependency role via the United States. The form of this dependency has changed over the past five decades. Now instead of being on the receiving end of direct economic assistance and governmental dictates, Korea looks to the US for its ideological model and English is the key component of this. The following sections will detail how this somewhat abstract explanation works on the ground.

From the USIS...

America, with its vast resources, its prestige and its great tradition of international philanthropy, no less than because it is the largest English-speaking nation, is one of the greatest English teaching forces in the world today. Teaching the world English may appear not unlike an extension of the task which America faced in establishing English as a common national language among its own immigrant population.5

The above quote, from the 1960-61 Annual Report of the British Council, highlights the shift from British to American global cultural dominance, a shift that was

---

4 Iwabuchi, p.41.
fully underway by the mid-20th Century. A senior British Council representative reported in 1960 that “the Americans were planning a ‘great offensive’ to make English a world language.”

Robert Phillipson notes that regarding the global spread of English, the British were co-operating with the Americans, seeing their potential benefit as mutual.

The British Council, established in the 1930s as a propaganda arm of the British government to combat fascism in Europe, is the dominant flagship of British English exportation, providing many ELT products, materials and services, teacher education, professional development, and the methodologies needed to support them. While the Council is officially set up as a “charity”, it does not attempt to disguise the reality that its main objective now is to further the business and political interests of Britain throughout the world. As early as 1968 the British Council stated in its annual report that there “is a hidden sales element in every English teacher, book, magazine, film-strip and television programme sent overseas.”

Phillipson spends a great deal of time in his book *Linguistic Imperialism*, documenting the evolution and continued importance of the British Council’s role in spreading the English language and ‘British values’ to its colonies and other dependent states. While Phillipson notes that in the 1950s, the Council singled out Asia as part of the underdeveloped world where they could make a substantial impact, I have not come across any information that would lead me to believe that the British Council played a significant role in post-war South Korea. Nor does the Council, aside from operating a few English schools, exert much of an influence on the ELT profession and spread of English in Korea today. This once again serves to demonstrate the overwhelming

---


8 Phillipson, 146.
American influence on the deification of English in South Korea. In the post-war period in South Korea, it was the United States Information Service (USIS) (known as the USIA in the United States) that fulfilled the role of the British Council in South Korea, heralding the wider global eclipsing of British influence by the USA.

The USIS set its mission, in the words of a former director, to “further the achievement of US foreign policy objectives...by influencing public attitudes abroad in support of these objectives...through personal contact, radio broadcasting, libraries, television, exhibits, English language instruction, and others.” The USIS centres set up in Korea in the 1950s, were welcoming shelters from chaotic post-war Korea, where all Koreans could go to borrow American books and to learn about American culture. Most importantly to the citizens of a country which ranked as one of the poorest in the world at the time, the various services were all provided free of charge.

Y.B. Min was a frequent visitor to the USIS centres in Seoul, attending English lessons there and borrowing books from the library as a young adult. Kim Sung Tcho, another successful ELT institute owner and teacher, told me in conversation that he frequently visited the US Cultural Centre, a branch of the USIS, in the southern port city of Busan as a child. Mr. Kim relayed to me how he received free English lessons there; English being regarded by the USIS as it’s most “booming item”. He also expressed to me that it was in this welcoming environment where he first learned about American culture and society.

While the USIS Centres were fixtures in Korean society for three decades, Korean attitudes towards the United States changed dramatically in the 1980s, and the

---


10 Phillipson, 158.
USIS bore the brunt of this dissatisfaction. The 1980 Kwangju Massacre is widely seen as a turning point in US-Korea relations. Thousands of peaceful protestors were killed in this southwestern city by Korean paramilitary troops, and many Koreans along with foreign commentators, accuse the United States of approving the deployment of these troops. In 1982, during a time of growing dissatisfaction over the Korean government's refusal to reveal the truth behind the Kwangju Massacre, radical students attacked the Busan USIS Centre and burned it to the ground. This event was only the most dramatic of a growing tide of anti-Americanism that had engulfed the nation and the USIS soon pulled its services from Korea. Officially, the reason given for the departure was that South Korea was at a level of affluence that no longer required the presence of the USIS. Regardless of its rationale for leaving, it can certainly be said that the USIS invoked a considerable influence in maintaining South Korea's dependent position as an American ally, and more specifically, in spreading the gospel of the English language throughout the country.\textsuperscript{11}

While the USIS has pulled its propagandising cultural centres from Korean cities, it is still involved in that country, albeit in a seemingly more detached manner. The USIS has changed its focus nowadays, dealing much more with matters like advising Korean students who plan to study in America. The website of an organization called “College Board” which helps international students register for study in the United States mentions its working relationship with the USIS,

Overseas Educational Advising Centers are located in major cities worldwide and are affiliated with the United States Information Services (USIS) and/or the United States Embassy. There you can find advisers

\textsuperscript{11} As Richard Maxwell documents, Herbert Schiller himself pointed in particular to the imperialist actions of the USIS, and he included the USIS among a distinguished group of "imperial communications research units" which he believed used the "influence of advertising and public relations in shaping public knowledge and political communication." (Richard Maxwell, \textit{Herbert Schiller}, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishes, Inc. Lanham, 2003), 72.)
and information to help you understand college searches, the admission process, and financial aid opportunities. Overseas advisers are experienced and well informed about American university systems and admission procedures.12

The changing mode of contact between the USIS and Korean citizens can be seen as a metaphor for the larger change in the relationship between the USA, the English language and South Korea. The previous relationship of dependency and the use of overt propaganda to maintain it, has now given way to the more ideological control of capitalist logic and transnational market forces. Of course, as mentioned earlier, the previous relationship cultivated the conditions of the present. It is now time to turn to an organization that embodies this current relationship. That organization is the Korean branch of the American Chamber of Commerce and I will attempt to show how it works to further the reach of English in Korean society.

