

A Survey Report on College English Materials: Differences in Nationality and Sex

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I. INTRODUCTION

Successful language education, as education in other fields do, requires several important conditions. Among them, qualified instructors, efficient teaching

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methods, appropriate textbooks, and student motivation are crucial. None of these can be easily isolated, and one can efficiently complement another. For example, a 'good' textbook can motivate students by providing interesting topics and useful exercises that can actually help them improve their language ability. A 'good' textbook can also lead instructors with little experience to teach well since, as Skierso notes, many instructors "tend to follow the text's sequence, methodology, pacing, and vocabulary to the letter" (Skierso, 1991, p. 432). But how can one define a 'good' textbook? The answer is emphatically local as mentioned by Sheldon (1988), and moreover, no teachers seem fully satisfied with their textbooks.

No educational institutions in Korea neglect the importance of English education. However, the social demand of English proficiency in Korea comes in many cases from an instrumental motivation, or rather, a very particular instrumental motivation: learning English is perceived by most adults as a means for improving their social status. On the other hand, most English instructors, especially in regular university curricula, do not teach English only to fulfill students' instrumental motivation. Their main objective is to enable their students to communicate using the language rather than simply helping them, for example, getting a better job. Thus, there exists some gap between students and instructors in terms of motivation. Such a gap is also reflected in their opinions on textbooks. Kim, Hong, Kim, and Nimmo (1996) reported a student survey result on what types of materials, topics, and exercises for developing the four basic skills Korean university students find useful, interesting, and/or important in learning English. Variables such as sex, year, purpose of taking English courses were used to compare different opinions among different groups of students. Kim, Hong, Kim, and Nimmo (1998) also report a teacher survey result, using a similar questionnaire used in their 1996 report. Furthermore, they compare the two survey results obtained from the students and the instructors, and provide some guidelines on how English

coursebooks should be developed suitable for college students in Korea.

Could there be any different opinions among different groups of the instructors who participated in the teacher survey? Based on the statistical results obtained in Kim et al. (1998) and as its follow-up study, this paper compares the instructors' opinions on college English materials between Koreans and foreigners and also between males and females who are teaching English in Korean universities. Since many Korean instructors have been replaced by foreign instructors in the 1990s and since many females are actively teaching English at universities compared to other fields of study, a comparison between Koreans and foreigners and between males and females would be meaningful to see how they differ in terms of what kind of topics, material types, exercises, etc. they think are useful or important for Korean college students in learning English.

II. METHODOLOGY

1. Subjects

Ninety-seven teachers of English from more than twenty-six universities in Korea kindly responded to our survey questionnaire from the end of 1996 to the beginning of 1997. Among them forty-five checked 'male' and forty-seven 'female' (frequency missing = 5). Thirty-nine responded that they were Koreans, and fifty-six instructors filled in different nationalities (frequency missing = 2). Out of fifty-six foreign instructors, forty were Americans, seven were Canadians, and a very few came from countries such as Australia, Czech, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom.²⁾

2) See Kim et al. (1998) for background information such as range of age, job status, final degree obtained and field of degree of the instructors.

The average years of teaching at universities in Korea of the Korean instructors, foreign instructors, male instructors, and female instructors were 8.833 years, 4.818 years, 6.318 years, and 6.457 years, respectively. As the numbers of years show, the Korean instructors had almost twice as much teaching experience as the foreign instructors, while the teaching experience of the males and the females were similar.

2. Survey Questions

The survey questionnaire consisted of questions on degree of usefulness in types of materials, degree of usefulness in topic areas, and degree of importance of types of exercises for listening, speaking, reading and writing, and questions to see how important English instructors think some aspects of conversation are (e.g., fluency, cultural awareness) and how much they think Korean university students need to improve them. Some more questions followed to find out instructors' opinions with regard to various aspects of coursebooks, such as number of sections in a unit, supplementary materials, accents recorded in tapes, illustrations, etc.

3. Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected from the teacher survey, the SAS (Statistical Analysis System) version 6.08 was used, and the frequency of instructors' responses was measured. Although only ninety-seven questionnaires were collected and used for the analysis, the statistical analysis is still valid since normal distribution can be obtained when samples are more than thirty.

A t-test was performed in order to see if there is any difference between the

Korean and the foreign instructors and also between the male and the female instructors teaching English at universities in Korea with regard to their opinions on college English materials. As a result, there were some items showing significant differences with 95% accuracy between the two groups.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Materials

Five text types were given and instructors were asked how useful each material type is for Korean college students in learning English. The following table shows the means for each type of materials listed in order, with the maximum of 5 as very useful and the minimum of 1 as not useful at all. In general, the instructors think *conversations/dialogues/interviews* and *newspaper/magazine articles* are more useful than the other types.

