WILL THE RECENT GOVERNMENT EDUCATION POLICY BENEFIT PRIVATE EDUCATION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH KOREA?

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Figure 1. Stakeholder map of the recent public education policy
List of Abbreviations

NESTs: Native English Speaking Teachers
KETs: Korean English Teachers
SMOE: Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education
EPIK: English Program In Korea
TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language
TETE: Teaching English Through English
M.O.E: Ministry of Education
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Abstract

This dissertation is to examine and analyse the recent government education policy of reducing the budget to hire Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in public schools in South Korea as well as discussing how the private education industry may benefit from the recent policy. In order to investigate the topic, it is crucial to understand the environment from three different points of view: 1) Is the public education system for English language learning practical enough to help reduce the cost of private education? 2) Are NESTs better than KETs in terms of English learning? 3) Is the recent education policy helping the private education industry enhance their business?

Semi structured interviews were implemented with various industry stakeholders: two parents, one NEST and one owner of a private institute (along with 2 failed interviews with public school teachers which will be discussed later). Evidently, there has been research implemented in related areas previously including: the public education policy, private education and the various aspects of learning English with NESTs and KETs, however, due to the fact that the recent policy was introduced just 3 years ago, this dissertation is fresh research in this area.
1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the dissertation

The English private institutes industry in South Korea has been experiencing a boom since the 1980s when the Asian games and the 88 Olympics were held in South Korea. Accordingly, Korean people began to adapt to globalization resulting in more connections with foreigners in a business context. Moreover, the trend of college students’ backpack-travelling on a low budget encouraged and boosted the thought about learning English to a higher level. Furthermore, the reduction of employees in many companies as a result of the IMF economic crisis of 1997/1998 changed many people’s attitude to English. It began to be seen as a vital ingredient in obtaining or indeed retaining employment. (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009)

English is one of the most important subjects in school in South Korea, and the score of this core subject affects tremendously students’ options in terms of the next stage of education, for example, if a student scores low in their final middle school English exam, they may not be able to attend the best high schools but rather be limited to the second tier. Korean parents have as a result become obsessed with their children’s after school English education i.e. private classes. Eventually these facts led to a boom in the private language industry. The number of private institutes more than doubled to a high of 17,053 schools between 2005 and 2009. And as these institute franchises become bigger and more corporate oriented, their revenue has risen ever faster by 26.1 percent annually, according to a financial report by KB bank in 2012 in South Korea. (Kim, 2012)

The fact that the English private institutes industry in South Korea has been experiencing a boom demonstrates the importance of English education. Although some scholars (Bray, 2003 cited in Kim and Lee, 2010, p.260) warned about the negative aspects of private tutoring, there has become no choice but to rely on private tutoring due to the problems apparent in the public education system such as large class sizes.

However, whilst the English private institutes have generated more and more profit from this circumstance, the government began to worry about the different English level between students who could afford private institutes and those who couldn’t. Consequently, the Korean government began supporting public schools by providing more budget to each school to hire Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs). (Hi, Korea, e-government for foreigner, 2008) Furthermore, a special type of visa, the E-2 visa, was established specifically for NESTs to work in South Korea as teachers. Moreover, a relatively high salary with free accommodation was provided to attract NESTs and the
visa allowed NESTs to work in either private institutes or public schools. This policy appeared to be fair to every student in South Korea and parents were initially satisfied with it before some problems and issues appeared. Some critics commented, however, that most NESTs were not capable of teaching Korean students because they have only little experience and techniques. (Ahn, 2011, p.691, Han, 2003) While this may be a rather extreme point of view, it stems from the fact that NESTs are only required to hold a degree in any discipline, not specifically education/English, in order to obtain the visa. This may have been one of the factors in some provinces’ decision to cut funding for the program. Furthermore, the public education system could not fulfill the demands of Korean parents and so private tutoring became necessary to bridge the gap.

Recently the trend has been reversed and this is evident in various provinces. Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) has begun reducing the budget for hiring NESTs in 2012. Indeed, the number of NESTs in public schools in Seoul actually reduced from 788 in 2012 to 622 in 2013 (See Appendix 1). And SMOE said that we may not be able to see them in public school in the near future.

Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education also announced a cut of 8.8% of the budget for NESTs in 2013 compared to 2012, and this has been implemented (See Appendix 2)

With approximately half the provinces in Korea showing a reduced budget for NESTs (see appendix 2), where can NESTs work in future in South Korea? As mentioned above: the booming private education industry. NESTs are commonly a necessary element in most private institutes because the institutes’ capability of providing and sustaining NESTs gives a positive professional impression to customers: most importantly to parents.

1.2. The objectives of the dissertation

It is a fair assessment to say that South Korean people have become obsessed by English learning in recent times. There are a number of driving forces behind this phenomenon: the adaptation to the fast movement of globalization, social concepts surrounding English and indeed the emphasis placed on English in the national education curriculum— it is one of the most important subjects in school. Furthermore, as an English teacher in private institutes in South Korea for 3 years, it naturally has become the author’s own concern and a wonder.

Evidently, researches of the public education policy, private education in South Korea and the various aspects of learning English by NESTs and KETs are implemented previously. (Chang, 2009), (Bray, 2006), (Mariño, 2011) However, due to the recent policy has been issued for 3 years, this dissertation would be the freshest research in this area.
In spite this dissertation will be focused on the positive impact for private education industry from government recent education policy, personally, through this dissertation, there will be more to suggest such as an improvement of public education system in South Korea and negative aspects for the teenage pupils. Due to upheaval of education policy for decades, it is not difficult to see teenage pupils’ study after school has been their daily schedule. As a matter of a fact, from this recent policy of reducing the budget of hiring NESTs in public schools, stakeholders have negative aspects except for private education industry which is fascinating to figure out the cause and the better ways to recommend through this dissertation.

To find out what and how the policy impact to our social life in particular will help guide to anticipating the possible future direction. In a business point of view, focusing on industry of private education, it could be a good news. All the experienced NESTs would move to private institutes, and consequently, the candidates will have competition to get a better job in private institutes. Private institutes can have better teachers and better quality of class and it will be sufficient to satisfy the demands. This dissertation is not for criticizing the government policy and finding a better solutions, though, reading the current social phenomenon carefully and interpreting the stakeholders’ particular reaction in particular situation of changing policy is core subject of the dissertation.

The objectives of this dissertation is as follow:

1. An examination of the changing public education policy and its impact on stakeholders’ including: NESTs, KETs (Korean English Teachers), owners of private institutes and parents.

2. Discovering how the stakeholders’ perceive both the public education policy in general, and the recent education policy change in South Korea, and then interpreting their thoughts relating to the following:
   a. The effectiveness of learning English by NESTs Vs KETs.
   b. The necessity of private education

3. Analysing if private education industry benefit from the recent government education policy of reducing NESTs in public school.

Research questions based on the objectives of the dissertation:

1. Is the public education system for English language learning practical enough to help reduce the cost of private education?
2. Is it necessary to have private education in South Korea?

3. Are NESTs better than KETs in terms of English learning?

4. Is the education policy helping private education industry enhance their business?

1.3. Approach to the dissertation

In order to achieve the objectives of the dissertation, it is required to make a certain plan including: collecting and analysing data. Due to the dissertation is focused on the particular social environment related to the government education policy and the private education industry, it is appropriate to apply qualitative approach which values each person’s opinion rather than numbers. The data collection of interview with stakeholders including: parents, NESTs, KETs and the owners of private institute will then be conducted. The information from interviews will be analysed and interpreted based on the literature. Therefore, the steps the researcher applied should be inductive way which will allow the listening all the stories interviewees will provide first. Through interpret the stakeholders’ attitude and opinion toward the government education policy, the research will then be achieved the objectives.

1.4. The organization of the dissertation

This dissertation will have six chapters begin with Introduction. Chapter one, Introduction, as being shown, will carry six parts of the headlines. Firstly, the background of the dissertation will be drawn and secondly, Objectives and research questions of the dissertation will then follow. Thirdly the way to approach the dissertation will be described, and fourthly, the organization of the dissertation will be simply introduced. For the next part of the scope and limitation of the research will then be explained, and lastly, the contribution of the research will be described.

Chapter two will analyse Literature Review critically with three subheadings: Government education policy, the private education industry and lastly, the effectiveness of English learning from NESTs Vs KETs.

Chapter Three will explain the Research Methods the dissertation applied. In this section, the explanation will be logically drawn: Qualitative method-The philosophy of Interpretivism-
Inductive Approach-Narrative Inquiry-Non probability-Sample size of Critical case in Purposive Sampling strategy-Mono Method. Additionally, the Time Horizon of Cross-sectional as well as ethical issues will be explained. Lastly, Data collection instruments of Semi-structured interview will then be followed with applying ethical issues.

Chapter four will be simply described the Data Analysis/Findings. The data collected by interviews will be analysed by four sections: 1) The Government Education Policy of hiring NESTs in South Korea. 2) The necessity of private education. 3) The effectiveness of English learning from NESTs compare to KETs. 4) The impact of recent education policy and an examination of how the recent education policy may benefit the private education industry.

Chapter five will then follow with Discussion of the previous chapter of data analysis. The researcher will review the work and interpret the results in this section followed the four main points in which chapter four present.

Chapter six will be drawn Conclusions and Recommendation which chapter include general summarise of all findings as well as the concepts raised in the literature review section. The future work will be recommended for the last part.

1.5. The scope and limitations of the research

This dissertation will include firstly: examination of past public education system and the recent public education through the literature, due to not having interviewees when analysing data can lead lack of information, however, the purpose of the dissertation is the impact of the policy rather than direct focusing on criticising the education policy.

Secondly, the private education industry will be analysed by both literature and the interviews from the key stakeholders of the dissertation: parents, NESTs and the owner of private language institute. The critical case of changing education policy will impact positively to private education through those interviews though, more various regions are the stakeholders are from could make the richer discussion.

Lastly, when analysing the effectiveness of learning NESTs and KETs, three different directions are applied by NESTs, the owner of a private language institute and parents. The NEST who interviewed examine both teachers strength and weakness in a fair way,
on the other hand, KETs’ interviews would give more direction to be discussed. Moreover, linguistic point of view is neglected due to presenting clear objectives of the dissertation.

1.6. The major contributions of the dissertation

Due to the dissertation has been done inductively approached as certainly suitable methodology for this dissertation, no hypothesis will be required. Instead, organizing objectives has contributed to find out the core message of data collection. Establishing research questions has led to make profound argument of the matters.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the beginning, the body of the literature review would be presented with three different sections: Government education policy, private education industry and the comparison between Korean English Teachers (KETs) and Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs).

The first section of literature review is about government education policy. Accordingly, the history and concept of government education policy will be explained. The researcher will then point out the details of recent education policy of reducing NESTs in public school. This first section is focused on the public education policy, however, it will be included the fair amount of private education and the social environment due to the impact of the public education policy. The second section of private education industry in full scale will then follow which contain the concept and the demand of English private education. Consequently, the third section will be carried on both KETs and NESTs. This section will embrace not only the concept of KETs and NESTs but also the argument of effectiveness of English learning from both parties of teachers. Finally, the most importantly, the existing literature of impact of recent education policy will be contemplated.

As will be seen, all section applied in the literature review is organized thematically due to it is the most logical way to explain the literature researched for this dissertation. Moreover, the last section of conclusion and recommendation will then be drawn with discussion of the review.

