Key Issues in Applying the Communicative Approach in Korea: Follow up after 12 Years of Implementation

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As globalization becomes more of a reality, "communicative competence" has become the focus of English language learning and teaching in Korea. Teachers seem to agree on the importance of gaining "communicative competence" in English; however, their positive beliefs about the communicative approach often do not coincide with their actual practice in the classroom because of constraints in reality. The present study reports on key issues in implementing the communicative approach in Korea. Key issues were first identified through a two-round Delphi technique. The issues identified were then presented to teachers (elementary, middle, and high school level) with a 10-point response scale to assess the degree of importance of each issue to them. Teachers' responses obtained in the beginning stage of 1996 and in the current stage of 2008 when was after 12 years' of implementing the communicative approach were compared to see changes in the degree of importance of the issue over time. Issues were analyzed along with the various teacher variables such as the degree of understanding, agreement to the premises of the communicative approach, teacher motivation, and self rated English aural/oral proficiency. Results are discussed in terms of their implications on teacher training, curriculum improvement, and material use in class.

I. INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Korea has been undergoing historic changes in recent years (Kwon, 2000). As globalization becomes more of a reality, "communicative competence" has become the focus of English language learning and teaching. The goal of EFL education is to teach students to speak English competently for international communication, not only knowing the grammatical rules of the language, but

also knowing what to say, to whom, in what circumstances, and how to say it. In order to achieve this communicative goal in English classrooms in Korea, the curriculum and textbooks are being revised from the grammar-translation approach to the communicative approach.

This shift to the communicative approach in the national curriculum has caused many upheavals in the education community. Many challenges and difficulties have surfaced as Korean teachers try to implement communicative language teaching in their classrooms (Ahn, 1998: Choi, 2000; Guilloteaux, 2004; Jeon, 1997; Kim, 2009; Li, 1998). First of all, many Korean EFL teachers have not had much experience with a communicative and learner-centered approach to classroom instruction. Most English teachers in Korea have learned English through a traditional grammar-translation approach and have not experienced a learner-centered approach in their school programs. Teachers may have been exposed to the concept theoretically while participating in pre-service teacher training programs, or in-service training programs, however, they have not had many opportunities to observe the practice in actual classrooms. Furthermore, they have not been taught to speak English. How can a teacher effectively instruct students to communicate in English when the teacher's own communicative competence is minimal?

Another difficulty that EFL teachers in Korea face is the educational system's focus on testing. The end result of English study for most students is to get a good grade in school, to enter university, to get a job, or to be promoted at work. Since most of these instrumental goals require obtaining good scores from acknowledged standardized English proficiency exams, a teacher's performance is usually evaluated by the ability to train students to achieve good scores on one of these exams. Communicative competence has not been required or necessary for attaining any of these goals or for passing an exam. While most administrators, parents, teachers, and students ideally agree that developing communicative competence for international communication is important, the reality is that people still expect to see visible achievement through exam scores. These public attitudes pressure teachers to continue to teach for test success, not for communicative skills.

There are still other factors that influence the implementation of a communicative language approach in Korea. What happens in the language classroom cannot be overlooked. Sometimes, the object of a course appears to be the completion of a text, rather than to actually instruct students in language. Within the existing teaching context of 35-40 students in one classroom, all facing the teacher at the podium, without any flexibility in the material to be covered, and assessment only by structured English tests, it is no wonder that teachers continue to face difficulties in adequately implementing the communicative approach.

For the reasons listed above, Korean teachers of English deal with the dilemma between

reality and the ideal goal. Teachers' positive beliefs about the communicative approach often do not coincide with their practices in the classroom. While most teachers accept the theory of the communicative approach, many of them would not practice it in their classes because they think it is not applicable to their contexts.

The goal of this study is to listen to the voices of practicing teachers about their concerns and struggles with implementing the communicative approach in their own classrooms. The research questions were:

1) What are the key issues in applying the communicative approach in a Korean context?
2) Is there an order of priority in the importance of these issues?
3) Are there any changes in the importance of these issues after 12 years of implementation?

Curricula innovation will be successful only when key members pedagogically believe in the new approach and adopt the changes. By listening carefully to the voices of teachers about the practical constraints in classrooms, policy makers and teacher educators might be able to identify specific actions to be taken to make the communicative approach successful in a Korean EFL context.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Ever since language educators moved their focus from developing 'linguistic competence' (Chomsky, 1957) to developing 'communicative competence' (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972), theories and methods have been presented to make the language classroom more communicatively oriented (Brumfit, 1984; Littlewood, 1981; Rivers, 1981; Savignon, 1972; Widdowson, 1978; Wilkins, 1976). To list a few, Wilkins (1976) suggested the functional-notional syllabus should replace the traditional grammatical syllabus; Littlewood (1981) emphasized functional communication activities, social interaction activities, and listening activities to promote communicative competence; Brumfit (1984) accentuated content-based language teaching, an integrated process of language learning, and the fluency-based model of language learning by highlighting the complementary relationship between accuracy and fluency.

This emphasis on communicative competence has influenced foreign language curricula in many parts of the world. In many countries, the curriculum of foreign language teaching has moved from a focus on teacher-centered classes with carefully designed materials to learner-centered classes with authentic and meaningful activities. Implementing the changes in the communicative curriculum, however, does not seem to be easy due to practical constraints, especially in Asian countries.

In their review of English education in mainland China, Wen and Hu (2007) reported English education in China has made tremendous progress since the early 1980's without much resistance. However, people in China, especially government officials and university students, are not satisfied with their approach to English education because of 'dumb and deaf English' (p.25). By attributing the unsatisfactory outcomes to ineffective teaching methods and an inappropriate priority given to reading, the Chinese national syllabus was changed in 2004 to a communicative syllabus focusing on listening and speaking. However, this priority given to listening and speaking is again facing criticism because it requires small class sizes and qualified English teachers. Teaching oral skills is unrealistic in the Chinese context because of the high investment with low return.

Japan is in a similar situation related to the focus on communication abilities. According to Iwai (2009), Japanese students and teachers still experience challenges in developing communication skills in a classroom setting because teachers tend to focus more on reading rather than communication skills, especially in upper secondary school. This is due to the teachers' burden of preparing their students for college entrance examinations. Japanese teachers' struggle between using the communicative approach and the grammar translation method in preparing students for entrance exams is well captured in the informant's response in Sakui (2004)'s study below.

> I think English teachers in Japan, especially in high schools, are forced to wear two pairs of shoes. One is for the entrance examination…At the same time, we need to teach English for communication. I find it difficult (p.158)

Emphasizing the communicative language approach was a drastic change compared to the previous, traditional approach to language instruction in Korea. In the past, the grammar-translation method maintained the unit of language analysis at the sentence level. Emphasis was given to linguistic competence, which included form, grammar, and accuracy. The structure of classes were teacher-fronted, with the teacher's role that of lecturer. In contrast to this approach, the newly dictated communicative approach sets the unit of analysis at the discourse level. Emphasis should now be given to communicative competence, including meaning, function and situation, and appropriateness. The structure of the classes should change to learner-centered, with the role of the teacher being that of facilitator. Textbooks now are being created to focus on communicative situations instead of the structure of language based on sentence examples.