TABLE 1. Types of Materials (Usefulness)

Types of Materials	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Conversations/dialogues/interview	4.146	4.308	4.035	4.091	4.277
2. Newspaper/magazine articles	4.021	4.079	3.982	3.651*	4.326*
3. Short stories/narratives	3.448	3.385	3.491	3.364	3.532
4. Letters/application forms	3.226	3.500*	3.036*	3.214	3.283
5 Graphics/charts/statistics	2.646	2.744	2.579	2.432	2.851

*P<0.05

The Korean instructors and the foreign instructors have the same rank for the usefulness of the types of materials. Most of the means are slightly higher for the Koreans, but the only type of materials that show a significant difference is *letters/application forms*.

On the other hand, *newspaper/magazine articles* are considered a lot more useful by the female instructors than the males do, and have the higher mean than *conversations/dialogues/interview* among the female instructors.

2. Topic Areas

Sixteen types of topic areas were given and instructors were asked how useful each topic is for Korean college students.

TABLE 2. Topic Areas (Usefulness)

Topic Areas	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Jobs/work	4.305	4.359	4.268	4.256	4.319
2. School life/education	4.301	4.231	4.352	4.024*	4.532*
3. Greetings/meeting people	4.295	4.256	4.321	4.233	4.383
4. Customs/cultures in other countries	4.245	4.256	4.236	4.093	4.413
5. Family relationship/family life	4.158	4.051	4.232	3.930*	4.383*
6. Traveling/transportation	4.095	4.154	4.054	4.047	4.128
7. Emotions	4.074	3.949	4.164	3.791*	4.326*
8. Dating/friendship	4.074	3.795*	4.268*	3.930	4.149
9. Sports/hobbies/entertainment	4.065	4.128	4.019	4.000	4.156
10. Food/dining out	3.809	3.974	3.691	3.814	3.848
11. Physical appearance	3.688	3.692	3.685	3.381*	4.022*
12. Shopping	3.641	3.846	3.491	3.683	3.652
13. Time/weather	3.581	3.564	3.593	3.488	3.667
14. Housing/accommodation	3.500	3.538	3.473	3.326	3.652
15. Neighborhood	3.226	3.333	3.148	3.071	3.304
16. Animals/plants/nature	3.043	3.154	2.963	2.721*	3.289*

*P<0.05

Note that the first nine topics have the mean higher than 4.000, which means they are considered by the instructors to be very useful topics.

While only one topic (i.e., *dating/friendship*) showed a meaningful difference between the Korean instructors and the foreign instructors, there were more differences found between the male instructors and the female instructors. A notable finding is that the female instructors have higher means for all the five topics (*school life/education, family relationship/family life, emotions, physical appearance, and animals/plants/nature*), which show a significant difference, than the male instructors.

3. Exercise Types for Listening

We asked instructors to indicate how important the following listening exercises are in a coursebook, with 5 as very important and 1 as not important at all.

TABLE 3. Exercise Types for Listening (Importance)

Exercise Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal	Fem.
1. Exercise for listening for gist and/or specific pieces of information	4.242	4.077	4.357	4.045	4.370
2. Exercise for understanding verbal description/narrative/ instructions	4.146	3.923*	4.298*	4.156	4.087
3. Exercise for making inferences through listening	4.124	4.026	4.190	4.000	4.170
4. Exercise for understanding informal conversations	4.073	3.897	4.193	3.867	4.174
5. Presentation and practice for intonations	3.361	3.333	3.379	3.156	3.468

*P<0.05

The result shows that the means for four types of exercises are higher than 4, which suggests most instructors think such exercises are important for their students, while *practice for intonations* is considered less important. The only valid difference found among the four groups of instructors is among the Korean instructors and the foreign instructors; the foreign instructors think *exercise for understanding verbal description/narrative/instructions* more important than the Korean instructors do.

4. Exercise Types for Speaking

We asked instructors to indicate how important the following speaking exercises are in a coursebook. Note in the table below that *expressing or explaining one's opinions in discussions* is ranked first by the instructors, and *asking and answering questions in a conversation* follows. Such a result suggests the instructors' expectation is higher than students' motivation for learning English, since most students tend to be satisfied with learning and practicing English necessary for conversations rather than expanding their language ability to participate in discussions. Also, the Korean instructors have the higher means for *giving summarized oral reports or short talks* than the foreign instructors, which requires higher proficiency of English than conversations.