...to AMCHAM

The American Chamber of Commerce, or AMCHAM, is in the words of Y.B. Min "a fraternity of American businessmen in Korea." AMCHAM's primary function is to "protect the interests of member companies (2,200 individuals and 1000 member companies) operating in Korea." The organization does not have any explicit mandate to promote English, however in conjunction with the easing of trade regulations and the relaxing of labour laws, campaigning for the wider use of English in Korean society is one of its key activities. In a March 2002 article in the Korea Herald, AMCHAM

13 Y.B. Min, CEO of YBM/Si-sa, interview by author, tape recording, 11 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
remarked that South Korea had a good chance to become Asia's regional business
centre for 20-50 multinational headquarters over the next three years "if it (Korea) makes
some changes in its laws."\textsuperscript{15} In another paper, AMCHAM presents 5 recommendations
about areas in which Korea needs to improve in order to become a Northeast Asian
business hub. Not surprisingly, improving the English ability of Koreans was one of their
recommendations (listed in priority right after "increased labour flexibility").\textsuperscript{16} The
authors of the paper that interviewed AMCHAM members and other foreign executives
residing in Korea concluded,

There are of course many ways to enhance the English–language
abilities of Koreans such as education and English-language
infrastructure (e.g., international schools, foreign media, more foreign
teachers at primary to tertiary institutions). But most importantly,
consensus among every part of Korean society should be drawn that
English-language proficiency is an essential \textit{international business tool}
and a must-learn intangible skill in this globalization era. Prompt but
detailed measures and strategies (regular workshops, professional
training (onshore and offshore), etc), in enhancing the people's \textit{global
perspective} and strategic mind that will play as a key success factor in
creating \textit{global corporate culture} and a better business environment,
should be prioritised in places like government, government agencies,
tertiary institutions, and small-and-medium sized firms as well as chaebol
(conglomerates). This would certainly enhance the brand image of Korea
and its market among potential and existing. (emphasis mine)\textsuperscript{17}

AMCHAM is currently pushing the Seoul Metropolitan Government to create an
English-only neighbourhood within the capital city. An article in the Korea Herald stated
that AMCHAM President William Oberlin proposed the idea of an "English Town" to
Seoul mayor Lee Myung-bak and promised that if "Seoul provides sites, American
businesses will build facilities."\textsuperscript{18} The proposed community would be a place where

\textsuperscript{15} Kim Mi Hui, "Eased regulations needed to be business hub: AMCHAM", \textit{Korea Herald}, 14
March 2002, quoted in Lee, Hobday p. 80, (online), (accessed December 1, 2004)
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} O Young Hee, "Mixed views on English-only community" \textit{The Korea Herald}, 10 March 2004,
p.2.
"business transactions, religious services and other social activities will be performed in English."\(^{19}\) This differs from the English immersion villages I described in Chapter Four, as English education is not the concern here. Rather AMCHAM wants to create a neighbourhood where foreign businessmen, and other native English speakers can live and socialize comfortably. However, as the article notes, it is expected that if this still-controversial neighbourhood is created, Koreans will also choose to reside in or visit the community, “giving them a chance to improve their English skills through every day living.”\(^{20}\)

AMCHAM has also offered much advice to the Korean government in a related issue – free economic zones. The government is currently developing an ambitious redevelopment project for three areas in the port city of Incheon, which has been chosen as one such zone. Aside from the usual tax breaks, no tariffs on capital goods, and a flat income tax for foreign corporate executives, the hope is to transform this reclaimed land into an oasis for foreign businesspeople and their families. According to an article in the magazine, “Korea Now”, foreigners moving to this area will find that, ...

...almost every aspect of their daily lives will meet international standards. From business operations and public services conducted in English to established foreign educational institutions, (including post-secondary schools) big-name department stores and world-class medical facilities...\(^{21}\)

The goal is to have English as the official language of the city of Incheon, the fourth largest city in South Korea. Pietro A. Doran, a U.S. real estate developer who is in charge of constructing a “Knowledge Information Centre” in the zone, believes that the “new facilities, coupled with the fact that English will be the official language for Incheon,

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{21}\) Yoo Soh Jung and Do Je Hae, “Incheon Free Economic Zone Key to Korea’s Hub Dream”, Korea Now, 23 August 2003.
are more than enough to seduce both foreigners and Koreans.\textsuperscript{22} Foreign business
people have long complained about the living conditions they have to endure while
posted in Korea. For example, one personnel head of a U.S. based company told a
reporter, "We've been here since 1998, and we continue to face the problem of
schooling for our kids, the lack of English-speaking people and the over-all mind-set
that's so different from the United States."\textsuperscript{23}

However, as comfortable as these new zones will be for foreigners, with real
estate speculation already skyrocketing for the new development, few Koreans will have
the option to live there. In a newspaper article, Kim Tae-il, a researcher at Lotte Real
Estate noted, "People want to send their kids there and enjoy an international level of
life, I suppose...(but) let's face it. Rich folks can afford to live there, while ordinary
people can only dream about it."\textsuperscript{24}

The issue of class stratification that this quote brings up is one that I will discuss
in greater detail below. However, I first would like to expand a bit more on the
"institutionalisation" of English, which naturalizes the language and its place in a distinct
society. Rather than clearly being a method used to control the "periphery" from the
"centre", the English language and the ELT industry has become an important institution
in Korean society that veils the historical and continuing dependency conditions created.
Unlike the methods used in the three decades preceding the 1980s, where projects like
AFKN, USIS and direct involvement in the organization of the Korean education system
characterized US influence in Korea, now brand partnerships between YBM/Si-sa and
ELS, Newsweek, and CNN, demonstrate the more delicate strategy of "think globally, act

