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Understanding the Importance of English Education in South Korea and Exploring the
Reasons Why South Korean Students Come to a University in the Midwest

by

Jaekun Cho

A THESIS

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Understanding the Importance of English Education in South Korea and Exploring the
Reasons Why South Korean Students Come to a University in the Midwest

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University of Nebraska, 2014

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The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions held by South Korean students who study at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) of the benefits and values of studying English language. Furthermore, the researcher found what kinds of challenges Korean students encounter both before they come to UNK and after they come to UNK. The following studies were discussed in the literature review: (a) the reasons why international students come to America; (b) the perspectives and experiences of studying English at American colleges and universities; (c) “push” and “pull” factors which influence the decision making process for international students; and (d) the value of English-medium courses in Korean colleges.

A sample of UNK Korean students (30 interviewees) was chosen. The researcher used the stratified sampling technique and the semi-structure interviews to collect the data.

This study found the following results: (a) South Korean students significantly focus on achieving a high level of English competency; (b) South Korean students especially lack English speaking and writing skills; (c) South Korean students devalue the

English educational environment in Korea, but value the English educational environment in America; (d) the majority of the research study's interviewees decided to come to UNK because of the affordable tuition and the transferable credit hours back to their home universities in Korea; (e) many of the research study's interviewees felt uncomfortable building relationships with Americans; and (f) no difference was found based on gender or duration of the study abroad program.

Recommendations for future research included: 1) developing English speaking skills in Korean students needs more careful; 2) greater attention to how Korean student can build relationships with American cultures and students by American universities needs to be studied; and 3) non-degree seeking students need more international programming to use their limited time in the USA learning English more efficiently.

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At the beginning, I would like to say a lot of thanks to my Korean family and American family, especially Greg and Laurie, who have strongly supported me to live in Kearney, NE. I really appreciate Miles T. Bryant being my graduate school adviser, and because of his guidance, I was able to enjoyably learn a new area of study, higher education administration, and finish this thesis. Furthermore, I am graciously thankful to Dr. Kenny who is my current supervisor at UNK because if he did not support me to stay at UNK, I would not be able to participate in this program and have this kind of privilege.

While I am writing this thesis, my father has not only fought against his physical health problem for over 3 years, but my mother has also strongly supported my dad to live longer despite his sickness. In spite of my family's difficult situation, all of my Korean family, my parents, two older sisters, my two brother-in-laws, and four nieces, have kept cheering me on to finish this program and stay in the United States. Because of their loving support, I have successfully accomplished a great amount of achievements while I live in Nebraska.

Many South Korean students have also helped me conduct this research study, so I really appreciate their support and help. Furthermore, I am so thankful that Heather Breight was able to help me revise this thesis as an English writing tutor at UNK.

I always feel sorry for my Korean family because I have lived in America for over 5 years; especially, in the circumstance of my father's illness. Again, I cannot say how much I appreciate all my family, friends, advisers, colleagues, and so forth. Without their help and support, I would not have been able to come this far.

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Chapter One

Overview of Study

Introduction

There are more than 7,000 different languages used daily around the world, and Mandarin Chinese, English and Spanish are the three most widely spoken languages around the world (BBC, n.d.). The world-renowned United Nations (UN) has designated six official languages: English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic. English is one of the only working languages used by the UN Secretariat, and English is also commonly used in most business meetings (UN, n.d.). Additionally, the increasing number of international students coming over to English-speaking countries shows how important the English language is all around the world. Furthermore, Swales (1987) found there were more than several million research papers and published articles written in English, and he expected that “English will remain the primary language of research” (p. 42). Consequently, many countries which do not have English as a first language have invested for several decades much money and effort into improving their English proficiency. In addition, these countries have sent large amounts of students to the following English-speaking countries to learn English efficiently and effectively: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.

South Korea is one of the countries described above, and one of the most prominent. The South Korean government puts large amounts of money toward English education and frequently revises the entire English education system to improve students’ English proficiency. In addition, South Korean students not only study English for

numerous hours, but their parents are also willing to invest in their children by sending them to private English tutoring services and institutions. The cost of sending their children to these private schools is often more than half of their incomes. This kind of phenomenon could be hardly seen around any other Asian or European country. The global importance of English education has significantly influenced the entire society of South Korea. As a result, having English proficiency is now essential for all Korean people who wish to successfully find a good job, improve social status, gain admission to the top universities in Korea, build a good career, and so forth.

Interestingly, South Korean students spend the most amounts of time and money for their English education in the world, but their English proficiency is still lacking (Jin, 2006). In other words, the efficiency of learning and studying English in South Korea is very poor, and the English education in South Korea could be a serious problem in South Korea. As previously stated, the South Korean government has tried to change the English education structures and policies quite a few times, but it has still been struggling to improve the English proficiency of the whole country. These academic reforms, combined with the importance of English education, make South Korean students go abroad to English-speaking countries —specifically America.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the perceptions South Korean students hold about the values of studying and learning English. Furthermore, the researcher will explore challenges Korean students encounter in terms of language acquisition both before they come to UNK and after they come to UNK.

This thesis will help U.S. higher education administrators, international educators, and staff and faculty members, who particularly want to closely interact with Korean students, know about the importance of English education in South Korea and find the reasons why South Korean students come to English-speaking countries. The subjects for this thesis will be found, and interviews conducted at UNK. Consequently, U.S. universities may profit from the valuable information about the South Korean students' perspectives of learning and studying English and their motivations to come to the Midwestern universities. In addition, this thesis will guide the staff and the administrators who are working for the Offices of International Affairs and wish to build a new South Korean partnership and program with American universities and colleges.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

1. What motivations make South Korean students decide to come to the United States?
2. What kinds of challenges do Korean students struggle with in terms of studying and learning English in Korea and the United States?
3. What factors influence Korean students who choose to attend UNK?
4. What perceptions about studying English and valuing English do South Korean students have both before and after coming to UNK?
5. What concerns do South Korean students address in terms of studying English before and after coming to UNK?

6. How do the responses to the above questions differ based on gender and the duration of the study abroad program?

Background and Context

A glance of the South Korean English educational situation. Hangeul, the official South Korean language, was created by King Sejong in 1433, and South Korean has been used as the official language in South Korea ever since. However, in South Korea today, there is a mania for learning the English language. Many parents and the South Korean government now think that the language of English is much more important than the language of Korean because of globalization. According to Korea Broadcasting System (2008), “Many kids begin to learn English long before they start attending elementary school. The results of a survey conducted in 2001 showed that of 1,116 private kindergartens nationwide, 64.3 percent teach infants to speak English.” This was an incredible statistical result at that time, and the percentage of those who teach infants to speak English in South Korea is likely much higher now. This is why parents push their children to go to private English institutes to learn English, even though their children cannot speak Korean at all, because the parents think that when their children learn English early, they can have more of an opportunity to be a native English speaker. In other words, the parents may think that the language of Korea is not important at all for living in South Korea and around the world. Moreover, parents send their children to more than one English institute per day. According to Swartz (2009), “This reality is widely recognized by the Lee Myung-bak government, which, in a very bold initiative, suggested that English become the medium of instruction in all subjects in

Korean schools” (p. 1). Because of the government-reformed educational regulations and social trends, some parents decide to send their children who are one-year-old or above to America, Australia, New Zealand, and England. If a family makes this decision, the mother and her children will go to one of the above countries without the father. Then, typically the husband will live alone and work in South Korea to support his family.

According to Hwang (2001),

An average of 16.5% of a South Korean family’s income is used to provide their middle school child with private schooling. For example, a family consisting of two parents and two children spends one-third of their total income on private costs for education. (p. 611)

Many parents believe that their efforts and sacrifices for their children will help their children improve their futures and change their socioeconomic statuses if they have exceptional English skills.

Why South Korean students study English extensively. Demonstrating English proficiency can be a valuable skill for South Korean students who live in South Korea. If a student fluently speaks English to an American, a Canadian, or a British citizen in the street, people will stare at him/her because there is a limited number of international people who can speak English as a native language. Most people will envy this language ability, and the positive social reaction inspires them to go to private English language schools and institutes or study abroad. In other words, South Korean social trends force students to intensively study English, and if they cannot prove their English abilities, they will be left behind and not have any chance to stand out in South Korea.

Most examinations leading toward university admissions and job qualifications require three major courses: Korean language, mathematics, and English. The Korean language and mathematics are important for students to master in order to locate job opportunities and gain admission to prestigious universities, but English has been highly valued compared to the above two courses. According to Hwang (2001),

[S]oo-nung (Korean ACT) consists of five major subjects and a selected category: Korean language (120), First Foreign Language : 'English' (80), mathematics (80), and social science and natural science (120) and second foreign language (40) (numbers in parentheses are distributed scores). (p. 612)

The proportion that represents English (80) is about 18% of the total score (440).

Moreover, prestigious colleges require their own entrance exams which are comprised of mathematics, Korean language, and English. Some of the tests and contests are based on only the English section, so students who win those contests or score outstandingly on those tests are awarded special admission chances. As a result, it is very important for all students to master English abilities.

As previously stated, most senior high school students have to take entrance exams such as the SAT or ACT. Every student really wants to be accepted into the top South Korean universities, such as Seoul National University, Korea University, Yonsei University, and so forth. In South Korea, people call these three schools SKY Universities. It is not easy for students to enter SKY universities, just as it is difficult for American students to enter Harvard or Stanford University. However, if students prove their English proficiency level as an expert, they will have a much greater chance to be admitted into SKY universities because SKY universities want to select the students with

special talents. This is why many parents spend a great deal of money for their children's English education when their children start going to kindergarten or even earlier than that.

Recently, in the South Korean job market it has been difficult for senior college graduates to find a good job with large companies, such as Samsung, LG, Hyundai, and so forth, because there are too many highly educated candidates in South Korea.

According to Hadid (2010), "During the late 1990s, the Korean government decided that all Koreans should get a college degree. The government reached its goal in 2000, when 89 percent of Koreans graduated from high school and attended college" (p. 1). Because of the government policy, there are many highly educated candidates in South Korea.

That is why companies decided to put stricter requirements on hiring job candidates:

They should graduate from the top ranking universities. Moreover, most prestigious

South Korean companies continuously require candidates to submit their English

proficiency test score, such as Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of

English for International Communication (TOEIC), International English Language Test

System (IELTS), or Oral Practical Interview Computer (OPIc). For instance, many South

Korean companies require all candidates to show at least a score of 800 or above on the

TOEIC. Some of the companies eliminate the majority of candidates who scored below

900 on the TOEIC during the first portion of the selection process (Educational Testing

Services, 2011). Interestingly, even though most companies rarely use English while

they work, job applicants have to achieve high scores in the above standardized English

tests to be qualified to apply for a job. Therefore, senior college students must spend

many hours studying English to obtain a high score on the above tests. Because of the

above reasons, college students are always looking for the best English institutions to improve their test scores and to help them speak like natives. However, it is not easy for them to quickly improve their English skills over a short period time, so many junior, senior, and even freshmen or sophomore college students decide to go to English-speaking countries to study abroad for one or two semesters. Even if senior college students find a job with the previously stated companies, they cannot stop studying English because they should keep the high score of the above-mentioned tests and prove their speaking level of English to receive promotions in their companies. If they cannot prove their English proficiency, they cannot be promoted to the next position and will finally quit their job.

The size and expense of English education in South Korea. The size of the educational market in South Korea has constantly grown since the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development lowered the age of beginning to study English from the first year in junior high to the third grade in elementary school in 1997. According to Yonhap News Agency (2010), “Spending on private education for elementary, middle and high school students amounted to an estimated 21.6 trillion won (US \$18.8 billion) in 2009, up 3.4 percent in 2010” (p. 1). Based upon the above statistical information, South Korea might spend approximately \$19.44 billion for private education in 2010. The U.S. Department of State stated, “[T]he annual budget of South Korea was \$227.2 billion in 2009” (2010). Comparing the 2009 private education expense to the annual budget of the South Korean government shows that South Korea spent billions of dollars on private

education in 2009, and this shows how much the South Korean government thinks about the importance of the educational sector.

The next section discusses how much South Korea spends on English education.

The article, *The English Frenzy in Korea*, by KBS stated:

The scope of the English-language education market in Korea reaches 4-5 trillion won “(approximately 3.697 billion U.S. dollars)” annually, including private institutes, textbooks and overseas language programs. “In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development estimates that the official number of English-language private institutes nationwide surpasses 3,000.” But people in the private education industry say the actual number of private English institutes nationwide is at least 10,000, with their profits exceeding 2 trillion won “(approximately 1.848 billion U.S dollars).” (2008)

Because the above article was published in 2008, the size of the English educational market in South Korea should be much larger now. Comparing the approximate 2010 South Korea private education budget (US \$19.44 billion) to the 2008 English-language education market (US \$3.697 billion) in South Korea, South Korea spent approximately 19% of its private education budget on English-language education between 2008 and 2010. Moreover, many unreported educational costs could have come out of pocket from the South Korean government and families. Therefore, large sums of money are being spent on English education in South Korea currently.

As previously stated, many South Korean students invest their money and time to study English. In other words, 99 out of 100 college students are willing to invest in the private educational programs after finishing the English classes. They spend more than \$400 per month for taking English classes and tutoring services. Some junior or senior students would also like to study abroad in America, Australia, England, and Canada.

They will spend at least \$10,000 for tuition and living expenses for six months or more while living abroad. The Korea Broadcasting System (2008) stated:

The amount of private tutoring costs paid by students for overseas language courses or for studying [Test of English as a Foreign Language] TOEFL and [Test of English for International Communication] TOEIC in order to find a job is enormous as well. After polling 2,348 college seniors, the School of Education of Ewha Women's University found that each of the respondents spent 12.61 million won (\$11,714.69) over four years on average on private education in order to find a job. Of that, 11.94 million won (\$11,092.26) was spent on studying English.
(p. 1)

As described above, some of the students already went to English-speaking countries to become proficient in English. Furthermore, many of them may consider studying abroad in America, Canada, England, and Australia.

Some students would stay in South Korea and register at English institutes, such as the Wall-Street Institute, SDA Institute, Global Institute, YBM, and Hackers, which are renowned in South Korea. Most English-speaking institutes charge \$200 per month. These costs only include learning of basic conversational English speaking skills; especially, these institutes do not focus on English academic or writing skills. Furthermore, students who attend TOEFL or TOEIC institutes, such as YBM and Hackers, are charged \$550 a month. Consequently, if a student attends both institutes, he or she will pay at least \$800 a month in South Korea. In addition, as described above, most conglomerate corporations require English proficiency tests, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, TEPS, and OPIc, and all applicants should take each test before applying for their jobs. The cost of each test is \$100 or more. If a student takes the tests at least two or three times, the student will pay \$200 or \$300 for each of those tests.

The problem of South Korean English education. Learning a second language, especially English, takes numerous years of training to become a fluent and native speaker. Moreover, the Korean Ministry of Education may expect that their students would significantly improve their English abilities through public education. As previously stated, students in Korea are required to take English courses through the public schools. In addition, many Korean parents support their children to send them to private English institutions as well. Nunan (2003) stated,

in most of [the Koreans] surveyed, the luckier students, particularly those in the early years, will receive only an average of 50-60 hours of English Language instruction a year, which is probably less than what is needed for significant progress in a foreign language. (p. 608)

Therefore, this situation definitely makes Korean parents want to send their children to private English institutes. In addition, some of families who are able to support their children's English education would like to place their children into public or private schools located in the U.S., England, Canada, and Australia.

Interestingly, the Korean Ministry of Education may not hire many English teachers who are from the English-speaking countries. Instead of hiring the native English-speaking teachers, Korean educational governments generally hire English teachers who are the same respective nationality (e.g., the Korean Ministry of Education hires Korean English teachers). In other words, those teachers, especially those who are majoring in Secondary English Education, may not be as effectively trained as teachers who are from the English-speaking countries like the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and so forth.