The difficulties that Koreans have faced upon implementing the communicative approach are well manifested in literature (Ahn, 1998; Choi, 2000; Guilloteaux, 2004; Jeon, 1997; Kim, 2009; Li, 1998). Ahn (1998) addressed the main issues in applying the communicative approach in a Korean context. He asserted that Korean learners are not

attaining the desired proficiency even though they put enormous amounts of time and effort into learning English. The main issues are centered on learners, teachers, instructional materials and socio-cultural factors. The first obstacle would be a decrease in motivation to learn English as learners' academic years advance. Learners' motivation is decreasing as they learn because of the teaching methods used, textbooks that don't provide authentic materials, assessment based only paper-pencil tests, and a lack of consideration for the learners' proficiency and interest levels. Secondly, teachers are providing teacher-centered learning using the grammar-translation method and having a hierarchical relationship with students due to the large number of students per class and time constraints. He emphasized that while overhauling the entire Korean testing system may be too big of a challenge, it is still necessary to continue to convince administrators, parents, and students of the benefits of communicative competence. It is vital to educate parents on what the communicative approach is and how and why this approach is needed so that they believe that it is not necessary to only evaluate academic achievement through test results.

Li (1998) explored Korean teachers' perceptions towards CLT. Based on interviews, he searched for the difficulties felt by teachers as they try to implement CLT in a Korean context. He categorized the difficulties as follows: teacher factor, student factor, education system factor, and finally the method factor. The teacher factor included teachers' deficiency in spoken English, teachers' deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence, teachers' lack of training in CLT, teachers' lack of opportunities for retraining in CLT, teachers' misconceptions about CLT, and teachers' lack of time for developing materials for communicative classes. The student factor consisted of students' low English proficiency, students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence, and students' resistance to class participation. The education system factor included large class size, grammar-based examinations, insufficient funding, and lack of support. Finally, the method factor included CLT's inadequate account of EFL context and lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments.

Choi (2000) provided empirical support for CLT showing teachers' positive beliefs about CLT. However, she concluded CLT could not be adopted without understanding the context of teaching. She further detected the obstacles that caused discrepancies between teachers' positive beliefs about CLT and the teachers' reluctance in applying it in their own classrooms. The factors listed were large class size, "few opportunities for in-service teacher training with little support for traveling to or studying in English-speaking countries (p.27)," teachers' low level of spoken English proficiency and lack of cultural knowledge related to English, lack of authentic materials, lack of facilities to use audio-visual materials, too much content to finish in a given time in the assigned textbook, and the national university entrance exam focused only on receptive skills.

Choi (2007) asserted in her review of the history and the policy of English language education in Korea, that there is an evitable gap between the ideals represented in the national curriculum and the reality practiced in the actual classrooms. Even though the national English curricula have emphasized developing communicative competence–the 6th curriculum suggesting a communicative approach for classroom activities and the 7th curriculum intensifying learner-centered education with further elaboration–the suggestions detailed in the national curricula have never been put into full practice in actual classrooms due to practical constraints. Choi (2007) attributed the gap between the national curricula and the actual classroom to the lack of consideration for what is actually being taught in the classroom and lack of communication with people involved who can provide professional and practical views. She further concluded that English education should be planned considering the values, situations, cultures, school systems, teachers, and learners based on communication with people involved and the results from the classroom-based research.

By adopting an activity theory framework, Kim (2008) looked at the curricular reform to the communicative approach in Korea. Through qualitative analysis, she identified the independent factors explaining the observed teacher's behavior of not adopting the communicative approach in spite of ongoing discourse about the communicative approach within the discourse community. The factors identified were the teacher's own experience as a learner while attending English classes, students' low proficiency level in English, the effectiveness and appropriateness of traditional methods of instruction for preparing students for high-stake school exams, top-down mannered teacher training, class sizes, teachers' and students' socialization in the educational context, and teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching and learning.

It seems important that we recognize the types of constraints and the priorities in dealing with those issues in order to move in the right direction for desired change in English education in Korea. It would be interesting to see the issues systematically collected and to see the changes in perceptions over time, especially after all the effort put into the change to the communicative approach by people involved.

III. METHODS OF RESEARCH

Even though the education system in Korea is rapidly embracing the communicative approach in language instruction, it is necessary to address the issues and concerns that make this reality difficult to approach. This study highlights these concerns as expressed by practicing language instructors in Korea. The key issues identified through a Delphi study were presented in a survey questionnaire to participating teachers. The participants

then rated the importance of these issues.

1. The Delphi Study[1]

The Delphi technique was used to initially identify key issues involved in applying the communicative approach in the Korean EFL situation. The Delphi technique, used in social science studies, seemed particularly appropriate for identifying key issues. This technique is valuable in bringing new issues to the surface and driving participants toward consensus. It can be used to study broad questions and also might focus upon specific problems (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975). Additionally, it can be used for organizing and prioritizing the collective judgments of the polled group and can be an excellent way to seek input on what may be causes or effects in problem areas (Orlich, 1978).

1) Round One

34 English teachers enrolled in a graduate seminar course served as panel members. In the first round of the survey, these teachers were requested to specify 5 to 10 matters that could be the most important issues in establishing a communicative approach in the Korean EFL context. They were also asked to provide the rationale for their choices. A total of 204 issues were provided by 34 teachers, averaging about six statements per respondent.

2) Round Two

The responses from the first round were thoroughly analyzed. The issues collected were classified to make the processing of statements easier. All issues suggested by at least five participants were synthesized, resulting in a list of 17 issues and their corresponding rationales. The resulting list of key issues was presented in random sequence on the second-round questionnaire. Additional space enabled the participants to include any possible new concerns or issues they might want to add.   Respondents were requested to rate the listed and added issues using a rating scale from 1 (unimportant) to 10 (most important), to provide new issues and rationales, and to suggest changes in the exact

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[1] This part of the study was conducted in 1996. This was the year when teachers were being trained for teaching communicative English, according to the new curriculum being revised, which emphasized communicative English. The elementary school teachers were being trained to prepare to teach English classes in 1997.

wording of issues or rationales. One issue was added from this second-round questionnaire, resulting in 18 key issues for the final questionnaire. The language used in administration of the survey was Korean.

2. Key Issues

The following is a list of the 18 key issues identified through the Delphi technique. The Issues are listed in the order in which they appeared on the survey.

Issue 1. Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam.
Most of the Korean education system has focused on preparing students to successfully pass university entrance exams. To change from this emphasis to promoting communicative competence in language skills has caused much upheaval in the system.

Issue 2. Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives.
While the communicative approach is emphasized for instructions, the main mode of assessment is still discrete point test or standardized test, in conjunction with preparing students for the university entrance exam. However, this is not an appropriate way to assess progress in communicative competence.