TABLE 4. Exercise Types for Speaking (Importance)

Exercise Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Presentation and practice for expressing or explaining your opinions in discussions	4.526	4.615	4.466	4.378	4.638
2. Presentation and practice for asking and answering questions in a conversation	4.309	4.359	4.276	4.133*	4.489*
3. Presentation and practice for giving summarized oral reports or short talks	4.113	4.308*	3.983*	4.000	4.234

Exercise Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
4. Presentation and practice for information gathering (interview, information gap exercise)	4.072	3.949	4.155	3.911	4.170
5. Presentation and practice of appropriate style and expressions in speaking	3.804	3.590	3.948	3.600	3.979
6. Presentation and practice of correct pronunciation and intonation	3.500	3.385	3.579	3.386	3.617

*P<0.05

The only meaningful difference found between the male instructors and the female instructors is *asking and answering questions in a conversation* with the higher means for the female instructors.

As was the case for the exercise types for listening, practice related to pronunciation and intonation had the lowest means in speaking.

5. Exercise Types for Reading

Instructors were asked to indicate how important the following reading exercises are in a coursebook. According to the result given in the table below, the instructors seem to prefer training for the overall comprehension and more content-oriented exercises over vocabulary or speed reading drill.

TABLE 5. Exercise Types for Reading (Importance)

Exercise Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Summary exercise about the main idea/information in a text	4.427	4.410	4.439	4.333	4.478
2. Exercise for making inferences	4.052	3.897	4.158	3.911	4.130
3. Questioning about specific pieces of information in a text	4.021	3.897	4.105	3.956	4.000
4. Exercise for guessing unknown words from context	3.969	3.692*	4.158*	3.867	4.022
5. Speed reading exercise for gist	3.771	3.744	3.789	3.467*	4.000*

*P<0.05

The foreign instructors give more importance to *guessing unknown words from context* than the Korean instructors, and the female instructors consider *speed reading exercise for gist* more important for the students than the male instructors do. Also, note that the foreign instructors and the female instructors have slightly higher means for all the other types of reading exercises than the Korean instructors and the male instructors, respectively.

6. Exercise Types for Writing

As was the case for the reading exercises, writing exercises related to contents, rather than specific drills for grammar and mechanics, are considered by the instructors more important for the students.

TABLE 6. Exercise Types for Writing

Exercise Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal	Fem.
1. Presentation and practice for organizing and developing an essay (writing a thesis, topic sentences, supporting sentences, conclusion, etc.)	4.573	4.487	4.632	4.444	4.674
2. Presentation and practice for process of writing(brainstorming, pre-writing, writing drafts, revising, etc.)	4.365	4.282	4.421	4.111*	4.565*
3. Presentation and practice for styles in writing(formal/informal essay, narrative, description, letters, etc.)	3.865	3.538*	4.088*	3.711	3.957
4. Presentation and practice for mechanics(paragraph format, punctuation, quotation, reference, etc.)	3.854	3.795	3.895	3.622	4.043
5. Presentation and practice for a variety of grammar	3.313	3.205	3.386	3.244	3.391

*P<0.05

A significant difference found between the foreign instructors and the Korean instructors is *practice for different styles in writing*, and *practice for process of writing* showed a meaningful difference between the female instructors and the male instructors. Again, like the reading exercises, the foreign instructors and the female instructors have slightly higher means for all types of writing exercises than the Korean instructors and the male instructors, respectively.

7. Some Other Aspects of Conversation

In addition to exercise types for the four skills, we asked instructors to determine how important and how much Korean students need to improve some aspects of conversation such as confidence, fluency, cultural awareness, and body language. These were included in the questionnaire separate from the exercise types since, although they may not be directly related to improving listening and speaking skills, they can play an important role in communicating and establishing relationship with English speakers.