2.2. Government education policy

2.2.1. The history and concept of government education policy

Korea commenced English language education 130 years ago (Chang, 2009, p.83) and attempted to develop the education system. Schultz (1961, p. 3-7) pointed out that investment in public school English language learning promotes economic growth. And indeed, Korean economic has been grown through education policy has developed since English education began in Korea. Public schools have followed and examined 7 different curriculums of English education for 13 decades. In the most recent curriculum from the 1990s, the classroom focus has been on communication. It was undoubtedly an ‘innovation’ in terms of changing the core style of classes,
including the introduction of a listening section for each unit. (Ministry of Education, 1992a, cited in Chang, 2009) Furthermore, in order to achieve this goal, the curriculum has started to include teacher training. The focus is now on fluency rather than accuracy in English education, a first step “to lead the nation into the globalized world”. (Chang, 2009, p.87)

Although the Korean government has strived to develop and implement the English language learning system in Korea, there have been critics at each step of the development. An example of this is the more developed the country became in terms of economic growth, the more demand for higher standards of education has emerged and the current education system is always not enough to fulfil the learners and parents’ needs. Unfortunately, public schools in developing countries like South Korea have fiscal constraints for offering satisfied education (Kim and Lee 2010, p.288). This in turn led to the increases development of private institutes, more so even than the public school.

Moreover, the policy is sometimes impulsively driven by certain political event which generated chaos in the industry because education professions couldn’t have enough time to consider the impact of the change. Hong, Choi and Limb emphasized that the education policy replaced to what the new president and the parties support. “Whilst public schools could not follow the up-to-date education system, the degree of dependence toward private education has been increased.” (2009, p.34). Kim and Lee (2001, p.8) also pointed out the pressure to attend private tutoring has increased.

Strong regulations and controls by the government have almost eliminated the competition among secondary schools, but definitely not among students. On the contrary, they produced side effects of runaway escalation in expenditures on private tutoring. In particular, many students felt that the schooling provided in their high school was not adequate enough for them to prepare for university entrance examinations because school or teachers do not effectively teach the students, since the academic background for the students in a typical high school class are very diverse. Also in the absence of competitive pressure, schools have not been very responsive to such needs of the students and their parents. Consequently, the equalization policy, which intended to reduce private tutoring, has made private tutoring more popular to the parents and students in Korea.

Another big policy driven issue emerged with the “English-only” policy in 2007 which mandated that all classes have to be taught in English except for the Korean class. (Shin, 2007, p.75) And it was believed that NESTs were the only proper teachers for these English language class due to the Korean English teachers are not ready to use English in their classes. Rabbidge and Chappell (2014) also mentioned that the “Teaching English through English” policy was supposed to be implemented but as Korean English teachers had been distressed by the pressure to use English only in their classroom, it was not successful due to KETs are not implementing the policy. 43%
of surveyed teachers had considered quitting their job due to the pressure to use English only. However, private institutes which could offer the English-only class with Korean teachers had become trend, and the number of private institutes has increased (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009, p.34). The Korean government has endeavoured to be a member of global world through increase English language use. And it is appeared to have had a negative impact on Korean pupils and parents in terms of pressure to follow the new curricula with more depending on shadow education. And moreover, it impacted to private institutes industry positively (Kim and Lee, 2010, p.259).

Whilst the English private institutes have generated more and more profit from this circumstance, the government began to worry about the different English levels between students who could afford private institutes and those who could not. Consequently, the Korean government started supporting public schools by providing an increased budget to each school to hire Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs). (Hi, Korea, e-government for foreigner, 2008) Furthermore, a special type of visa, the E-2 visa, was established specifically for native English speakers to work in South Korea as teachers. Moreover, a relatively high salary with free accommodation and flight was provided to attract NESTs.

This policy appeared to be fair to every student in South Korea and parents were initially satisfied with it before some problems and issues appeared. Some critics comment that most NESTs are not capable of teaching Korean students because they have only little experience and techniques (Ahn, 2011), (Han, 2003). While this may be a rather extreme point of view, it stems from the fact that NESTs are only required to hold a degree in any discipline, not specifically education or English, in order to obtain the visa. This may have been one of the factors in some provinces’ recent decision to cut funding for the program. Furthermore the public education system does not fulfil all the demand of parents. According to Hwang (2001, p.615), most Korean parents are concerned with ‘labelled’ of their children fall behind in school and not enrolling hagwon(private institutes). Consequently private tutoring is also necessary from a parent’s perspective especially mothers according to (Park and Abelmann, 2004)

2.2.2. The details of the recent education policy of reducing NESTs in public school

Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) reduced the budget of hiring NESTs in 2012. Indeed, the number of NESTs in public schools in Seoul actually decreased from 788 in 2012 to 622 in 2013 according to the statement in formal website of SMOE. (See Appendix 1)
This policy change was set in motion in and reported extensively in the media upon implementation in subsequent years (Busan Ilbo, 2012), (The Korea Times), (The Korea Herald), (The Jeju Weekly) and conducted since the year of 2013. (Ramirez, 2013) As mentioned previously, Korean education policy is often driven by sudden political changes and in the wake of the 2012 Presidential Election, in the case of Gyeonggi province, the policy focused on a “free meal” for all students in public schools rather than English class with NESTs. (Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education, 2014) As presented in appendix 2, the budget for NESTs is reduced compared to the previous year of 2012 although the published budget stresses, for obvious reasons, the core policy of education in 2013 which is providing free lunch for every student in Gyeonggi province. In another case, SMOE mentioned the cost-effectiveness of hiring NESTs had to be considered. As a matter of a fact, there is an ongoing debate in Korea over the quality of the English conversation classes undertaken by NESTs. It will be discussed further in the 3rd theme of this Literature Review: KETs (Korean English Teachers) VS NESTs. Moreover, there is another justification for this budget reduction (The Jeju Weekly, 2012) the belief that KETs are ready to teach English through English as a result of the improvement of their English speaking competency. This will also be discussed further in the next section: KETs VS NESTs.

The above mentioned policy change is an interesting development because since the focus of education policy has changed from reading comprehension or accuracy to communicative competency and fluency in the 1990s, the role of NESTs has been of critical importance and the education system has been settled for a few years. And now, due to Korean English Teachers’ potentially improved capabilities to teach English through English, the government has decided to reduce the number of NESTs. The fact that the teacher training has been conducted actively for communicative competency (Chang, 2009, p.88) could assume that KETs are ready however, some researchers believe KETs are not ready to teach English through English. (Rabbidge and Chappell, 2014) That could bring about another controversial social issue and it necessary to examine the opinion of key stakeholders in the industry to understand the current positions and potential effects of this shift in policy.

2.3. Private education industry

2.3.1. The concept of private education

Buchmann, Condron&Ruscigno defined of “Shadow education” as follow,
"Educational activities, such as tutoring and extra classes, occurring outside of the Formal channels of an educational system that are ‘designed to improve a student's chance of successfully moving through the allocation process.’” (2010, p.483)

Private institutes are one of the forms of “Shadow education”, private supplementary tutoring which is called a Hagwon in South Korea. (Bray, 2009, p.11) There are other similar mechanisms of shadow education to private institutes: one-on-one private tutoring, correspondence courses and internet private tutoring classes. The Private Institutes Industry has developed as fast as the economic growth. (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009) Thus, it is necessary to analyse the role of private institutes in the current South Korean education system due to its continuous growth over the most recent decades. Despite the government’s remarkable efforts towards developing English language education in the public education system, the Private Institutes Industry has been growing much faster than the public education system. Evidently, the tremendously emerging cooperation of private institutes in South Korea demonstrates how important the private institutes are in English education. (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009). Indeed, Bray (2009, p.11) pointed out the shadow education has to have more attention by educational planners and policymakers as the industry has major social and economic implication. Korean parents have ‘Education Fever’ defined by the intensity of South Korean parents in trying to educate their children for admission into the best schools. (Hwang, 2002, p.614)

Why are private institutes important in terms of English learning? What role do they play?
As in many countries, the education curriculum in Korea is used as a bench mark against which students are measured in public schools. The final assessments at middle and high school level have a deep impact on students in terms of entering better high schools or colleges. When the English education curriculum changed from an academic approach to a communicative competency approach in the 1990s, (Chang, 2009, p.88) public schools were unable to satisfy the demands of students and parents. The public education system at that time was ill equipped to achieve pupils’ communicative competency, parents began to depend on shadow education, including private institutes, which had various methods for English conversation classes. Kim and Lee (2010, p.263) highlighted that parents are unsatisfied by the public provision of schooling by the developmental state. In particular, for the households with higher demand for education, the gap between the demand and public supply is greater so that they are more likely to seek for private tutoring.
However, the government introduced further measures to combat this such as hiring NESTs in public schools, reducing the number of students in one class. In spite of these efforts, “lower school quality” let parents depend on shadow education. (Kim, 2004, p.2) and private institutes remained a “challenge” to a public education system. (Lee, H. Lee, and Jang, 2010, p.97)
Undoubtedly, when parents choose a class in private institutes to give their children a perceived better quality of education, it costs. Although parents can select relatively low cost-private institutes, the concept of the higher price the better quality continues. Fortunately, the economic situation has improved continuously in Korea since most parents don’t seem to hesitate to spend money on their children’s language education.

Due to the apparent problems in the public education system i.e.: inadequate textbook, too big class size, too short class time to make classes productive, (Ramirez, 2013) there is a perception that there is no choice but to rely on private tutoring (Hwang, 2001) even though Bray warned of the negative aspects from the private tutoring: student fatigue, dependency of shadow education, unethical and corrupted educational environment (2003, cited in Kim and Lee, 2010, p.260). Indeed it is interesting to note that in the 1980s (Bray, 2002, p.524) all kinds of private tutoring were banned for the unfair effects it had in attaining the next stage of education, for example, if a student scores low in their final middle school English exam, they may not be able to attend the best high schools but rather be limited to the second tier. In 2000, however, the private tutoring (Bray, 2002, p.524) law was relaxed and Korean parents have as a result become obsessed with enrolling *Hagwon* naturally.