Issue 3. Developing curriculum that allows flexible use of the textbook.
Many teachers still feel the need to finish, or cover, all the material provided in the textbook, instead of allowing time for students to practice actual use of the language.

Issue 4. Developing practical and interesting materials.
There are many complaints about the topics and information included in the textbooks. They are often neither interesting, relevant, nor motivating to students.

Issue 5. Developing supplemental materials.
Usually, only a textbook is provided for teachers. There are few supporting materials available, and teachers are too pressed for time to make interesting and relevant materials themselves.

Issue 6. Providing tools and technology.
There often is a lack of availability of language labs, computers, overhead projectors, videos and tapes. Appropriate technology could strongly support a communicative approach.

Issue 7. Providing instruction on using technology and resources.
Having the technology available is simply not enough without the appropriate training and support for teachers to use the tools effectively and easily.

Issue 8. Improving teachers' English communicative competence.
Many EFL teachers in Korea have had little experience themselves in communicating

in English. It is difficult to focus on listening and speaking in the classroom when a teacher's own level is low in these areas.

Issue 9. Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence.

Most of the resources describing communicative teaching techniques are published by foreign publishers. Korean EFL teachers want specific support and explanations of techniques that are appropriate to their unique situation.

Issue 10. Providing experience in the learner-centered approach.

The learner-centered approach is contrary to Korean educational tradition; most teachers have had no personal experience in this approach. Therefore, there is a need for modeling of this approach in the classroom, and personal experience for the teachers to better understand how the approach can work.

Issue 11. Providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training.

Currently, there is only one, formulaic in-service training program that teachers can attend. There is a need for greater depth and support of the communicative approach for in-service teacher training programs.

Issue 12. Promoting teacher motivation to comply with the communicative approach.

Even if teachers thoroughly agree with the theory behind the communicative approach, it can be incredibly difficult to implement. School administrators, parents, and students still want high test results. Therefore, teachers are often more motivated to teach to the test instead of working hard to create materials and lessons encouraging communicative competence.

Issue 13. Having a reasonable number of students in the classroom.

There are more students than a teacher can handle in one language classroom. In order to make a language class communicative, the number of students per class should be reduced.

Issue 14. Appropriate seating arrangements.

Most classrooms in Korea have fixed desks in rows, all facing toward the teacher's podium.   This makes group work and monitoring difficult.

Issue 15. Promoting learner motivation and participation.

Korean students are accustomed to passive learning. To suddenly be in a classroom where they are expected to participate and respond is often a surprise. Students are not sure of what is appropriate behavior in such a situation. Also, in large classes it is difficult for teachers to monitor activities well; therefore, students are not accountable to participate. In addition, students still aren't evaluated according to communicative competence, so their motivation for participating in communicative activities is very low.

Issue 16. Lowering students' anxieties about new teaching methods.

Korean students can feel insecure and nervous in a communicative atmosphere since

they have not had previous experience to such an educational approach. Also, most Korean students are extremely afraid of making any mistakes in front of the teacher or another classmate.   This can greatly limit practice of language use in the class.

Issue 17. Increasing parents' and administrators' understanding of the communicative approach.

Since test scores are still so important and necessary in Korean culture, it is hard to convince parents that a communicative classroom is helping their child improve in language skills. Public awareness needs to be raised about communicative language learning and teaching.

Issue 18. Improving pre-service teacher training programs.

Hopefully, the training of teachers in the communicative approach can begin before they arrive in the classroom. Recently, there has been an emphasis on including training during an in-service training program. There needs to be more work done to include communicative language teacher training in university classes.

3. The questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was developed in Korean for the study based on a panel discussion and the two-round Delphi technique with panel members. As shown in Figure 1, issues identified through the Delphi method were presented to participants with a 10-point response scale to indicate the degree of importance of the issue to them.

FIGURE 1
Example Item on the Questionnaire

Directions: The following are important issues involved with applying a communicative approach in the Korean EFL context. Read each issue and the rationale provided, and rate the importance of each one. 10 means the most important issue; on the other hand, 1 means the least important issue. Circle the number that reflects your opinion.

Example Item:
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives.

Rationale:
While the communicative approach is emphasized for instruction, the main mode of assessment is still the discrete point test or standardized test, in conjunction with preparing students for the university entrance exam. However, this is not an appropriate way to assess progress in communicative competence.

In addition to these 18 issues, the following information regarding teacher variables was

collected:
- years of teaching experience.
- degree of understanding of the communicative approach.
- degree of support for implementing a communicative approach.
- level of motivation as an English teacher.
- degree of satisfaction toward the job.
- level of communicative competence in English.

With the last five variables, teachers had to self-assess their situation based on a 6 point response scale, with 1 being the lowest and 6 the highest degree or level.

4. The Administration of the Questionnaire

1) The first administration (1996)

   The participants for the study in 1996 were 106 elementary school teachers and 66 secondary school teachers enrolled in teacher training courses in Seoul. Since 1997 is the year that Korean elementary schools began to include English classes, much emphasis was given at that time on teaching communicative English at the elementary school level. Thus the questionnaires were collected without classsifying between middle school teachers and high school teachers. Among 172 questionnaire participants, 140 were female teachers and 32 were male teachers.

2) The second administration (2008)

   The questionnaire administered in 1996 was used again in 2008 to detect if there were changes in the importance of the issues. 305 teachers participated in the study: 75 elementary school teachers, 131 middle school teachers, and 99 high school teachers. As Table 1 indicates, again there was a much higher percentage of female teachers surveyed than male teachers. Table 2 shows the participants' years of teaching experience.

TABLE 1
Gender Distribution of Participants (2008)

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total
Male	9	27	46	82(26.9%)
Female	66	104	53	223(73.1%)
Total	75(24.6%)	131(43.0%)	99(32.4%)	305(100%)

TABLE 2
Participants' Years of Teaching Experience in School (2008)[2]

	Years of Teaching Experience						
	0-5 Yrs.	6-10 Yrs.	11-15 Yrs.	16-20 Yrs.	21-25 Yrs.	26-30 Yrs.	Over 31Yrs.
Elem	30	20	6	11	3	4	1
Mid	51	21	16	24	14	5	0
High	38	23	9	10	7	9	3
Total	119(39.0%)	64(21.0%)	31(10.2%)	45(14.7%)	24(7.9%)	18(5.9%)	4(1.3%)

IV. ANALYSIS

1. The Importance Perceived by Teachers: A Comparison among Elementary Teachers, Middle School teachers, and High School Teachers

In order to understand the relative rankings of the issues by the participating teachers, the mean scores of the importance of each issue were first compared. The five issues that were ranked the highest among all three groups–elementary school teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers–were having appropriate class sizes, providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training, improving pre-service teacher training programs, developing supplemental materials, and developing practical and interesting materials.