Many foreign English teachers who are not from the English-speaking countries may only focus on specific subject areas, such as reading and grammar, because they are not familiar with English speaking and conversation, writing, and listening. Nunan (2003) said, “In [Korea], informants spoke frankly of the fact that the quality of English language education in the public sector was so poor that ‘no one learns English in school’” (p. 606). The above statement asserts that the quality of English education may be suspicious and lacking because of fewer qualified teachers who are native English speakers and inappropriate training for native teachers who are hired by public schools and private institutions in Korea. Establishing English education is a requirement in Korea, and it is challenging for students to improve their English proficiency through the systems of their public and private schools because there are not many appropriately trained English teachers from their nation or the English-speaking countries.

As a result of the above reasons, many Korean students consider studying abroad in the English-speaking countries. They may want to be fully exposed to English by being surrounded by native English speakers while they stay in one of the English-speaking countries. For these reasons, Korean students want to come to American colleges and universities to effectively learn English and improve proficiency to the level of a native speaker.

Why South Korean Students Attend American colleges.

Economic power of the United States. Through the foreign point of view of the economic situation of the United States, the United States may have the strongest and

most powerful economic status compared to any other countries. The following information proves how the American economy is powerful around the world.

First, examining the percentage of the world economy is a good way to discover how influential the American economy is. According to Ahearn (2011), “The United States remains the largest economy in the world, although its share dropped nine percentage points, from 33% of the world economy between 1960 and 1972 to 24% in 2008-2009” (p. 3). So, what the GDP, the economic situation for each country, means is that “[GDP] has become widely used as a reference point for the health of national and global economies” (Callen, 2012, para. 3). Moreover, the gross domestic product (GDP) shows that the United States was the second highest ranked nation after the European Union in 2012 (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). However, the European Union is not one nation, so the United States is the most powerful economic country around the world.

Second, as described above, there are four popular English-speaking destinations for international students: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Looking at the GDP per capita of these four countries shows these countries’ purchasing power and predicts the economic circumstances whether they are positive or negative. The GDP per capita of the United States was \$49,800 in 2012, compared with the GDP per capita in the United Kingdom (approximately \$36,700), the GDP per capita in Australia (approximately \$42,400), and the GDP per capita in Canada (\$41,500) (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). Therefore, based on the above statistics, it shows that the American economic GDP per capita is the highest in the four English-speaking countries. In other words, Korean students may want to come to the United States because they may

have a dream to have a job and make about \$49,000 or above if they graduate from U.S. colleges and universities.

Third, people generally know about some conglomerated companies, such as Apple, Coca-Cola, GE, Google, and McDonald's. These companies are representative of America because their products and services are very popular and distributed around the world. Furthermore, the above companies are listed on the Fortune 500. Stangler and Arbesman stated, "Every spring since 1955, Fortune magazine has published a list of the largest public companies, by revenues, in the United States" (2012, p. 3). Interestingly, the headquarters of 132 companies, including Apple, Coca-Cola, GE, Google, and McDonald's, are established in the United States (CNN Money, 2012). In other words, this figure shows that one single country, America, has generated enormous revenues through powerful and rich companies like the American Fortune 500 companies.

According to the Partnership for a New American Economy (2011), "the Fortune 500 companies generated revenues equivalent to 73 percent of GDP [in the United States]" (p. 5). It is also noted that: "We must give existing American companies access to hire and keep the highly skilled workers from around the world. And we must stem the loss of highly skilled foreign students trained in [American] universities" (Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012, pp. 5 & 27). Taking into consideration the above statements, the American Fortune 500 companies definitely help the United States become a world economic leader and open the door for international students to come to the United States. Especially, these reasons may bring Korean students to American colleges and universities.

Good quality of higher education. Generally, people know that there are an abundance of well-known colleges and universities in the United States. For example, anywhere in the world, people instantly recognize the following schools' names: Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Yale University, University of California-Berkeley, and so forth. Moreover, foreign students from all around the globe want to gain admission to the above schools. According to U.S. News & World Report (2012), these schools have high national rankings: Harvard University is number one in the United States, MIT is number six, Yale University is number three, and University of California-Berkeley is number twenty-one. Moreover, these four schools are ranked globally as well, and this specific information is available through the QS website: MIT is ranked as number one in the world, Harvard University is ranked as number three, Yale University is ranked as number seven, and University of California-Berkeley is ranked as number twenty-two (U.S. News & World Report, 2012).

The above national and world rankings show that the American higher education is significantly outstanding around the world. Although only four universities are listed above, Labi (2007) stated, "American institutions dominate the latest edition of a ranking of the world's top 200 international universities by The Times Higher Education Supplement and Quacquarelli Symonds [(QS)]. Fifty-seven American institutions made this year's list" (para.1). Therefore, those famous colleges and universities definitely affect the decision of the Korean students who decide to come to the United States.

The following article reveals some valuable results. The article was written by Patricia Chow, Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation at the Institute of

International Education (IIE). This article significantly points out the perception of U.S. higher education based upon the point of view of diverse international students from all around the world. Chow used several methodologies, such as quantitative research and qualitative research, to find valuable results. Chow said that there were 9,330 valid students who participated in her research. Through her article, Chow (2011) mentioned “The high quality of U.S. education is a prime factor, with over three-quarters of respondents worldwide rating the U.S. positively in this dimension” (p. 29). In other words, approximately 7,000 students felt that the system of the U.S. higher education is the best of the best, especially compared to the other English speaking countries.

Students from all around the world in the American colleges and universities.

As previously stated, there were 764,495 international students in the United States in the academic year 2011-2012 (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2012). The majority of the international students who come to the United States to acquire their degrees from colleges and universities have many chances to meet diverse students from all around the world. The purpose of studying in the U.S. higher education institutions for international students is not only to learn the advanced academic knowledge through their college and university courses, but also to have numerous and multicultural experiences among international students and American students.

The University of Southern California (USC) (2011) had the highest number of international students in American colleges and universities, those following were: the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, New York University (NYU), Purdue University, and Columbia University based on the academic year 2010-11 (IIE, 2012).

Interestingly, USC hosted 8,615 international students, and they came from 125 different nationalities from all around the world (University of Southern California, 2012). The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the second largest hosting American college and university, had “8,057 international students in 2011 from 115 countries” (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012, “International Programs and Studies”). According to IIE, the numbers of international students in the three campuses were as follows: NYU had 7,988 international students; Purdue University had 7,562 international students; and Columbia University had 7,297 international students (IIE, 2012).

As illustrated above, these top five hosting American colleges and universities have the majority of international students attending there, and they may enjoy taking classes and having a great time with a variety of international students from many different regions and countries. Therefore, this factor may cause Korean students to want to come to the U.S. higher education institutions, meet a diversity of international students and American students, and have intercultural environments and experiences through all U.S. higher education institutions. Especially, those five popular hosting U.S. colleges and universities are good examples of the reason Korean students are coming to the United States.

Variety of institutions: Liberal art colleges, women’s colleges, universities, colleges, and community colleges. Korean students may come to American colleges and universities because of the variety of choices of the U.S. higher education institutions. The U.S. higher education has different types of institutions: liberal arts colleges,

women's colleges, private non-profit universities and colleges, private profit universities and colleges, public universities and colleges, and community colleges. Due to the many different types of U.S. higher education, Korean students can choose U.S. colleges and universities flexibly based upon the preferred academic programs. In 2009, the total number of U.S. higher education institutions was 4,495: 4 year institutions were 2,774 and 2 year institutions were 1,721 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Furthermore, Table 1 illustrates that international students choose certain programs in the United States, such as Research/Doctoral, Master's, Bachelor's, Special-Focus, and 2-year, depending on the type of U.S. higher educational institutions (Chronicle, 2010).

Table 1

Racial Representation Among American College Students, by Type of Institution

	Public/Private Institutions				
	Research/Doctoral	Master's	Bachelor's	Special-Focus	2-year
All Races Total	5,211,700	4,042,159	2,043,632	449,540	7,250,698
Nonresident Alien	885,989 (17%)	242,530 (6%)	102,182 (5%)	44,954 (10%)	290,028 (4%)

Note: Percentages are rounded. Figures include full-and part-time undergraduate and graduate students.
Source: Chronicle analysis of U.S Education Department Data

As shown in Table 1, in 2010, 17% of students (885,989) enrolled in the research and doctoral based programs in the United States were international students, and 6% of students (242,530) pursuing master degrees were international students. Furthermore, 5% students (102,182) who graduated with their bachelor's degrees were international students. There were 4% of students (290,028) who went to two-year colleges, like

community colleges, who were international students, and they may come to four years colleges and universities after finishing at their two-year colleges.

Interestingly, there were 10% of students (44,954) who studied in the subject of special-focus who were international students, and this shows that this figure is the lowest population of the total public and private institutions. According Table 1, international students may come to the U.S. higher education institutions to earn professional experiences through the research labs and the Ph.D., the certificates or the licenses, the master degrees, the bachelor degrees, and the associate degrees in that order of popularity.

As previously stated, approximately 4,500 American colleges and universities are spread out around the United States. This number is quite huge for one single country because Korea has fewer colleges and universities than the American higher educational institutions. In Korea, “Today there are some 376 official [Higher Educational] institutions that support 3.7m students and 60,000+ academic staff” stated Parry (2011, para. 3). The total number of South Korean colleges and universities is approximately 376, and the American higher education institutions have 4,124 more than Korean colleges and universities. In other words, Korean students have fewer opportunities to find appropriate academic programs in their home country than in the American higher education system. Therefore, this circumstance may make many Korean students decide to study in the American higher education institutions.

Chapter Two

Review of the Relevant Literature

This literature review helps a reader to understand how the previous researchers explored studies in international education. This section explains how the previous researchers have studied and what kinds of methodologies they have used for their research. In addition, the researcher discovered the previous results and findings in terms of the perceptions of the international students. Especially, the literature review mainly focused on South Korean students who came to U.S. colleges and universities. As a result of reviewing the previous findings, the researcher is able to choose the appropriate methodology and the research questions for this research study. Furthermore, the researcher compared in the section of Chapter Five the previous results and findings with this study's findings and results.

Reasons that International Students Come to the United States

Many international educators and higher educational administrators have researched the perceptions of international students who made a decision to come to the United States. Lee, who is an associate professor of Center for Higher Education at University of Arizona and has studied this kind of area for over 10 years, found that the number of international students who came to the United States has been significantly increasing for several decades (Lee, 2008). Interestingly, Lee (2008) designed her research study to discover “how [international students'] background (i.e., gender, region of origin, and familial education) relates to the information sources and reasons for studying in the United States” (p. 8). To explore her research questions and the purpose

of her study, Lee used both quantitative research and qualitative research. She utilized the online survey for the quantitative research, and interview for the qualitative research to collect the data from a public university located in the Southwest region of the United States (Lee, 2008).

Lee's study explained how international students chose their American colleges and universities. Through analyzing the survey data, Lee (2008) found the following results:

Approximately 36% of the students relied on friends, 14% were informed by school counselors and teachers, and 13% relied on family members who studied abroad. Four percent used recruiters and exchange agreements, which may reflect U.S. universities' limited recruitment efforts, especially compared with the aggressive recruitment efforts among universities outside the United States (such as those in Australia and Britain). (p. 10)

These previous findings and results will be investigated by this study's researcher, and new findings and results will be discussed later in this research study. Moreover, facilitating the previous findings and results helps a reader to understand how South Korean students receive the proper information about American colleges and universities. In other words, the new results and findings of this research study will explain how and why South Korean students make the decision to come to UNK.

Furthermore, Lee (2008) interviewed 24 international students for the qualitative research study, and she discovered that the majority of the interviewees pointed out the importance of the institution's reputation to make the decision to choose an American college or university. School's reputations influence the students' study abroad destination, especially students who are from East Asian countries (i.e., South Korea, Japan, and China). The previous research results and findings which

were analyzed through the qualitative research processes will help the researcher to develop the interview protocol and to answer the research questions of this study. At the end of Lee's research study, she mentioned that "future research should explore [multiple reasons] related to international student college access" (Lee, 2008, p. 16). Therefore, this research study will consider the other reasons that South Korean students choose to come to UNK.

Perspectives and Experiences of Studying English at American Colleges and Universities

Yin, Huang, and Hare (2010) studied the points of view of South Korean undergraduate exchange students at one higher educational institution located in the southern United States. Their research study focused on the perspectives and the experiences of short-term and non-degree seeking South Korean students who lived and came to the particular institution for a year. Therefore, the findings and the results of their study will help the researcher of this study discover relevant information regarding the perspectives and experiences of studying English at American colleges and universities.

Yin et al. (2010) used mixed methods and utilized both surveys and interviews to collect the data. The study researchers sent the invitations to 21 participants for their study, and 17 participants responded to the researchers. Hence, the total participants of the survey tests were 17 out of 21. In addition, there were only four participants involved in the interviews. Comparing Yin et al.'s study to the researcher of this study, there are a few differences between the two studies (i.e., the different methodology methods, the

different number of participants, the different location of the research study, and so forth). However, the researcher of this study is able to utilize Yin et al.'s results and findings to establish the in-depth interview protocol and to discover the answers for the research questions. Furthermore, the future findings and results of this study will be compared with the previous findings and results of Yin et al.'s study.

Analyzing the survey data of Yin et al.'s study, the following results were discovered. First, Yin et al. (2010) found that 12 out of 17 Korean undergraduate exchange students never experienced living in a school dormitory; instead, they lived in their parents' or relatives' houses while they attended their home universities in South Korea.

Second, the researchers mentioned that 9 out of 17 Korean students made their own decisions to come to the American colleges to improve their English proficiency, and 5 students wanted to have a study abroad experience in a foreign country (Yin et al., 2010). Third, Yin et al. (2010) stated, "Their English proficiency was directly related to the number of courses they could manage each semester in America" (p. 103). In other words, most of the survey participants were not able to take more than 5 courses because of their English barriers (Yin et al., 2010).

Fourth, the researchers discovered that more American professors encouraged all of their students to actively participate in the classes by using discussion sessions than Korean professors. This kind of class structure made the Korean students happy while they stayed at the American colleges. However, not all of the Korean students enjoyed taking this kind of class because of their English barriers (Yin et al., 2010). According to

Yin et al. (2010), “I want to participate in class discussion, but it’s a problem, its’ a little bit difficult for me to participate in the discussion” (p. 104). Furthermore, the researchers noticed that the American courses were much more practical than the Korean courses. In other words, one of the interviewees stated, “It was easy to gain knowledge in a South Korean classroom, but it was hard to learn to use the knowledge; whereas, in an American classroom, the professors made the knowledge practical” (p. 104).

Fifth, Yin et al. (2010) found that many Korean students struggled with building a strong relationship with American students while they attended the American colleges. Through the survey data, only 3 out of 17 students had a great time with their American friends, but 14 students did not feel comfortable talking to the American students. The researchers stated, “How they felt about making friends with Americans depended on the individual student’s personality, gender, and personal background” (p. 104). Because of this difficulty of making American friends through the American colleges, many Korean students interacted mostly with the other Korean students.

Sixth, the researchers discovered that many Korean students had difficulties when they just arrived in the United States. The Korean students stated that the American colleges were supposed to organize all of the orientation plans and to announce necessary information regarding the dormitory information, opening the bank account, issuing the identification card, and so forth (Yin et al., 2010). However, the persons who worked for the International Student Office managed their jobs poorly so that many Korean students were not happy with their services. In addition, most Korean students came from the metropolitan areas in South Korea, so they stated that it was very difficult for them to go

to a grocery store or a shopping mall without the public transportation. One of the interviewees stated, “If public transportation [was] available, it would provide more opportunities for the students to make American friends and to know American culture” (p. 106).

Seventh, Yin et al. (2010) found that nine Korean students felt they spent more money for their educational expenses in the American colleges compared to their educational expenses in the Korean colleges. However, six Korean students stated that they did not feel that their educational expenses in the American colleges were different from their educational expenses in the Korean colleges. Moreover, one of the interviewees mentioned, “The exchange program actually helped [us] save money because [we] could take college English composition directly. [We] did not have to spend money taking ESL classes” (Yin et al., 2010).