2.3.2. The strengths and weaknesses of Private Education

Apparently, some studies have warned of the negative aspects of private education. Firstly, it is always subsequent to the main stream public school education. Pupils can attend the class after school which makes pupils tired in general. Secondly, it could be unethical as a result of the unfair advantages wealthier pupils would have and it is for this reason that the government continuously strives to innovate its policy to positively impact all pupils. (Bray, 2003 cited in Kim and Lee, 2010) Dawson (2010) also mentioned “…much of the data in Korea present a clear picture of who is investing the most in private tutoring and who is reaping the benefits.” However whether it was the government’s intent or not, the English education policy gave rise to the general belief that English education is of paramount importance and a corresponding demand for better quality i.e. smaller classes with better teaching methods. Private education can fulfil most parents’ needs as the payment of fees allows the institutes to provide what the public is demanding. Furthermore, although there are negative aspects of existing private institutes, their existence is natural “market response” according to Kim and Lee (2010, p. 262) in terms of generating more pupils prepared for engagement in a globalized economy and to satisfy the demand from parents. Moreover, in South Korea, because of the simplified bureaucracy of a private institute as opposed to a public school, they are more flexible to customer demands and
the learning outcome could be more productive and faster than the public education. Kim and Lee emphasized that clearly “...Therefore, the hasty state-led expansion of secondary education may lead to not only inefficient but also inequitable educational system.” (2010, p. 262). These facts led to a boom in the private language industry as exemplified by the number of private institutes which more than doubled to a high of 17,053 schools between 2005 and 2009 (Kim, 2012, p.2). Many of these institutes have become franchises include *YBM/e4u Language Education institutes, Pagoda Academy Incand Jung-chul Language* becoming larger and more corporate oriented with revenue rising ever faster, 26.1 percent annually, according to a report by KB bank in 2012 in South Korea. (Kim, 2012)

2.3.3. The demand of English private education

Private institutes are necessary because they fulfil their customers’ needs: as the recent policy change towards reducing the budget for NESTs has been implemented from the year of 2012, it is necessary to examine the demand toward the public education and furthermore, shadow education. First of all, although policy makers made innovative changes to English education in Korea, the quantity of study students are actually required to undertake has increased dramatically. Indeed, although the education policy changed from an emphasis on accuracy to that of fluency, (Chang, 2009, p.88) for teachers and students, fluency adds up to accuracy because in the exam paper, there are a variety of questions, some for fluency and some for accuracy. Consequently, lack of time to receive individual attention in public school lead students to find another teacher outside of public school. They believe that private tutors/teachers help them to raise their exam marks with their own strategy and experience. According to Lee ,Lewis and Thornhill in their journal, this tendency is explained by the Goal Expectancy Theory which students can have individual goal that they made themselves can be effective in terms of achieving good marks in the school exams. However, not every student can have effective result from private education for example many of Korean pupils go to *Hagwon* without choice. They are under stress every day from extra study because they do not want to study. As Hwang (2001, p. 617) “…students were willing to sacrifice their time, energy, and money as an investment into their future”. In this case, no matter how much the parents spend money on private education including any sources such as tutoring and institutes, it is not effective. Private tutoring is very efficient for students who decided to study for their needs. And that is why “some elite families refuse to send their children for tutoring because they resist the incursions into their children’s free time.” (Bray, 2006, p.526). As Bray mentioned, rarely, parents start to think private institutes are not effective for their children, and they do not care to be ‘labelled’ because of their children’s fall behind or not
enrolling *Hagwon*. (Bray, 2006, p.526). However, it is true that the ‘English divide’ exists which is recent social protocol—refer to recognize the income of each household and so it will affect negatively to lower-income students in terms of discrimination and confidence. (Ramirez, 2013)

2.4. Korean English Teachers (KETs) VS Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs)

2.4.1. The concept of KETs and NESTs in South Korea

Korean English Teachers (KETs) from South Korea work in two different kinds of workplace: public schools and private institutes. KETs had traditionally taught English focusing on grammar and reading comprehension academically which had previously prepared students for the various exam questions they would face. One of KETs’ teaching methods was the deconstructing of English sentences into segments and analysing them to discover important expressions and essential grammar points. In school exams, it is still a requirement to solve multiple choice questions which consist of those important points teachers emphasized in the class. On the other hand, due to the shift in focus of English education in Korea from reading and grammar to conversation in full-scale since the introduction of the 7th curriculum, (Chang, 2009) the role of KETs has been decreased or changed. Rabbidge and Chappell (2014) pointed out that KETs had to start teaching English through English.

When communication through English began to be emphasized in English subjects in public schools, the government commenced hiring NESTs to enhance pupils’ communicative competence. NESTs are from the countries which use English as their native language which include: USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of South Africa. The Korean government created the special foreign teacher visa named “E2” visa. (Hi, Korea, 2008) The role of NESTs is to improve the English communication level in both public schools and private institutes and his visa is available to teachers working in both the private and public sectors.

To work as one of the NESTs in South Korea, it is a prerequisite to have a Bachelor degree in any discipline. The fact that this did not have to be a educative or linguistic/English oriented degree has been used as one of the justifications for the recent policy change i.e. the idea that NESTs’ lack of teaching capabilities rendered them an inefficient use of government funds, according to The Jeju Weekly (2012), including their grammar knowledge, and indeed some commentators have gone as far as to suggest a lack of cultural awareness in the class, although
this may be a rather extreme point. (Kim, 2009, p.421), (Ahn, 2011, p.691), (Han, 2005, p.197) On the contrary, Mariño pointed out that “The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his other grammar. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the grammar of the common (or standard) language which are distinct from his or her idiolect grammar.” (2011, p. 137) It must be noted, however, that the evaluation of NESTs’ performance was barely implemented (Nam, 2010, p.229) compared to the one for KETs, and as such this point may be conjecture rather than documented fact.

2.4.2. The effectiveness of English learning from KETs and NESTs

The education policy of hiring NESTs in English conversation class made it possible for students to naturally enhance their communicative competency. Ahn mentioned that NESTs are using their first language so the tradition of the language would melt into the students. (2011, p.691) In fact, it could be one of the reasons why their income is higher than KETs. The international association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) issued a position statement,

“There has been a long-standing fallacy...that native English speakers are the preferred teachers because they are perceived to speak “unaccented” English, understand and use idiomatic expressions fluently, and completely navigate the culture of at least one English-dominant society, and thus they will make better [ESL or EFL] teachers than non-native English speakers. As a result, non-native-English-speaking educators have found themselves often implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, discriminated against.” (TESOL, 2006 cited in Reis, 2011, p. 140)

However, there are some other cases that native speakers’ have grammar or spelling mistakes (Mariño, 2011, p.137) which relates to the above point of the lack of an educational background of some NESTs in Korea. On the other hand, some KETs’ language acquisition is comparable to that of natives. While there are cases are not typical, it is no longer rare for a KET to have a level comparable to that of a NEST. (Ahn, 2011)

On the other hand, there is another point that even though a NESTs can use English fluently and accurately, it might not true that he/she can teach effectively in his/her class. (Han, 2003) In fact, Mariño highlighted about non-NESTs that students generally prefer their non-NESTs as a result they have “effective pedagogical skills”. (2011, p.129) Moreover, according to the research of Yang and McMullen (2003), it could be achieved to learn English from NESTs more effectively with better communication and NESTs’ awareness of cultural difference. In addition, as parents’ point of view cannot be ignored since the demand of English education has dramatically
increased. And mostly, mothers are the one of the most important stakeholders in terms of fast development of private institutes industry. (Park and Abelmann, 2004)

2.5. Conclusion / Recommendations

There are a multitude of studies based on the effectiveness of the class from KETs compare to NESTs (Mariño, 2011, p.129). As public KETs have traditionally taught English in a very academic way, the KETs in private institutes were previously the same as shadow education tends to follow the main stream. However, things changed with the introduction of the 7th curriculum. Education policy is paying more attention to fluency in English rather than the traditional academic approach with the result that the KETs have too much pressure to use only English in the public schools. The difference between KETs in public schools and KETs in private institutes is that the private education system can be much more flexible than public schools.

Evidently, economic growth in South Korea had led the higher demand of education in public school. According to the literature so far, it is true that the public education policy has been developed, however, the speed of development of public education system has not been fast enough to satisfied parents and students. In this situation, private education has had opportunity to grow their business through offering better and faster education system than public school. Apparently, parents has become depend on private education, consequently, it led private education industry grow. On the other hand, the parents has spent more and more money and effort finding ‘right’ education for their children. They seek private institutes which their children can learn English from NESTs as a result the public school made parents perceive the NESTs are necessary in learning English through maintaining NESTs in public school. Whether the private education is affordable for particular parent, they do not care if their children can have the best class. The society have been seek by ‘English fever’, nobody wants to be ‘labeled’ about not enrolling a certain hagwon (private institute) or two.

What if the government develop the education policy to reduce the cost of private education? It could be possible everyone could imagine the next situation, ‘The better public education for the better future’. Surprisingly, public education policy change to reduce the budget for NEST s in 2013 and following years with the justifications of NESTs’ lack of capabilities of working in public school. Therefore, the research of NESTs and KETs is collected the third chapter of this review. One of the points the researcher make here is that there has been no relevant research materials of NESTs’ performance.
At this point, there are some objectives for this dissertation: the impact of the recent education policy of reducing NESTs, the stakeholders’ perception of the recent policy. In the following part of Data Analysis, the objectives are revealed and achieved.
3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Initially, this research will be **qualitative** and principally based on recent social and political issues. The philosophy of this research is **Interpretivism** which values people’s behaviour and thoughts rather than the ‘facts’. The researcher interpreted the participants’ thoughts and attitudes appropriately from their point of view based on their unique circumstances in light of the government’s recent educational policy change. For the secondary part of the research, an **Inductive Approach** is appropriate in this research in order to achieve the aim of this paper. An Inductive Approach allows for the author to consider the most critical matters through people’s valuable opinions and it is possible to draw upon the available literature and relate it to the new thoughts of various people in the real world. The strategy of **Narrative Inquiry** will then follow to explain why the strategy is suitable for this research. Initially, the high quality of data collecting is achieved by Narrative Inquiry through interviews. This will allow the researcher to have a broad angle for the unique situation in South Korea. Accordingly, the **Non-probability** sampling will be applied for conducting a relatively small **sample size** of participants for which it is appropriate to use the **Critical Case in Purposive Sampling** strategy. For collecting primary data a **Semi-structured Interview** has been selected due to the fact that the research questions were not structured although there is a core of key questions. Additionally, as the purpose of the research questions were to seek the participants’ thoughts and experiences in a less formal format, questions could be added or omitted as necessary. Due to the fact that the research was implemented using the qualitative method, in which adequate information was provided from semi-structured interviews, the straight forward **Mono Method** approach is used in this research. Indeed, considering this dissertation is undertaken within the time constraints of a matter of months, which is a relatively short time for master’s dissertation, the Mono Method is particularly appropriate. In this particular circumstance, the **Cross-sectional Time Horizon** is suitable instead of the **Longitudinal Method**.

It is relevant to note that there are some potential pitfalls involved in this type of research. In particular, there could be **ethical issues** in terms of the researcher to avoid steering the data towards a set result. It is important to anticipate these issues arising and avoid them in order for the research to be relevant and honourable. **Data collection instruments** will then follow which will be interviews with an internet phone and a video phone based on the internet (i.e. e-mail and internet phone).
3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Research Philosophy: Interpretivism

This dissertation is focused on discovering social phenomenon and its direction through people who are involved directly in the industry. It will be interpreted by the in terms of the Interviewees thoughts covering a particular situation. In detail, the core stakeholders are teachers, owners of private institutes and parents in South Korea who are directly involved and affected by the changing English education policy. The role of the researcher here is analysing their situation in-depth and expressing their opinions from their point of view.

However, the findings from the stakeholders will be not be representative of each member of their social group. Therefore, the researcher will interpret the social situation as a “social actor” in a human life drama. Moreover, as this dissertation focuses on the impact of policy on the business industry, especially the private English language institutes industry, in circumstances of a changing English education policy, the stakeholders opinions are all different in terms of how they accept the particular situation. As Saunders highlighted, the business situation is complex and unique, (2012, p. 137) and the role of the researcher is critical in terms of how well they interpret the situation in their own point of view.

In addition, this research is based on understanding the “natural” social flow and reading “the phenomenon being studied” in South Korea, therefore, the philosophy of Interpretivism is appropriate for this paper. (Saunders Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.163)

The researcher has discounted the use of Positivism or Realism. Positivism is used for a scientific approach which values the ‘fact’ rather than impressions or feelings. As quantitative research is more suitable for positivism and this thesis is focused on qualitative research, it is decided not to apply Positivism in this dissertation.