ANOVA F tests were then performed to detect any statistical difference among the participating teacher groups in rating the importance of the issues. As Table 3 indicates, for most issues there were no significant differences found among elementary school teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers in rating of the importance. Two significant differences found among the groups were issue 5 (Developing supplemental materials) and issue 14 (Appropriate seating arrangements). The mean scores of the high school teachers in rating the importance of these were significantly lower than elementary school teachers and middle school teachers. This means that high school teachers consider developing supplemental materials and having appropriate seating arrangements as less important than elementary school teachers or middle school teachers do. This implies high school teachers either (1) have no trouble developing supplemental materials and having appropriate seating arrangements for communicative classes or (2) have no time to use supplemental materials and have no need to have seating arrangements for communicative classes.

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[2] Missing data was treated as 0.

Two interesting disparities in the rankings of the importance among the three groups can be also observed in table 3. First, high school teachers ranked issue 1 (Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam) as much more important than did middle school teachers or the elementary school teachers. As expected, high school teachers ranked issue 1 higher than middle school teachers, and middle school teachers ranked issue 1 higher than elementary school teachers. Second, disparity in the rankings was also found with respect to issue 6 (Providing tools and technology) being ranked higher by elementary school teachers. Elementary school teachers rated having tools and technology for communicative classes of higher importance than middle school teachers and high school teachers. This implies that secondary school teachers are either more satisfied with the current tools and technology or they are using tools and technology less than elementary school teachers.

TABLE 3
Comparing the Ratings of Elementary School, Middle School, and High School Teachers (2008).

Issue number	Total (n=305)			Elem (n=75)			Middle (n=131)			High (n=99)			F-test
	Rank	M	SD	Rank	M	SD	Rank	M	SD	Rank	M	SD	P value
13 Number of students	1	9.36	1.30	1	9.55	0.95	1	9.31	1.16	1	9.28	1.65	.349
11 In-service teacher training	2	8.86	1.27	2	9.12	1.01	2	8.82	1.45	2	8.72	1.15	.100
18 Pre-service training	3	8.76	1.36	3	8.99	1.14	3	8.74	1.53	4	8.61	1.26	.185
5 Supplemental materials	4	8.64	1.47	4	8.98	1.10	4	8.72	1.43	6	8.28	1.70	.005*
4 Interesting materials	5	8.63	1.45	5	8.75	1.27	5	8.71	1.56	5	8.43	1.43	.263
1 University entrance exam	6	8.43	1.53	12	8.29	1.42	7	8.37	1.69	3	8.63	1.39	.283
8 Teacher English competence	7	8.40	1.52	6	8.67	1.33	8	8.35	1.58	7	8.27	1.55	.209
9 Teaching techniques	8	8.38	1.43	7	8.53	1.28	6	8.46	1.47	9	8.15	1.47	.152
15 Learner motivation	9	8.30	1.58	11	8.33	1.69	9	8.32	1.58	8	8.26	1.49	.951
2 Assessment techniques	10	8.18	1.60	8	8.40	1.49	11	8.07	1.64	10	8.14	1.64	.356
3 Inflexible textbook use	11	8.16	1.73	13	8.23	1.70	10	8.23	1.81	12	8.02	1.67	.619
12 Teacher motivation	12	8.12	1.63	10	8.36	1.55	12	8.02	1.76	11	8.05	1.51	.324
6 Tools and technology	13	8.07	1.74	9	8.39	1.73	13	7.96	1.78	13	7.97	1.67	.190
10 Lack of experience	14	7.88	1.57	14	8.16	1.41	15	7.85	1.65	15	7.71	1.55	.162
17 Stakeholders' understanding	15	7.80	1.67	15	8.01	1.70	16	7.82	1.74	16	7.60	1.52	.254
16 Students' anxiety	16	7.74	1.75	17	7.75	1.78	17	7.71	1.75	14	7.77	1.74	.966
14 Seating arrangement	17	7.72	1.80	16	7.91	1.60	14	7.92	1.89	17	7.31	1.78	.024*
7 Instruction on technology use	18	6.86	2.24	18	7.13	2.39	18	6.80	2.21	18	6.74	2.17	.472

Issue 1. Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam. **Issue 2.** Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives. **Issue 3.** Developing curriculum that allows flexible use of the textbook. **Issue 4.** Developing practical and interesting materials. **Issue 5.** Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 6.** Providing tools and technology. **Issue 7.** Providing instruction on using technology and resources. **Issue 8.** Improving teachers'

English communicative competence. **Issue 9**. Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence. **Issue 10**. Providing experience in the learner-centered approach. **Issue 11**. Providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training. **Issue 12**. Promoting teacher motivation to comply with the communicative approach. **Issue 13**. Having a reasonable number of students in the classroom. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements. **Issue 15**. Promoting learner motivation and participation. **Issue 16**. Lowering students' anxiety about new teaching methods. **Issue 17**. Increasing parents' and administrators' understanding of the communicative approach. **Issue 18**. Improving pre-service teacher training programs.

2. The Changes over Time: A Comparison between the Ratings of 1996 and the Ratings of 2008

The responses of two surveys, one conducted in 1996 (N=172) and the other conducted in 2008 (N=305) were compared. Surprisingly, the top 5 issues were identical in both administrations.

Among the top five issues, the issue that was ranked highest was Issue 13, (Having a reasonable number of students in the classroom). The typical number of students in 1996 was 45-50 per class. Even though the number of students per class has been reduced to 30-37 students in 2008, teachers still felt they have too many students to make their classes communicative. The issue that was ranked second was Issue 11 (Providing opportunity for systematic in-service teacher training). Teachers felt that the in-service teacher training program currently offered does not provide the necessary training for the necessary people at the necessary time. The issue that was ranked third was Issue 18 (Improving pre-service teacher training programs). Teachers believed that in order to be equipped with English communication skills and methods to teach English for communication, the current pre-service training is still focused on English literature, linguistics, and methods in non-practical ways.

The issue ranked the fourth was Issue 5 (Developing supplemental materials). Many teachers still felt the need to supplement materials to make classes more interesting and relevant to students; however, there are still few supporting materials available, and teachers are too pressed for time to make materials themselves.

The issue ranked the fifth was Issue 4 (Developing practical and interesting materials). Teachers in both administrations felt the topics and information included in the textbooks are neither practical nor interesting for communicative language learning to occur.

Other than the top 5 issues stayed the same in both 1996 and 2008 administration, two issues should be noted for their noticeable rank difference. The issue 1 (Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam), which was ranked the 13th on 1996 administration, jumped to the 6th in 2008 administration. This may mean that the teachers in the beginning stage of applying communicative approach considered myopic

constraints more importantly than long-term constraints. The issue 15 (Promoting learner motivation and participation) also moved up to the 9th in 2008 administration from the 16th in 1996 administration. This is probably because teachers in the beginning stage focused teaching–related issues more importantly than learner-related issues.