As previously stated, Yin et al. (2010) noticed that Korean students had cultural difficulties, English language barriers, difficulties adjusting to a new environment and system, and so forth. Even though they struggled with these kinds of frustrations and difficulties, half of the surveyed Korean students wanted to come back to American colleges and universities for their higher degrees, such as a master or doctoral level (Yin et al., 2010). Especially, Yin et al. (2010) found that the reason Korean students make a decision to study English and come to the United States is “to gain a better command of English and [American culture and] to have experiences that will allow them to obtain desirable employment later” (p. 107).

As a result, the researcher of this study will utilize the previous results and findings of Yin et al.'s (2010) study to establish the interview protocol and discover the future findings and results by doing in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the research place of Yin et al.'s study was specifically at the area of the southern United States, and the research place for this research study is located in the midwestern United States. Hence, some of the findings and results from both studies could have some similarities. Yin et al. enclosed the actual South Korean students' interview transcripts regarding their study abroad experiences in the southern United States; these transcripts will definitely help the researcher of this study to establish their own interview transcripts into this research study.

Push and Pull Factors

Altbach (2004), Chow (2011), and Lee (2008) briefly studied how the “push” and “pull” factors influenced a decision making process for international students, and they mentioned that these factors significantly impacted their decisions to study abroad out of their home countries. Generally, “push” factors make international students leave their home countries to explore finding better opportunities in another country. The following factors have been founded by three researchers. According to the three researchers (Altbach, 2004; Chow, 2011; Lee, 2008), first of all, some international students are not able to find college level specialized and training programs in their home countries. Second, some international students cannot be admitted to prestigious colleges and universities in their home countries because of the competitive entry requirements. Third, some international students want to leave their home countries because of unstable

political circumstances and the overwhelming burden of their academic demands. Fourth, some international students wish to gain international experiences and have opportunities to improve their career. Fifth, many international investors have invested a large amount of money into many international markets around the world, so an international businessman must have English competency. Because of these factors, many international students come to American colleges and universities instead of staying in their home countries.

In contrast, “pull” factors make international students choose their preferred countries to study abroad based upon their interests. The three researchers mentioned that the following factors greatly impacted international students’ study abroad destinations (Altbach, 2004; Chow, 2011; Lee, 2008). First, many international students always look for the best academic programs in the world; as previously stated, many American colleges and universities are reputable and renowned around the world. Second, many international students wish to work in the developed or advanced countries because they are able to receive more benefits and competitive compensations and to have better quality of life than they would have in their home countries. Third, the international relations between the host countries and the home countries affect international students’ study abroad destinations. Fourth, the strong economy and military power cause international students to choose study abroad destinations. Fifth, the successful marketing campaigns promoted by the study abroad destination countries, the complicated school application processes and visa procedures, and the safety issues influence international students to choose the study abroad destinations.

These results and findings are very useful for the researcher of this study to establish the interview protocol and to find the research questions' answers. Especially, the researcher of this study is able to analyze the "push" and "pull" factors that influence Korean students, specifically in their study abroad destinations, such as a country and a city. As previously stated, the three researchers only included a small part of this study. Moreover, Lee (2008) stated that more empirical research needed to be studied regarding the "push" and "pull" factors. Therefore, the researcher of this study will explore this area of study more deeply by interviewing Korean students, and the section of the analysis and the implication of the collected data will be explained in this study.

Ineffectiveness of English-Medium Courses in Korean Colleges

Byun et al. (2011) described that Korean higher educational institutions have increased the English-medium courses taught by many Korean professors because South Korean students need to have English competency before they graduate from their colleges and universities. The researchers also mentioned that the government policy has been required to increase more English-medium courses at Korean colleges and universities and has forced them to have English proficiency for college and university students' graduate requirements. This kind of policy has negatively influenced many Korean college students and Korean faculty members because of their lack of English proficiency and English-medium pedagogy experiences (Byun et al., 2011).

Interestingly, Byun et al. (2011) discovered that the Korean government and the members of the English-medium courses development committee assumed that the majority of Korean students would be qualified to take English-medium courses because

they have learn and studied English for over 10 years through the primary and the secondary educational system in Korea. Furthermore, the Korean government and many Korean higher educational administrators thought that many Korean faculty members earned their doctoral degrees from the United States, so they would not have a problem to teach English-medium courses. However, in the conclusion of Byun et al.'s (2011) research study, they stated that many Korean students needed to improve their English competency, have special supports to fully understand English-medium courses, and actively participate in a discussion group. Furthermore, the researchers recommended that Korean faculty members were required to continuously train their teaching styles and skills, especially for English-medium courses (Byun et al., 2011).

In Byun et al.'s (2011) research study, they utilized the in-depth case study and the semi-structured interview method to collect relevant data. The researchers selected one of the prestigious universities in South Korea, Korea University (KU), and the reason for choosing this university was that the school has significantly developed a variety of English-medium courses and has required KU students to register for a certain number of English-medium courses for their graduation requirement. Moreover, the researchers wanted to collect KU student opinion surveys on English-medium instruction's effectiveness through this research study (Byun et al., 2011). Moreover, Byun et al. (2011) used two focus group discussions, which were participated in by KU students and professors, to analyze the effectiveness of English-medium instruction and to further improvements for English-medium courses at KU. The researchers chose 20 KU undergraduate students who took KU English-medium courses, 5 KU professors who

taught KU English-medium courses, and 2 KU foreign professors who assisted to develop and teach KU English-medium courses (Byun et al., 2011).

Through analyzing the collected data by conducting the online surveys and interviews, Byun et al. (2011) found that some KU students needed to improve their English proficiency to fully understand and comprehend their English-medium courses. The researchers stated that some of the KU students felt that they really struggled to take English-medium courses because of an excess amount of reading in English textbooks, their lack of English skills, their lack of knowledge of the subjects, the special jargon and terms, and so forth (Byun et al., 2011). Furthermore, some KU students expressed that they did not like to take English-medium courses because of unqualified KU Korean faculty members.

Interestingly, many KU English-medium courses were designed to accommodate more than 200 KU students at once, and KU faculty members who taught these kinds of courses took care of this size of class entirely by themselves. In other words, the quality and the satisfaction of KU English-medium courses would not be effective and efficient because of the high student to faculty ratio. Moreover, the researchers found that KU students who registered for English-medium courses needed to have writing center services or tutoring services for revising their assignments, but KU only provided these kinds of services for a short period of time; due to financial problems, these kinds of services were not able to be offered to the KU students anymore (Byun et al., 2011).

Regarding these kinds of problems and complaints, Byun et al. (2011) mentioned that some KU Korean faculty members were not able to teach English-medium courses

entirely in English. Moreover, the KU student interview transcripts described that some of the KU students had difficulties in English-medium courses as follows:

It's impossible to hold a discussion in English. There are some students who can speak English fluently, but most are not fluent, so only the fluent students speak or no one tries to take part in the discussion.

Non-native professors explained things briefly and simply. It's hard to understand them when there aren't enough explanations. When asked to clarify, they merely repeated themselves.

The class does not move smoothly, and things stall from time to time. And it gets boring when there's a break in the flow. (Byun et al., 2011, pp. 440-441)

As described above, Byun et al. (2011) pointed out that KU English-medium courses were not effective and efficient for some of the KU students and KU professors because of their lack of English proficiency. Particularly, the researchers found that KU Korean professors' lacked English teaching and conversational skills, some KU students' lacked English proficiency, and KU students had difficulty understanding certain jargon and terms related to their majors. In other words, when KU Korean faculty members teach their courses in English, it could be really difficult for KU students to understand the context of the courses due to their lack of English abilities and the professors' poor English skills. It would be better for them to take and teach KU courses by using their first language, Korean, but more college courses in Korea will be taught in English because of the importance of English education. In the beginning of Byun et al.'s (2011) research study, many Korean higher institutions have established English-medium courses, so many other Korean higher institutions will have similar problems like KU.

Byun et al.'s (2011) research study proves that many Korean colleges and universities have significantly established English-medium courses for their students, and Korean higher educational administrators have looked for qualified Korean faculty

members who are capable of teaching courses entirely in English. In spite of this kind of effort mandated by the Korean government and Korean higher educational administrators, there still have been many problems in the Korean higher educational system regarding English-medium courses. Because of these kinds of reasons, many Korean students could make a decision to come to American colleges and universities, and they would like to take college courses taught by native-English speakers. Therefore, the researcher of this study will focus on finding Korean students' perspectives and challenges of English-medium courses in Korea by utilizing in-depth interviews with UNK Korean students. Furthermore, the researcher of this study will ask UNK Korean students about how satisfied they are with native-English speakers' courses compared to Korean faculty members' courses. The results and findings of this study will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three

Measurement

Subjects

The subjects for this study are Korean students who have studied at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). There are many Korean students who come to UNK to study and learn English, so the subjects for this study were drawn for the student population. The South Korean students at UNK exhibited the following four characteristics: first, they previously attended one of the Korean high schools or the Korean universities; second, they came to UNK to learn and study English for a short period of time or for a long period of time until finishing their program at UNK; third, they wanted to experience the American culture and to have an opportunity to meet with American friends; and fourth, they took either UNK undergraduate courses or English Language Institute courses, depending on their English proficiency.

Recruitment Process

The following information describes how 30 interviewees were recruited. According to the list of UNK international students reported by the Office of International Education, there were approximately 150 Korean students attending UNK in Fall 2013. The researcher contacted all South Korean students about whether or not they would be willing to participate in this study. The researcher sent three emails to UNK Korean students, and the format of the three emails is shown in Appendix A. After the researcher received the first responses from the UNK Korean students who agreed with participating in the interview process, the researcher chose 30 samples out of all of

the first responses depending on the following two conditions: gender and the duration of the study abroad program. In other words, out of the 30 samples, the researcher recruited 14 female samples and 16 male samples. Out of these candidates, the researcher ensured that 13 are new Korean students who just arrived at UNK and 17 Korean students who have been at UNK for over one semester. Therefore, the total number of the sample for this study was 30 respondents who agreed to become interviewees for the subject.

Interview Procedure

This research study preferred to use the interview procedure instead of the survey procedure because it was very important for the researcher to collect accurate and meaningful data for the interview protocol answered by the subjects. It would be difficult for the researcher to collect the accurate answers by using the survey, and the researcher understood that it would be much more helpful to collect more quality data by using the interview process for this study. That was why this research study used the interview procedure.

The researcher sent an email to the 30 selected subjects with the informed consent form which included the following information: the purpose of this study, the benefits of the research, the methods, the researcher's contact information, and the use of pseudonyms for confidentiality. The informed consent form was collected when the researcher first met each participant. Each participant was asked about the interview dates (Summer 2013 or Fall 2013) and the interview places (Welch Hall and Calvin T. Ryan Library) via the initial emails. After receiving all of the emails from each participant for the interview dates and the interview places, the semi-structured

interviews were started on an individual basis. The average interview lasted between one and two hours, and all of the interview questions and answers used the Korean language because of the lack of the interviewees' English proficiency. Every interview was recorded on an iPad and was noted on the field notes. These were transcribed in the documents placed in the secure and confidential location. The iPad was password protected by the researcher for the purpose of confidentiality. The audio records are kept for one year, and the researcher will permanently delete all of the audio records in January, 2015. Only the researcher has access to these audio resources and transcribed all of these audio resources. Hence, there was no transcriptionist for this study. Moreover, the field notes, transcribed documents, and the informed consent forms were securely retained and locked in the file cabinet located in the researcher's office for one year. Eighth, the researcher encouraged all of the interviewees to honestly answer the study's inquiries by reemphasizing the confidentiality of the process.

Method Procedure

This study used the stratified sampling technique in gathering data from the subjects. Mertens (2010) described this technique the following way: "This type of sampling is used when there are subgroups (or *strata*) of different sizes that you wish to investigate" (p. 319). As previously stated, the researcher recruited 30 participants based upon two different genders and two different durations of study abroad programs for this study because the researcher are able to access all of the Korean students' information through the Office of International Education. Therefore, the different subgroups made it suitable for the researcher to use the stratified sampling technique for this study.

The researcher developed the interview protocol based on the research questions and the initial literature review. Furthermore, the interview protocol asked the interview participants about their Korean academic backgrounds, their Korean academic experiences, their perspectives of studying and learning English at American colleges, and the challenges of attending American colleges and South Korean colleges. The interview protocol is located in Appendix B.

The research data was collected through the semi-structured interviews with 30 Korean students who enrolled at UNK and who stayed in Kearney, Nebraska, during Spring 2013, Summer 2013, and Fall 2013. After receiving the approvals from the members of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln IRB committee and the research study adviser, Dr. Miles Bryant, the interviews were conducted in Summer 2013 and Fall 2013. The institutional review board approval letter is located in Appendix C.

These semi-structured interviews helped the researcher find the reasons why South Korean students study English extensively in South Korea. The interviews also provided insight for the researcher to discover the motivations for studying English in the United States. Interestingly, after collecting the interview data, the researcher understood what factors made Korean students come to UNK specifically.

Data Analysis

Through the interview process, the researcher found 30 Korean students' answers for 16 interview questions. The 16 interview questions were individually answered by 30 Korean students. After examining the Korean students' answers for the interview questions, the researcher found a particular commonality for each question and

summarized the Korean students' answers of the interview questions in the section of Chapter Four. Reviewing the answers of the interview questions, the researcher discovered the answers of the six research questions.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Results

Introduction

In the interview process with 30 Korean students, the researcher interviewed 16 male Korean students and 14 female Korean students. Particularly, there were 9 male Korean students and 8 female Korean students who were in Kearney over six months, and 7 male Korean students and 6 female Korean students arrived in Kearney in Fall 2013. Moreover, there were 8 Korean students who want to graduate from UNK, and 22 Korean students were attending UNK for a short period of time as exchange students or visiting students. Table 2 shows the students' majors and year of schools.

Table 2

Thirty Korean Students' General Information

Interviewee's Name	Gender	Year of School	Major
* Mary	Female	Freshman	English Education
** James	Male	Freshman	Business Administration
* Patricia	Female	Junior	English Literature
* Linda	Female	Junior	English Literature
** John	Male	Freshman	Aviation
** Barbara	Female	Freshman	Biology
* Robert	Male	Senior	English Literature
* Michael	Male	Senior	Information & Communication Tech
* Elizabeth	Female	Junior	Information Society

Table 2 continues

Interviewee's Name	Gender	Year of School	Major
* William	Male	Senior	Electronic Engineering
* Jennifer	Female	Senior	Advanced Material Engineering
* David	Male	Junior	Business Administration
** Richard	Male	Sophomore	Psychology
* Charles	Male	Junior	Sport Administration
* Maria	Female	Junior	International Economics & Law
* Joseph	Male	Senior	Economics
* Thomas	Male	Senior	Economics
* Christopher	Male	Senior	Information & Communication Tech
* Daniel	Male	Senior	Food Industrial Management
** Susan	Female	Sophomore	Business Administration
* Margaret	Female	Junior	Industrial Management Engineering
* Paul	Male	Junior	Electronic Engineering
* Dorothy	Female	Senior	English Education
** Lisa	Female	Freshman	Music Performance
* Nancy	Female	Senior	Korean Literature
* Karen	Female	Senior	English Literature
* Betty	Female	Junior	English Literature
* Mark	Male	Senior	Business Administration
** Donald	Male	Sophomore	Mechanical Engineering
** George	Male	Senior	Business Administration

Note: All names are pseudonyms.

*Designates students matriculating in a South Korean university

**Designates students matriculating at UNK

Summary of Findings

The purposes for studying abroad in the United States. Significantly, 20 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they came to the United States to focus on

improving their English proficiency. For example, Karen stated, “I really want to study English while I live in English speaking countries, such as America.” Moreover, the other students said that they would like to be exposed daily to the environment of English education in the United States.