In the case of Realism, especially Critical Realism, it appears to be a similar philosophy to Interpretivism, however, it is proper reject this method as realism tends to result in: ‘to see is to believe’ rather than offering logical explanations of the social phenomenon. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.136)

3.2.2. Research Approach: Inductive

The research approach of this thesis will be inductive and as a result this research will develop theoretical perspectives as a means of contributing to the existing literature. (Saunders, Lewis
and Thornhill, 2012, p. 163). It will be discovered how a particular person thinks about a particular situation which is driven by government policy even though the assumption is difficult to be made by researcher in this “subjective world”. (Gill and Johnson, 2011, p. 60)

The primary data was collected first to find out how the teachers, owners of private institutes, and parents feel about the recent English education policy change through a semi-structured interview.

In the next part, the points of view from the interviews are critically analysed and these ideas will then be interpreted in terms of each Interviewees particular situation.

After the primary data has been analysed, it is then necessary to collect the secondary data, which refers to relevant literature in this dissertation. This paper will then examine how the ideas from the primary data relate to the relevant literature.

This approach is implemented in an inductive way to interpret the Interviewees’ thoughts regarding their particular situation as affected by the recent education policy change. Saunders, Lewis and Thronhill (2012, p.146) support using such an inductive approach when “such events were taking place” which would refer to the situation of government policy change and the movement of people’s thoughts and attitudes.

The Inductive Approach is the only appropriate method for this dissertation for the aforementioned reasons. In addition, literature which can be regarded as relevant for this research includes: literature surrounding the English education policy in South Korea and previous education policies which have shaped individual’s opinions, for example, The Equalization Policy as discussed in the literature review section.

The rejection of applying the Deductive approach is related to this dissertations methodology which is to interpret people’s ideas as shaped by their unique circumstances as affected by the government policy change. This policy change is very recent and in fact was only implemented in 2012, less than 2 years ago. Consequently, this subject has not been researched yet meaning there is a dearth of available literature on this particular issue and it would therefore be impossible to build a hypothesis around how people view this ‘new’ social phenomenon through available literature. However, in spite of this, most Korean parents already have encountered various problems in the past years due to the English education policy and they are an excellent source of data on this social phenomenon. The inductive approach has therefore been selected.
3.2.3. Research Strategy: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is focused on a relatively small set of participants’ stories which derive from an event or a sequence of events. This dissertation’s event is the government policy change and as a consequence of this change it is fair for people who are related to this event to believe they have certain resulting disadvantages or advantages. The researcher will listen to their thoughts through interviews and elaborate upon their thoughts with reference to existing literature. To do this, the narrative inquiry tends to use in-depth interviews in order to preserve the consistency of the storytelling from the participants, however, semi-structured interviews will be applied for this dissertation. Semi-structured interviews have similar ideas to in-depth interviews in terms of encouraging narrators to tell their entire story and in valuing their experience. Semi-structured interviews are also more beneficial in allowing the researcher to continuously focus on the main topic of the dissertation throughout the interview. Moreover, the interviewer can add or omit questions to avoid losing the objectives of this research. Accordingly, it is also important that the participants of this interview will be a relatively small group of people, however, their story is much more valuable than a large amount of abstract thoughts as the Interviewees are industry stakeholders with very rich experience and ideas. As this is a narrative inquiry it is appropriate to apply purposive sampling of important cases which does not require a large group of people but rather a group of influential people within the effected section of the population.

The researcher has chosen not to apply Grounded Theory in this research. There are apparent similarities between the strategy of Grounded Theory and that of Narrative Inquiry as both theories allow for the qualitative method inductively considering human behavior, business and management. However, the most important part of Grounded theory is that the analytical fragmentation and a well-developed theory are required to do the research project which is not the method of this dissertation.

Another possible research strategy candidate for this dissertation would be Ethnography, particularly Critical Ethnography. Nevertheless, the reason for the rejection of this strategy is clear: this dissertation is focused on interpreting people’s thoughts resulting from the special circumstance of government policy change. Recommendations with critical points will be drawn by this researcher in the last section of this dissertation however the objective of this research is clearly not a critique of government policy.
3.2.4. Selecting Respondents: sampling choice and sample size (non-probability)

First of all, it is critical to conduct sampling for this dissertation and there are three reasons for this: impracticality, budget and time constraints. A researcher must choose the probability or non-probability sampling method as it is not practical to collect data from an entire population. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p.260) suggest not to assume the census always provides “useful” resources for a research. Accordingly, it is acknowledged that the fewer cases, the more detailed the results will be, especially with more influential people (perhaps “higher staff” in the organization or highly experienced CEOs in the particular industry) in terms of collecting data from interviews which is especially suitable for this dissertation. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p.261)

Consequently, non-probability sampling is applied to this dissertation due to the fact that it is not considered to be a type of statistical data. Non-probability is also often applied in a “business and management research project” which is the goal of this dissertation. Furthermore, within the Non Probability Method, the researcher will avail of Purposive Sampling which allows for the selection of interviewees who occupy important positions within the industry. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012, p.258-262, 281-289)

Thus, 4 interviews have been conducted in this dissertation, including: one owner of a private language institute, two owners of other private institutes who are also the parents of teenage school students and lastly, one experienced Native English Speaking Teacher who is simultaneously a regional moderator for the provincial educational board of professional development. Additionally 2 pilot surveys were conducted, however, they will only be mentioned as a minor part of the data analysis as their eventual choice was to not take any part or express their own opinions. Interviewees chosen for this dissertation are relatively influential within their organizations as well as within the industry. Interviewing these candidates has proved sufficient to critically analyze the effects of recent educational policy changes on the social environment and to view these changes through the prism of highly experience professionals within the subject industry. This has ultimately afforded the researcher the opportunity to make certain recommendations and elaborate on the real impact of educational policy change.

3.2.5. Research choice: mono method qualitative

In order to collect the relevant for this dissertation, it is necessary to apply Mono-method as a result the research question to be answered is complicated as well as tended to be unique. This
could be the reason why the quantitative method is not suitable due to the findings doesn’t focus on how many people think about certain issue. This dissertation values particular people’s thought in some special situation. For example, one of the research question is that how the government policy of reducing the budget of hiring NESTs in public school impact to stakeholders regarding their own situation which will be various. Thus, the answer will also vary in terms of their specific situation and experience. Interpretivism which is main philosophy for this dissertation is required qualitative interviews to collect the relevant data. Due to the research questions to be answered are complicated and sometimes unique, such quantitative approach is not possible to satisfy those questions. Therefore, implementing interviews is chosen for this research.

3.2.6.  Time horizons: Cross-sectional

Due to there is certain time constraint which is a few months, Cross-sectional study is useful for this dissertation. Cross-sectional approach also aims at capturing a snapshot of a situation at one moment in time. The other method is Longitudinal which is required longer time (years) as a result the method should include staged experiments and multiple interventions.

3.2.7.  Research Ethics

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p.236) organized the different specific stages of the research processes that ethical issues could occur to. Simply, through following the principles from the book will allow the researcher avoid the ethical issues. When ethical issues occurred in research, it has to be managed properly. It is simply found during most of the stages of researching and it is very important to handle them carefully and certainly. There are stages researchers commonly face ethical issues:

1) When researchers seek access, there should not be pressure on participation from their “colleagues or subordinates”. As a result individuals have right to say no to researchers’ requests therefore researchers must be ready to face rejection from their potential interviewees. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 237) Consent is one of the ethical issues in this section which refers that the scope of information given to interviewees. When participants have sufficient information from researchers about the research before they start participating, participants tend to follow the conclusion or the arguments of the research rather than taking a part of her/his own opinions. On the other hand, lack of information for participants will cause deception which
researchers will use to collect data. The solution referred is that making a consent form which will help researchers comply the data protection legislation. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 238-240)

2) When the ethical issues arise during data collection: Researchers should not control or give pressure on the participants’ opinion because they can disagree about some part of research. Particularly, this research is conducted by semi-structured interview, even though the participants didn’t provide the information the researcher want to listen, it should not be lead to offer the participants the clue of the direction of the research. Therefore, the researcher can interpret their own thoughts as being a ‘social actor’ for their point of view. Accordingly, it is emphasized that researchers must not take an action causing harm to participants’ privacy. Moreover, fabrication is obviously unacceptable. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity are also important principles which have to be sustainable. Especially it is easy to break when researchers use internet based source for example email, online chat room, or messenger. Reactivity is another ethical issue that must not to be used by undertaking a covert study. During the interview, the participants naturally recognize what the researcher want to listen from them. That can lead the situation that the participants have pressure on answering in a ‘right’ opinion for the researcher. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 241-244)

3) When analyzing and reporting: researchers meet this issue about maintenance the objectivity as a result when researcher stared collecting data, which means the objectives of the research is certainly determined. Therefore, it is important to collect data objectively. And confidentiality, anonymity is also ethical issues in this section.

In order to avoid the ethical issue, it is required to read the principles which were being issues. When trying to acknowledge and anticipate of ethical issues, researchers and participants can be in safe place on the research. Which during conducting entire process and even further stages of this dissertation, it is very important to seriously consider all the possible ethical issues and keep in mind all the time.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

3.3.1. Semi-structured interview

The strategy of interviewing is one of the common methods in qualitative approach. (Mason, 2009, p. 62) Semi-structured interview is the most logic way to answer the research questions of this dissertation for example one of the research question is how the practice of learning English
from NESTs impact to the social protocol to people who involve in the industry: parents and owners of private institutes. Interviewing with parents and owners of private institutes will be the best way to find out the thought. On the other hand, from a business management point of view, there are issues about employing NESTs which is common practice of both public schools and private educational institutes industry. Accordingly, employing NESTs doesn't seem to be a simple matter socially, politically and financially. Due to this such complicated and special matters of business and management, therefore acknowledging the concept of people who are related to this industry is important such as teachers, parents and employers of private institutes. As the interview is conducted in an inductive way due to the hypothesis of the social flow was set by the researchers, semi-structured interviews with those who are related in the issue and interpret their ideas in their point of view helps to achieve gaining a “rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted” (Eisenhardt and Graebne, 2007 cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 179) Moreover, through the semi-structured interview, it is possible to find the way or recommendation of the recent policy and better strategy in business from their own experienced opinion. This research is about how those stakeholders ‘think’ about the recent policy been issued for the previous years, their attitude or ideas assumed to be settled for the change since it had been implemented. Consequently, this strategy of interview is suitable for answering those questions of ‘people’s thought’. Dawson (2006, p.15)supports that the interview is suitable to find out the attitudes, behaviour and experience of people in this dissertation. Furthermore, as mentioned about the complexity of research question due to this dissertation deals with business area, such quantitative method which include multiple choices questions or number-valued is inappropriate. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.161)

3.3.2. Practical issue: access to ethical issues

As the data collection instrument of this research should be semi-structured interview and thus, there is a list of the themes and key questions which the interviewers can add or omit in a limited way during the interview. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 374) The objectives of this research is about the recent English education policy change and the impact to private educational institutes in South Korea, it is logic and relevant to conduct interviews with Korean people who are directly impacted from such unique circumstance. In this situation, it is found that the most practical way is using on-line resources based on internet considering budget and time constraint. Hogan, Dolan and Donnelly also encouraged that the technology developed enough to access the interview easily through various sources i.e. internet messenger, online chat with smart phone application made it possible to examine “lived” experience people for relatively recent social movement or thought. (2009, p.16)
However, in order to minimise or avoid the ethical issue in this stage, internet phone call (Kakao voice talk program and video chat through Skype) is chosen for the instrument of data collecting and recorded the entire conversation with the participants’ approval safely. Two initial interviews with public school teachers are denied to record and interview thoroughly, they will be also mentioned in a data analysis section.