TABLE 4
Comparing the Ratings of 1996 & 2008

Issues	2008 (n=305)			1996 (n=172)			Rank Difference	t-test
	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD		P value
13 Number of students	1	9.36	1.30	1	9.14	1.29	0	.070
11 In-service teacher training	2	8.86	1.27	2	9.06	1.32	0	.095
18 Pre-service training	3	8.76	1.36	5	8.75	1.27	+2	.962
5 Supplemental materials	4	8.64	1.47	3	9.00	1.28	-1	.007*
4 Interesting materials	5	8.63	1.45	4	8.77	1.33	-1	.290
1 University entrance exam	6	8.43	1.53	13	8.38	1.62	+7	.736
8 Teacher English competence	7	8.40	1.52	7	8.50	1.38	0	.488
9 Teaching techniques	8	8.38	1.43	6	8.36	1.53	-2	.871
15 Learner motivation	9	8.30	1.58	16	8.21	1.56	+7	.511
2 Assessment techniques	10	8.18	1.60	8	8.30	1.36	-2	.379
3 Inflexible textbook use	11	8.16	1.73	12	8.30	1.47	+1	.357
12 Teacher motivation	12	8.12	1.63	9	8.17	1.46	-3	.731
6 Tools and technology	13	8.07	1.74	10	8.32	1.69	-3	.122
10 Lack of experience	14	7.88	1.57	11	8.17	1.46	-3	.054
17 Stakeholders' understanding	15	7.80	1.67	14	7.92	1.83	-1	.438
16 Students' anxiety	16	7.74	1.75	17	7.42	1.99	+1	.067
14 Seating arrangement	17	7.72	1.80	15	7.98	1.71	-2	.110
7 Instruction on technology use	18	6.86	2.24	18	7.30	2.07	0	.033*

Issue 1. Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam. **Issue 2**. Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives. **Issue 3**. Developing curriculum that allows flexible use of the textbook. **Issue 4**. Developing practical and interesting materials. **Issue 5**. Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 6**. Providing tools and technology. **Issue 7**. Providing instruction on using technology and resources. **Issue 8**. Improving teachers' English communicative competence. **Issue 9**. Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence. **Issue 10**. Providing experience in the learner-centered approach. **Issue 11**. Providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training. **Issue 12**. Promoting teacher motivation to comply with the communicative approach. **Issue 13**. Having a reasonable number of students in the classroom. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements. **Issue 15**. Promoting learner motivation and participation. **Issue 16**. Lowering students' anxiety about new teaching methods. **Issue 17**. Increasing parents' and administrators' understanding of the communicative approach. **Issue 18**. Improving pre-service teacher training programs.

3. Analysis of Teacher Variables

With regard to the teacher variables, as Table 5 displays, the teachers' understanding of the communicative approach and levels of motivation as English teachers were rated relatively high both in 1996 and in 2008.

It was surprising, however, to see the degree of support for the communicative approach has been reduced in the 2008 administration. While 48.9% gave 6 points[3] in 1996, only 17.4 % expressed the highest support in 2008. On the other hand, teachers' self-rated English speaking proficiency increased tremendously. In 1996, only 13% rated their English proficiency as 5-6 points[4]. In 2008, however, 66% rated their proficiency as 5-6 points. The degree of satisfaction with their teaching position also improved. In 1996, only 10.1% of teachers marked 5-6 points[5] on the degree of satisfaction with their teaching position. This increased to 39.6% in 2008. (Please see Appendix for the bar graphs on teacher variables.)

TABLE 5
Questionnaire Responses to Teacher Variables
(Count and Percentage in Parenthesis)

Teacher Variables	Year	Scores					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Degree of Understanding Communicative Approach	2008	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.4%)	29 (10.1%)	91 (31.6%)	125 (43.4%)	39 (13.5%)
	1996	3 (1.7%)	4 (2.2%)	23 (12.8%)	62 (34.6%)	68 (38.0%)	19 (10.6%)
Level of Teacher Motivation	2008	4 (1.4%)	32 (11.1%)	59 (20.5%)	102 (35.4%)	72 (25.0%)	19 (6.6%)
	1996	6 (3.4%)	9 (5.1%)	27 (15.3%)	67 (37.9%)	39 (22.0%)	29 (16.4%)
Degree of Support for the Communicative Approach	2008	2 (0.7%)	9 (3.1%)	34 (11.8%)	92 (32.1%)	100 (34.8%)	50 (17.4%)
	1996	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.7%)	5 (2.8%)	17 (9.6%)	65 (36.5%)	87 (48.9%)
English Communicative Competence	2008	2 (0.7%)	3 (1.1%)	17 (6.0%)	75 (26.3%)	110 (38.6%)	78 (27.4%)
	1996	10 (5.6%)	30 (16.9%)	48 (27.1 %)	66 (37.3%)	21 (11.9%)	2 (1.1%)
Degree of Satisfaction with Teaching Position	2008	3 (1.1%)	16 (5.6%)	46 (16.1%)	107 (37.5%)	97 (34.0%)	16 (5.6%)
	1996	26 (14.6%)	40 (22.5%)	50 (28.1%)	44 (24.7%)	13 (7.3%)	5 (2.8%)

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[3] 6: the highest support towards communicative approach
[4] 6: the highest proficiency
[5] 6: the highest satisfaction

These teacher variables were further analyzed in relation to the 18 key issues rated by teachers. The responses for each teacher variable were coded into high and low groups. Two-way ANOVA F tests were then performed to see if there were any differences in the ratings of the 18 issues answered by elementary, middle, and high school teachers. As a result of this analysis, the degree of understanding about the communicative approach and the degree of satisfaction as an English teacher have no significant effects on issue importance ratings. For those teacher variables with significant effects, the results are presented in the following section.

4. Effects of the Motivational Level of Teachers on Issue Importance Ratings

The differences in the ratings of importance of each issue were analyzed in relation to the teachers' motivation level by using two-way ANOVA F tests. Significant differences were found in the ratings of issue importance with 6 of the 18 main issues. As Table 6 shows, the higher the motivation level of the teacher, the more highly rated in importance were issues 5 (Developing supplemental materials), 6 (Providing tools and technology), 7 (Providing instruction on using technology and resources), 8 (Improving teachers' English communicative competence), 11 (Providing opportunity for systematic in-service teacher training), and 14 (Appropriate seating arrangements).

With issues 2 (Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives) and 17 (Increasing parents' and administrators' understanding of the communicative approach), a different consensus was reached among elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The elementary and high school teachers with high levels of motivation gave these issues higher scores in ratings their importance. On the other hand, the middle school teachers with low levels of motivation responded similarly. Therefore, elementary and high school teachers with high levels of motivation seem to feel more the need for developing assessment techniques and increasing parents' and administrators' understanding for the communicative approach, while middle school teachers feel the opposite. Middle school teachers with low motivation seem to have expressed their desire for available assessment techniques and parents' and administrators' understanding for the communicative approach.