TABLE 7. Some Other Aspects of Conversation (Importance)

Aspects	General	Kor.	For.	Mal	Fem.
1. Confidence	4.495	4.385	4.571	4.400	4.587
2. Fluency	4.242	4.128	4.321	4.111	4.326
3. Cultural awareness (understanding different etiquette, customs)	3.916	3.949	3.893	3.778	4.043
4. Body language (gestures, eye contact, nodding, etc.)	3.200	2.974	3.357	2.978	3.348

* $P < 0.05$

TABLE 8. Some Aspects of Conversation (Need for Improvement)

Aspects	General	Kor.	For.	Mal	Fem.
1. Fluency	4.467	4.538	4.415	4.341	4.591
2. Confidence	4.333	4.282	4.370	4.227	4.422
3. Cultural awareness (understanding different etiquette, customs)	3.785	3.949	3.667	3.705	3.867
4. Body language (gestures, eye contact, nodding, etc.)	3.215	3.154	3.259	3.000	3.378

*P<0.05

Confidence and *fluency* are considered not only highly important by the instructors, but also as some aspects of conversation that Korean students should work on to improve. *Cultural awareness* follows the two, while *body language* is thought comparatively less important.

No statistically important difference was found between the different groups.

8. Sections

Instructors were asked to select an appropriate number of sections included in one unit in a conversation and a composition coursebook. The result below shows that for both conversation and composition, 4 to 5 sections are considered appropriate.

TABLE 9. Number of Sections in a Unit

Coursebook Types	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
Conversation	4.627	4.486	4.739	4.769	4.537
Composition	4.349	4.162	4.500	4.478	4.244

*P<0.05

No significant difference was found between the Korean and the foreign instructors and between the male and female instructors.

9. Supplementary Materials

Instructors were asked how important some supplementary materials are for listening and speaking coursebooks and for reading and writing coursebooks. The two tables below clearly show how important different supplementary materials are considered by the instructors for different types of coursebooks.

TABLE 10. Supplementary Materials for Listening and Speaking (Importance)

Materials	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Listening Tape	4.021	4.231	3.879	3.756*	4.319*
2. Teacher's Guide	3.823	4.333*	3.474*	3.667	4.000
3. Video Tape	3.811	4.154*	3.571*	3.667	4.044
4. Workbook	3.417	3.564	3.316	3.311	3.522

*P<0.05

TABLE 11. Supplementary Materials for Reading and Writing (Importance)

Materials	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Workbook	3.979	4.000	3.964	4.136	3.844
2. Teacher's Guide	3.821	4.179*	3.571*	3.886	3.804
3. Listening Tape	2.596	2.949*	2.345*	2.605	2.587
4. Video Tape	2.548	2.846*	2.333*	2.395	2.689

*P<0.05

There are a few significant differences found between the Korean instructors and the foreign instructors with regard to supplementary materials. First of all,

all the means in both tables above are higher for the Korean instructors. Teacher's guide especially is considered more important for both types of coursebooks, which may imply that the Korean instructors are more dependent on a teacher's guide provided with a coursebook. On the other hand, the foreign instructors are less likely to use a listening and speaking coursebook that comes with a video tape. The male instructors consider listening tape fairly less important than the female instructors for a listening and speaking coursebook.

10. Accents

Instructors were asked which accents should be recorded in listening materials. The result given below clearly shows that very few instructors consider it desirable for students to become familiar with just one type of standard accent.

TABLE 12. Accents Recorded in Listening Materials

Accents	Percentage
American only	18.2%
British only	0.0%
American and British mixed	36.4%
Native speakers' and non-native speakers' mixed	45.5%

* $P < 0.05$

In addition, if instructors checked for *native speakers' and non-native speakers' mixed*, they were also asked to give the percentage of non-native speakers' participation in recording listening materials. The result was that they (45.5% of the instructors) consider about 27.5% of the listening materials could consist of accents of non-native speakers of English.

However, among the Korean instructors, only eight (20.5%) prefer to have *native speakers' and non-native speakers' accents mixed*, and in average they consider about 23.8% of the listening materials could consist of accents of non-native speakers of English. On the other hand, thirty-one foreign instructors (55.4%) prefer to have *native speakers' and non-native speakers' accents mixed*, and they consider about 28.5% of the listening materials could consist of accents of non-native speakers of English.

Unlike the Korean instructors and the foreign instructors, no such large difference was found between the male instructors and the female instructors. Among the male instructors, eighteen instructors (40%) prefer to have *native speakers' and non-native speakers' accents mixed*, and in average they consider about 29.7% of the listening materials could consist of accents of non-native speakers of English. Similarly, eighteen female instructors (38.3%) prefer to have *native speakers' and non-native speakers' accents mixed*, and they consider about 28.6% of the listening materials could consist of accents of non-native speakers.

Since English has become an international language with a huge number of non-native speakers of English actually communicating with each other around the world, it should be desirable to have students exposed to non-native speakers' accents.

11. Layout

Three aspects of layout were given and instructors were asked how important each aspect is in English coursebooks for university students, with 5 as very important and 1 as not important at all. As shown in the table below, no significant difference was found between the Korean instructors and the foreign instructors and between the male instructors and the female instructors.