Additionally, the key questions related to the topic of the dissertation were sent to the participants through e-mail a day before the interview. Text messages through mobile phone were used several times to arrange the proper time for the interview. It is important to concern the perfect time for both the interviewer and interviewees as a result there is 8hour-time difference between Ireland where the interviewer is and Korea where the interviewees are.

Particularly in this research, confidentiality using email and internet would the biggest ethical issue to be avoided. It is easy to find the mistakes from some researchers that presenting information of the participants on their paper. Even though it is not intended, the participants could possibly be embarrassed to show their thoughts to public (when they don’t want them to be) and sometimes have disadvantage from their organizations. For example if the research is about finding if people are satisfied with some policy in their company, and when the other college, perhaps her/his supervisors find it, it is not difficult to anticipate that it could cause any harm for the participants. Another practical example related this dissertation, the confidentiality and anonymity could be the most important part in this paper due to the participants work for the government who are public school teachers and the owners of their private institutes. They are responsible and confident for their jobs and thoughts, consequently, when their personal information is presented publicly, it will be harm for their career or their image for their business.

As it is very sensitive matter to be dealt with, there is no doubt that it is necessary to acquire all the possible ethical issues and consider it through entire dissertation.
4. Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

In this part, the author focuses on how the participants answer the research questions based on facts. There are no opinions from the researcher but rather critical judgement on the basis of the participants’ answer. (Saunders, Lewis and Thronhill, 2012, p.604, 605) Each chapter is thematically organized based on the objectives of the dissertation. 1) The Government Education Policy of hiring NESTs in South Korea. 2) The necessity of private education. 3) The effectiveness of English learning from NESTs compare to KETs. 4) The impact of recent education policy and an examination of how the recent education policy may benefit the private education industry.

First of all, the topic of this dissertation is as follows

“Will the recent government education policy of reducing the budget for NESTs (Native English Speaking Teachers) benefit the private institute industry in South Korea?”

The objectives of this dissertation:

a. An examination of the changing education policy and its impact on stakeholders’ including: NESTs, KETs (Korean English Teachers), owners of private institutes and parents.

b. Discovering how the stakeholders’ perceive both the education policy in general, and the recent education policy change in South Korea, and then interpreting their thoughts relating to the following:
   • The effectiveness of learning English from NESTs VS KETs.
   • The necessity of private education

c. Analysing if private institutes industry will benefit from the recent education policy.

Research questions based on the objectives of the dissertation:

• Is the public education system for English language learning practical enough to help reduce the cost of private education?
• Is it necessary to have private education in South Korea?
• Are NESTs better than KETs in terms of English learning
• Is the education policy helping private education institutes enhance their business?
4.1. The education policy of hiring NESTs in South Korea

The EPIK (English Program In Korea) started in 1995 with 59 NESTs employed for the first time in public schools South Korea in order to reduce the cost of private education. It was implemented to help improve students’ level of listening and speaking competency. This policy appeared to be positive a positive step for parents in terms of an improvement in the public school education system with the result that parents could reduce their effort to seek private institutes for their children’s English language learning. However, it is also true that the hiring of NESTs in public schools led people to perceive English learning as very important part of the curriculum, particularly around the beginning of the new millennium where an increasing number of private institutes with different strategies began to appear and thrive. This policy was the beginning of the English private education industry specializing in Speaking directly with NESTs. More than 70% of pupils are currently using various kinds of private education related to English in South Korea. (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009)

James has worked in Korea since 2010, the point at which government support was at its highest in the history of South Korean English education. This government support extended not only to employing NESTs, but also to furthering their development as teachers. The RPDP (Regional Professional Development Program), in other words the provincial learning program, was very active at that time and held meetings 4 times in one semester. This program is conducted by EPIK (English Program In Korea) which is the established national program sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Education. James stated, “I think it is a very useful program for initiative teachers because it helps the teachers who started their job in Korea with this support forum includes: preparation for topic by topic with discuss about teaching and teaching method. I heard this program will be expanded to other regions soon enough because this program was experimentally implemented in one city of my province and now all teachers from working through EPIK have to participate the program.”

However, the budget for the training program has been partly reduced, as James said “we used to have 4 meetings in one semester but now, we have 3meetings only.” James elaborated on further budget reductions such as the English camps which are normally run during the vacation seasons. For the previous 4 years the English camp had multiple schools participating: 3 to 4 elementary schools in the mornings and 2 middle schools in the afternoon. “It had been quite a big deal” James said. The scale became much smaller this year, however: Only one school with just 5 EPIK teachers in the morning and nothing in the afternoon. James believes this is definitely related to the reduced budget situation. Indeed, James stated that next semester in the winter vacation, there will be no English camp.
4.2. The necessity of private education

A mother of two kids C.S. believes “The purpose of hiring NESTs is very good but I think NESTs in public schools are just to get familiar with them not learning. My son’s NEST teaches almost 30 pupils at the same time in 50 minutes once a week and the Korean co-teacher interprets in the class. Do you think it helps to learn English? I don’t think so.” Another parent J.C. said, “The number of NESTs is not enough to interact with every student.” J.C. is a father of two daughters, one in college at the moment and one in the last year of high school. He paid for them to learn English outside of public school (in specialized *hagwons* (Private institutes) where the focus was on speaking English) for their entire school years.

Accordingly, private institutes started hiring KETs with the ability to teach English through English and NESTs. These KETs mostly have more experience studying English overseas than KETs in public school. Private institutes offer their customers (parents and students) the opportunity to learn English through English by both KETs and NESTs. Parents and students perceive Private institutes’ instructors as being better than public school English teachers.

Whether it was originally intended or not, the government policies implemented in previous years would seem to have helped the development of the private education industry. Mrs Jang blames the education policy. “Education policy seems to be changed every 5 years from the new president and the ministry. I spent ₩550,000 (equivalent to €400) for a total of 8 hours of classes a month from private tutor for years for my first son. He went to college abroad and had to attend 20% of classes in English, 80% of classes in Japanese and he couldn’t understand or speak English, he dropped out of the college because of English.” She sounded very upset about the result. Therefore, she decided not to spend much money for the second son. She added, “If my kid is not interested in English study, nothing works for him. *Hagwon*, NESTs, expensive private tutoring, they are useless.” Even though she stated directly that private institutes are unnecessary for learning English, she still worries about not sending the second son to a *Hagwon*. “…but I am still worried about him to go to just a ‘normal *hagwon*’ because everyone around me invests more money in their kids than I do.” She sighed. The ‘normal hagwon’ offers classes for all school subjects (e.g. 13 subjects for middle school) and is not specialized in English language teaching.

In reality, The English boom began in full scale in 2008 with the politics of President Lee Myeong Bak during which time many parents were worried and nervous about education. One of his slogans for education policy was very straightforward: Expansion of the public English education system and this was to reduce the cost of private education.
In that period, Mr Kim had spent approximately ₩450,000 (Equivalent to € 327.83) solely for English classes mainly for pronunciation and a ‘native-like-accent’. He said he believes that he is the one of the people who most actively participated in English education although compared to those parents who sent their children abroad as the trend was, J.C. didn’t spend a lot of money. He also blames the education policy. “I really don’t understand why the education policy makers make it impulsively in an unreasonable way. The victims of education policy change are us parents and our children. The English boom made parents spent more money on private education because we thought that’s what our duty to our children was.” Accordingly, he pointed out the great result from expensive private education is just temporary because even though his children had learned high school-level English in their elementary school and everybody would say they are ‘English geniuses’, when the children went to actual middle school and high school, they forgot what they learned. He blamed the unstable education policy. This ‘English fever’ as discussed above by Mr Kim accelerated many of private institutes entrepreneurship including YBM/e4u Language Education Institutes, Pagoda Academy Inc. and Jung-chul Language (Kim, 2012) which became franchises.

While the aforementioned growth of the English private institutes industry may be an unintended consequence of government policy, the government does provide some direct support to Hagwons for adult education. W.A. has received some support from the Department of Employment and Labour in that a taxpayer’s English education could be subsidized, however, she said, “the support is existing however, it is too stingy to see as a ‘help’ for the business. And Korean workers are so busy working in their companies that they can’t attend 80% of the classes in a month which means the workers and hagwons can’t get the support.” When the workers attend the English classes more than 80%, the financial assistance for paying the institutes fees is available.

When the NESTs classes were booming few years ago, Lee’s private institute expanded: she and her husband built a 3 story-building for the institutes and other business (to rent to a small bank in the first floor.) “We had NESTs from China for teaching Chinese, Japan for Japanese and an Australian for English conversation classes even a few years ago. The public schools started hiring NESTs for all students, and we had to employ NESTs even though the cost of hiring and maintaining NESTs is much higher than those for KETs, however, there was enough demand to manage English conversation class with NESTs, it was not a problem.” Lee said.

J.C. said, “….every time education policy changes or adds even slightly, so many Hagwons open with their own marketing strategy based on the policy: ‘speaking-focused Hagwon’, ‘Native English Teacher only-Hagwon’, ‘preparation for NEAT (National English Ability Test: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing)’”. In 2011, some private institutes which used the ‘uncertain’ government policy as their advertisement resource were eventually investigated and warned by the
government. Some private institutes even used a threatening kind of advertisement relying on parent’s fears in order to expand their business.

The above mentioned opinions lead to the obvious questions: would hiring more NESTs be beneficial for all students and parents? J.C. believes “If the government want to change the policy in a practical way, they must not reduce the budget for maintaining NESTs in school. The government should hire more NESTs in public school. NESTs’ performance is not shining because of a lack numbers. When the NESTs are not in school, parents will spend more money on private education than they do now. I would be ready, I don’t hesitate investing money in my children because I can afford the education but what about the poor family? They work very hard with low income and they spend almost as much money on private education for their children.” This is as unfortunate a situation as we could imagine, however, the policy doesn’t seem to be implemented for ‘fair’ public education.

C.S.’s opinion of private education is very strong. “I don’t think there is an option for Korean parents if we enrol (our children) in a Hagwon or not. When the speaking test’s importance is enhanced then my son has to prepare for the test, I will look at everything I could use for the exam. I don’t think it’s a good idea to have a little class with NESTs right now because I know he needs school exams rather than speaking and having fun with NESTs at high cost. If he thinks it is necessary, I don’t care how expensive they are, I will definitely go for private tutoring.”

4.3. The effectiveness of English learning from KETs VS NESTs

In the pilot survey of two public school teachers, they refused to answer any research questions. The policy of reducing the budget for NESTs may be a sensitive matter for them as public school KETs may now have more issues in terms of their performance (fluency in English). Some KETs may even be under pressure to keep their jobs. In these circumstances, it may be difficult to voice their opinions publically even with a guarantee of anonymity.