\textsuperscript{22} Kim Ji Hyun, "Oasis of the East, but when?" \textit{The Korea Herald}, 20 April 2004, p.20.
\textsuperscript{23} Kim Ji Hyun, "Business environment drives away FDI" \textit{The Korea Herald}, 30 January 2004,
p.19.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
locally". Instead of the USIS, there is now AMCHAM. However, it can be argued that this new form of domination is completely dependent on the older methods, as US military bases still take up prime real estate within Seoul and throughout the country. Nonetheless, even the six-decade long American military presence in South Korea is undergoing rapid change. By the end of 2005, the United States has stated that it will withdraw a third of its 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea. This is the most significant realignment of U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula in half a century.25 The overall geo-political goals remain the same however. Pentagon officials claim that this redeployment will actually help them to better protect South Korea from North Korean aggression as new military technology now allows the US to operate effectively and more safely from further away. The build-up of U.S. forces elsewhere in the Pacific -- notably in Guam, and in Hawaii is evidence of this new strategy.26

From the above discussion, we can posit that there is a general shift away from American military zones, towards English-only zones within the physical landscape of South Korea. This raises interesting questions about the changing character and mode of American influence in South Korea, and the important role that the English language plays in defining that relationship. The underlying logic that ties the appeal of AMCHAM's ideology to the creation of "foreigner-friendly" English-only zones, to the global expansionary drive of YBM/Si-sa, is that English is a fundamental technology for the creation of a borderless, information economy.

26 Ibid.
English As A Technology For The Information Economy

The view that English is a commodity is not new. I have already described the British Council Annual Reports from the 1960s, which celebrated the exchange value of the language. However the global marketing of English has exploded since the end of the Cold War, and much of this has to do with the neo-liberal project to create a borderless, global market. The power behind the spread of English lies in the argument that there needs to be a uniform global business language in order for this global market to emerge. Thus English is seen as a sort of fundamental technology for a new knowledge/information economy, one that operates in a largely transnational marketplace.

South Korea is one of the purest examples of the new knowledge/information economy. As a resource poor country, Korea personifies what Schiller called the "super-aggregations of resources in the cultural-informational sphere." South Korea has the highest Internet access per capita rate in the world and an economy highly dependent on educated, skilled labour. In this light, it is easy to see how the argument in favour of English gains its strength when you consider that about 80 percent of global digital information is stored in English.

For South Korea, as for other nations, English is promoted as a technology that can offer a cure for economic and social problems. The heralded benefits of the English language are routinely stretched and exaggerated. The noted economist Paul Krugman had this to say about the Asian economic crisis: "the common denominator of the countries that have done best in this age of dashed expectations is that they are the

countries where English is spoken."\(^{28}\) His statement, and the general theory about the intrinsic value of English, hangs on the belief that there is a direct correlation between English usage and economic growth. Robert Phillipson writes how this sort of mindset is nothing new when it comes to legitimising the promotion of certain languages over others. The French language assumed this dominant "common sense" position in the past.

The eighteenth-century idea of the 'universality' of French, at a time when only a minority of citizens of France spoke the language, was due to French being the international language of the European ruling groups. In addition to functional arguments, a fundamentally racist ideology of superiority...was propagated...This ideology was used to legitimate an unequal distribution of power and resources to the dominant language.\(^{29}\)

The project of creating a knowledge/information intensive and borderless economy and the promotion of the English language are intimately linked by an ideology that like any before it, serves certain interests over others. We do not have to look very far back to find similar arguments. For example, Herbert Schiller believed that the promotion of information technology by the US in the 1970s was done to "strengthen (the United State's) command over the culture and communications components of the imperial system."\(^{30}\) Schiller argued, "the proposition that mass communication technology was a key to modernization was based on a false claim – there had been neither historical precedents nor sociological evidence showing that an unindustrialized country had ever leapt to an advanced economic stage on the basis of communication technology alone."\(^{31}\) Of course Schiller was well aware that this was never really the central point of the exportation of these communication technologies, nor is


\(^{29}\) Phillipson, 104.

\(^{30}\) Maxwell, 66.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 75.
'development' the raison d'etre behind the ideological promotion of English. Rather, through promoting "modernization through English", a certain type of modernization is envisaged. A world where economic globalization more closely links disparate regions through new trade and consumption relationships yet still manages to maintain traditional power dynamics.

When we try to understand the role that a unifying language such as English can have in first imagining and then in creating this "new world", it is important to remember how commercial media was put to the same task in the middle of the last century. Ithiel de Sola Pool, who was "one of the leading exponents of anti-Communist modernization theory in the post war period, and a regular contributor to government-sponsored development studies of the time", proposed that a new world capitalist system required a global communication system that would work to "construct the imagined communities and social relations of human life quite independently of national interests and visions." In 1963 he wrote:

> The propaganda in favor of modernism contained in commercial communications media is not solely intended to obtain sales for a particular brand of soap. It certainly aids this operation, but it would have neither audience nor effect if the communications media did not provide a product much richer in savor or excitement. Persuasion towards a particular choice is only part of a general argument for a totally modernized mode of life. The communications media, whose object is to open the market to new products and new interests, also present the image of a new kind of man in a new kind of milieu. As Marx underlined, the businessman is a revolutionary, even though this is not his intention. It is the mass media which transform what would otherwise be the unrealized dream of a few modernizers into the dynamic aspiration of a whole people.33

Let us know look at the impact that the "dynamic aspiration" to learn English has on determining, and re-determining Korean social class lines.

**English Testing And Class Stratification**

In South Korea, social classes are assembled within the thousands of private language schools that dot the country. Those that will constitute the new upper class attend the premier institutes which are heavily located in posh neighbourhoods like Seoul’s Gangnam district. The parents of these future business and political leaders busy themselves with booking plane tickets so that their sons and daughters can study in English vacation metropolises like Vancouver, Los Angeles and Sidney. As an article in the Korea Herald recently noted, “more than a third of students at high schools in the rich southern Seoul district of Gangnam go abroad during their vacations to study English and get a taste of foreign cultures.”34 According to another newspaper article, it costs the average foreign student about $24,000 annually to study and live in Vancouver.35 This is clearly unaffordable for most Koreans when one considers that the South Korean national income average is about $13,000. Nevertheless, Korean parents of all economic classes feel enormous pressure to send their child overseas because the simple fact is that English test scores (especially the TOEIC), are one of the most influential factors for college admission, and for getting a job and a promotion in a large Korean company. I have written in previous chapters about the success of YBM/Si-sa’s overseas education recruitment program. However, the opportunity to study abroad is limited to a small segment of Korean society, and many are left standing at the platform as the ‘English train’ moves away. Left behind are those students whose parents can’t afford the exorbitant costs of English private tutoring and study overseas, and those

---

34 O Youn Hee, "English gets dramatic lift in Seoul," *The Korea Herald*, 13 May 2004, p.3.
students who live in rural areas far from the top private institutes that tend to cluster together in urban centres. In this environment of ever-increasing expectations, future social mobility in Korea is determined at an earlier and earlier age. While living with a Korean family in Seoul, I personally witnessed the intense pressure that Korean parents are under to enrol their children in private English institutes (like YBM/Si-sa's) in the United States, Canada, Britain, New Zealand or Australia.\(^{36}\) Top-ranked Korean high schools which directly feed into top-ranked universities which themselves feed into the best jobs, only accept students with near-fluency in English, often achieved only by returning students who have lived abroad for a number of years. As Singh writes, this is "aggravating existing inequalities and creating a new polarization of economic opportunities and disadvantages."\(^{37}\)

In order to clearly illustrate English's role in class re-stratification in Korea on a more personal level, I will now turn to a conversation I had on this matter with my friend Kim Sung Tcho, who is the owner of a successful private English institute in Busan, the second largest city in South Korea. As a well-respected businessman and a highly popular teacher who has made a name for himself in Korea's prosperous but cutthroat English industry, Sung Tcho has spent a lot of time reflecting on the role the English language plays in his country. I visited him a number of times during my return trip to Korea last year. On one of those visits, the talk invariably shifted to how the "English craze" was reorganizing Korean society. This is some of what Sung Tcho told me,

\(^{36}\)This pressure seems to affect parents with younger and younger children every year. I lived with a Korean family in Seoul from January until August of 2004. The mother of the family repeatedly asked my opinion about whether or not she should send her 12 year old son to Canada for a 4 week English camp because "all of the neighbours were doing it" and she was worried that he would not get into the best high school for this reason.

\(^{37}\)Michael Singh et al., 82.

See also Phillipson (1992), especially p. 128-130, where he explains how knowledge of the English language in colonial and post-colonial Africa became the primary way to gain elite status. All other knowledge, particularly local knowledge was relegated to second-class status.
English is more than simply a tool for communication in Korea. It is rather now the key determiner of class. Class lines are constituted around English knowledge. This is because the TOEIC test is the critical gauge of employability for all the best jobs. Chaebols (large companies) like Samsung see success in the TOEIC as being proof that an applicant possesses desirable personality traits for a globalizing company. This is because one must be dedicated to learn English, one must be hardworking, one must be able to set goals, one must be outgoing and willing to talk to foreigners and finally one must be a risk taker as the majority of students who score highly in the TOEIC have lived abroad in another culture.38

What Sung Tcho expressed to me seemed to make a lot of sense. A globalizing company wants to hire globalized young minds. I asked Sung Tcho how the importance of the TOEIC test for determining employability was affecting Korean society on the whole. He responded by telling me of a chart he had seen that documented TOEIC test results of Korean students over many years. According to Sung Tcho, the chart showed that TOEIC test results used to form a sort of pyramid, with very few students achieving top level marks, a greater proportion of students receiving medium to good marks, and then the largest share of the students dwelling at the lower end of the grade distribution. However, Sung Tcho went on to describe how this pyramid has slowly changed into a grade distribution that nowadays resembles a dumbbell stood on its head. Due to the increased societal pressure to master English in recent years, many students are now scoring top marks in the TOEIC. However, an equal number of students are performing poorly at the test, and most interestingly of all, fewer students are scoring in the middle ranges. Sung Tcho told me how this ‘upright-dumbbell-shaped’ distribution of English proficiency was highly illustrative of a larger change in Korean society, that being class

---

38 Kim Sung Tcho, owner of Moojok Language Institute, interview by author, tape recording, 21 February 2004, Busan, South Korea.
polarization and a shrinking middle class.\textsuperscript{39} For Sung Tcho, this is precisely why his job as an English teacher is so important,

When students ask me why they should study hard at English, I answer that it is because they will have to take the TOEIC one day if they hope to work in Korea, and a good mark in the TOEIC is critical because the TOEIC mirrors income trends in Korea.\textsuperscript{40}

During our discussion, Sung Tcho and I also touched upon the subject of American influence on the Korean peninsula over the past fifty-plus years. No matter who you talk to in Korea, this is always a subject that elicits strong emotions and opinions one way or another. When I asked him to try to disentangle American influence from the amazing power the English language has over South Korea, he had this to say,

Former British colonies like India used to stratify society by creating a class of brown Englishmen who studied at Oxford, spoke British standard English and returned to administer the colony. The Republic of Korea is now doing the same under neo-imperialism – instead of Britain or the United States overtly stratifying our society through language, now Samsung and other companies are doing it.\textsuperscript{41}

From what Sung Tcho told me, it is clear that English has a primary role to play in the re-stratification of Korean society. While Sung Tcho sees globalizing Korean conglomerates like Samsung as providing the impetus behind this phenomenon, for Robert Phillipson, it is examinations like the TOEIC or TOEFL that ensure ‘international standards’, which are the driving force behind a still western-based educational imperialism.\textsuperscript{42} Herbert Schiller would likely say that the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie and foreign imperialist interests are actually two facets of the same

\textsuperscript{40} Kim Sung Tcho, owner of Moojok Language Institute, interview by author, tape recording, 30 January 2004, Busan, South Korea.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Phillipson, 58.
Transnationalizing Class Interests

Herbert Schiller in *Communication and Cultural Domination* discusses how the “class identification” of national leaders in periphery countries was crucial to understanding why cultural imperialism did not work by simply pushing from the core alone.\(^{43}\) He would recognize the actions of companies like YBM/Si-sa and Samsung, which encourage both the global spread of English and the stratifying effects of English on Korean society, as manifestations of a desire to incorporate Korean society into the world system. Thus as he put it aptly, it is “inappropriate to describe the contemporary mechanics of cultural control as the outcome of ‘invasion’”\(^{44}\).