TABLE 6
Significant Issues Corresponding to Levels of Teacher Motivation[6]

Issue	Elementary Teachers		Middle School Teachers		High School Teachers		P-values from Two-way ANOVA F-tests		
	High M(n=55)	Low M(n=16)	High M(n=77)	Low M(n=45)	High M(n=61)	Low M(n=33)	High/Low	Elem/Middle /High	Interaction
2	8.62	7.88	7.90	8.41	8.23	8.06	.540	.930	.054*
5	9.09	8.56	8.74	8.62	8.49	7.82	.026*	.012*	.386
6	8.51	8.00	8.17	7.49	8.08	7.67	.024*	.340	.865
7	7.31	6.50	6.97	6.31	7.15	6.09	.005*	.742	.826
8	8.75	8.56	8.47	8.18	8.54	7.88	.066*	.257	.597
11	9.22	8.87	9.08	8.40	8.69	8.76	.062*	.290	.118
14	8.11	7.56	8.01	7.76	7.64	6.76	.019*	.018*	.460
17	8.09	7.94	7.57	8.20	7.82	7.30	.945	.235	.048*

Issue 2. Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives. **Issue 5**. Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 6**. Providing tools and technology. **Issue 7**. Providing instruction on using technology and resources. **Issue 8**. Improving teachers' English communicative competence. **Issue 11**. Providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements. **Issue 17**. Increasing parents' and administrators' understanding of the communicative approach.

5. Effects of the Degree of Support on Issue Importance Ratings

The differences in the ratings of importance of each issue were analyzed in relation to the degree of support for communicative English. There were significant differences in the degree of importance in 3 issues. As summarized in Table 7, the more teachers supported the communicative approach, the more important issues 11 (Providing opportunities for systematic in-service teacher training) and 13 (Having a reasonable number of students in the classroom) became, and the less important issue 7 (Providing instruction on using technology and resources) became.

With issues 5 (Developing supplemental materials), 9 (Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence), 10 (Providing experience in the learner-centered approach), and 14 (Appropriate seating arrangements), there are significant differences of the degree of importance among elementary, middle, and high school teachers. With issue 3 (Developing curriculum that allows flexible use of the textbook), there are effects of interaction: while middle school teachers with a high degree of support ranked issue 3 high in importance, elementary and high school teachers with a low degree of support ranked issue 3 high.

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[6] Responses on 1-3 were categorized as low while responses on 4-6 were categorized high.

TABLE 7
Significant Issues Corresponding to Levels of Support for the Communicative Approach[7]

Issues	Elementary Teachers		Middle School Teachers		High School Teachers		P-values from Two-way ANOVA F-tests		
	High m(n=41)	Low m(n=30)	High m(n=68)	Low m(n=54)	High m(n=41)	Low m(n=53)	High/Low	Elem/Middle /High	Interaction
3	8.00	8.40	8.43	8.00	7.66	8.30	.330	.581	.063*
5	9.05	8.87	8.68	8.83	8.12	8.36	.693	.004*	.631
7	6.68	7.73	6.59	7.02	6.71	6.83	.050*	.393	.418
9	8.71	8.47	8.65	8.28	7.90	8.34	.744	.079*	.101
10	8.34	8.17	7.90	7.91	7.39	7.96	.471	.061*	.250
11	9.44	8.73	9.00	8.58	8.78	8.66	.008*	.163	.340
13	9.71	9.27	9.42	9.31	9.46	9.19	.068*	.695	.650
14	8.00	7.97	7.93	8.04	7.41	7.26	.909	.016*	.862

Issue 3. Developing curriculum that allows flexible use of the textbook. **Issue 5**. Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 7**. Providing instruction on using technology and resources. **Issue 9**. Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence. **Issue 10**. Providing experience in the learner-centered approach. **Issue 11**. Providing opportunity for systematic in-service teacher training. **Issue 13**. Having Reasonable number of students in the classroom. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements.

6. Effects of English Communicative Competence on Issue Importance Ratings

Significant differences in the ratings of importance were found in issues 2, 8, 10, and 12 in relation to teachers' listening and speaking proficiency in English. The results are shown in Table 8. The teachers who rated themselves high in English proficiency gave high importance ratings to issues 2 (Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives), 8 (Improving teachers' English communicative competence), 10 (Providing experience in the learner-centered approach), and 12 (Promoting teacher motivation to comply with the communicative approach). With issues 5 (Developing supplemental materials) and 14 (Appropriate seating arrangements), there are significant differences of the degree of importance among elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

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[7] Based on cumulative percentage, responses of 1-4 were categorized as low while responses of 5-6 were categorized as high.

TABLE 8
Significant Issues Corresponding to the Level of English Proficiency (2008)

Issues	Elementary Teachers		Middle School Teachers		High School Teachers		P-values from Two-way ANOVA F-tests		
	High m(n=52)	Low m(n=19)	High m(n=77)	Low m(n=44)	High m(n=59)	Low m(n=34)	High/Low	Elem/Middle /High	Interaction
2	8.52	8.26	8.36	7.68	8.42	7.71	.007*	.332	.647
5	9.00	8.89	8.67	8.86	8.03	8.59	.254	.019*	.391
8	8.87	8.26	8.71	7.70	8.51	7.94	.000*	.306	.532
10	8.42	7.84	8.01	7.66	7.75	7.62	.078*	.231	.686
12	8.38	8.21	8.32	7.43	8.19	7.82	.026*	.281	.329
14	7.92	8.16	8.00	7.91	7.17	7.59	.412	.033*	.584

Issue 2. Developing assessment techniques to match with communicative objectives. **Issue 5**. Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 8**. Improving teachers' English communicative competence. **Issue 10**. Providing experience in the learner-centered approach. **Issue 12**. Promoting teacher motivation to comply with the communicative approach. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements.

7. Effects of Teaching Experience on Issue Importance Ratings

In relation to the amount of teaching experience, there were significant differences in the ratings of importance with issues 1 (Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam), 6 (Providing tools and technology), and 7 (Providing instruction on using technology and resources). As shown in Table 9, the teachers with a mid-range of experience gave issue 1 (Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam) a higher rating of importance than those teachers with many years of experience or those with few years of experience. The teachers with high teaching experience gave issue 7 (Providing instruction on using technology and resources) a higher rating of importance than those teachers with mid-range experience or those with few years of experience. With issues 5 (Developing supplemental materials), 8(Improving teachers' English communicative competence), 9 (Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence), and 14 (Appropriate seating arrangements), there are significant differences in the degree of importance among elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

TABLE 9
Significant Issues Corresponding to the Amount of Teaching Experience (2008)[8]