As James said “the best way to learn English isn’t necessarily by NESTs……it is a very good way to learn English because if you learn English by KETs, you are never going to speak English naturally.” He added that even if KETs are good at speaking English, they may never be able to express something completely naturally in English because they are never going to be perfectly fluent and perfectly dramatic in every sense. “I know that through my experience and I try to learn Korean from Korean people. I mimic what they said, copied how they express their language. I think it is the only way to learn Korean naturally because I don’t think I can learn natural Korean language from an American who can speak Korean.”
In reality, this is the same reason why J.C. spent a great deal of money on private education for his children: for more frequent and closer interaction with NESTs. “If you were born in Korea, you can speak Korean naturally. I want my children to learn English in a ‘right way’ from NESTs so that they can speak English naturally.” Even though he spent a relatively large amount of money on English private education for his daughters, he doesn’t regret his decision because he had a goal for their education i.e. to speak English with a native-like-accent. He said proudly “when one English teacher asked me if I sent my daughters to the USA for learning English, I couldn’t hide my excitement that the money and effort I spent had finally paid off!” The basic truth for MR Kim is NESTs can speak naturally and Korean children can learn ‘natural English only from NESTs.’

Nevertheless, there are more issues than this one theory, for example, the question of are NESTs always better than KETs in terms of preparation for school exams or next level school-entrance exams for middle school and high school students? The manner in which NESTs tend to teach is a communicative approach rather than solving technical language problems such as translating and comprehension. Having less than one hour conversation class with NESTs every week will not necessarily help middle school and high school students to improve their actual school exam results. Surprisingly, though, there is no research or studies on the performance of NESTs yet, indeed Choi and Kim recommended this area for a future study (2013, p.18), however, there are positive results in terms of an improvement in high school students’ listening test. Therefore, although the class with NESTs may not be enough to cover all aspects of language learning, it did pay dividends. One difficulty with this is that it works especially well for students who already have a high standard of English. (Choi and Kim, 2013) The result of this is that public school English classes help the students who we assume already experienced private English education and the NESTs classes offers a synergy effect for those students, not for all students.

From a marketing point of view, as W.A. said, private institutes have to maintain NESTs to put forward a professional image. When she hired NESTs, she had lots of difficulties with them in terms of communication: she reminisced, “Personally, managing NESTs is more difficult than hiring them in terms of language barrier between employer and employees. Sometimes I feel I am wasting money on them because they don’t teach the way I explain to them. They seem to spend meaningless time with playing the same games under the name of a ‘different teaching method’. The reason for private institutes to hire NESTs does not seem to be necessarily teaching but also them using as a marketing strategy. “We need NESTs not only for them to teach English but also to show our professional image of teaching a language to learners and parents. And it of course works.” W.A. also felt that Most NESTs she encountered were very passionate for teaching in their class for the first few months, but they changed after a few months because they may have lost interest in teaching as their dream was not to be a teacher for life.
Accordingly, C.S. thinks KETs are better in terms of interaction between with the learners. She said, “NESTs can’t understand the problems and what the learners are seeking. They can’t speak Korean so it is difficult to connect to basic-level English learners. There are lots of KETs who have perfect pronunciation and the ability to deliver their skills effectively to learners. I would learn English from them instead of NESTs. I am learning Japanese from a Korean teacher at the moment and the teacher is better than a Native Japanese speaker for me.” She does not believe it possible for her son to develop English communicative competence from NESTs, whether it is in public schools or private institutes/tutoring. She thinks if teachers have proper qualifications with the capability of understanding their students, it doesn’t matter where the teacher is from. Her argument is supported by her own experience. Pronunciation is not a major issue for her as she saw many children who attained perfect pronunciation from KETs and electronic listening materials such as e-class, video, and CDs.

On teaching English through English from KETs W.A. believes: “it would be a very good idea if KETs in public schools are ready to speak fluently in class. There are more and more KETs who can speak English fluently and confidently, nowadays. They are the best candidates for learning English. However, public education doesn’t fulfil the needs. Our children need more hours to study in Hagwons or with a private tutor”.

A final reason that W.A. does not consider learning from NESTs to be beneficial is that she stated she met only ‘unqualified’ NESTs. “Do you know how many NESTs who are not real teachers are in Korea?”

James argued the hiring institute/government program bear some responsibility for this situation when it occurs. “They should review CVs carefully when they hire teachers. Find qualified teachers with passion for their job rather than hiring any degrees.” At the same time, He suggested to hire NESTs who have a minimum of TESL (Teaching English as Second Language) certificates even if they don’t have an educational background. He added that he actually saw many NESTs who don’t care about teaching but just were enjoying one year getting beers. And this made the image of all NESTs worse.

According to the recent policy, KETs will soon become the alternative to NESTs for a speaking class. Are the KETs then ready to teach English through English?

James voiced concerns over some that some KETs’ communicative competencies. He mentioned “some Korean teachers were very inefficient in class and their level of English is incredibly low so I was surprised how they work as English teachers.” He worries about the pupils who will learn English through English from only Korean English Teachers.

Do parents want their children to learn how to speak English from Korean teachers? The answer is quite direct and predictable. J.C. said, “I wouldn’t want my children to learn how to speak English from Korean teachers because I strongly think children will get less of an outcome from Korean
teachers as opposed to NESTs. I would enrol them in a hagwon which offers the NESTs speaking class.” His opinion is very much in favour of learning English through NESTs and he believes NESTs in private institutes are better in terms of qualifications and experience. He said, “From the owner of a private institute’s point of view, I would tend to hire the best teacher. This could be a pre-conception of my own, but I thought those teachers in private institutes are using high-level English.” He added that this could be one of the reasons that the fees of private institutes are very expensive and that also in order to avoid some students having unfair opportunities to learn, the recent policy of reducing NESTs in schools is an inappropriate decision.

As the speaking aspect of English learning is apparently a NEST’s jobs, C.S. added. “When my son needs to practice English conversation for exams, I will use private tutoring. And it might be NESTs or KETs who can speak perfectly fluently and who can directly help my son to pass the exam that he is aiming for. I will look at any way necessary to help my son pass the exam.” Even though she stated she would prefer to learn from Korean Teachers in general for speaking classes, when preparing for an important exam, she would choose NESTs.

4.4. Will the recent education policy help private education industry enhance their business?

It is apparent from the above interviews that the recent policy of reducing the number of NESTs in public schools will benefit the private education industry. It is also interesting to examine how the education policy may impact parents, NESTs and the owners of private institutes.

Firstly, two participants as parents have different viewpoints and their disenchantment with the education policy in South Korea is evident, albeit for different reasons. Both parents have experienced spending money on shadow education, including: private institutes (hagwon), one-on-one private tutoring, correspondence courses and internet private tutoring classes. While they each have their own philosophies on education, they couldn’t hide their nervousness towards the social flow. In the case of C.S., her previous experience of using all different kinds of private education for her first child led her to a realization. “I have seen many children who can speak English very well in the relatively big cities such as cities in Gyeonggi province, Seoul and Busan. They are crazy about English education, and they actually have communicative competence. My point is…. If everyone is good at English and the English subject, what’s the use? The competition will increase, the pressure on ‘the next level’ will be more. Not everybody lives with English, somebody who work as a government officer without speaking English fluently. And actually that happened around me. I think it would not be late even if he needs speaking English for achieving
his own goal and then starts.” Her second child seems happier than his older brother because he escaped from “mandatory hagwon enrolment and forced study”.

However, the case of J.C. is slightly different. His daughters did expensive private tutoring called YunSeonSeng (“Teacher Yun”: English correspondence courses) and he does not regret any of his decisions. He believes this is just what the parents do for their children. If the NESTs are not teaching speaking classes in public schools anymore, he would definitely enrol his children in a hagwon or seek NESTs personally (private tutoring) for his daughters’ English pronunciation. “The level of teaching English in public school is of course not enough for (my) children, English is a language, and the teachers teach English academically and even though there are NESTs in schools the number is too small to interact with every student.” Public education policy flows focused on fluency in English and consequently one or two NESTs were hired in school for a few hundred students. JC believes hiring NESTs in public schools was a great plan unless they stop developing it now. “I couldn’t believe the new policy of cutting the budget for NESTs in schools. As I told you, NESTs are not many already so there has to be an increase rather than a reduction. As a result of the public schools change in style of teaching to offering English conversation class with NESTs, I thought it was necessary to follow the direction of English education. And now, after spending lots of money because of the conversation-focused classes emphasizing the importance of NESTs when you learn a language, the government shows a lot of reasons not to hire NESTs anymore because it might not be useful to learn English? It is very disappointing and as speechless a policy as ever.” He worries that almost all parents are satisfied with their children having English class with NESTs in schools so when the public school no longer employ NESTs, they will have to spend more money on private institutes because they would maintain NESTs.

Would NESTs move to the private sector if there were less public school jobs? James said if the recent policy affected him, he would find an ideal hagwon to work for or considering getting an F type Visa for private tutoring. The private institute industry may therefore be able to benefit from the increased availability of experienced teachers. However, James also said, “I would not want to move to a hagwon basically, but if the public school doesn’t want me to have another contract, instead of working in a hagwon which offers not enough wages regarding my experience in teaching, short holidays, I might leave.” Another option would be getting the aforementioned F visa which would allow him to work as a private tutor in Korea. “It is very attractive though, very difficult to get for example I need 5 years previous living evidence in Korea, fancy degree, huge income, or marriage to a Korean, etc.”

Finally, W.A. who owns a private institute said if the number of available NESTs increased she would hire the best of them. She previously did not have a good impression of NESTs until a recent hire with whom she is satisfied, however, she is worried about this because he is from the Philippines which is not referred to as a Native English Speaking Country under government policy (NESTs should be from one of 7 countries: The US, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New...
Zealand, and South Africa). She said, “I have the perfect teacher now because he has a bachelor degree in Education from the Philippines and another Bachelor degree of English from Korea. It is very important to maintain good teachers in a hagwon because they are the one who make a good reputation for us.” She said she had the perfect teacher but on the other hand when the options were wider, she would consider about him again.

As a result of the recent policy, the participants the author interviewed agreed that private education will be inundated. Korean parents want NESTs for the speaking aspect of language learning in either public schools or private institutes. NESTs who wish to remain in Korea and are unable to retain their public school contracts may move to hagwons or give private tutoring if they have the appropriate visa. Private institutes who focus on communicative English will never stop hiring NESTs and they may have more options to hire better teachers if public schools continue to hire less NESTs.
5. Discussion

Introduction

The discussion is based on the primary data analysis/findings. The Literature Review will help support discussing the agenda in terms of making reliable points in this section. Moreover, new data will be introduced which can contribute to the industry discussion in such a time of social environment upheaval with the changed education policy. However, a few points of limitation aiming at critical evaluation of the researcher’s own work will also be drawn in this section. There are three main focal points relating to the objectives of the dissertation, as follows: 1) Is the public education system of English practical enough to help reduce the cost of private education? Is it necessary to have private education in South Korea? 2) Are NESTs better than KETs in terms of English learning? 3) Is the recent education policy helping the private education industry stakeholders enhance their business?

5.1. Question 1.
Is the public education system of English practical enough to help reduce the cost of private education? Is it necessary to have private education in South Korea?

Since 1997, the public education system ‘innovated’ and began focusing on fluency rather than accuracy however the government did not wholeheartedly follow through with this policy, for example, the number of NESTs in public schools has been too few to interact with every student. When the education system was implemented in full scale in 2008, the number of NESTs began to steadily increase and this continued for the next 4 years. The more public schools hired NESTs, the more NESTs were also hired in the private education industry. The speed of development of public education system could not follow the private education system regarding the fast growing demand. The public education system of maintaining NESTs in public schools appeared settled until 2010.