This can be seen in the popularity of “education English”, whereby the familiar practice of studying English in order to get a university degree in the western world, becomes a specific marketing tool in the arsenal of the ELT industry. Daniel Choi, manager of one of the main YBM/ELS schools in Seoul, told me,

> We (YBM/Si-sa) are slowing changing. We have the basic classes but we also now offer overseas education training. We used to just teach everyday living conversation, speaking, and listening but now we are focusing on overseas education English. For example lets say you graduated from a Korean university with a Bachelors degree in Business and you come to our Institute and take a course called Overseas Education and after a few months of studying here you will be attending UCLA grad school, doing an MBA for example. We will teach you what to expect. This is because you don’t know the lifestyle in a grad school


\(^{44}\) Ibid.
format - how to take notes, turn in your midterm, how to get ready for your final thesis, etc. We try to get you a little info ahead.45

Upon hearing this, I remarked that it seemed like YBM/Si-sa is moving towards preparing students for a ‘global’ world, or that they are working to ‘globalize’ their students. The English language seemed to be the fulcrum around which this process was carried out. Choi said this was correct and he continued.

Lets say you are looking for a job, you have just graduated from college and you want to work for IBM Korea for example. It’s a foreign firm, what do you do? Well, most likely the person who will be interviewing you will be foreigner and you have to do a presentation. How would you go about making a presentation with MS PowerPoint, how would you sell yourself, how do you see the industry. We will train you to do this.46

If we look carefully at what Choi is saying, we see that the English language is not being marketed or learned simply as a “language for wider communication”47 as many liberal scholars would claim it is. Rather, the English language is seen as part and parcel of an effort to get Korean society, or at least a certain segment of Korean society, into the world system, while leaving in place the basic asymmetrical power relations that exist. According to Schiller, while we must understand the role of companies such as YBM/Si-sa, the main responsibility still lies with the “initiating drives from the center of the system.”48 These initiating drives cultivated the conditions that are present today.

This is why I spent so much time in this thesis outlining the role the United States played in influencing the educational and social evolution of post-war Korea. YBM/Si-sa’s

45 Daniel Choi, Manager of YBM/Si-sa ELS/Jongno Branch, interview by author, tape recording, 7 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
46 Ibid.
As touched upon in Chapter One, liberal scholars who write about the global spread of English, tend towards as Iwabuchi puts it, a “utopian view of world unity, in the same way that Macluhan’s famous term global village connotes a sense of bonding, togetherness, and immediacy.” (Iwabuchi, 36.)
48 Maxwell, 71.
actions today and the hegemony of American English in Korean society cannot be understood without placing it in this proper historical context. At the same time, we must acknowledge the continued and changing influence of the USA on Korean affairs.

Appadurai (1996) and other theorists of modernity talk of how globalization has created "imaginary cultural landscapes." We can see that the English language, more specifically the promise of modernization through English and the creation of a global transnational village through English, is a powerful component of these shared imaginings. However, in order to temper what can easily slide into a liberal utopian vision, it must be remembered that the emergence of these shared imaginings themselves are largely the result of corporate marketing practices that accompany the spread of capitalism. Also, as Michael Griffin points out, the "continuing strength of the metaphor of imperialism lies in the fact that...the operations of transnational corporate systems ... seem to reinforce, rather than diminish, continuing inequalities between historical colonizers and the historically colonized." Griffin cites Golding and Harris (1997), who describe how the vast inequalities in living standards that seem to be exacerbated by global networks creates, "a growing dependence on the North for research and development, technology, and education." What is relatively new is that "this continuing dependency...is linked more than in the past to the transnational marketing of consumer goods rather than industrial development within nation-states."

Along with the traditional focus on the flow of consumer goods and cultural products, it is crucial to consider the nature of the transnationalization of the ELT industry as a cultural industry in its own right. English must be seen as one of these key cultural products.

49 Griffin, 17.
51 Griffin, 20.
However, English is also more than just a cultural product. The ability to “purchase” a quality English education is largely class determined and once purchased, the ownership of English allows for ready access to real capital and greater upward social mobility. English is also a product that can be marketed across cultures to create transnational horizontal integration, which trumps any antiquated concern for national vertical integration. As Phillipson writes, English is used for “elite formation and preservation, intranational and international links between elites, and international identity.” The process of horizontal integration, according to Sreberny-Mohammadi, “is evidenced by several factors, one of which is a process whereby people are increasingly addressed across national boundaries on the basis of class status and other cultural attributes by marketing, political and cultural agencies alike.” A prime example of this is the way YBM/Si-sa is going after the thin (but numerically and financially massive) middle and upper-class Chinese market that desperately wants to learn English. The geographic location where these students are reached, whether in China or in Australia, may cause some logistical headaches for YBM/Si-sa. However, in the end the location is not so important as long as YBM/Si-sa is provided with full access to the Chinese class counterparts of YBM/Si-sa’s established Korean customer base.

This process ensures that cultural differences aren’t homogenized on the national scale so much as they are blurred at the ‘class’ level. The upper-class in Korea or China want the same Harvard education for their children as do American elites. Thus, they “consume” English in order to attain that goal. In Korea, the conditions seem to fit with Pattanayak’s analysis that, “in developing countries, educated persons tutored in the modes of western thinking consider (1) transnational communication more

52 Phillipson, 286.
important than national communication, (2) standardization and uniformity more important than transmission of knowledge and information within the country, and (3) translation and transference of knowledge more important than creation of knowledge.  

Any debate over the merits of the cultural imperialism thesis cannot ignore the internationalisation of the capitalist class system. Schiller, in the 1990s, noticed the empirical changes in the international class system and modified his theory of cultural imperialism to fit this reality. He concluded in the updated edition of his classic Mass Communications and American Empire,

American cultural imperialism is not dead. Rather, the older form of cultural imperialism no longer adequately describes the global cultural condition. Today it is more useful to view transnational corporate culture as the central force, with a continuing heavy flavor of U.S. media know-how, derived from long experience with marketing and entertainment skills and practices.  

The dependence on this “know-how” is why when YBM/Si-sa opened up schools in Canada, it was on the advice of ELS headquarters and with the ELS brand name proudly displayed on the schools (with the YBM/Si-sa brand invisible). Likewise when YBM/Si-sa first worked on a plan to enter the Chinese market, it did so thinking that Disney would be there alongside. When this plan failed, YBM/Si-sa resorted to creating a symbolic partnership, naming their new institute, “American School of English”. As Stuart Hall argues “Transnational capital attempts to rule through other local capitals, rule alongside and in partnership with other economic and political elites.”  

---


obviously the case with YBM/Si-sa and their various American partnerships that I have documented throughout this thesis.
CONCLUSION

In South Korea, the English language derives its power from its direct association with the United States.¹ This is a positive association whereby English connotes modernism rather than cultural imperialism. It also raises an interesting question; is it still appropriate to use the term "cultural imperialism" when describing a process that isn't blatantly coercive, a process that involves the active participation of those who are supposedly being "dominated"? As Michael Griffin writes, "the weakness of the metaphor of imperialism...is that it suggests a planned co-optation and transformation of local 'ways of life'."² He suggests that perhaps contemporary conditions are better described as "the steadily increasing participation of peoples across regional, national, and local boundaries in (what Appadurai calls) "imaginary cultural landscapes."³ In this view, cultural influence is seen to be spread through cultivation rather than through coercion.

On the surface, this would appear to be the case with the adaptation of the English language as an important institution in South Korean society. However, on the other hand, "the continuing strength of the metaphor of imperialism," as Griffin also notes, "and the operations of transnational corporate systems of technology and

¹ Sometimes this results in Koreans simply referring to English as "the American language". For example Keun Dal Lee, the Senior Editor of CNNez Magazine continuously did this during our interview. "US forces came here about 60 years ago, after the 2nd World War, from that time, our interest in the American language grew fast." (Keun Dal Lee, Senior Editor of CNNez Magazine, interview by author, tape recording, 25 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.)
³ Ibid.
marketing (and we can add, the English language) seem to reinforce, rather than diminish, continuing inequalities between historical colonizers and the historically colonized.\textsuperscript{4} Furthermore, when assessing the relative autonomy of the choices a particular culture makes, one must always be careful to understand the particular historical context that gives order to the choices that a culture can make.

For this reason, it was absolutely imperative to tell this story from a historical perspective. The ELT industry in Korea could never have been so profitable without the initial structural conditions imposed upon Korea by the US and the continued allure of "American modernity" that is so closely linked to the English language and presented everyday through American mass media. The association between English and "American modernity" is precisely so powerful because English first appeared to Koreans en masse through the channels of American media, which became widely accessible due to the post-WWII American occupation of South Korea. As Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi (1997) argues, imperialism laid the ground or cultivated the conditions for the ready acceptance and adoption of "modern" values which came much later.\textsuperscript{5} The historical conditions founded the present conditions and continue to feed the present imagination.

I began my study in Chapter Two by outlining the historical context that formed South Korea's relationship with the United States. America's influence on South Korea was facilitated by the direct occupation of the war-weary country by US troops and government personal. Due in part to South Korea's absolute dependence on the United States following the devastating Korean War, the mythical appeal of all things

\textsuperscript{4} Griffin, 17.
“American” was (and is still) incredibly alluring. This in turn created yet another context, whereby the interest generated by the presence of American culture in the everyday lives and on the political and economic reality of ordinary Koreans, combined with the ready availability of an American media outlet – AFKN. Entrepreneurial Korean businessmen harnessed that interest within the corrals of the early ELT industry by riding on the widespread availability and popularity of the AFKN media presence. Additionally, as we saw with the case of YBM/Si-sa, the company developed by cultivating the powerful symbolism associated with America in South Korea. YBM/Si-sa’s driving goal in its 40-plus years of existence has been to make its name “synonymous with the study of English in Korea.” They have succeeded by both actively pursuing and welcoming intimate brand name and business relationships with American publishers like Collier-Macmillan; American education companies such as English Language Services (ELS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS); and finally with US-based mass media operators like CNN, Newsweek, and Disney. Even in the case of a company that is no longer technically “American”, as with ELS which was bought by the Japanese publishers Benesse, YBM/Si-sa still benefits from a brand association that says “America”. YBM/Si-sa’s American-based “Young & Son Global” operation, and YBM/Si-sa’s decision to name their Beijing school, American School of English, are two further examples of this. As I noted in Chapter Three, according to YBM/Si-sa’s founder and CEO, the company’s chief strength lies in its ability to effectively cultivate this association with ‘America’.