As described in Table 2, seven Korean students have studied in the realm of English, and seven more Korean students would like to have the following occupations: leadership coach, air controller, pharmacist, English teacher, psychologist, musical performer, and business analyst. One of the seven students, Charles, stated:

People always think of Europe as the first destination for backpackers. On the other hand, people generally choose America as the first destination for studying in sports management. That is why I wanted to come to the United States, and while I stay in the United States, I want to overview the variety of American sport markets, such as football, baseball, basketball, and so forth and plan a future opportunity to find my job in Korea or around the world.

In addition, through the interview process, the latter group of seven students said that these areas of studies have originated from the western cultures, so it is really beneficial for them to study in these areas and to have opportunities to take relevant courses through colleges and universities in the United States. In other words, these areas of studies have been specialized in the United States, and Korean students think that they are able to learn specific knowledge related to their studies in the United States more than in Korea.

Eight out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they want to have diverse experiences when they come to the United States. For example, they want to make friends from another country, to broaden their scope, and to live with Americans or foreign friends in colleges’ or universities’ dormitories. Specifically, 6 out of the 8 Korean students who want to have diverse experiences said that they want to understand

the cultural differences between Korea and America. In addition, 4 out of these 8 Korean students commented that they would like to experience how American college students study at colleges and universities in the United States. One of those students, Paul, stated:

I heard from someone that the teaching style of Korean colleges and universities could be different from the teaching style of American colleges and universities. Moreover, the relationship between students and professors in America is different from the relationship between students and professors in Korea. To find out the answers, I decided to come to the United States.

Therefore, 8 out of 30 Korean students really look for these kinds of experiences while they stay in the United States, and this reason made them come to America.

After reviewing the transcriptions of the 30 Korean students' interviews, it seems that the majority of the Korean students individually decided to come to the United States. However, 7 out of 30 Korean students did not intend to come to the United States; their parents asked them to study abroad in the United States. For instance, one of the 7 students, Donald, mentioned:

I really wanted to go to a college or university located on the Eastern Coast, so I applied for the University of Delaware through my Korean college. However, I failed to get this chance because of numerous applicants and high competition. So, I thought that I would not go to the United States, but my parents kept asking me to apply for UNK. Even though UNK was not my preferred school, I have been in Kearney since Spring 2013 because of my parents' passion for English education.

Furthermore, 2 out of the 7 students, Betty and Mark, were mainly influenced by their parents and relatives regarding studying abroad in the United States. Particularly, in Betty's interview, she stated,

My uncle has lived in Australia over 20 years, and he always emphasizes the importance of English proficiency when we have a chance to meet in Korea. Therefore, I decided to come to the United States and to improve my English skills.

The above statements show that some Korean parents are concerned about their children's English proficiency.

The obstacles of learning English in South Korea and the United States.

Difficulties of studying English in South Korea. Twenty-six out of 30 Korean students mentioned that English education in South Korea has been excessively focused on a great amount of reading, grammar, listening, and vocabulary. Moreover, they concurrently stated that English teachers of public schools and private institutes in South Korea forced them to use numerous English materials and workbooks continuously because they want students to achieve the highest score in the English section of the annual university entrance test. One of the 26 Korean students, Karen, said:

In Korea, people always judge you on how good you are at English depending on the score in any type of English test. It does not matter how well you speak English. However, it does matter what English score you have. That is why I tried to receive the highest score in the English tests. Because of this competitive environment, I studied more than 20 English workbooks when I was a high school student.

In addition, two other students, Joseph and Thomas, strongly believed that gaining a high grade in any type of English test is only the reason for Korean students to study English extensively in Korea; that is why they are still preparing for TOEIC or TOEFL which will help them to find a good job in South Korea.

As previously stated, English education in Korea has been intensively focused on reading, grammar, listening, and vocabulary. In other words, public schools and private institutes in Korea have not been concentrated on English speaking skills. Through the interview process, 15 out of 30 Korean interviewees stated that they always feel

uncomfortable when they speak English with native English speakers and foreigners in public areas in Korea. One of the 15 Korean students, Thomas, stated:

Honestly, I have learned English for 10 years through the public schools and the private institutes. However, I was surprised that I could not say 'Hi' to Australians when I visited Australia because I did not feel confident to communicate with them. When I had a chance to see foreigners, I was always afraid of speaking English with them.

In addition, another student of the 15 Korean students, James, felt that English education in Korea has never helped him to improve English speaking skills. He said:

Korean students know English grammar really well; I am sure that some Korean students could know English grammar more than American students. However, the majority of Korean students do not feel comfortable to speak English with foreigners. When I watched the educational TV show which showed the difference in the English educational systems of Europe and Korea, I recognized that more Europeans could speak English better than Koreans. Interestingly, the TV show indicated that Europeans were not focused on learning English grammar, reading, listening, and vocabulary, but they started learning English speaking skills when they were very young. After watching this TV show, I clearly understood that English education in Korea would not be much more effective than English education in Europe. Furthermore, knowing English grammar could not help me confidently speak English to foreigners.

Because of the lack of English speaking skills, a great number of Korean students consistently look for English institutes which specialize in English conversation and speaking. Through the interview process, all 30 Korean students mentioned that they had experiences attending this type of English institute at least once. Interestingly, 10 out of 30 Korean students stated that learning English speaking skills through these English institutes was not effective or efficient because the number of native English speakers was limited. In other words, the ratio of Korean students to native English teachers was very high. Furthermore, two out of the 10 Korean students, Maria and Nancy, said that the majority of Korean attendees in the English institutes did not fluently speak English,

so it was very difficult for them to learn appropriate English speaking skills by alternatively speaking with each other through English lessons in the English institutes.

Another reason it has been difficult for Korean students to learn English in Korea is that the environment of English education has not been pleasant for Korean students to focus on studying English. As described above, 26 Korean students mentioned that they always used numerous English workbooks and materials, and their English teachers intensively pushed Korean students to memorize English grammar, reading skills, and listening skills; the only reason for them to study English extensively was to enter a prestigious college or university and find a nice job in Korea. That is why 6 out of 30 Korean students indicated that their experiences of English education in Korea were unpleasant. One of the 6 students, Jennifer, stated:

When I was a high school student, I did not know the reasons why I should study English. I remembered that my Korean English teachers always forced me to study English because I needed to enter a good university or college. Even though I did not have any interest in studying English, I kept studying English.

Moreover, the 6 Korean students felt that they did not know the specific purpose for learning English in spite of numerous hours they spent studying English in middle school and high school in Korea. Due to this reason, these students mentioned that it was very difficult for them to study English in Korea.

Difficulties of studying English in the United States. The majority of 30 Korean students felt that it has been difficult for them to learn English in the United States because of the lack of communication skills, listening skills, vocabulary, writing skills and understanding of American cultures. First of all, 15 out of 30 Korean students mentioned they could not communicate with Americans and foreigners confidently

because of the lack of English speaking skills. For instance, one of the 15 Korean students, Christopher, stated:

When I greeted American friends, I typically said to them, ‘How are you?’ I thought that I should always use the same phrase when I started conversations with them. The reason I used that phrase was because it was the only one I learned from the elementary school to the high school through the English materials and workbooks. However, when I arrived in Kearney, I was surprised that Americans rarely used that kind of phrase. For example, when I met a new American friend in the street or at the school, he said to me, ‘What’s up, Man?’ After I heard from him, I would not be able to answer this question because I had never heard this kind of phrase before. I was very frustrated because I could not say anything to him. He knew that I was not sure how to answer, and he started explaining about the meaning of ‘What’s up?’ and teaching me how to answer that question. Because of this kind of experience, I felt that it was difficult for me to start conversations with Americans and foreigners.

Furthermore, another student of the 15 Korean students, Joseph, mentioned that he believed that the English expressions he learned in Korea were not similar to the English expressions which Americans commonly used. The reason he felt this way was that his American friends could not understand what he said; the phrases or sentences he used during the conversations with his American friends were written in Korean English materials and workbooks.

Second, 14 out of 30 Korean students indicated that it has been difficult for them to learn English in the United States because they only had limited English vocabularies. One of the 14 Korean students, Margaret, mentioned that she did not know American slang, so it was difficult for her to infer what was said when she communicated with her friends. In addition, three out of the 14 Korean students said that they could not understand certain jargon or terminology when they took their major courses, such as Aviation, Electronic Engineering, and Information & Communication Technology.

Furthermore, two out of the 14 Korean students mentioned that they had no idea when American students talked about the American jokes to their friends. For example, one of the two students, Patricia, stated, “I was the only one who was not laughing when the UNK professor said something to us in the class.” In other words, she was not able to fully understand the American humor and culture, so this kind of experience made her feel uncomfortable and unprepared to learn English in the United States.

Third, 10 out of 30 Korean students stated that they could not understand completely when they talked to Americans and foreigners. In other words, the 10 Korean students felt that it was very difficult for them to clearly hear Americans and foreigners when they communicate with each other. Three out of the 10 Korean students were not able to understand at all when Americans speak English quickly. Moreover, four out of the 10 Korean students said that various English pronunciations were spoken by Americans, so they recognized that each American could have a different accent and pronunciation. Especially, the majority of the 10 Korean students have consistently felt uncomfortable and unhappy when they took the UNK classes taught by American professors because of the lack of their English listening skills; specifically, Korean students had a hard time understanding when American students directly talked to American professors or the other American students in the classes.

Fourth, 4 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they did not feel confident when they wrote English papers. For instance, Mary, said, “It was difficult for me when I wrote the English essay after I read and understood the class materials.” In addition, another student, Paul, stated:

I think that writing an English essay is the most difficult for me while I attend UNK. I felt that it is not easy for me to write what I want to say in an essay. I am currently taking the science class, and I have to write the laboratory journal after I finish every laboratory experiment. I think it is not difficult for me to read and understand science materials. However, it has always been difficult for me to write the laboratory journal. Especially, I typically take the laboratory journal to the UNK writing center, and I have always been surprised with a great number of English errors. That is why I felt that it is always difficult for me to write an English essay.

Through the above stories, it assumes that the 4 Korean students have struggled to write their English essays while they attend UNK because of their lack of English writing skills.

Ranking the difficulty of English speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Fifteen out of 30 Korean students strongly agreed that English speaking is the most difficult part of English education. One of the 15 students, Donald, mentioned:

If someone wants to speak English well, she/he needs to understand American cultures, customs, and thoughts. Moreover, to improve English speaking skills, she/he needs to have numerous opportunities to practice her/his English by using various English expressions. However, Koreans did not have enough chances to properly learn American cultures and customs and understand American thoughts in Korea. Therefore, it could be very difficult for Korean students to understand American cultures, customs, and thoughts and to find a topic to talk about when Americans and Koreans start communicating with each other. Because of these reasons, I cannot speak English well in front of Americans.

Another student, Patricia, said:

I read some research articles regarding the Korean student's characteristics. The research said that if Korean students had any question, they would not ask anyone to solve that because they did not want to be frustrated by the wrong answer for that question. However, in the research, American and foreign students typically asked any question to their teachers and professors if they were not able to answer that question. Through this research, I realized that it could be difficult for Korean students to learn English speaking skills because they are typically afraid of collaborating their curiosities with their peers or teachers and are easily shy if they do not know the exact answer for any question. As a result, Korean students always worry about speaking English in front of foreigners and even other Korean students.

In addition, the majority of the 15 Korean students mentioned that English education in Korea has not been focused on English speaking skills. In other words, the public schools and the private institutes have not invested a great amount of funds in English speaking skills; they would rather create English reading and grammar courses. That is why half of the 30 Korean students felt that it has been very difficult for them to improve their English speaking skills in Korea.

Ten out of 30 Korean students stated that the next most difficult part for them to improve is English writing skills. One of the 10 Korean students, Linda, said, “Accidentally, the native English speaker looked over my English essay, and she said to me that my essay had many grammatical errors. Moreover, some of the sentences did not make sense at all. After I heard these comments, I realized that English writing is not easy.” Another student, Daniel, discovered that it was very difficult for him to precisely choose a word, idiom, and phrase depending on each situation while he wrote an essay. Because of the lack of English vocabulary, he felt that he could not write a good essay. Furthermore, Betty mentioned that she generally started writing the essay in Korean first before she wrote the essay in English, so sometimes it was very difficult for her to write the English essay because of translating the words from Korean to English.

Eleven out of 30 Korean students said that it was the third most difficult for them to learn English listening skills. One of the 11 Korean students, Charles, mentioned:

I did not feel that my English listening skills were not so bad when I was in Korea. However, when I came to UNK, I was not able to clearly listen to UNK professors and Americans. Especially, when UNK professors and Americans spoke English so fast and used humor and jargon in the classes, I could not understand what they talked about.

Through Elizabeth's and John's interviews, they felt embarrassed like Charles did above when they could not fully understand while they communicated with Americans who spoke English rapidly. In addition, two Korean students, Karen and Jennifer, found that people who come from different countries, such as Australia, England, New Zealand, and Canada, and different states, such as the Western and Eastern states, have different English accents, so this reason makes English listening skills difficult for Korean students to understand when they communicate with people from the above places.

Twenty-one out of 30 Korean stated that it was the least difficult for them to learn English reading skills. The majority of these students discovered that they have studied English reading skills for a long time compared to English speaking skills, English writing skills and English listening skills. One of the 21 Korean students, Richard, mentioned that his English middle school and high school teachers intensively focused on English reading skills, so he felt that English reading is the easiest of the four parts of English. Four students of the 21 Korean students, Christopher, Nancy, Mark, and Donald, stated that they extensively studied English reading in their schools and private institutes, so it was not difficult for them to read English workbooks and materials.

Discovery of UNK. Twenty-one out of 30 Korean students said that they came to UNK from their home university located in Korea; particularly, they applied for the UNK program through their Office of International Education. Through their interviews, most of them chose UNK because their home university has had a partnership with UNK. In addition, 2 out of the 21 Korean students, Patricia and Linda, mentioned that the chair of

their school's department continuously promoted the UNK program and because of these reasons, they applied for the UNK program.

Ten out of 30 Korean students stated that they decided to come to UNK because of their family, relatives, and friends. One of the 10 students, John, mentioned that his uncle and uncle-in-law who currently live in Texas helped him to find the information about UNK. Moreover, his uncle called several times to the Office of International Education at UNK and asked about the school and the town of Kearney. Another student, Nancy, said, "I knew one of my friends who had come to UNK as an exchange student. She gave me the UNK information. Because of my friend, I found UNK and finally decided to come to UNK." In addition, two other students, Robert and Jennifer, directly heard from their friend who visited UNK and attended the same school as them before applying for UNK.

Through the interview process, the minority of Korean students worked with the agency companies; four out of 30 Korean students used their services. Moreover, 5 out of 30 Korean students found the UNK information using the media, such as internet and newspapers.

The important factors of choosing UNK. Eighteen out of 30 Korean students decided to come to UNK because of the affordable tuition. One of the 18 Korean students mentioned:

I could go to Hawaiian Pacific University, but I did not want to go there because of the expensive tuition and living expenses. However, the tuition and living expenses of UNK were much more affordable than Hawaiian Pacific University, and my parents and I decided that I should apply for the UNK program.

Another student, Susan, said that she could apply for California State University – Sacramento (CSUS), but she did not go to CSUS because CSUS’s tuition and living expenses were higher than UNK’s tuition and living expenses. Finally, she chose UNK because of UNK’s reasonable tuition and living expenses.

Nine out of 30 Korean students decided to come to UNK because UNK is located in a rural area instead of an urban area. One of the nine Korean students, Barbara, mentioned:

I have several friends who went to the United States, and they decided to go to the colleges and universities located in urban areas, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Texas. Some other friends came to America when they were very young. However, these friends always hung out with Korean people, and they normally lived in the Korean areas of urban cities in the United States. Because of this kind of environment, their English proficiency did not improve much, so I felt that I could choose an American college and university not located in urban areas or Korean towns. That is why I decided to choose UNK.