The policy of hiring NESTs had to be developed more in terms of the quantity as well as the quality of teachers if it was to effectively satisfy its objective. (Mariño, 2011, p.137) Nonetheless, the policy has been weaker since 2010 according to the certain media reports. (Hong, Choi and Limb, 2009, p. 34) and some provinces in South Korea have actually been reducing the number of NESTs with some media sources sighting the reason as NESTs’ lack of capability to teach in public schools (The Jeju Weekly 2012), though, James, the NEST interviewed, argued that the system of employment has to be improved as currently the sole qualification is to have “any
Bachelor degree” and according to James, there are “lots of NESTs in South Korea just for having fun for a year”. What if the qualifications become higher and the interview was more serious to find people who have a desire to be real teachers? Can the “lack of teaching capability” be the reason for firing NESTs in public schools who are perceived as specialists in English speaking classes?

Nonetheless, the number of NESTs is decreasing in public schools even though it is apparent that it is necessary for Korean students to learn and practice more English in such modern circumstances of globalization. Consequently, the demand for NESTs is never going to decrease. J.C. who is the parent of two daughters agreed with this and James (NEST) emphasized, “…natural English is learned only with Native English Speakers.” In C.S.’s case, “I will seek whoever (NESTs or KETs) to be able to teach the speaking part of English when it’s necessary.” Accordingly, parents seek NESTs outside of school already. As C.S. said “NESTs in public school is not for improving students’ communicative competence but to get familiar with NESTs as a ‘foreigner’.” As a result of the public school focus on fluency in English and the implementation of this teaching method of the English subject through NESTs, parents now perceive having a class with NESTs as important.

The macro-environment of society in South Korea cannot be ignored because of the ubiquitous social phenomenon of ‘Education Fever’ which stirred up the demand for a better education system. (Hwang, 2002, p, 614), (Shim and Park, 2008, pp.137) J.S. the father of two children, spent a lot of money on private English education in Korea, however, it cannot be evaluated as ‘a lot of” money compare to the parents who sent their children abroad to learn ‘native-like-English’. Apparently, the social protocol of the ‘English Divide’ between those who could afford private education and those who could not stemmed from this policy. (Ramirez, 2013)

From the findings, it is true that the parents would spend more money on private education as a result of education policy in this particular social phenomenon. Some parents have their own philosophy relating to education not to follow the regular social thought, however, at the same time, when the private education is needed for their children (Bray, 2006, p.526), they would be ready to be involved in the circle of ‘Education Fever’. C.S. showed her strong opinion on English education and the anxiety of the decision at the same time in the interview. “If my kid is not interested in English study, nothing works for him. Hagwon, NESTs, expensive private tutoring, they are useless…but I am still worried about him going to just a ‘normal hagwon’ because everyone around me invests more money in their kids than I do.” However, J.S.’s opinion of the private education was very straightforward. “...if the public school doesn’t hire NESTs? Of course I would find NESTs outside of school”
Directly speaking, the public education system of English is insufficient to help reduce the cost of private education in general.

5.2. Question 2.

Are NESTs better than KETs in terms of English learning?

Apparently, NESTs can speak English naturally in general as Ahn (2011, p.691) mentioned, elaborating that NESTs are using their first language so the tradition of the language would melt into the students. In other words, it is very difficult for Korean teachers who are born in Korea to speak English like NESTs. Therefore, if you want to speak natural English, you should learn it from NESTs. James (interviewee) also made the point that “natural English is learned only from NESTs”.

In contrast, speaking English naturally does not necessarily mean teaching English effectively. When regarding what makes good teachers, “pedagogical skill” or even proper teaching method for teaching effectively is important. (Mariño, 2011, p.129) Unfortunately, there have been complaints that there are many NESTs who are not qualified as teachers in South Korea as a result of the ‘low’ standard of accepted by the employment system. As James argued, instead of blaming unqualified NESTs’ inappropriate attitude or their level of English grammar, (Ahn, 2011, p.691), (Han, 2005, p.197) it is better to hire qualified NESTs with a passion for teaching. James suggested the specific standard for hiring NESTs should be a minimum of a certificate of TESL (Teaching English as Second Language) even if they don’t have an educative or a linguistic/English oriented degree.

However, contrastingly, there is a current report by the Korean government which proves the NESTs’ class has helped high school students to improve their listening skills. (Choi and Kim, 2013) This research presents the positive aspects of NESTs, though it must be said that the students who improved their level of English were high-middle, a group who were already confident enough in their classes to have more advantages.

Are KETs’ then willing to teach English instead of NESTs? Traditionally, they teach English for school exams rather than speaking English. Although, currently it appears that KETs are under significant amounts of pressure to teach English through English. (Rabbidge and Chappell, 2014) It might be the reason why the two public school teachers rejected the interview for this research. In the pilot survey, one public school teacher in Gyeonggi province stated he had no comment on the public education policy system and NESTs because the middle school he is working in does
not have NESTs anymore. Therefore, he explained, he was too busy even though it was during the summer vacation period.

W.A. who is the owner of a private institute preferred KETs in terms of satisfactory communication. The reason she had some issues with NESTs before could be her high expectation towards NESTs because in most cases, NESTs are hired by recruitment agencies or the government ‘English Program in Korea (EPIK)’ and not by herself. Therefore, it is not surprising that she began hiring NESTs in a better way from her previous experience: NESTs who have experience and passion with actual references in South Korea.

C.S. is a big fan of KETs since she values the interaction between teacher and learner the most which is a relevant point, on the assumption that your teacher “knows where to scratch when learners feel itchy.” (Han, 2005) However, the problem occurring with this might be achieving perfect pronunciation, and yet there are countless materials including many kinds of internet sources, DVDs, and CDs.

C.S.’s fair opinion of learning English is against discrimination between KETs and NESTs. Provided that KETs have the proper capability including fair level pronunciation, the effectiveness of learning language from KETs is convincing for her. C.S.’ point of view is very relevant as a mother of two children as well as a beginner learner who has experience of learning languages: English and Japanese.

Consequently, it is crucial to confirm if KETs are ready to be an alternative to NESTs. Rabbidge and Chappell (2014) pointed out the policy of TETE (Teaching English Through English) was not successful due to KETs non implementation of the policy in their classes, furthermore, 43% of KETs surveyed had considered quitting their job as a result of the induced pressure and stress. As a consequence, James’s argument of some KETs being inefficient in terms of co-teaching with NESTs and having an “incredibly low level of English” is evidence that KETs are certainly not perfectly ready to teach English in the same manner as NESTs in public schools.

5.3. Question 3.
Is the recent education policy helping the private education industry enhance its business?

(1) The shortcomings of the public school system

Hiring NESTs in public schools has had a positive response from parents, students and KETs even though there were matters to be improved such as increasing the numbers of NESTs and training NESTs for effective teaching. However, currently public schools encountered the crisis
of decreasing the number of NESTs. Public school KETs who were not well prepared for this transition are now responsible to be an alternative to NESTs. James who is working in a public school as a NESTs agreed that more NESTs are needed in public schools to have effective classes. J.C. has the same opinion of hiring more NESTs in schools as he said. “The government should hire more NESTs in public school. NESTs’ performance is not shining because of a lack numbers.”

(2) The social environment of English education: English Fever.

This section is a short version analysis of the macro environment in South Korea.

South Korea is experiencing English Fever, parents do not want be ‘labelled’ as a non- hagwon (private institute) user. The ‘English divide’ controls students’ confidence in school. Parents and teenage pupils who are not hagwon users tend to be perceived as from a poor family and isolated. The advertisement industry for learning English is huge. Adults, students, even 2-3 year old babies learn English. English is not an option in Korea, it is a necessity both in school and later in the employment world. Moreover, as Kim and Lee pointed out that “The economic ability of a household plays an important role in determining the level of private tutoring.” (2010, p. 275) In these circumstance, it is understandable that public school hired NESTs, on the contrary, it is not easy to accept that the government reduced the NESTs in public schools after only a few years.

(3) Development of private education

Private education has followed the main stream of public schools as a ‘shadow’ and the successful private institutes are flexible and fast to accept the policy change. Moreover, sometimes private education starts the ‘ideal’ class even before public schools. The advantage of private institutes is that by charging fees, they have the capability to cover the shortcomings of the public education system. When the private education is perceived as a necessary process in learning, as expected, parents will depend on private education. Kim and Lee (2001, p.2) highlighted that there are “… households with higher demand for education, the gap between the demand and public supply is greater so that they are more likely to seek for private tutoring.” By the time public schools started hiring NESTs, parents were already dissatisfied with the entire system and started depending on private education. In the interviews, two parents, C.S. and J.C. explained they never stopped using private education for their children to study more and experience more, to achieve natural English or better exam marks.

The result through this research is simple: The recent education policy of reducing NESTs in public school benefits the private education industry. Parents who participated in this research
want NESTs for learning English in either public schools or the private education industry and they don’t hesitate to spend money on private education provided that the class is necessary and efficient. A NEST who interviewed said he would move to a hagwon if offered better conditions relative to his experience, otherwise he would consider obtain a visa for private tutoring in South Korea. Private language institutes will maintain NESTs or even more NESTs will be employed and there may be more opportunity to hire better teachers with public school experience.

Furthermore, as presented in the Literature Review section, research on public education policy, private education in South Korea and the various aspects of learning English by NESTs and KETs has been undertaken previously. (Chang, 2009), (Bray, 2006), (Mariño, 2011) However, as the recent policy of reducing the number NESTs is less than 3 years old, this dissertation is a fresh area in terms of discovering ‘renewed thoughts’ on recent public education policy. In order to obtain the stakeholders thoughts of the recent reversal in education policy, the questions and the background are relatively broad i.e. encompassing the interviewee’s past experience of English education, through to their thoughts and attitudes toward the recent policy. In this way, it is possible for the readers to lose their focus on the specific area of the dissertation, however, it is believed that due to having sufficient information and specific opinions on the background of the situation, the points now being made can be reliable.

![Figure 1. Stakeholder Map for discussion](image-url)
6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings can be summarised as three main points: The perception of the government education policy, the continuously developing private education industry, and the effectiveness of classes by both NESTs and KETs. Whether it was intended or not, it appears that the recent government education policy supports the private education industry. It is interesting to reveal how the situation has been drawn out.

The public education has not offered sufficient study materials to students and parents have been depending on private education. With the purpose of reducing the cost of private education in South Korea, the public education policies the government made failed to satisfy the demand for English learning for a number of reason, including: The relatively low numbers of NESTs hired in public schools, The Equalization policy, TETER (Teach English Through English), The English-only policy and finally reducing the already small number of NESTs in public schools. In the circumstances of attempting to be a globalized nation coupled with fast economic growth, the demand for a higher standard of English education in South Korea has only increased. Every 5 years the education policies shift in line with new presidential elections which leave the entire public education system in chaos. Specifically, the recent policy of reducing NESTs in public schools has to be seriously reconsidered due to insufficient justifications for the policy i.e. 1) The lack of NESTs’ capability of teaching, 2) KETs have improved enough to be an alternative to NESTs, 3) Considerations of cost-effectiveness.