It is so alluring that some Koreans seem frustrated by the inability of their country’s citizens to speak English as fluently as American citizens do. This is the sentiment expressed by Dr. Kim Seong-Kon - executive director of Language Education Institute at South Korea’s top university, who for this reason told me “Maybe it would have been much more practical for Korea to have been directly colonized by the US.” (Dr. Kim Seong-Kon, executive director of the LEI at SNU, interview by author, tape recording, 31 March 2004, Seoul, Korea) 6

YBM/Si-sa, YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year, (2001, promotional material, obtained from YBM/Si-sa corporate headquarters, Seoul, Korea) 5.
Therefore, while YBM/Si-sa is the prototype of a successful, globalizing Korean company and definitely not a "pawn" in the American imperialist strategy, it derives much of its success through intelligent business moves that have mentally associated YBM/Si-sa with "American modernity". As Alistair Pennycook has noted, the ELT industry thrives by portraying 'the West' as representing 'modernity' and 'civilization' and then by selling the English language based on the power of this portrayal.\(^8\) As I have shown in this thesis, it is through the "tool" of English that one can hope to achieve the promises of modernity - freedom, opportunity and upward consumerist mobility. This is also why throughout this thesis, I have attempted to highlight the relationship between English and global capitalism. As Griffin writes, "It is the system of neoliberal capitalism itself, dependent upon imagined myths of the market as panacea, and dreams of future acquisition, upward social mobility and cultural and personal autonomy, that is spreading inexorably, though unevenly, to affect people to varying degrees in nearly every part of the planet."\(^9\) Global capitalism wouldn't be possible without the spread of English, or as Phillipson puts it, "the role played by the ELT industry is integral to the functioning of the contemporary world order."\(^10\) In the same way that the royal classes in Feudal Europe used French, the "transnational capitalist class" now use English. While it is true that there are more Chinese native speakers than native speakers of English, this is not the point. "Capitalism has given English its global predominance...the claim of English to be the global language arises from its accompaniment of and support for English imperialism and the global interests of the United States."\(^11\) Finally, as Michael Singh so


aptly puts it, "while the whole world may not necessarily speak US/American English or become neo-liberal capitalists, everywhere in the world is struggling to establish a position in relation to these major phenomena."\(^{12}\)

John Tomlinson, in his comprehensive book *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* concludes that it is more beneficial to speak about issues of cultural domination in terms of 'Capitalist Modernity' rather than in the traditional cultural imperialist concept of 'Americanization'. The strength of this approach is that it emphasizes a historical perspective over a more political one. Yet, as my thesis has shown, at least regarding the case of YBM/Si-sa in the country of South Korea, the English language, and the hegemony it represents is still directly connected to America, or perhaps more accurately to "what Barthes might have called the *myth* of America."\(^{13}\) If we substitute "English" for "McDonald's" in the following quote, we can see that Tomlinson recognized just as much.

We may ultimately decide that it makes more sense to think of McDonald's as instancing cultural domination in temporal terms ('modernity') rather than spatial terms ('America'). But we must allow, for the present, that there is at least a certain coherence in a discourse of cultural imperialism which sees McDonald's as America: that is as the salient feature of a hegemonic version of America which has 'imperialist' intent.\(^{14}\)

**Tensions and Resistance**

It remains to be seen whether or not the ELT industry in South Korea will sustain itself or if over-saturation will persuade more ELT operators to begin peddling English in overseas markets, like YBM/Si-sa is doing in China and Canada. As I noted earlier, Y.B. Min felt that his company's future was in reaching the emerging cosmopolitan-orientated

---

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 24.


\(^{14}\) Ibid.
Chinese population. However, YBM/Si-sa manager Daniel Choi, expressed a sense of security in the Korean domestic market.

The Korean economy nowadays is not that great but the English educational market will never, never diminish. If everyone else is starving, we're ok because parents may not buy that extra blouse or rice cooker but they will not hesitate to spend that extra won on their son/daughter's English education. I personally believe that (this) is the safest industry to be in.\(^\text{15}\)

It would appear from what has been written thus far, that there is little resistance to the hegemony of the English language in South Korea. English, as I have pointed out throughout this thesis, is largely regarded as a "tool" which can be utilized to strengthen South Korea's global position. Most of the interviews and the research I conducted for this thesis seemed to confirm that argument. This mindset even displays itself in the title of Y.B. Min's biography, \textit{One Small Man Making Korea Strong through English}. As further proof of this, Stanford professor Gi-Wook Shin told me in conversation about a high school he visited in Korea called the Korean Minjok Leadership Academy (KMLA), which is Korea's version of Eton. At KMLA students study in English and are required to even use English outside of the classroom. The curriculum however, some would say paradoxically, aims to enhance Korean national identity through the teaching of Confucian ethics, traditional rituals, music and sports. Every year, the school succeeds in its goal of sending its best students to the best universities in the United States (like Stanford).\(^\text{16}\) What Dr. Shin told me, is a perfect example of the use of English as a utilitarian tool removed from larger cultural concerns.

\(^\text{15}\) Daniel Choi, Manager of YBM/Si-sa ELS/Jongno Branch, interview by author, tape recording, 7 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
\(^\text{16}\) Shin Gi Wook; associate professor of sociology, Stanford University, interview by author, tape recording, 21 November, 2003, Stanford University, California, USA.
Another of my favorite examples has to do with the "Experience English Village" which I discussed in Chapter 4. Parents can enroll their children in this camp-like environment that resembles a 'real American town', with English as the only language permitted on the grounds. The site containing the "Experience English Village" was actually bought by the Seoul Government in 2001 in order to protect heritage artifacts found during archeological digs. Archeologists believe this may be the site of an ancient Korean kingdom. The location has since been designated a national cultural heritage site by the Korean government. Interestingly, a newspaper article reports officials as saying, "there is little chance valuable cultural assets that may lie underground will be damaged (with the opening of the English immersion camp on the site)."17 In a way, the creation of an English-only campus where the Korean language is banned, on top of a government protected repository of Korean cultural artifacts is a perfect metaphor for how the English language is seen in South Korea.

That being said, in the late 1990s newspaper columnists and the general public were very vocal in criticizing the views of Guil Bok who in his controversial book *English as an official language* (1998), argued in favor of adapting English as a second official language in South Korea. The book for a time at least, seemed to politicize the English language and brought it into the domain of an environment of rising Korean nationalism. However, the focus of this debate was not so much on the role of the English language itself in Korean society, but rather on whether or not English should be given official status by the Korean state.18

---

18 Kim Jung Kang, "Globalization and English Language Education in Korea: Socialization and Identity Construction of Korean Youth" (Ph.D. diss., New Mexico State University, 2002) p. 3
While American soldiers over the years have been the targets of protests and anger, English teachers working in the Korean ELT industry have largely been welcomed with open arms. This may be changing. The headline of a recent *Asian Pacific Post* front-page article screamed “English Teachers In Korea Face Wrath Of An Angry Nation”. According to the article, various foreign embassies in South Korea have warned English teachers in the country to be on alert after a popular Korean TV station broadcast an expose that painted them as “an assortment of high-school dropouts, losers, drug peddlers and pedophiles.” The TV show and an online petition promising to rid South Korea of “low-grade Westerners”, cashed in on public anger in late 2004 that was sparked by a foreign English teacher’s web-posting which provided “a step-by-step guide to bedding local women”. Whether or not the newspaper article is exaggerating the extent to which English teachers are now “open targets”, this is an interesting new development that should be watched closely. Once again however, it appears that it is not so much the role of the English language in South Korean society that seems to be the focus of Korean’s anger, but rather on the apparent disrespect displayed by English teachers towards Korean culture.

Nevertheless, this perspective may also derive from the particular limitations of my research. Due to the fact that I am not fluent in Korean, and I am a visible “westerner” in Korean society, my research may have some blind spots when it comes to determining the true feelings of everyday Koreans towards the English language. Obviously, my network of connections tended to run amongst Koreans who were

---


20 Ibid., 5.

21 This example reminds me of Sheila Jager’s book *Narratives of Nation-Building in Korea: a genealogy of patriotism* (2003). In the book Jager provides an excellent account of how Korean woman have historically been placed in a problematic relationship with Korean culture, with their honour being a metaphor for the honour of the nation as a whole.
involved in the English industry in one form or another, since this was the focus of my research. Furthermore, I suspect most South Koreans would not want to openly criticize the political and cultural ramifications of the English language in the company of a former English teacher. That being said, I have overheard and participated in such conversations and I fully realize that many Koreans are critical of the way English has restructured their society. In a dissertation that researches the English language and its role in socialization and identity construction of Korean youth, Jung-Kang Kim writes, “As a people who have lived through a history of (Japanese) colonization and who have been deprived of their native language by the colonizer, Koreans do not overlook the current position that English takes up in the society and other related social, cultural, and educational issues.”

I remember as well a conversation I had over coffee with London Lee, a director at the Lee Ik Hoon Language Research Center, on a humid day in late June 2004. Mr. Lee met me in a café in the Gangnam district of Seoul. On this particular afternoon, every eye in the café was glued to a TV set broadcasting grisly images from Iraq of an abducted Korean man, Kim Sun-il, pleading for his life and begging the Korean government to fulfill the demands of his captors by keeping Korean soldiers out of Iraq. Earlier in the year, South Korea had promised the United States that they would send an additional 3,000 troops to Iraq, thus making South Korea the 3rd largest contingent in Iraq after the US and Britain. Lee, along with everyone else in the café was visibly furious with these developments. He told me that this situation made it clear to everyone that Korea was simply a colony of the US. They must support the war in Iraq if they hoped to keep peace on the Korean peninsula and maintain economic stability. Noting the parallel between this tragic situation and the role of the English language in Korea,

22 Kim Jung Kang, 2.
Mr. Lee told me, "many people resent the fact that they seem forced to learn English but they see it as the only way to put Korea in a stronger negotiating position."\textsuperscript{23}

The story has an all too tragic end. South Korea kept their promise to the United States, and a few days later Kim Sun-il was beheaded.

\textsuperscript{23} London Lee, director of Lee Ik Hoon Language Research Center, interview by author, tape recording, 22 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Choi, Daniel. Manager of YBM/Si-sa ELS/Jongno Branch, Interview by author, tape recording, June 7 2004, Seoul, South Korea.


Dr. Kim Seong-Kon, executive director of the LEI at SNU, Interview by author, tape recording, 31 March 2004, Seoul, South Korea.


Evans, Gillian. "Language School Evolution," *Language Travel Magazine* http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltm/ltmbackissues/may03web/may03specreport.htm


Kim Sung Tcho, owner of Moojok Language Institute, Interview by author, tape recording, 21 February 2004, Busan, South Korea.


Lee Ik Hoon, founder and owner of Lee Ik Hoon Language Institute, Interview by author, tape recording, 10 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.


Lee Young Lock. Editor of Newsweek21 magazine, Interview by author, tape recording, 25 June 2004, Seoul, South Korea.


Min Y.B., CEO of YBM/Si-sa, Interview by author, tape recording, 11 August 2004, Seoul, South Korea.

Min Y.B., CEO of YBM/Si-sa, Interview by author, tape recording, 30 April 2004, Seoul, South Korea.


Shin, Gi Wook. Associate professor of sociology, Stanford University, Interview by author, tape recording, 21 November 2003. Stanford University, California, USA.


--------. YBM/Si-sa’s Fortieth Year, Seoul: YBM/Si-sa, 2001.

--------. “Young & Son Global,” YBM/Si-sa, http://www.ybm.co.kr/eng/ybm_eng01_1.asp.


Yim SH. “Geographical Features of Social Polarization in Seoul, South Korea” http://www.lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp.html