Furthermore, another student, Robert, stated that it could be effective and efficient for him to attend a school located in a small city because he felt that he could have more opportunities to communicate with the local community members and the school’s students to improve English speaking skills.

Two different factors were chosen by another 16 Korean students. The first group of 8 Korean students said that they came to UNK because of the relatively easy admission process; particularly low TOEFL score. For example, Nancy, indicated that the English requirement of UNK is much lower than the other American colleges and universities. The second group of 8 Korean students found that a small number of Korean students at UNK influenced them to apply for the UNK program. Charles, mentioned, “Through the internet searching, there are a few Korean residents living in

Nebraska. After I read this information, I was really happy to apply for UNK because I found the school in which there were not many Korean students.” Furthermore, another student, Christopher, stated that many popular American universities could have a great number of Korean students, so he would rather go to an unpopular university for Korean students like UNK instead of popular American universities or colleges because he thought that UNK could have a small number of Korean students.

Six out of 30 Korean students indicated that they chose UNK because the majority of the local community of Kearney uses standard American English. One of the 6 students, Robert, stated:

Before I came to UNK, I researched the general information of UNK and the town of Kearney on the Internet, and I found that people from the Midwest, such as Nebraska, Kansas, and so forth, typically used standard American English. Furthermore, my home university’s professors mentioned the same information that I found on the Internet. Because of this reason, I finally chose UNK.

Another student, Elizabeth, stated that she thought that it could be very difficult for her to listen to someone who speaks with a very strong accent and uses numerous dialects, and to understand the meaning of his/her English. In addition, in her interview, she stated, “Due to this reason, I weighted much more value on standard American English than on the tuition cost of UNK.”

Five out of 30 Korean students said that they would like to stay in a safe area like Kearney while they study in the United States. One of the 5 students, Maria, stated:

I could go to Troy University located in Alabama. One of my friends told me that it could be really dangerous for international students to go to a school located in the Southern areas because of the high rate of crime and the lack of the public security. Moreover, my school’s representative recommended that UNK could be much safer than Troy University. Because of these reasons, I wanted to come to UNK.

Another student, Margaret, also said that her parents seriously recognized that a big city could be much more dangerous than a small city, so her parents preferentially thought that she should go to UNK because UNK is located in a small town.

Average hours spent on English in South Korea from elementary to high school. Twenty-four out of 30 Korean students spent less than 10 hours per week studying English when they attended the elementary schools in Korea. However, there were 4 Korean students, Robert, Richard, Margaret, and Donald who spent between 10 hours and 20 hours per week studying English through the public elementary schools and the private institutes.

Nineteen out of 30 Korean students spent between 10 and 20 hours per week studying English when they attended the middle schools in Korea, and there were 3 Korean students spending between 20 and 29 hours per week on the subject of English. Furthermore, 7 out of 30 Korean students spent less than 10 hours per week studying English through the middle schools in Korea.

Twelve out of 30 Korean students spent between 10 and 20 hours per week studying English when they attended the high schools in Korea. There were 9 Korean students spending between 20 and 29 hours per week studying English. In addition, 4 Korean students spent more than 40 hours per week studying English. Through the interviews with 30 Korean students, the main reason why the number of hours studying English significantly increased when Korean students attended the high schools in Korea is that they have to receive the highest score in the university entrance exam, especially on the part of the English test. Furthermore, all of the 30 Korean students mentioned that

they took a great number of English courses through both the public schools and the private institutes.

The level of importance of English in Korea. In the interviews with 30 Korean students, they stated that English proficiency is the most important factor for them to live in Korea. The following reasons were found through the interviews. First, 21 out of 30 Korean students discovered that a high level of English proficiency is the essential key for them to obtain their desires; in other words, they think that good English skills help them to find better jobs and to be admitted to top universities and colleges in Korea. Second, 15 out of 30 Korean students thought that English is a global language. These students found that English skills are really valuable for them to connect with a foreigner. In addition, some of them mentioned that using English helps them to have more diverse experiences when they communicate with a great number of foreigners. Third, 7 out of 30 Korean students said that it is very important for them to learn English because the United States is the most powerful country economically and academically in the world, so they thought that it could be extremely valuable for them to have English proficiency due to that reason. Fourth, 5 out of 30 Korean students indicated that knowing English allows them to be full of confidence when they meet with foreigners. Furthermore, they strongly felt that reaching the level of native English proficiency is really essential for them to compete with the other candidates before or after they work for companies in Korea.

The future occupation preferences of Korean students. Fifteen out of 30 Korean students stated that they want to work for the following organizations: Korean

conglomerate companies, such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG; public enterprises, such as Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPC), Korea Water Resource Corporation (KWRC), Incheon International Airport (IIA), and so forth; foreign companies, such as Google Korea, IBM Korea, 3M Korea, and so forth; and Non Profit International Organizations (NPIO), such as the United Nations (UN), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and so forth.

Seven out of 30 Korean students indicated that they want to pursue specialized jobs, such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA), pharmacist, news reporter, psychologist, fund manager, and musical actress. In addition, 4 out of 30 Korean students look forward to being English teachers at public schools or private institutes.

The rank of English education in Korea and the United States. Figure 1 shows 11 out of the 30 Korean students ranked English education in Korea at 6 out of 10. Seven out of 30 Korean students gave a score of 4 out of 10 and 5 out of 30 Korean students gave a score of 3 out of 10 for English education in Korea. In addition, 4 out of 30 Korean students ranked English education in Korea at 7 out of 10, and 3 out of 30 Korean students gave a score of 5 out of 10 for English education in Korea.

As described above, they strongly believed that English education in Korea has not been effectively and efficiently taught because they did not have enough opportunity

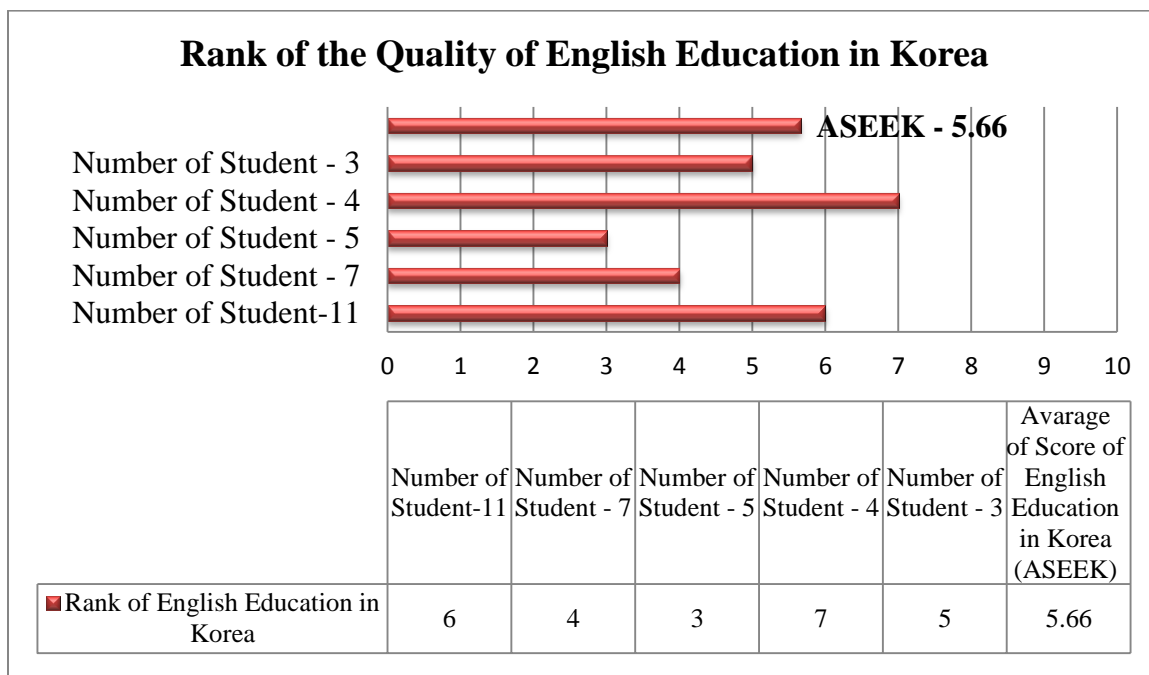


Figure 1. Rank of the Quality of English education in Korea.

to properly learn English speaking and writing skills through the public schools and the private institutes. Instead, the 30 Korean students mentioned that they were forced by their English teachers to intensively study English reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills through English education in Korea. One of 30 Korean students, Dorothy, stated:

Actually, I studied a little bit of English speaking through my high school and college, and I thought that I could speak English with American students. However, at the beginning of semester, it was very difficult for me to communicate with my American friends because of the lack of English speaking skills and the different English word choices than what I used to learn English in Korea. One time my friend said to me, 'I am getting married,' and I replied back to her, 'Are you expecting?' Then, my American friend said to me, 'What did you say to me? Did you say expecting? I am not pregnant.' During this conversation, I was so confused because I did not know the practical meaning of 'expecting.' I only knew about the dictionary meaning of 'expecting.' After my friend explained about the actual meaning of 'expecting,' I fully understood that meaning. Because of this kind of experience, I frequently thought that my

English speaking skills were not great, and I was so sad and disappointed that English education in Korea definitely needs to become more practical.

Furthermore, the majority of the 30 Korean students described that they used numerous English materials and workbooks to intentionally achieve the top score on the English part of the annual university entrance test and TOEIC or TOEFL to get a nice job. Nine out of 30 Korean students said that there are 2 reasons for them to study English continuously: first, they wanted to enter the best Korean universities, such as Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yensei University when they were high school students; second, before they graduate colleges or universities in Korea, they would like to obtain jobs at the best companies, such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai. One of the 9 Korean students, Michael, mentioned:

Many English teachers in Korea specifically teach Korean students how to answer English questions quickly and to achieve a high score on TOEIC and TOEFL in a short period. In other words, these teachers always taught me unique test techniques to find appropriate answers of English questions right away. So, I never had a chance to learn genuine and practical English when I attended the public high schools and the private institutes.

Three out of 30 Korean students thought that the public schools and the private institutes did not have enough qualified native-English teachers in Korea. In other words, Korean students have a limited chance to learn practical and real English with qualified native-English teachers. One of the 3 Korean students, Daniel, stated:

There are many Korean students in the public schools and the private institutes, but there are only a few native-English teachers in the public schools and the private institutes. I could understand that it is difficult for the public schools and the private institutes to bring in qualified native-English teachers under the limited budget of hiring this kind of English teacher, so I am not sure how Korean students could improve their English fluency, especially English speaking skills, without this kind of teacher in the public schools and the private institutes.

As previously stated, it seems that most of the 30 Korean students showed that they have not been satisfied with English education in Korea. That is why the average score of English education in Korea was 5.66 out of 10.

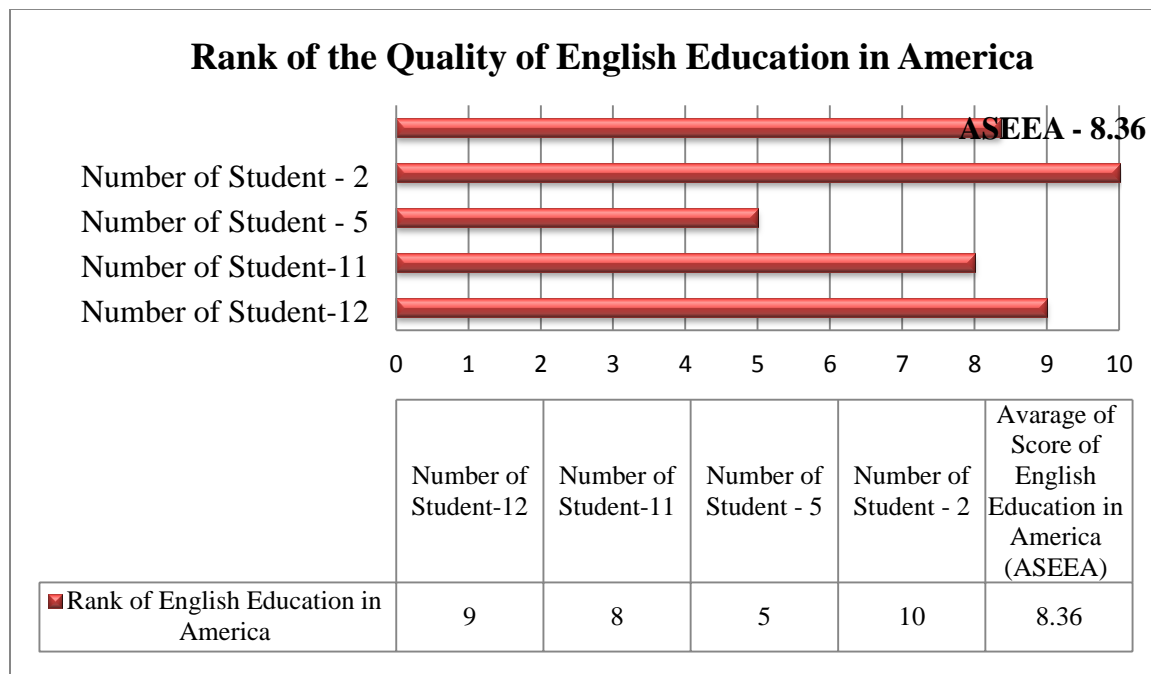


Figure 2. Rank of the Quality of English education in America.

These students also gave a score of English education in America as follows. Twelve out of 30 Korean students ranked English education in America at 9 out of 10, and 11 out of 30 Korean students ranked English education in America at 8 out of 10. In addition, 5 out of 30 Korean students gave a score of 5 out of 10 and 2 out of 30 Korean students gave a score of 10 out of 10 for English education in America. The majority of the 30 Korean students indicated that they really like to be exposed to an English

speaking environment every day. For instance, one of the 30 Korean students, Elizabeth, said:

I think it is much better for me to study English in America than in Korea because I can be easily surrounded by Americans more often and listen to them consistently. Moreover, I have a great chance to improve English reading skills by taking UNK courses, doing English assignments, sharing opinions with UNK classmates, and reading local and national English newspapers at the UNK library and on the Internet.

In addition, another student, Susan, pointed out that the environment of UNK constantly provides international students with several programs, such as the International Friendship Program which helps UNK international students connect with the local community members; cultural activities and events, such as the African festival, Korean festival, Chinese festival, and Japanese Festival; and international organizations, such as the International Student Association, Asian American Student Association, and Korean Student Association at Kearney. Therefore, she has participated in these kinds of programs and kept improving her English proficiency and building a relationship with American friends and international students. Because of these diverse opportunities, she has been satisfied with studying English in the United States, and the other Korean students have a similar impression and feel the same level of satisfaction while they stayed at UNK.

In addition, 4 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they enjoyed taking UNK classes because they felt that it was much easier and more comfortable for them to directly discuss a variety of topics and questions with UNK professors and UNK students during the classes. Dorothy, indicated:

I really like the atmosphere of the UNK courses. Comparing a class in Korea to a class in the United States, especially in Kearney, NE, I thought that the class in America had much more freedom and interaction with classmates and professors than in Korea. For example, not many Korean students typically ask a question to his/her professor in the class in Korea. However, when I was in the UNK classes, I saw that many American students kept asking questions to their professors, and the professors answered the students' questions in the classes continuously. After I had this kind of experience in the United States, I strongly believe that this kind of interaction between a student and a professor is very important to follow the classes well and to understand the concept of the classes, so that is why I felt that learning English in America is much more efficient and effective than in Korea.

A couple of the 30 Korean students described that it has been very valuable for them to meet diverse ethnic groups of people from all around the world in the United States, to enunciate their improper English accents by meeting with native-English speakers, and to practice and to learn a real and genuine English while they stayed in the United States. Because of the above positive factors, the average score of English education in America was 8.36 out of 10, and it is a much higher score than English education in Korea. Therefore, this shows that the majority of 30 Korean students felt that to learn English, it is better for them to come to the United States instead of staying in Korea.

The concerns of Korean students before and after coming to UNK.