Issues	Elementary Teachers			Middle School Teachers			High School Teachers			P-values from Two-way ANOVA F-tests		
	High (n=19)	Mid (n=29)	Low (n=22)	High (n=47)	Mid (n=49)	Low (n=32)	High (n=31)	Mid (n=43)	Low (n=23)	High/Mid Low	Elem/Middle /High	Interaction
1	8.16	8.41	8.27	7.94	8.71	8.41	8.35	8.84	8.61	.070*	.356	.907
5	9.26	8.79	8.95	8.74	8.57	8.84	8.31	8.51	7.78	.567	.002*	.294
6	8.89	7.97	8.50	7.96	7.65	8.31	8.03	7.65	8.48	.017*	.176	.766
7	7.58	6.66	7.45	7.11	6.49	6.81	7.03	6.53	6.65	.096*	.336	.950
8	8.84	8.31	9.00	8.35	8.31	8.50	8.34	8.44	7.78	.761	.090*	.191
9	8.53	8.45	8.77	8.33	8.57	8.53	8.00	8.40	7.87	.661	.061*	.633
14	8.05	7.48	8.41	8.00	7.80	7.94	7.34	7.16	7.48	.186	.027*	.811

Issue 1. Changing from education centered on passing a university entrance exam. **Issue 5**. Developing supplemental materials. **Issue 6**. Providing tools and technology. **Issue 7**. Providing instruction on using technology and resources. **Issue 8**. Improving teachers' English communicative competence. **Issue 9**. Developing detailed teaching techniques for communicative competence. **Issue 14**. Appropriate seating arrangements.

V.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to aid the development of a successful English education system in Korea by identifying key issues that teachers consider the most important to address. The Delphi survey method was used to gather and identify 18 key issues related to using the communicative approach in EFL classes. The results of a survey based on these 18 issues showed that most teachers are concerned with the number of students in the classroom, opportunities for on-going teacher training, and the availability of supplemental materials. It was also discovered that teachers from different backgrounds and levels of English proficiency have different opinions about the importance of certain issues.

The results of this study provide ample material to consider when reflecting on language instruction in Korea. First of all, as numerous studies (Ahn, 1998; Choi, 2000; Jeon, 1997; Wen & Hu, 2009) have mentioned, the number of students per class should be somehow controlled to make the class communicative. Policy makers and administrators need to consider limiting the number of students per class, particularly, for oral communication

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[8] Based on 33% percent, responses of 0-4 were categorized as low, 5-15 as mid, 15-37 as high.

skills. By assigning assistants, for example, teachers might be able to divide classes with over 30 students into two sections. While the teacher has an interactive class on oral skills for one section, the assistant can help the other section focus on the vocabulary and reading.

One factor to consider is public awareness with regard to the communicative approach. While overhauling the entire Korean testing system may be too big of a challenge, it is still necessary to continue to convince administrators, parents, and students of the benefits of communicative competence. Parents must believe that it is not necessary to only evaluate academic achievement through test results. It is vital to educate parents on what the communicative approach is and how and why this approach is valid in Korea. Based on parents' understanding of the benefits of a communicative approach in Korea, EFL classroom teachers could be valued and supported more as they offer the communicative approach to students. Administrators that understand and support the communicative approach might be convinced to introduce smaller class sizes to better handle the situation.

Secondly, the necessity of adequate teacher-training programs cannot be overlooked. While these programs already exist, their usefulness and organization must be re-examined and improved. Training institutes for Korean EFL teachers must appropriately model a learner-centered, communicative approach. Currently, there seems to be one formula for teacher training which is offered over and over. However, it would be appropriate to offer different electives and courses that focus on a learner-centered approach and could better address the needs of EFL teachers.

According to Guilloteaux (2004), Korean teachers of English have been exposed only to theoretical discourse of the communicative approach. Since the teachers have not had opportunities to observe or participate in communicative English classrooms, they have only an incomplete understanding about the communicative approach, which make it difficult for them to link the methods they acquired in teacher trainings to actual classroom practice. Although the Korean government has put an emphasis on teacher training through diverse programs for pre-service and in-service teachers, as Lee (2009) asserted, teacher education in Korea has been neither effective nor practical. Teacher trainers might consider employing new ways to link theory and practice. In teacher training sessions, teachers need to have ample opportunities to observe teaching techniques, not just hearing about them. Exposing teachers to new ideas alone cannot change them. Opportunities to observe and experience new ways can result in the desired changes in teachers. Teachers will be better prepared for their classes by observing techniques and putting them into practice during teacher training sessions. Although it would be costly, it would be wise to provide more concrete and real classroom ideas, or even have teachers watch actual classes at schools and teach classes under the supervision of the trainers.

One example of creating a learner-centered training program is to focus on the concern

of the lack of supplemental materials available. One option is to offer elective courses in a training program that could specifically address this issue, and give time for teachers to create materials. In such a setting, the materials they create could be shared with every participant. As time goes on, the accumulation of developed materials could be pooled into a type of supplemental library and resource forum. Also, it is time to consider continuing support and training through such forums as an Internet discussion board or chat room which would allow for teachers to constantly find encouragement, ideas, and answers to their continuing concerns.

Thirdly, teachers' stress from searching for interesting materials for the class should be reduced. It is stressful trying to decide what might be appropriate material, trying to find it, and wondering if it is the right choice. Although teachers want to use and to develop their own supplemental materials that can intensify their students learning, practically they do not have the time or skills to develop the needed materials. The difficulties of material development are well described in Li (1998)'s interview data below.

> Even if I have enough time for material writing, I do not think I can write good communicative materials. First, I have never been taught how to do it myself. Secondly, there are few authentic English materials around me. That means I have to create everything. That's beyond me. It also means I have to spend more time than I can afford. (Young-Cheol, July 26, 1995) (p.689)

Providing relevant and interesting materials for students seem to be overwhelming task for teachers, particularly in the EFL context, because the materials need to match with students' proficiency levels, intellectual levels, and interest levels at the same time. In the EFL environment, it is common to have a discrepancy between students' proficiency levels and intellectual levels, which makes it harder to find relevant materials. In other words, ready to use authentic materials appropriate for students' proficiency levels usually do not match with students' intellectual levels, and thus do not motivate students to learn. For the EFL context, we need to share materials, intellectually appropriate yet easy enough to use for low level learners.

Fourthly, we might consider reforming the way we assess learners for English achievement as they develop communicative skills. As observed in studies on CLT applications in different contexts, mismatched tests to the communicative goals are the major constraints in implementing the communicative approach. Two issues among the 18 issues were related to tests and assessments. The issue of "education centered on university entrance" reached number 6 in the 2008 rankings, up from 13th in the 1996 rankings. Teachers believed that English education in a public school context will never change unless the tests and assessments for university entrance change. Since the current

university entrance exam measures students' listening and reading comprehension only, classes focusing on oral language cannot be effective.

Swender (2009) described the curricula changes in foreign language classrooms in America upon the introduction of the proficiency[9] movement in the 1980s. Before the introduction of the concept of proficiency, the instructional practice typically consisted of choral repetition, imitation of native speaker speech, pattern drills, teachers asking questions and students providing minimal responses. The English tests accordingly reflected what was taught in the classroom. In particular, learners were tested on memorized responses, the contents of a specific textbook, forms, and vocabulary lists, with little practical applicability to the real world. However, after the proficiency movement, the focus of assessments shifted toward "what language users can do." Instead of assessing "what students know" or "what teachers teach" they began to focus on "what students can do with what they know." Proficiency-based English tests should reflect real world tasks, measure a person's ability to function in a language, take many factors into consideration, and compare a person's unrehearsed ability against a set of criteria. According to Swender (2009) this concept of proficiency in assessing learners changed the actual classrooms to be communicative. To develop learners' proficiency, foreign language classrooms began to link the instruction and the assessment. In particular, the classroom activities should be the same activities that will be on the tests, and should provide learners opportunities to develop the general ability to accomplish communication tasks in a variety of settings. Korean people anticipate that the Korean National Proficiency Test, currently under development, should make the desired change in our English education system[10]. If the test can successfully assess learners' proficiency, we might expect to witness the desired changes in classrooms as well.

The last consideration to mention is motivation. Teachers' motivation levels greatly affect the quality of instruction in the classroom. While it can be seen that many EFL teachers support the introduction of the communicative approach in Korea, it is also evident that too many discouraging factors will inhibit their enthusiasm for actually implementing the communicative approach in reality. Teachers need to feel that they are the experts in education, which can happen by providing them with continuing, well-organized, systematic training opportunities on a regular basis and by giving them

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[9] According to Swender (2009), proficiency is "more than grammar and accuracy, it is "the ability to use a language to communicate meaningful information in a spontaneous, non-rehearsed, interaction, and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language."

[10] This national test aims to assess learners' proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Lee (2009) mentioned the test will be thoroughly checked until 2012, and, if it successfully measures the proficiency as intended, it may be possible to replace the current English exam on the National Scholastic Aptitude Test in 2014.

options to choose elective courses freely as needed. To achieve the most effective English education system in Korea, there needs to be physical as well as moral support for teachers. This can be achieved by offering support groups, a variety of workshops to share information, and chances to meet with eminent scholars. The more teachers are able to exchange ideas, experiences, problems, solutions, and concerns, the more they will begin to feel successful in addressing a communicative approach in the classroom.   Thus, such improvements in teacher-training programs would assist teachers in heightening their awareness and preparing them to participate effectively in the global era.

Indeed, as Nunan (1991) mentioned, it seems to be true that "there never was and probably never will be a method for all (p.228)," because different contexts require different methods. It is time for Korean policy makers and practitioners to seek a Korean way to develop communicative competence in English.

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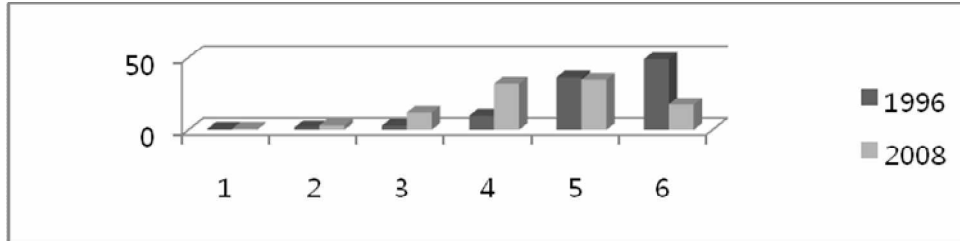Wilkins, D. A. (1976). *Notional syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX

1. Degree of Teachers' Understanding of Communicative Approach
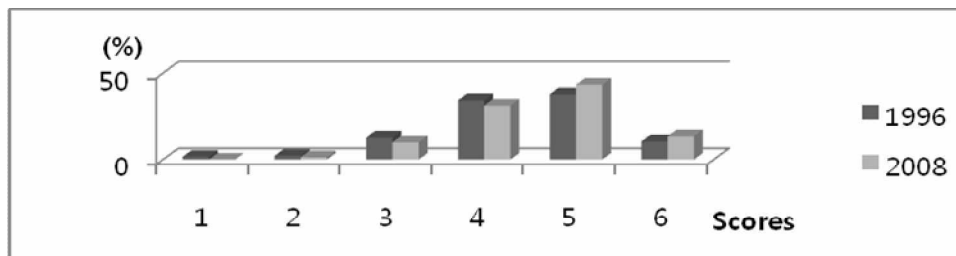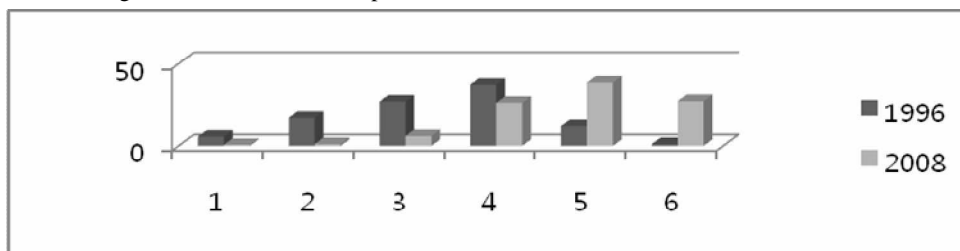

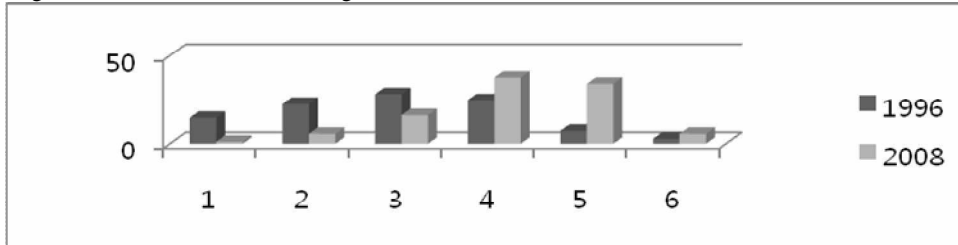2. The Level of Teacher Motivation
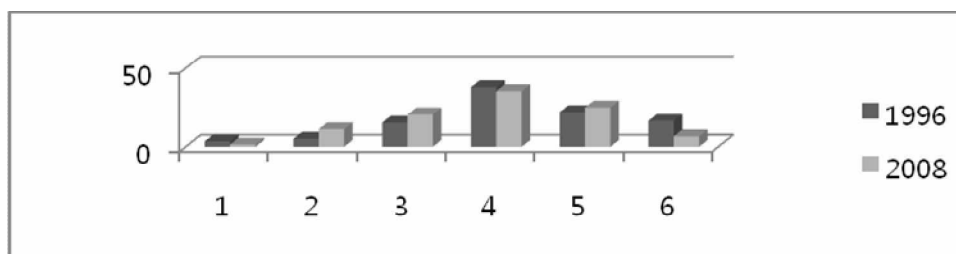
3. Degree of Teacher Support for the Communicative Approach

4. Teachers' English Communicative Competence

5. Degree of Satisfaction with Teaching Position

Applicable levels: elementary, secondary
Key words: Delphi, communicative approach, CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), key issues

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