TABLE 13. Layout (Importance)

Layout	General	Kor.	For.	Mal.	Fem.
1. Photos	3.927	3.949	3.911	3.841	4.043
2. Drawings	3.670	3.692	3.655	3.500	3.889
3. Color	3.564	3.667	3.491	3.512	3.696

*P<0.05

12. Computer Softwares

We asked instructors if they had ever used computer softwares as course materials. Only fourteen out of ninety-seven instructors (14.4%) responded 'YES'. We further asked how effective they thought the computer softwares were, and the mean for effectiveness was 3.476, with 5 as very effective and 1 as not effective at all.

Sixty-eight instructors (70.1%) out of ninety-seven responded that they had never used computer softwares. When they were asked how much they would like to try using computer softwares in English courses in the future, its mean was 3.153, with 1 as the minimum and 5 as the maximum.

Thirty-three Korean instructors (84.6%) answered that they have never used computer softwares as course materials. The mean for their willingness to use them in the future was 3.242. On the other hand, Thirty-nine foreign instructors (69.6%) answered that they have never used computer softwares as course materials. The mean for their willingness to use them in the future was 3.077.

Thirty-one male instructors (68.9%) answered that they have never used computer softwares as course materials, and the mean for their willingness to use them in the future was 3.097. Among the female instructors, thirty-seven (78.7%) answered that they have never used computer softwares as course

materials, and their mean for willingness to use them in the future was 3.216.

In general, English instructors teaching at Korean universities do not seem to be very eager to try using computer softwares in their class, regardless of their nationality or sex.

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국문초록

본 소고에서는, 97년 1월 국내 전지역에 퍼져있는 26개 대학에서 영어회화를 가르치는 교수진에게 한국학생들에게 적합한 교재개발 내용을 물었던 설문 조사로 회수한 97부의 결과를 교수진의 성별과 국적별로 재분석하여 어떤 의미있는 차이가 나타나는지를 살펴보았다. 교수진의 성별 차이란, 유용한 주제, 텍스트 유형, 목표언어기술을 습득하기 위한 연습 유형 선택 등에서 남자와 여자 교수진이 의견차이를 보이는지를 분석하는 것이다. 국적별 차이란 한국인 교수진과 외국인 교수진이 한국 학생들에게 적합한 주제, 텍스트 유형, 연습유형 선택 등에서 의견차이를 보이는지를 점검하는 것이다. 우선 교수진의 영어교육 경력 측면에서 보면, 성별의 경우 남자 6.318년, 여자 6.457년으로 별 차이가 나지 않았다. 반면, 국적별로 본 경우 한국인 교수진 8.833년, 외국인 교수진 4.818년으로 한국인 교수진이 전문성에서 앞선 것으로 나타났다. 텍스트 유형의 선정에서 여자 교수진이 남자보다 신문/잡지 기사를 효과적인 교재물로 인식하고 있었으며, 한국인 교수진이 외국인보다 편지/기타 공문서 서식 등을 더 가르쳐야 한다고 생각하는 것으로 나타났다. 학생들에게 유용한 주제를 선정할 때 16개 항목 가운데, 5개 항목에서 성별차이가 나타난 반면, 국적별차이는 1개 항목에 그쳤다. 그 외 목표언어기술을 습득하기 위한 적절한 연습유형 선택에 대해서 큰 차이는 없었지만, 나타난 차이를 점검해보면, 성별보다는 국적별 차이가 더 두드러지게 나타났다. 한국인 교수진이 인식하는 한국 학생들의 약점과 외국인 교수진이 인식하는 문제점에 차이가 있음을 뜻한다. 교재의 보조자료에 대한 필요성에서는 국적별차이가 현저하게 드러났다. 이점은 90년대 이후 한국인 교수진을 무조건 외국인 교수진으로 대체하면 바람직한 영어교육이 이루어진다고 여기는 현 추세에 시사해주는 바가 크다고 생각한다. 즉, 바람직한 영어교육을 위해서는 문제점 인식에서 차이를 보이는 한국인과 외국인 교수진 구성을 적절한 비율로 유지하여 보완을 하여야 한다는 점이다. 그리고, 바람직한 대학 영어 교수진은 이제 그가 영어 원어민이어야 한다는 주장보다는 담당자의 영어능력과 영어교육에 대한 전문성을 논제로 삼는 것이 보다 설득력이 있다고 생각한다.