The concerns of Korean students before coming to UNK. Fourteen out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they thought they could not communicate with native-English speakers because of the lack of English speaking skills before they came to UNK. Elizabeth stated that she had a limited chance to learn English speaking abilities, so she was worried about talking to native-English speakers because they could not understand

what she said; especially, she was afraid of her English accent and pronunciation when she spoke English with native-English speakers.

Twelve out of 30 Korean students indicated that they were not sure they would be able to follow UNK courses because all of the UNK courses were taught by UNK professors and were required to fully use English and participate in more discussions and presentations. John said:

I heard from my friend who attended one of American universities that the teaching style between Korean college courses and American college courses could be different, so my friend mentioned that American college courses required more discussions and presentations. After hearing from my friend's comment, I was so afraid of how I would handle the different teaching style, and I was not fully sure whether or not I could share my opinions and present my projects in front of professors and classmates. That is why I always thought about adjusting to the different teaching styles between Korean college courses and American college courses before I decided to come to UNK.

Ten out of 30 Korean students agreed that they were wondering whether or not they could build a strong relationship with native-English speakers and international students. One of the students, Richard, stated that he did not know how to make a foreign friend and how to find a commonality between him and foreign friends. In addition, he thought that it could be difficult for him to strongly connect with foreign friends due to the age difference; he was a little bit older than a traditional college student.

Seven out of 30 Korean students said that they could experience racial discrimination. Patricia mentioned:

Before I came to UNK, I strongly thought that Nebraskans would not know about Korea much, so it could happen that Nebraskans discriminate against Korean people. Furthermore, I heard and saw numerous news articles regarding discrimination between Caucasians and African Americans, so I was worried about this kind of discrimination against Korean people as well.

Another student, Michael, also indicated,

I heard from several of my friends that they had experienced racial discrimination while they stayed in the United States, and they told me that I might have this kind of experience while I attended UNK. Therefore, I was very worried about racial discrimination before I came to UNK.

As previously stated, the above concerns were the main worries of the 30 Korean students. The following concerns were mentioned by a couple of the 30 Korean students before they came to UNK: how to adjust to the new environment (six people), how to handle the loneliness away from families (six people), how to eat American food every day (five people), how to efficiently and effectively spend the time while they stay in the United States (four people), and how to stay away from guns and illegal drugs and keep safe while they attended UNK (four people).

The concerns of Korean students after coming to UNK. Ten out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they seriously worried about how to spend their time to effectively and efficiently improve their English abilities. The majority of these students thought that their English skills would significantly improve if they stayed in the United States. However, in the interviews with these students, they found that it was very difficult for them to considerably advance their English abilities like a native-English speaker. Two students, Daniel and Susan, said that they completely understood that it was not easy for them to achieve the certain level of native-English abilities even though they are currently studying abroad in the United States. Particularly, they have experienced that improving English abilities is much harder while they stay in Kearney, NE than what they expected. Furthermore, a couple of the 10 Korean students continuously stated that they have kept looking for a specific solution for how to use time

and money effectively to increase the level of their English skills while they study at UNK.

Nine out of 30 Korean students indicated that they wanted to know how to make friendships with UNK domestic students. One of the 9 Korean students, Patricia, mentioned that she did not feel happy hanging out with her Korean friends while she attended UNK because she thought that speaking Korean with her Korean friends interfered with improving her English proficiency. In addition, she stated that there were too many Korean students around her, so she usually met and saw the UNK Korean students when she walked around the UNK campus. The other 8 students also agreed that it has been very difficult for them not to pair up with the other UNK Korean students, and they strongly felt that they need to find an alternative plan to use English and to meet more UNK domestic students.

Eight out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they are really afraid of going back to Korea because of unknown future plans and a very competitive job market in Korea. These students discovered that they could improve their English abilities while they stayed at UNK. However, they strongly realized that they could be left behind and miss many opportunities in Korea, such as conglomerate internships, national or regional contests regarding each area of industry, chances of earning a certificate of qualifications, and so forth, compared to the other Korean students who take advantage of the above opportunities.

Seven out of 30 Korean students experienced that they struggled to gain a good grade in their UNK courses. Michael said:

I always felt that I have had no idea how to follow the UNK courses. For instance, in the UNK class, I received the survey document and the reading material from the professor. After 10 minutes, the professor let us talk about the survey questions and the reading material, but I was so desperate because I was only able to answer two survey questions and to read half of the reading material. Before I came to UNK, I had expected to follow UNK courses very well because I had learned English for more than 10 years, but after I came to UNK, I felt really terrible because I could not follow the UNK courses well. That is why I strongly felt that it has been really tough for me to follow the UNK courses.

Another student, John, mentioned, “I always missed one or two assignments because of some reason, so my grade in all of my courses is not great. I wanted to receive a better grade, but it is not easy for me to earn a good grade because I could not follow the UNK courses.”

Six out of 30 Korean students strongly believed that it has been very difficult to go somewhere in Kearney, NE because of the lack of public transportation. Furthermore, they thought that the town of Kearney and UNK needs to develop more amenities, services, and activities for international students. Because of this reason, it has been very challenging for these students to adjust to living in Kearney, NE.

As described above, the concerns were experienced by the 30 Korean students after they arrived at UNK. The following additional concerns were indicated by some of the 30 Korean students after they came to UNK: feeling the burden of the expensive cost of room and board and UNK non-resident tuition (2 responses); longing for Korean food and being tired of American food (2); worrying about being sick while living in the United States (1); and procrastinating while they attend UNK because of the comfortable and quiet environment in Kearney, NE (1).

The effectiveness of preparing for and reviewing after UNK courses. Twenty-one Korean students out of 30 Korean students strongly agreed that they need to read the UNK courses' materials before and after each course. Mainly, most of the 21 Korean students stated that it was really essential for them to improve the comprehension of the UNK courses by preparing for and reviewing after UNK courses. Moreover, they felt that it could be difficult for them to follow UNK courses because of the language barrier; especially particular terminology and jargon. Michael stated,

It is really crucial for me to prepare for and review the UNK courses to understand the professors' explanation, to find specific information which the professors refer to in the courses, and to share an idea with the UNK professors and students when the UNK professors require students to discuss the idea.

In addition, the other students of the 21 Korean students discovered that UNK courses required more assignments, quizzes, and tests than Korean colleges and universities, so they felt that it was necessary for them to prepare for and review the UNK courses frequently.

Results of Research Questions

As previously stated, Chapter One included six research questions. After analyzing the Summary of Findings, the researcher presents the following answers of the six research questions.

What motivations make South Korean students decide to come to the United States? Four motivations are found after reviewing the Summary of Findings, and these motivations make South Korean students decide to come to the United States.

First, South Korean students want to come to the United States to significantly improve English skills by being fully exposed to the English environment; especially,

English speaking and writing abilities. Through looking over the Summary of Findings, it seems that South Korean students have a limited chance to learn appropriate English speaking and writing skills from native-English speakers through public schools and private institutes in Korea. Furthermore, South Korean students spend too much time studying English reading, grammar, listening, and vocabulary, so English education in Korea only helps Korean students develop the above English skills. In other words, this type of English education in Korea makes it difficult for Korean students to learn English speaking and writing skills. That is why the participants want to come to the U.S.

Interestingly, the researcher found that most of the 30 Korean students have studied English for 10 years or more through secondary education and higher education in Korea, but when they met and spoke English with domestic UNK students, they did not feel comfortable communicating with them because of their lack of English speaking skills. These students spent a great amount of time and effort, but this shows that English education in Korea is not effective or efficient. Because of this, these students only ranked the quality of English education in Korea at 5.66 out of 10. However, these students rated English education in America 8.36 out of 10 which shows that these students strongly believe that English education in America is better than English education in Korea. Therefore, the researcher indicates that South Korean students decide to come to the United States to stay in a better English learning environment, and through the Summary of Findings, the researcher understands that a South Korean student who studies English in America especially wants to focus on improving his/her English speaking and writing skills.

Second, South Korean students count on the study abroad information from their home universities in Korea, and the living expenses and the cost of tuition are the most important factors for them to choose a destination in the United States. Especially, South Korean students take advantage of the exchange programs organized by American universities and Korean universities because they are able not only to transfer certain credit hours from American universities to their home universities if both universities exchanged mutual agreements, but also to gain the various experiences and to improve English proficiency while they attend American colleges and universities. Through the Summary of Findings, the researcher discovered that 22 Korean students came to UNK as non-degree seeking students, which means that this type of student only stays in the United States up to one year and does not graduate from UNK. In addition, 21 out of the 22 Korean students came to UNK because they found UNK's information and the exchange programs through the Office of International Affairs of their home universities. In other words, their home universities and UNK had mutual agreements, and their home universities posted the study abroad information for their students on their internal website.

Interestingly, the researcher was able to find whether or not these students had ever heard about the state of Nebraska, and 23 out of 30 Korean students said that they never heard about the state of Nebraska before they came to UNK. Only 7 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they briefly heard the name of the state from the American TV show, *Big Bang Theory*, or their home professors referring to the state through their courses. Furthermore, the researcher asked the 30 Korean students another

question about what made them come to UNK, and 20 out of the 30 Korean students mainly agreed that the reasonable tuition of UNK and the additional tuition remission significantly helped them to decide to come to UNK. A couple of the 20 Korean students stated that they only looked for the American colleges and universities which offered the exchange students this kind of tuition remission, and they finally decided to come to UNK because they felt that UNK generously provided the exchange students with the most affordable tuition and gave them the best tuition remission. As a result, South Korean students mainly consider the tuition and the living expenses of American colleges and universities the most important factor for them to decide their final destination in the United States. In addition, South Korean students seem to rely on their school study abroad information before they decide to come to the United States.

Third, South Korean students strongly believe that English proficiency helps them to achieve their goals and dreams; particularly, they want to be admitted to the top Korean universities, to have high salary jobs, and to travel around the world. In other words, a high level of English proficiency is the symbol of intelligence in Korea. As described above, all of the 30 Korean students indicated that the society of Korea always pushes South Korean students to prove their English abilities if they want to have good jobs and gain admission letters from the top Korean universities. Surprisingly, even though employees of numerous Korean companies, Korean government offices, and Korean non-profit organizations rarely use English, they must show their advanced English skills by providing their scores on certain English tests, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, TEPS, and so forth. One of the 30 Korean students, George, mentioned that

I studied English to get admitted to the top Korean university. For now, I am studying English in the United States because I want to find the best and highest paying jobs in Korea. Probably, after entering into that kind of job, I will keep studying English to be promoted to a better position.

This shows how important the level of English proficiency is in Korea, and it seems that South Korean students endlessly put time and effort into improving their English proficiency to live in the society of Korea. Therefore, the researcher has found that English abilities are the essential requirement for all South Korean students if they want to reach their desires right now.

Fourth, South Korean students come to the United States because America's influence in the international community is very powerful. Furthermore, the diverse areas of studies in America have been very specialized by American scholars. One of the 30 Korean students, Daniel, stated

I heard that most studies and the educational system in Korea originated from the western countries and were facilitated by the American educational system. So, I decided to come to the United States and deeply study in Food Industrial Management.

As previously stated, the 30 Korean students studied the following areas in Korea: aviation, biology, English literature, business administration, psychology, musical performance, engineering, and international economics & law. In general, these areas of study have been focused on by a great number of American scholars for numerous years in the United States, so overall the higher education of America has been well-known around the world because of many international conferences and consortiums held in the United States. Furthermore, looking over several world-class American universities and colleges, such as Harvard University, Stanford University, New York University,

University of California – Berkley, and so forth, South Korean students think that the general American education level is outstanding. Therefore, the researcher discovered that South Korean students decide to come to the United States to experience this kind of educational environment.

What kinds of challenges do Korean students struggle with in terms of studying and learning English in Korea and the United States? Through analyzing the Summary of Findings, the researcher discovered the following difficulties in terms of studying and learning English in Korea and the United States. Typically, English education in Korea concentrates on putting a great number of hours into English reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary abilities through the entire public and private educational system. Twenty-six out of 30 Korean students strongly believed that South Korean English teachers emphasized that it was necessary for South Korean students to improve the above English skills if they wanted to enter the top ranking Korean universities and to find good jobs. Due to the importance of the above English skills in Korea, South Korean English teachers keep pushing South Korean students to use numerous English materials and workbooks which are mainly specialized in the above areas of English studies.

As described above, half of the 30 Korean students spent more than 20 hours per week learning and studying English in Korea when they were high school students, and a couple of these students put even more than 30 hours per week into extensively studying English. Furthermore, all 30 Korean students experienced attending private English institutes at least once, and they mentioned that private English teachers were Koreans

and primarily taught English reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary skills similar to public schools. Interestingly, they stated that the main roles of these English teachers in private institutes supported them to obtain the best score on the English tests of the public schools and the English part of the annual university entrance exam instead of a more practical use of the language.

The above situations show that South Korean students have spent numerous hours for several years on English through the public and private educational system, and some of them even decide to come to the United States to improve their English abilities. In the Summary of Findings, the majority of the 30 Korean students thought that the English educational environment in Korea was not joyful or meaningful, so they strongly believed that there was no purpose for learning and studying English without achieving the best scores on every English test. Due to this reason, the 30 Korean students poorly ranked English education in Korea. Therefore, the researcher indicates that learning and studying English for South Korean students is not effectively or efficiently constructed, and the level of South Korean students' satisfaction of learning and studying English in Korea is relatively low. Because of the improper English environment in Korea, it definitely makes it difficult for South Korean students to be interested in learning and studying English consistently and to improve English speaking and writing skills.

Surprisingly, the researcher discovered that most South Korean students learn and study English for more than 10 years through the public and private educational system in Korea, but when they arrive in the United States, most of them struggle to use their English abilities; particularly, they are seriously lacking English speaking and writing

skills. Because of this reason, many of the 30 Korean students experienced the difficulties of speaking English with native-English speakers and foreigners and writing an essay or academic paper for their American college assignments. Furthermore, many interviewees commented that it was very challenging for them to listen to native-English speakers' conversations because of different accents and pronunciations and to fully understand specific jargon and terminology related to students' majors and American slang.

In addition, the majority of the 30 Korean students mentioned that it was very difficult for them to build a strong relationship with a domestic student or a local community member. That is why many Korean interviewees stated that they typically hung out with Korean friends even though they came to the United States to improve their English abilities. Moreover, some of the 30 Korean students strongly agreed that it was a big problem for them to find a way not to speak Korean with other international students frequently and to connect with more domestic American students and local community members because they really wanted to speak English with Americans. The researcher discovered that South Korean students struggle to find an American to practice their English with daily and worry about consistently hanging out with Korean friends while they live in the United States.

Through the above findings, the researcher was able to determine the difficulties of learning and studying English in Korea and America. Before finalizing the answer of this question, the researcher strongly suggests that South Korea evenly focus on the four parts of English education and recruit more qualified native-English teachers from

English speaking countries to provide South Korean students with a good quality of English education if South Koreans wish to be successful learning and studying English or if they decide to go to English speaking countries. If not, it will continuously be challenging for South Korean students to significantly improve English speaking and writing skills even though South Korean students go to English speaking countries to improve their English proficiency.

What factors influence Korean students who choose to attend UNK? The researcher found several factors which influence South Korean students to come to UNK. First, more than half of the 30 Korean students came to UNK because of the cheap and affordable tuition. Twenty-nine out of 30 Korean students have received tuition remission from UNK because these students came through associated agencies and partnership universities with UNK. Furthermore, some of the 29 Korean students who attended the associated partnership universities with UNK were allowed to apply for the exchange programs, so their universities gave them an opportunity to receive transferable credit hours from UNK. Therefore, the researcher found that the reasonable tuition and transferable credit hours significantly affected these Korean students to decide to come to UNK.

Second, the location of UNK makes South Korean students decide to come to UNK. In the Summary of Findings, 9 out of the 30 Korean students came to UNK because UNK is located in a rural area. The 9 Korean students mentioned that the perception of a small city like Kearney was much more friendly and welcoming than big cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Dallas because these students came from big

cities and experienced the unfriendly and unwelcoming environment in Korea.