The three main points of the education policy of reducing the budget for NESTs are clearly not proven. The argument against the first explanation for the policy is that there is no relevant research/study on the performance of NESTs. (Choi and Kim, 2013) And also J.C. who did interview for the research said “the lack of the number of NESTs cannot make them shine”. There are also sensible alternatives to simply reducing the number of NESTs. The requirements to be a public school teacher is too low: “any Bachelor degree without educational/English background”. On this point, a more appropriate change would be to change the requirements to be a teacher in Korea. As James’s suggested, if the candidates have any degree, a minimum of a certificate of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) should be required, as well as implementing a more serious interviews to hire ‘real’ teachers. However, there should also more research undertaken on the effectiveness of hiring NESTs in public schools in terms of their performance and contribution in school. Correspondingly, the research evaluating KETs’ English speaking classes should be expanded so that a comparison targeting NESTs and KETs could make for a fair discussion on the topic.

Relating to the second core question, Have the KETs’ level of English improved enough to teach English through English? Directly speaking, KETs are not ready to be alternatives to NESTs. James criticized some KETs’ capability of speaking and teaching as an “incredibly low level of English” and
inefficient co-teaching in his experience of more than four years in a public school. Moreover Rabbidge and Chappell (2014) pointed out that some research reveals the policy of TETE (Teaching English Through English) is not implemented properly in the class.

The argument being made for the third part is crucial: considering the cost-effectiveness of hiring NESTs. Whether it was intended or not, the education policy of hiring NESTs made parents perceive NESTs as necessary to educate their children. If NESTs do not work in public school, parents would still seek NESTs outside of school in private education. Thus as the government reduces its expenditure, it is time for parents to spend more money on private education. Those who cannot afford such classes may simply be left without, exacerbating the already existing ‘English Divide’.

Directly speaking, while the public education system for English is insufficient to help reduce the cost of private education in general, it is necessary to consider that parents who cannot afford private education may be very satisfied with NESTs in public schools. Additionally, there is evidence that some parents who were already satisfied with the public education system of NESTs classes became more disappointed with the new policy of reducing NESTs in public schools. (No, 2012)

In the following section, learning English from both KETs and NEST has been analysed. KETs and NESTs each have their own roles in English classes due: KETs are well experienced in teaching grammar and reading comprehension preparation school exams while NEST are more suited to speaking and writing. In these accepted circumstance, it is not acceptable from parents’ point of view to learn the English speaking aspect from KETs.

C.S.’s fair opinion of learning English language could make a potential theory of non-discrimination between KETs and NESTs. As a result, provided that KETs have certain qualification of teaching and fair pronunciation, the performance of KETs could be compared with NESTs in terms of “teaching natural English” and this theory could be expanded based on the literature include: Ahn’s ‘Conceptualization of American English native speaker norms (2011), Reis’s ‘Non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) and professional legitimacy: a socio-cultural theoretical perspective on identity transformation (2011).

The researcher has highlighted the recent social flow of the private education industry as impacted by government education policy. Due to time constraints it was decided to omit a linguistic assessment on the benefits of language acquisition from NESTs/NNESTs, however it is recommended for future research as this could lead to a more in depth view of the entire situation and a more complete cost/benefit analysis part of research to be left for the future study. Furthermore, for the results of this research to be more reliable, the private education industry should be examined in more detail and categorized, for example, ‘successful private institutes’ or ‘small sized institutes specializing in school exams.’ The effects on the different categories of institutes could then be examined. As mentioned,
focusing on the impact of the recent policy resulted in the in-depth details of the private education industry being left for future study.

The conclusion of this research is straight forward: The recent education policy of reducing NESTs in public schools will benefit the private education industry. Parents who participated in this research want NESTs for learning English in either public schools or private education industry and they are willing to spend money on private education provided that the classes are necessary and efficient. A NEST interviewed said he would move to hagwon if the conditions were better taking into account his experience or he would otherwise considering obtain a visa for private tutoring in South Korea. Private language institutes will maintain NESTs or even more NESTs will be employed with more opportunity for the institute to hire more experienced teachers with the reduction in public school NESTs.
7. References


8. Appendices

Appendix 1. 2012~2016 Mid-term Seoul Education Budget Plan

□ The plan of the investment (2012~2016)

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Original data (Korean)

□ 향후 투자계획(2012~2016)

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Source: The official website of Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (www.sen.go.kr)
Appendix 2. NESTs Head Count

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<tr>
<th>Region/Year</th>
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<td>686</td>
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<td>Daegu</td>
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<tr>
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<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gangwon</td>
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<td>Gyeonggi</td>
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Source: The Korea Herald, 1 May 2013
Appendix 3. Interview questions

**Parents-point-of-view: 학부모관점**

1. How do you think about the recent government education policy of reducing the budget of hiring NESTs in some provinces (including Seoul, Gyeonggi and Busan)? Would you worry if the recent policy is conducted in your district?

이최근교육정책에대해어떻게생각하십니까? 이정책이본인이거주하고있는지역에반영된다면걱정되시겠습니까?

2. Are you satisfied with your children to have English class without NESTs?

아이들이원어민강사가없는영어수업을받는것에대해만족스러우십니까?

3. What makes you think NESTs are important in terms of education of English?

영어교육에있어원어민강사가꼭필요한이유는뭐라고생각하시니까?

4. If public schools do not hire NESTs anymore, how will you educate speaking and writing part of English to your children?

학교가원어민강사를채용하지않는다면아이들의영어회화/쓰기수업을어떻게지도할계획이십니까?

**Owners of Private Institutes point of view: 사설영어교육시설측관점**

1. How do you think about the new policy of reducing the budget of hiring NESTs in Seoul and some other provinces? Do you think private institutes will have benefit from this policy?

이최근교육정책에대해어떻게생각하십니까? 학원측에도움이되실것이라생각하시는지요?

2. Do you think private institutes need NESTs even though public schools started reducing hiring them? If so, why?

정책적으로학교에서원어민강사를채용하기를점점꺼려하는데도학원측에서는원어민강사가필요하다고생각하십니까?

3. What are NESTs’ role for your institute?

원어민강사학원에서하는역할이무엇입니까?

4. What kind of positive impact do you think private institutes would have from this policy?

이최근교육정책이학원측에는구체적으로어떤긍정적인영향을미쳤까요?
NESTs-point-of-view:

1. What do you think about the new policy of reducing the budget of hiring NESTs in Seoul, Gyeonggi and some other provinces in 2013?

2. Why do you think Korean pupils need NESTs in their English class? (What’s the role of NESTs in class?)

3. What would you do if your school does not want to make another contract for the next year?

4. Do you think you will prepare more for the interview to get a job in private institutes?

5. What source or ways can make the class better through your experience?

6. Do you think Korean teachers are ready to be alternated NESTs in class?

7. Over all, how do you think the recent policy impact to NESTs, pupils and finally private institutes?
Appendix 4. Reflection

1. Dissertation.

Starting to write was the most challenge part for the researcher who was not accustomed to writing in English. Since all different chapters cannot stand alone but synthesize each other, it was not simple to ‘just write first’ as a reflector. A Reflector, as Kolb (1984) described is the type of researcher who favours “standing back, listening, observing from collecting information and thinking it through, through different perspectives and grasping the big picture…. .” This approach can led to difficulties in terms of wasting time and effort for unnecessary things. Moreover, the researcher is not only a reflector, but also a theorist, specifically: “when reviewing things in terms of systems, concepts, models, theories, when absorbing ideas and providing integrated explanations/theories, solving problems by data collection, planning and organising work, through critical evaluation, working alone”

The fact that the researcher is a reflector and at the same time, a theorist, generated stress in terms of having too much pressure to be perfect at once. It was tremendously difficult to start writing without a perfect concept and the methodology for the dissertation. For more than a month, during which time the researcher had several meetings with her mentor, she was still looking for the perfect concept and direction of the dissertation. It was not surprising that everything else seemed unimportant including: friends, family, part-time job, and even the weather did not seem to be helpful. This was the first phase of her dissertation: negative thoughts without self-esteem.

The time spent considering options was too long and when the researcher finally opened her eyes and decided to ‘act’ first it was already the month of July. Contacting all the candidates in South Korea was not easy due to the 8 hour-time difference. In the pilot survey, two public teachers’ rejection generated a great deal of worry for the researcher. Collecting primary data through interview required a different kind of competency: interacting with people and listening. A Master’s dissertation is not like an individual assignment or even a team project but more related to people’s effort and care than the researcher would ever have thought. This was the second phase of the dissertation: realization and action.

When conducting interviews with people who have more than 20 years of experience in the industry, it was an honour in terms of listening to their own opinion which the researcher can confidently describe as gold for the dissertation. On the other hand, listening to their stories made the researcher think beyond the dissertation to the problems in South Korea currently has are too huge and it influences everyone involved in the industry. The public education system is a huge concern for almost everyone in South Korea especially English education in terms of the nation attempting to be globalized. The interviewees each had their own problems, complaints, and worries even though
they earn relatively high incomes and have secure jobs while living relatively successful lives (all have their own business or career). The researcher, however, felt a huge responsibility to solve those problems when listening or even contribute to solving the problems by shouting through the dissertation. And that’s how the third phase of the dissertation passed: passionate and satisfied with the direction.

The academic approach of Research Methodology section was precisely agreeable to work on, though, there were a few moments for second guessing the methods for example, ‘Do I have to change the approach from inductive to deductive?’ Accordingly, the approach was temporarily replaced. Eventually, after realizing the first choice made was more suitable, three days had passed with a great deal of disappointment. On the other hand, the experience made the researcher more confident for the choices of methodology as well making the next chapter of Data analysis easier.

Interpreting people’s thought and attitudes through the interviews was fascinating work and it felt like being a journalist. This section required a three step procedure of writing down the core messages from them, interpreting the language from Korean to English, and organising thematically.

The final phase of writing the dissertation was a huge time pressure in terms of meeting the researcher’s own deadline and target for each day, however, it helped the researcher in terms of meeting the final deadline without major difficulty.

2. MBA program

Remembering the first class of Project Management is not pleasant. When the researcher was presented with three sheets of paper of an unexpected case study, everything was a panic: from reading to sharing each other’s opinion. For the approximately 30 minutes of being isolated and having zero self-esteem, the research would name the time as ‘hell’.

For the year prior to the MBA, even before deciding to do the MBA in Ireland, reading and researching about the MBA course was constant and that made the researcher more passionate about the studies. Confidence and expectation in herself was enough to enrol in the program, and the first day, the researcher thought ‘it is not going to be easy.’ For the next few weeks, researching and planning skills improved due to pushing harder to learn and develop. The time went by, and the researcher is reminded of the day of having the first result and feedback of the Project Management professor, team by team. Although having marks of second class honoured, all the team members were not satisfied with the marks.

It is freely admitted that first step of personal development the researcher experienced in the first semester was the most valuable achievement in her life. It offered her the capability to research for a
particular module. Efficient time management skill is one of the other key achievements learned through this program though at the time it did not seem possible to complete four assignments at the same time. Through a great deal of team project work, the researcher can recognize and accept that people are different and there is always a positive way to solve the problem. Consequently, the fair researching skills and time management techniques learned as a team player in the MBA will help the researcher in future as those capabilities are required in an organization.

In summary, this MBA program gave the researcher the opportunity for great development personally and professionally. The three months Master’s dissertation in English will never be forgotten in her entire life.

Reference