Furthermore, the 9 Korean students worried about visiting a Korean community and meeting Koreans and speaking Korean frequently if they lived in one of those cities in America. Some of 30 Korean students indicated that the city of Kearney was much safer than big cities in the United States, so these students felt comfortable living in a small and rural area instead of an urban area in America. Because of these disadvantages of living in a big city in America, the Korean interviewees decided to come to UNK.

Third, UNK undergraduate international admission processes are relatively easy compared to other American colleges and universities. Particularly, many American colleges and universities require high English proficiency scores and university entrance exams, such as the SAT or ACT, but UNK only requires international students to score at or above the 50th percentile on the TOEFL or an equivalent English test if they want to be an undergraduate student. Fourth, as previously stated, South Korean students do not want to stay in a place which has a large population of Koreans while they come to the United States. In the Summary of Findings, 8 out of 30 Korean students decided to come to UNK because they thought that the town of Kearney did not have many Korean students or residents. As a result, the South Korean population influenced the Korean interviewees to decide to come to UNK.

Fifth, 6 out of 30 Korean students found that the state of Nebraska normally uses Standard English, so they decided to choose UNK because they wanted to learn standard American English. Sixth, 4 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that UNK offered the

following majors which they are interested in: aviation, physical education, agro-business, and musical performance. Hence, they came to UNK to study the above majors.

What perceptions about studying English and valuing English do South Korean students have both before and after coming to UNK? The researcher discovered South Korean students' perceptions about studying English and valuing English before and after coming to UNK. In the Summary of Findings, all the 30 Korean students strongly believed that consistently studying English and significantly achieving a high level of English are crucial if they want to live in the society of South Korea. For example, all South Korean high school students focus on studying English through the high schools and the private institutes. Furthermore, all South Korean college and university students extensively study English to take TOEIC, TOEFL, and TEPS before they apply for any job in Korea, and even many employees who work for Korean companies continuously study English and prepare for the above tests due to the qualifications for promotion.

As described above, placing such a high value on English in Korea, South Korean students spend a great amount of time and money on English education. That is why all 30 Korean students consistently learned English through the public elementary and secondary schools, and they even attended and paid a great amount of money for the private institutes to study English and obtain the best scores on any English test in Korea. Moreover, all 30 Korean students came to UNK to focus on improving their English level to that of a native-English speaker and having priceless experiences, such as the

American college and university life, American cultural activities, American academic programs, and so forth.

Especially, the researcher found that the majority of the 30 Korean students thought that English education in Korea was ineffective and inefficient, and they were not happy with the English educational environment in Korea; due to this reason, the 30 Korean students devalued English education in Korea. In addition, in the Summary of Findings, the 30 Korean students gave an average score of 8.36 out of 10 for English education in America, and this score was higher than the score of English education in Korea; in other words, these students were more satisfied with the English educational environment in America than in Korea. That is why the researcher indicated that when they decided to come to UNK, the 30 Korean students expected not only to improve their English proficiency significantly, but also to overcome the difficulties of English speaking, writing, listening, and vocabulary abilities.

As previously stated, the 30 Korean students are satisfied with the UNK educational environment; particularly, they enjoyed taking UNK courses with UNK professors and domestic and international UNK students and being completely exposed to an English speaking environment. In other words, the 30 Korean students exceedingly praise the English environment at UNK. Furthermore, in the Summary of Findings, 22 out of 30 Korean students specifically stated that achieving a certain level of English proficiency is very important while they attend UNK because this ability will significantly help them to accomplish their desires and dreams. Moreover, most of the 30 Korean students realized that they still struggle with English speaking, writing, listening,

and vocabulary skills even after coming to UNK, so the researcher understood that this kind of experience would help the 30 Korean students to improve all English abilities. Therefore, these results show how all of the South Korean students value the English language and the experience of coming to UNK.

What concerns do South Korean students address in terms of studying English before and after coming to UNK? The researcher found South Korean students had the below concerns before and after coming to UNK. The following answers covered the concerns before the 30 Korean students came to UNK. First, 14 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that it was very difficult for them to find an appropriate way of communicating with domestic UNK students and the Kearney community members. In the Summary of Findings, the researcher was able to discover that before these students came to UNK, they did not have an appropriate level of English education in Korea, especially English speaking skills, so almost half of the 30 Korean students were afraid of speaking English with domestic students and the Kearney local community members. Second, 12 out of 30 Korean students were worried about taking UNK courses because of being fully exposed to the English environment spoken by UNK professors and domestic UNK students. As previously described, the majority of the 30 Korean students did not have enough experiences taking English courses taught by native-English speakers through public schools and private institutes in Korea, so it could make them feel overwhelmed by being immersed in an English speaking environment and feel uncomfortable following a different teaching style. Through the Summary of Findings, 1 of the 12 Korean students, John, mentioned that American colleges and universities

typically have more class discussions and presentations through the courses. As a result, the researcher found that many Korean interviewees significantly worried about taking UNK courses and directly participating in class discussions and presentations before coming to UNK.

Third, one third of the 30 Korean students stated that before they came to UNK, they thought that it would not be easy for them to make a strong friendship with UNK domestic and international students and the members of the Kearney community. In the Summary of Findings, the researcher discovered that a couple of the 30 Korean students were seriously afraid of starting conversations with Americans or foreigners or to continuously keep conversations going with them because of cultural differences and different commonalities among many countries. Furthermore, some of the Korean interviewees stated that they were worried whether or not their behaviors were inappropriate from the points of view of Americans or foreigners or whether or not their unfriendly personality would irritate Americans or foreigners. Therefore, the researcher indicated that many Korean interviewees thought about these above factors before they came to UNK, so they were especially concerned about whether or not they could create new relationships with Americans and foreigners while they attend UNK.

Fourth, 7 out of 30 Korean students were worried about Americans discriminating against them while they stayed at UNK. As described above, the researcher asked the 30 Korean students whether or not they have heard from someone or read about the state of Nebraska. The answers from the 30 Korean interviewees showed that 23 out of 30 Korean students never heard about the state of Nebraska. In other words, more than half

of the 30 Korean students felt scared to go to an unknown state like Nebraska.

Furthermore, a few Korean interviewees of the 7 Korean students heard from their friends or read news articles regarding discrimination between Whites and African Americans or against foreigners. Therefore, the researcher found that the unfamiliar state like Nebraska and the incident of discrimination in the United States influenced several South Korean interviewees to increase their concerns before they came to UNK.

Through the Summary of Findings, five more concerns were addressed by the Korean interviewees, and the five concerns are listed below:

- how to adjust to the new environment (six participants);
- how to handle the loneliness away from families (six);
- how to eat American food every day (five);
- how to efficiently and effectively spend time while they stay in the United States (five); and
- how to stay away from guns and illegal drugs and keep safe while they attend UNK (four).

Through the interview process with the 30 Korean students, there were 7 Korean students, John, Robert, Richard, David, Thomas, Daniel, and Donald who had studied abroad in an English speaking country, such as America, England, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. In other words, the other students have never been to the above countries, so it would be the first time for them to come to one of the English speaking countries, America. Therefore, the researcher discovered that many Korean interviewees had the above concerns before they visited UNK, and the researcher was able to think about whether

John, Robert, Richard, David, Thomas, Daniel, and Donald shared similar concerns with the other students or had less concerns because they had traveled to an English speaking country before coming to UNK.

Before going through the concerns the Korean interviewees had after coming to UNK, the researcher found how they handled the concerns they had before they came to UNK. In the interview process, 23 out of 30 Korean students stated that most of their concerns which they had before coming to UNK were gone after they arrived at UNK and adjusted to the new environment of UNK and the city of Kearney. A couple of the 23 Korean interviewees discovered that the Kearney community and UNK are extremely friendly to most international students, and they strongly felt that the city of Kearney is very safe. Furthermore, the other Korean students mentioned that several UNK domestic students are interested in the Korean culture, and these Korean students had positive experiences with these UNK domestic students. Therefore, the researcher found that these kinds of factors are really helpful for the Korean interviewees to feel comfortable staying at UNK.

However, 7 out of 30 Korean students indicated that they still struggled with the following concerns: building a relationship with Americans and foreign students, being afraid of communicating with Americans and foreign students, and having a difficult time following UNK courses and achieving good grades on assignments and tests. As a result, the researcher discovered the 7 Korean students have still had the above concerns even though the other Korean students mostly overcame their concerns.

The above concerns were mainly focused on before the 30 Korean students arrived at UNK, and now the researcher will discuss the concerns after they came to UNK. First, 10 out of 30 Korean students stated that they have been seriously worried about how to effectively and efficiently use their time and money to significantly improve their English abilities while they attend UNK. As previously stated, the researcher found that 7 out of 30 Korean students still felt that they have not figured out how to handle the concerns they had before coming to UNK; the concerns are closely related to utilizing and improving their English skills. Interestingly, the majority of the 30 Korean students ranked the quality of English education in America at 8.36, and this score determines that the English learning environment in America for these students is better than the English learning environment in Korea. These participants perceived they could significantly improve their English abilities while they attend UNK. However, 10 Korean interviewees or more have still struggled to notice positive results from improving their English abilities. Furthermore, in the Summary of Findings, most of the 30 Korean students spent a great amount of time and money on English education in Korea and were chronically exposed to the Korean-style of English learning environment which is focused on English reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills through public schools and private institutes in Korea. The researcher indicated that it would be difficult for the Korean interviewees to exceedingly improve their English speaking, listening, and writing skills in a short period because of the improper English learning environment in Korea. Because of this reason, the researcher indicated that all the 30 Korean students strongly believed that it was the most challenging for them to improve English speaking,

listening, and writing skills; especially, these students have kept thinking about how to find the best solution to improve the above skills while they attend UNK.

Second, 9 out of 30 Korean students stated that they felt sad because they mostly hung out with Korean students and did not have many American friends even though they came to UNK to speak English daily and build a relationship with Americans and foreigners. As described above, the main purpose for these Korean interviewees to come here to the United States is to reach a certain level of English like native-English speakers. In addition, the majority of the 30 Korean students agreed that learning English in Korea is not effective or efficient because they are not able to use their English on a daily basis with native-English speakers. In other words, all the 30 Korean students want to practice their English with native-English speakers instead of Korean students or English teachers who are South Koreans. As a result, the researcher found that the 9 Korean students were not happy with speaking Korean frequently while they attend UNK, and they really look forward to meeting with more Americans through UNK and the city of Kearney. Moreover, the researcher determined that many Korean interviewees consistently look for an alternative plan to find more American friends and not to hang out with Korean students.

Third, 8 out of 30 Korean students were worried about their unknown future plans because of very competitive job markets in Korea. In addition, they were afraid of missing an internship and a contest opportunity related to any industry while they stay at UNK. As previously stated, English proficiency is one of the important skills to have before applying for good jobs in Korea. That is why the 30 Korean interviewees and

even any Korean student who comes to the United States want to learn English and have a specific goal to improve their English skills. However, a couple of the 8 students mentioned that they only need to have their English test scores, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, or TEPS, to be qualified to apply for most good jobs in Korea, and they strongly believed that it is very essential for them to have the following factors as well: personality, social activity experiences, previous working experiences, contest experiences, certificates, and so forth. In the interview process with the 30 Korean students, several students called the above qualifications “SPECS,” and they said that they must keep focusing on updating their SPECS to compete with many talented Korean students and eventually to find good jobs in Korea. Because of this reason, the researcher indicated that it would be very challenging for many Korean interviewees to find a way to improve their SPECS, so they have continued to worry about this kind of concern while they attend UNK.

Fourth, 7 out of 30 Korean students mentioned that they were worried about how to receive a good grade in their UNK courses. In the Summary of Findings, the researcher discovered that it has been difficult for them to follow their UNK courses because of different teaching styles between South Korea and America and their lack of English proficiency. This concern has already been identified by 12 Korean interviewees before they came to UNK, and it seems that a couple of the 12 Korean students have still struggled to follow their UNK courses. Therefore, the researcher believed that it would be difficult for several Korean students to keep good grades and to follow UNK courses.

Fifth, 6 out of 30 Korean students stated that it has been challenging for them to go somewhere in a rural city like Kearney. In the Summary of Findings, all the 30

Korean students did not mention that it would be difficult for them to go somewhere in Kearney. In Korea, public transportation is facilitated everywhere no matter the size of the city. Their perception of America only made them think of a big city like LA, Chicago, New York, and so forth. However, after arriving at UNK and living in Kearney, many Korean students experienced how it was difficult for them to visit a local grocery store or any other store located far away from the UNK campus without public transportation services. Therefore, the researcher discovered that the lack of public transportation services makes it difficult for many Korean students to live in a rural city like Kearney.

Through the Summary of Findings, four more concerns were addressed by the Korean interviewees, and the four concerns are listed below:

- feeling the burden of the expensive cost of room & board and UNK non-resident tuition (2 participants);
- longing for Korean food and being tired of American food (2);
- worrying about being sick while living in the United States (1);
- procrastinating while they attend UNK because of the comfortable and quiet environment in Kearney, NE (1).

The researcher was able to discover the above concerns, but the other reasons were not found regarding the specific factors that made a couple of the Korean interviewees have these four concerns. In addition, the researcher positively thought that any participant who studied abroad to a new country would have the same concerns, such as financial burden, homemade food, loneliness, and laziness like the above Korean students.

How do the responses to the above questions differ based on gender and the duration of the study abroad program? The researcher did not find the different responses to the above questions based on gender and the duration of the study abroad program. Through the Summary of Findings, the females' answers and the males' answers were not very different because they had numerous similarities and commonalities; one of the similarities and commonalities for both groups is that the majority of the 30 Korean interviewees came to UNK to significantly improve their English. In addition, as previously stated, there are 8 Korean students who want to graduate from UNK, and 22 Korean students are attending UNK for a short period of time as exchange students or visiting students. The only difference between the 8 Korean students and the 22 Korean students is that the degrees will be given to them by UNK or their home Korean universities. However, the 8 degree seeking students did not mention that they came to UNK to receive the UNK undergraduate degree in the interview process. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that a couple of the 8 Korean students and the 22 Korean students similarly decided to come to the United States to experience the advanced areas of studies, such as aviation, leadership training, pharmacy, English, psychology, and music performance. Therefore, through the above findings, the researcher indicated that there is no difference to be found based on gender or the duration of the study abroad program.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Implications

This chapter explains about the comparison between the findings of this research and the previous findings which were written in the Review of the Relevant Literature. Furthermore, the researcher of this study indicates the future research in Chapter Five.

Implications

Comparing Lee's previous findings with this study's findings. As previously stated, the researcher wrote the literature review and mentioned that the findings of this research and the previous findings will be compared and summarized in this research paper. The first item in the literature review was written by Dr. Lee, and she discovered that one third of her international interviewees was informed by their friends regarding U.S. higher education information. Furthermore, 14% and 13% of Dr. Lee's interviewees heard American colleges' and universities' information from their school counselors and teachers and family members who studied outside of their countries (Lee, 2008). Only 4% of Dr. Lee's interviewees worked with American college and university recruiters and came through the exchange programs.

Through Chapter Four, the researcher was able to find that the majority of the 30 Korean students received the information from their home universities, especially the Office of International Affairs. In addition, 22 out of the 30 Korean students came to UNK under the exchange and visiting agreements signed by host universities and UNK's chancellors. In other words, the 22 Korean students applied for UNK because they wanted to take advantage of receiving the transferable credits and improving their

English abilities. Moreover, 7 out of 30 Korean students received the UNK information from their relatives and friends. As a result, the researcher found that, between this study's findings and Dr. Lee's previous findings, there were the differences. For example, Dr. Lee's interviewees came to America because of their close friends. However, the majority of this study's interviewees came to UNK because of the partnership relationships between UNK and their home universities. Only 4% of Dr. Lee's interviewees came to America under the exchange agreements and through American college and university recruiters, but two thirds of the 30 Korean students came to UNK because of the two parties' exchange or visiting agreements. The researcher found that the original source of American college and university information could depend on the nationality of students; for example, Dr. Lee's students came from several countries around the world; and this study's interviewees all came from South Korea. In addition, interestingly, UNK has employed the Korean recruitment specialist since Spring 2011, so this person has developed initial student recruitment plans, created diverse relationships with Korean universities, and brought a great number of Korean students to UNK. Therefore, more than 20 Korean students were aware of UNK and decided to come to UNK campus through their home universities.

Moreover, Dr. Lee (2008) discovered that many international students strongly believe that the value of the institution's name is one of the most important factors for them to choose; especially students who come from East Asian countries, such as South Korea, Japan, and China. However, none of the 30 Korean students decided to come to UNK because of the institution's reputation. Instead, the majority of the 30 Korean

students came to UNK due to the reasonable tuition and the discount offer. As a result, the researcher found that Korean students do not always decide to come to American colleges or universities because of schools' reputations. However, it is more likely for Korean students to come to American colleges and universities because of affordable tuition and tuition remission.

Comparing Yin et al.'s previous findings with this study's findings.

Yin et al.'s (2010) findings described that their interviewees came to one of America's colleges or universities located in the southern United States because of the following reasons: Yin et al.'s interviewees wanted to experience American college's and university's life through campus housing and courses; and 9 out of 17 Korean undergraduate exchange students came to the school to significantly improve their English abilities. Furthermore, through Yin et al.'s findings, the researcher indicated that the following concerns were brought by Yin et al.'s interviewees: first, the majority of Yin et al.'s interviewees did not feel comfortable to take more than 5 academic courses; second, a couple of Yin et al.'s interviewees enjoyed joining in class discussions with American professors and their peer friends from America and the other countries, but the other Yin et al.'s interviewees were not happy with this type of class setting because of their English barriers; third, many of Yin et al.'s interviewees mentioned that it was not easy for them to build a strong relationship with American students while they attended the American colleges; fourth, several of Yin et al.'s interviewees were frustrated by the lack of public transportation in the city in where they lived; and fifth, 9 of Yin et al.'s

interviewees felt that tuition and living expenses in America were more expensive than in Korea.

As previously stated, the researcher of this study found very similar results to Yin et al.'s findings. In Chapter Four, the researcher discovered that two thirds of the 30 Korean students said that they came to UNK because they wanted to significantly improve their English competency. Eight out of 30 Korean students indicated that they wanted to have various experiences living at UNK, so many of them already lived in the UNK dormitories with American or foreign roommates. Furthermore, the researcher already found the concerns of Korean students before and after coming to UNK through analyzing the interview data, and the above 5 concerns discovered by Yin et al.'s study were found through this research's findings as well. As a result, this research's study and Yin et al.'s study have similar results. Both studies' interviewees were mainly exchange and visiting students from South Korea, so it might be expected both studies' findings are similar.

Comparing Altbach's, Chow's, and Lee's previous findings with this study's findings. In Chapter Two, "push" and "pull" factors were described, and the researcher mentioned how these factors influence South Korean students. Before comparing Altbach's (2004), Chow's (2011), and Lee's (2008) previous findings with this study's findings, the researcher summarized the "push" and "pull" factors in Tables 3 and 4.

As described above, the researcher was able to find "push" and "pull" factors through Altbach's (2004), Chow's (2011), and Lee's (2008) studies. In Chapter 4, the

researcher discovered the 9 reasons why the 30 Korean students decided to come to the United States and 1 of the American universities, UNK. The researcher thought that the

Table 3

Push Factors

Push Factors
1. Unavailability of specialized and training programs in international students' countries
2. The competitive colleges or universities entry requirements in their countries
3. Unstable political circumstances and the overwhelming burden of their academic demands
4. To gain international experiences and to have opportunities to improve their career
5. To obtain English proficiency

Table 4

Pull Factors

Pull Factors
1. The best academic program in the world; Ivy-League schools in America
2. Better pay and benefits in developed or advanced countries
3. International relationships between the host countries and home countries
4. The economic and military power of developed or advanced countries
5. Successful educational marketing projects promoted by study abroad destination countries
6. Complicated school application processes and visa procedures in study abroad destination countries
7. Safety issues

following reasons are closely related to “push” and “pull” factors. First, the majority of the 30 Korean students studied English extensively through public schools and private institutes because of the importance of English abilities in the Korean society. Second, the quality and the structure of the English educational environment in Korea were not effective or efficient, so most of the 30 Korean students came to UNK to overcome their lack of English speaking, listening, writing, and vocabulary skills. Third, 21 out of 30 Korean students heard the UNK information from their school representatives. Fourth, 20 out of 30 Korean students came to the United States to focus on improving their English proficiency.

Fifth, 8 out of 30 Korean students obtained the diverse experiences by living in college dormitories and engaging with American students and the local community members. Sixth, 8 out of 30 Korean students came to UNK because of the uncomplicated application process and the relatively low English requirement to gain admission to the UNK undergraduate program. Seventh, 8 out of 30 Korean students thought that the United States has the best academic programs, a great amount of natural and financial resources, and a strong military power compared to any other country in the world. Eighth, 7 out of 30 Korean students wanted to study in the specialized programs, such as leadership, aviation, pharmacy, English education, psychology, musical theater, sport marketing and business administration, in the United States. Ninth, 5 out of 30 Korean students agreed that they came to UNK because they heard that UNK is very safe compared to a big city in the United States.

Through this research study's findings, the researcher of this study found that the nine factors significantly affected all 30 Korean students to come to the United States and the city of Kearney. In addition, the previous studies' findings and this research study's findings have similarities and commonalities. However, No. 2 "push" factor and No. 2 and 3 "pull" factors had no significance to participants in this study. Therefore, the researcher determined that except No. 2 "push" factor and No. 2 and 3 "pull" factors, the other "push" and "pull" factors strongly influence South Korean students decide to come to America instead of the other English speaking countries.

Comparing Byun et al.'s previous findings with this study's findings.

Through Byun et al.'s (2011) previous findings, the researcher found that the Korean government intensively pushed administrators of higher education in Korea to create more English-medium courses, so Byun et al. conducted their study at one of the prestigious universities, Korea University (KU), in Korea, and tried to find out how South Korean students efficiently and effectively learn English and improve their English competency through English-medium courses. Overall, Byun et al.'s interviewees were not happy with English-medium courses because of the following reasons; first, the interviewees' lack of English skills made it difficult for the interviewees to follow English-medium courses; second, the Korean faculty members who taught English-medium courses at KU were not qualified to teach English-medium courses entirely in English because of the lack of their English skills; and third, the interviewees felt that most of the English-medium courses required them to complete an excess amount of reading in English textbooks.

In Chapter Four, the researcher found that the English educational environment in Korea has not been effectively and efficiently developed because South Korean students were always taught English grammar, reading, vocabulary skills through public schools and private institutes. For the above English skills, most Korean English teachers intensively pushed South Korean students to use numerous English materials and workbooks. A few of this research study's interviewees mentioned that they did not have a chance to learn from qualified native English speakers in Korea. Because of these reasons, the average score of English education in Korea was 5.66 out of 10. On the other hand, the majority of the 30 Korean students were satisfied with English educational education in America. Most of this research study's interviewees enjoyed being fully exposed to the English speaking environment throughout UNK and the city of Kearney. Furthermore, these Korean interviewees thought that taking UNK courses and meeting various ethnic groups of people from all around the world were the most valuable experiences while they attend UNK. Because of the positive feedback from the 30 Korean interviewees, the average score of English education in America was 8.36 out of 10. As a result, the 30 Korean interviewees rated the English educational environment in America much higher than in Korea.

By analyzing the results between Byun et al.'s (2011) findings and this research study's findings, the researcher indicated that South Korean students extensively study English from elementary educational system to higher educational system in Korea. However, Byun et al.'s previous findings and this research study's findings showed that the entire English educational environment in Korea has not been effective or efficient

because South Koreans poorly rated English education in Korea. In other words, even though South Korean students have focused on improving English proficiency for over 10 years, they are not able to follow English-medium courses at Korean colleges and universities because of the improper English learning environment in Korea. Through Byun et al.'s findings, surprisingly, it was ineffective and ineffective for Korean faculty members who graduated and received their doctoral degrees from well-known American colleges and universities to teach English-medium courses at their colleges or universities in Korea because of the lack of their English proficiency. Through the above results, the researcher determined that it would be seriously challenging for most South Korean students to follow English-medium courses if untrained Korean faculty members teach those courses. There would be no difference between English courses which they normally took through public schools and private institutes and English-medium courses at colleges and universities in Korea. Therefore, many South Korean students would like to come to America to be fully exposed to an English speaking environment and improve their English competency.

Recommendation for Future Research

Recommendations for future research included: 1) developing English speaking skills in Korean students needs more careful; 2) greater attention to how Korean student can build relationships with American cultures and students by American universities needs to be studied; 3) non-degree seeking students need more international programming to use their limited time in the USA learning English more efficiently.

Through this study, the researcher reviewed the English educational environment in Korea and America and determined that the society of South Korea surprisingly places much weight on English proficiency for all South Korean students. In addition, the researcher found that the majority of the 30 Korean interviewees strongly believed that the English educational environment in Korea is poorly developed and only focuses on English grammar, reading, and vocabulary skills through the entire public and private educational system in Korea. The *Wall Street Journal* recently stated that typical South Korean students spend more than 20,000 hours on English education from kindergarten to university (Kim, 2013). In addition, according to Kim (2013), “In a recent English Proficiency Index Survey of 60 countries worldwide by EF Education First, South Korea ranked 24th” (para. 7). Due to the ineffective and inefficient structure of English education in South Korea, the researcher wants to further study how the society of South Korea starts restructuring an effective and efficient way of teaching English. Especially, it could be a good way for American educators and professors who received English as a Second Language (ESL) certificates and teach ESL courses in America and Korean English teachers and Korean professors who teach English courses in South Korea to work together and research how to restructure the South Korean English educational system significantly.

The future research needs to focus on finding the data from Korean students who study and learn English at the other American colleges and universities. This research study is only focused on UNK, so it will be beneficial for all higher educational administrators to know about the other reasons Korean students come to the other

American colleges and universities. In addition, there were two different groups of this research study's interviewees, non-degree seeking students and degree seeking students. Therefore, the future research would like to focus on one specific group, either non-degree seeking students or degree seeking students, and the researcher will be able to find out different perspectives of learning and studying English and motivations to come to the United States.

As described above, it seems that the majority of Korean students have a lack of English communication, English listening skills, English vocabulary, and English writing skills. Moreover, it has been really challenging for Korean students to learn English in the United States because they are not able to build a strong relationship with American students and the local community members. Through this study's findings, the behavior of Korean students is to frequently hang out with Korean students while they attend UNK. As a result, the future research wants to determine how to help South Korean students get connected with American students and the local community members. In addition, the researcher would like to find an American college or university which has successfully resolved the above difficulties in the future study.

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Appendix A

Emails (3) Sent to UNK Korean Students

Subject: First Invitation to Participate in the Study's Interview Process

Dear UNK Korean students,

Greetings! I hope you had a productive spring semester and are enjoying some well-deserved relaxation time during this summer.

I am writing to ask if you would agree to be interviewed by me for a research project entitled "Understanding the Importance of English Education in South Korea and Exploring the Reasons Why South Korean Students Come to a University in the Midwest." I am hoping to collect information from you to discover the perceptions about South Korean students who study at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). Your participation will help me find the reasons why South Korean students choose to come to UNK and what kinds of challenges Korean students encounter both before they come to UNK and after they come to UNK.

I will only recruit 30 participants for this study. In other words, not everyone who volunteers to participate will be included in this research. The interview will last about one or two hours. Our discussion will be recorded on an iPad to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. All records will be kept confidential in my secure possession. In addition, no individual responses will be shared with other parties.

If you agree to participate, please send an email to me using the following address: choj1@unk.edu. After I receive your email responses, I will respond to your email and send an invitation for the study's interview process via email.

If you have any questions regarding this interview and study, please feel free to contact me. You can reach me at 308-865-8141 or 308-224-6575.

I appreciate your participation and the time you have given me.

Sincerely,

Jaekeun Cho
Graduate Student
The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Subject: Second Invitation to Participate in the Study's Interview Process

Dear UNK Korean Students,

Greetings! I really appreciate that you are interested in being a participant in this study by responding to my first email. Your support will help me develop this research study significantly.

Based upon the criteria of recruiting 30 samples for this study, I would like to let you know that you were selected as a participant for this study.

The next step you need to take is to contact me about the date, time, and place (Welch Hall or Calvin T. Ryan Library) when you are available for an interview. If you would like another location other than the options listed above, feel free to notify me. We will definitely find more suitable location for the interview.

I appreciate your participation and the time you have given me.

Sincerely,

Jaekeun Cho
Graduate Student
The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Subject: Third Invitation to Participate in the Study's Interview Process

Dear UNK Korean Students,

Greetings! I really appreciate that you informed me about the date, time, and place for our interview.

Next, please open the attached file, the informed consent form.

The informed consent form includes the following information: title, purpose of the study, procedures, benefits, risks and/or discomforts, confidentiality, and so forth. Please read this document and be ready to sign the form when we first meet for the interview.

If you have any questions regarding this interview and study, please feel free to contact me. You can reach me at 308-865-8141 or 308-224-6575.

I appreciate your participation and the time you have given me.

Sincerely,

Jaekeun Cho
Graduate Student
The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

- What brought you into the United States to study English? (e.g. Ranking, Quality of Education, New Cultural Experiences, Diverse International Students – Building the Network, Variety Higher Education Programs, Job Opportunities, the Strongest Economic Power, and so for)
- Could you tell me how and where you hear about the University of Nebraska at Kearney (e.g. friends, UNK counselors, government, family members, your school’s representatives, and so forth?)
- What are the struggles and barriers for English education in South Korea and in the United States?
- How much time and effort have you put into your English education in your entire life?
- What do you think about English education in South Korea and America?
- What benefits do Korean students receive if they can prove their English proficiency to be similar to a native-English speaker?
- What make South Korean students think that English is the most important academic subject?
- If you think English education in South Korea needs to be fixed, could you explain to me about the specific reasons why English education in South Korea needs to be changed and reformed?
- Please tell me about your satisfaction level with UNK courses taught by native-speaking American professors. (Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction)
- What made you think that learning and studying English is better at the University of Nebraska at Kearney than in South Korea? In other words, what influenced you

to attend UNK rather than receiving your entire English education in South Korea?

(Motivation)

- What do you expect to learn, earn, achieve, or accomplish by studying English at UNK?
- What concerns do you have before and after you come to the University of Nebraska at Kearney (e.g. difficulties adjusting to a new environment, system, and food, the lack of English proficiency, difficulties of making an American friend, safety issues, the cultural differences and difficulties, and so forth)?
- Could you tell me about your favorite experiences you have done while you attend the University of Nebraska at Kearney regarding learning and studying English?
- If you want to propose anything to create a better English environment and place for an international student at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, could you give us any idea?
- Have you ever heard about the state of Nebraska?
- What do you want to do after graduating from your college or university?

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter



June 18, 2013

Jaekeun Cho
Department of Educational Administration
1319 E 45th Apt F6 Kearney, NE 68845

Miles Bryant
Department of Educational Administration
133 TEAC, UNL, 68588-0360

IRB Number: 20130613502 EX

Project ID: 13502

Project Title: Understanding the Importance of English Education in South Korea and Exploring the Reasons Why South Korean Students Come to a University in the Midwest.

Dear Jaekeun:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Exemption Determination: 06/18/2013.

1. Once you have the approval from UNK™s IRB, please forward a copy of the letter to me for our records.
2. The stamped and approved informed consent document has been uploaded to your form files (document with Approved.pdf in the file name). Please use this document to distribute to participants. If you need to make changes to the document, please submit the revised document to the IRB for review and approval prior to using it.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- * Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
- * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB

